

# Angus Learning Disabilities Housing Support Service

Voluntary Action Angus  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
12 November 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Turning Point Scotland

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002813

**Service no:**  
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## About the service

Angus Learning Disabilities provides care to adults with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs in people's own homes within the Angus area.

The head office is based in Forfar and at the time of the inspection the service was supporting four people.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 and 7 November 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 three people using the service and three of their family members
- spoke with seven staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with two visiting professionals.

## Key messages

- People benefitted from a staff group who knew them very well.
- People benefitted from support to access community healthcare and treatment from competent trained practitioners.
- The service was well led and organised.
- Some improvements were required with the provider's service improvement plan.
- Staff were appropriately skilled to meet the needs of the people they cared for.
- Staff were confident, engaged and motivated.
- Agency staff were well supported and integrated as part of the team.
- Communication assessments were in place to support each person's unique communication and information needs.

## 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?	4 - 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.

People benefitted from a staff group who knew them very well. People were comfortable and at ease with the care and support they received. We observed trustworthy and warm relationships between staff and people experiencing care. Staff recognised people as individuals and this promoted good outcomes for people. One family member shared, "my loved one's wellbeing has improved so much since this provider has taken over, my loved one is less anxious, and life is so much better for them. Staff are excellent and have spent a long time getting to know them and seeing the world through their eyes".

People were confident in their support because there was good staff continuity and staff knew how to effectively communicate changes to people. One person benefitted from the use of visual aids. This enhanced people's wellbeing and supported good outcomes.

Care and support people received reflected the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS). People were supported to make decisions for themselves. This helped people take control over their lives and the support services they received. One family member shared, "the staff have been very patient, choices are promoted and as a result my loved one does not have a life completely chosen by other people".

Communication assessments were in place to support each person's unique communication and information needs. Staff were good at recognising behaviour as a form of communication and were able to interpret this to identify different moods. For example, when someone was happy, upset or frustrated. Staff were able to respond appropriately and this provided people with reassurance and supported their emotional wellbeing.

Staff used autism friendly communication strategies to meet the needs of people. For example, using plain language and giving people time to respond. This supported people to be heard and communicate effectively.

Medications were well managed. There was a robust medication management system in place and this included regular audits. Any errors were identified timeously and appropriate actions were taken to reduce the risk of them happening again. We were confident people were receiving the right medication at the right time. This promoted people's safety and well-being.

People benefitted from support to access community healthcare and treatment from competent trained practitioners. The provider prioritised and supported people to access appropriate health assessments. Care and support were tailored around appointments and the provider had a flexible approach. As a result, people experienced prompt and consistent care. One family member shared, "I have confidence in the staff to manage these appointments and see them through".

Staff were vigilant to changes in people's health and wellbeing and contacted relevant professionals promptly. We observed a robust system for staff to communicate any concerns to leaders in the service. As a result, people had access to the right care when they needed it most. This ensured people received the correct care and treatment.

Staff understood how hormonal fluctuations could impact on wellbeing. There was consideration of the impact of hormonal fluctuations when assessing wellbeing or behaviour. This evaluation and review benefitted from thorough analysis of patterns of people's behaviour to help reduce causes of stress and distress.

## How good is our leadership?

### 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The service was well led and organised. It benefitted from a committed and experienced leadership team who worked well together. The leadership team had only been in post for ten months at the time of inspection. However, the leaders had developed a culture of continuous improvement and it was evident people experiencing care were central to any decisions.

The leadership team promoted a friendly and professional culture within the service. One staff member told us, "I can go to my manager about anything, It's a hard job, but I feel very well supported". Family members echoed this feedback and were confident if they raised a concern, it would be dealt with promptly. This supported good outcomes for people.

There was evidence of good overall management oversight and a variety of processes and audits in place to evaluate the performance of the service. There was a wide range of effective processes and audits in place to ensure improvements were identified and progressed timeously. For example, regular medication audits. However, some audits did not have action plans, so it was difficult to establish if it had been completed or not. We provided guidance about developing action plans from audits. This would support continuous improvement. The provider started to take steps during the inspection to improve this and we are confident the manager will drive this area for development forward.

