

Sense Scotland Supported Living: Ayrshire & Surrounding Area Housing Support Service

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Unannounced

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Service provided by:
Sense Scotland

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About the service

Sense Scotland is a Scottish charity and specialised social care provider supporting people with communication support needs associated with complex and sensory disabilities, and their families.

This is a registered combined housing support service and care at home service. The service is located in Ayrshire and covers the surrounding area. The structure is flexible, to allow for the appointment of staff at the appropriate level to match emerging needs. The office base is near to the waterfront in Ardrossan and has good transport links.

There were five people being supported within their own accommodation and in the community when we inspected.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25, 26 and 27 March 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with four people using the service and spoke to two of their family
- spoke with eight staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with two external professionals.

Key messages

- People spoke very positively about the tailored care and support provided.
- Expectations were often exceeded in how people responded to support provided.
- People were supported to carry out activities which they made active choices over. This partnership with enabling staff promoted independence and improved wellbeing.
- The matching of staff to people was carried out with involvement of people supported and their representatives.
- People benefitted from a small, consistent staff team who could meet their specific needs very well and were fully involved in decisions about their care.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

During the inspection we observed staff engaging confidently and compassionately with people who experience care. Staff were caring and attentive, taking the time to support people how they wished in relation to their choices and aspirations. Staff knew people well, this demonstrated that people were valued and treated as individuals.

Sense delivered high quality care and support that meets people's assessed needs; this enabled people to develop skills to live safely in their own homes and make community connections. People can expect to get the most out of life because the people and organisation supporting them have an enabling attitude to support people's wishes and aspirations.

Each person was supported by a small, skilled, motivated and well guided staff team. People were involved in selecting their staff team and people were carefully matched, this resulted in very positive and effective relationships being formed. This meant they could be assured that they could rely on staff to keep them safe. Since our previous inspection in 2020, we saw evidence of people's journey and progression in achieving their outcomes.

We saw examples of people making choices in partnership with staff, so people were fully involved in making decisions. This demonstrated a person-centred approach to providing support which met people's individual needs. The service had an enabling approach to support people's wishes, and this meant people led interesting lives engaging in activities they enjoyed and were meaningful to them.

We were particularly impressed with the way staff supported people to get out of their comfort zone. Their belief in the person showed high regard for people and their potential; this had resulted in very positive outcomes. For example, one person is no longer required to take medication for Diabetes, due to being supported to manage weight loss so well.

The service that Sense provided to people clearly made a difference to them and their families. Comments included:

"It took a while to build the right team, but we got there; she chooses her own staff. The support makes a huge difference to her life and ours, big time."

"We're really fortunate, all the staff are kind, caring and respectful, never had any problems."

"His life is so much better now; he's out doing things he enjoys. He's been to Glasgow by train, out for lunch, making friends, going to the theatre and cinema, he's even been at the golf range"

"He's looking great, lost a lot of weight, he likes to show his clothes off and has increased in confidence, which is great to see."

People could be confident their health and wellbeing benefitted from support. Staff were knowledgeable about the people they supported, and this meant they could pick up on changes and respond to them. We saw good evidence of people's health being monitored and reviewed, and medication was handled safely.

How good is our leadership?**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

The manager had effective quality assurance systems in place which provided a good overview of the service, this helped identify any areas for improvement. We saw evidence of regular monitoring and audit processes which were part of those quality assurance processes.

It was heartening to see that audits were used to drive improvements of people's outcomes. Feedback from staff consistently told us that the vision and values of Sense positively informed practice. Managers were responsive to feedback and used learning to improve things for people.

Comments from families included:

"I'm really happy with how things are now, the key to that has been good communication."

"I now get regular updates and photos to see what he's been doing."

"If I need to raise anything, suggest or share an idea, I have a point of contact that makes that much easier."

People could be assured that the manager used evidence-based approaches to continually update and improve the support they received. The manager ensured that staff were kept up-to-date with current legislation and best practice. The manager was proactive in keeping in touch and engaging with other services and professionals.

The manager worked closely with the supervisors and team to share the areas to focus on and the plan in which to get there. This helped others to understand the service's quality assurance processes and provided reassurance to people that required actions were being taken forward.

The manager had a good level of presence and knew people and their families well. Staff were happy in their role which improved positive relationships with people experiencing care and their relatives.

Feedback from people and their relatives was that they felt they had been listened to, any issues raised were dealt with and addressed promptly. Their views were positive and all those we talked to said they felt the managers were approachable and responsive.

Staff we spoke to were also very positive about working in the service.

Comments included:

"It's not like working, wish I'd done it years ago."

"I love it, I'm skipping to my work in the mornings."

"I absolutely love working for Sense, we're always looking to improve things for people, they are very well supported."

"It's quite a relaxed workplace, all managers are very approachable if I need support."

"I have regular supervision sessions, which I find worthwhile and feel they keep me on track."

How good is our staff team?**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Staff had the right knowledge, competence and development to support people. Staff had accessed training appropriate to their role and apply their training into practice to promote the safety and wellbeing of people supported. On speaking with staff, they said the training was second to none.

We observed good practice and adherence to training, which meant that training was effective. Staff observations were used to improve practice and promote a culture of learning. This meant that people were being cared for by staff who understood them and were sensitive to their needs and wishes.

There were a number of learning and support opportunities available for staff. This meant that people were confident that staff had the necessary skills and competence to support them. Staff's competence and practice was monitored to improve outcomes for people by spot checks and competency checks.

Staff supervisions were used productively, and staff valued them because they supported their personal and professional development. This meant that staff practice improved through effective supervision, promoting a learning culture within the service, which included reflective practice.

The service demonstrated a good level of commitment to staff learning and development. Newer staff had comprehensive induction training and their progress was regularly reviewed. It was good to see the journey of support in place for new staff, with spot checks and competency checks.

It was good to see that supervisors had been given development opportunities, this meant that people experiencing care could be confident in a team of staff who were trained and competent.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

People benefit from support plans which were person-centred, and outcomes focussed, outlining how people's care needs should be met and how staff should support them.

We saw that there was good information within support plans about the individual, what was important to them, preferred routines, choices and wishes regarding their care and support. This provided a guide for staff to ensure that people were supported in an agreed and consistent way and that their wishes were respected.

Plans had been formally reviewed and updated with the person, their families and relevant professionals, where appropriate. Strong leadership, staff competence, meaningful involvement and embedded quality assurance and improvement processes supported this happening.

It was good to see that time had been invested in mapping out a person's history with those who knew them best. This was done to enable the team supporting him to develop a better understanding of him and how certain things in life may have shaped him. Similarly, a path was developed to support a person's journey in moving forward. In doing this his team were clear on what mattered to him, and what they needed to focus on to help him achieve his dreams.

Support planning maximises people's capacity and ability to make choices. It reflects a culture of promoting independence. This was clear by the progress we could see people had made. People were choosing how they spent their time and who with.

We saw evidence that risks in people's lives were fully assessed and clear guidance was implemented for staff to follow. Where people were unable to share their views, their representatives helped shape their support in line with their known preferences.

Where people were not able to fully to express their wishes and preferences, individuals who are important to them or have legal authority are involved in shaping and directing the support plans.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 People get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
3.2 Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people	5 - Very Good

How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and personal planning reflects people's outcomes and wishes	5 - Very Good

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