

# Western Isles Housing Support Housing Support Service

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**Type of inspection:**  
Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**  
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**Service provided by:**  
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002104

**Service no:**  
CS2016349167

## About the service

Western Isles Housing Support is provided by the Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar and is based in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis. The service aims to provide accessible, flexible and personalised housing support services to young people aged from 16 - 19 in critical need or as part of a transition plan to securing or maintaining permanent housing.

At the time of this inspection, the service was provided by three support workers and a service coordinator. Four young people staying in their own tenancies within the service in central Stornoway were supported, and outreach support was offered to several other young people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.

The service has undergone significant development since the time of the last inspection, with the development of new premises and the development of a dedicated staff team.

## About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on 21 and 22 October 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:

- spoke with two people using the service
- spoke with four staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- reviewed survey responses from three young people, three members of staff and six external professionals with regular contact with the service.

## Key messages

- Young people were well understood, listened to, and valued as individuals.
- Young people benefitted from good quality and regularly reviewed interagency plans and were empowered to request reviews of their plans at any time.
- Young people's needs and capacity are constantly assessed and any significant concerns were shared with partner professionals to help deliver good outcomes for young people.
- Young people living with the service's housing provision felt safe, and the staff team took a measured approach to supporting young people manage risks outwith the service.
- The service needs to ensure that all relevant incidents are notified to the Care Inspectorate in accordance with legislation.
- The service took a flexible approach to staffing arrangements, which took into account people's practical and wellbeing needs.
- Young people benefitted from the support of a committed, skilled and well trained staff team.

## 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 staff team?	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.

Young people were recognised as experts in their own experiences, and were supported to make decisions about their support and wider lives. One young person told us that they had asked for an early review of their plan when they felt their circumstances had changed and they wanted their plan to move on. This helped young people to feel empowered to set and work towards goals that were important to them.

Young people received tailored support, in line with their wishes, plans and emerging needs. This has included planned and spontaneous direct support in a wide range of areas as well as helping young people to build relationships with partner organisations. The staff team were proactive in supporting young people to reach their goals. One young person told us 'I would not be where I am without them'. Young people's strengths and achievements are encouraged and celebrated.

The service offers flexible and highly responsive care and support. Support is available to young people at clear and consistent times each day but there was also capacity within the service to respond to urgent or changing need. This included providing overnight on call support where this fitted with people's personal plans. These plans were underpinned by strong relationships.

All of the young people we heard from said that they felt safe within their accommodation. This was enhanced by CCTV in public areas, residents meetings, one to one support and clear tenancy agreement guidelines. Young people said that they felt confident about raising any worries or issues with the staff team, and knew that they would be listened to.

Where there have been significant concerns about the safety or wellbeing of young people, these concerns were clearly recorded and shared. Referrals were made appropriately to social work and health services, ensuring a timely shared response. Some young people within the service have been part of adult support and protection processes, which have worked alongside the young person's personal planning to help deliver the best outcomes for young people.

We noted that the service had not notified the Care Inspectorate of some significant incidents in line with legal requirements. Guidance around this was shared during the course of the inspection, and the service immediately began to make relevant notifications. It was clear that any concerns were otherwise appropriately recorded, shared and addressed and so there has been no impact on outcomes for young people using the service. Nevertheless we would expect to see notifications continuing in line with legislation at the time of the next inspection.

## 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.

Young people benefitted from support from a consistent and reliable staff team. This allowed young people the opportunity to build trusting relationships with a staff team who knew them well and had a strong understanding of their preferences and needs.

We heard from young people using the service and from the staff team that it felt as though there were the right number of staff with the right skills working at the right times to support people well. One young person told us that the staff team 'are so responsive and do everything they can to support me and others'. It was clear from observation throughout the inspection that the staff team were compassionate, committed and really cared about the young people.

A flexible approach is taken to scheduling, with young people's emotional and practical needs being considered on an ongoing basis. When young people prefer to be supported outwith their accommodation this is understood and responded to. Young people are supported to stay organised and keep track of support times and other appointments in a way that takes account of their needs and learning styles. For some young people, this means having a visual weekly planner which supported them well to become more independent and in control of their plans and responsibilities.

Care and thought is put into matching young people with a key worker who is most likely to be able to connect and build a relationship with them. One external professional stated that if relationships become difficult for any reason, 'the manager will adapt the support by changing support worker to attempt to engage with the young person.' This enabled young people to continue to stay engaged with the service and benefit from the support on offer.

Young people using the service benefitted from very good working relationships amongst the staff team, and between the staff team and the wider group of professionals supporting young people. Communication between staff is excellent, with good verbal updates, weekly planning meetings in addition to more formal team meetings, and a high quality of recording of support to young people. The staff team all said that they felt well supported by their supervising manager and that these relationships helped them to continue to offer a good quality of support to young people even during times of stress.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.2 People get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	5 - Very Good

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