The leadership team had a good overview of staff training. This supported staff to have the right skills and knowledge to undertake their role effectively. The provider was in the process of developing their training matrix and we are confident the manager will drive this improvement forward.

The management team demonstrated a good understanding about what was working and what improvements were needed. Some improvements were required with their service improvement plan. Where they had an improvement plan in place but this did not demonstrate how it would improve outcomes for people with clear timescales. There had been some positive actions taken to seek feedback from people experiencing care and their relatives. This could be incorporated into the improvement plan more clearly. People and their relative's feedback should be central to how the service is evaluated and improved. We shared some guidance with the manager surrounding this and we are confident this area for development will be driven forward.

Accidents and incidents records were consistent and were clearly documented. Staff were aware of accidents and incidents to report and did this promptly. The provider had a built in alert system which alerted the manager. This ensured the manager had oversight and correct actions were taken. It was positive this process was audited to ensure people's safety and overall wellbeing was being maintained.

We were confident when things went, gone wrong, leaders fully investigated incidents, learned from mistakes and put systems and processes into place to prevent them from happening again. This helped keep people safe.

## 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.

People told us staff were dependable and reliable. People and their families felt well informed and confident about the care they were receiving.

Staffing levels reflected people's needs. The right number of staff with the right skills were working at the right times to support people's outcomes. As a result, staff had time to provide care and support with compassion and engage in meaningful conversations and interactions with people.

Staff were appropriately skilled to meet the needs of the people they cared for. Staff demonstrated good knowledge about autism and how this may present for each person. An external professional advised, "staff we observed were skilled in this area and because of this we were able to withdraw with confidence". This ensured people's individual needs were met.

Staff were confident, engaged and motivated. Staff told us they really enjoyed their role and this was observed in their passionate approach to enriching the lives of people they supported.

Leaders demonstrated specialist knowledge of autism and used this to ensure that staff providing day to day support had the right knowledge and skills to meet people's needs. Leaders of the service worked alongside staff and regular observations of practice were undertaken. This ensured staff practice was regularly evaluated and that practice was safe and effective.

The provider was struggling to recruit staff in some areas of the service but had a robust support plan to ensure this deficit did not impact on outcomes for people. There was an ongoing recruitment drive working alongside the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and it was evident the provider was taking every step to try and improve this. Whilst agency staff had been used, consistent staff had been utilised. There were no gaps on the rotas and staffing appeared stable. This enabled people to build trustworthy relationships with all staff members. Family members told us they were very happy with the consistency of staffing.

Agency staff were well supported and integrated as part of the team. Agency staff were provided with induction, development support meetings and mandatory training. This ensured the staff approach was consistent. Full time staff told us they had a very good relationship with agency members of the team and that they, "enhanced the team". This was observed during the inspection. One agency member shared, "I feel very much part of the team here and this is because I am given the same support and mentoring as a full-time member of staff".

The provider supported staff wellbeing. This was evident within the supports available to staff. Staff felt appreciated and valued within their role. One staff member shared, "We are very well supported by the management team, the support is very good, this helps us to deliver better care" and "they are a brilliant provider to work for, they really care".

Staff training was ongoing. Where some staff had recently been identified as requiring more training to enhance their skills, we observed a clear plan of how this would be met. We were confident the manager would support and drive area for development forward.

People using the service and staff, benefitted from a warm atmosphere because there were good working relationships. Staff worked well together as a team and communication was effective. This ensured that important information was shared promptly, which had a positive outcome for people.

People had a say in who provided their care and support. This helped build successful relationships. One person experiencing care was empowered to decide which member of staff would lead the shift. This helped reduce stress and anxiety for them and supported better outcomes.

Staff were registered with appropriate professional bodies and the provider undertook regular checks to ensure these were maintained. This helped keep people safe.

We were confident staff were recruited in a way that was informed by all aspects of safer recruitment guidance. All relevant checks and documentation were in place and this promoted people's wellbeing and safety.

## 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.

Each person experiencing care had their support plan in their home with a robust care plan summary in place. These were succinct and staff told us they were a positive tool as they could find important information at a glance.

People's support plans reflected their assessed support needs and described what was important to them. For example, care plans acknowledged the importance of routines for people, what is needed from staff at each stage and included the impact when this is disrupted. This promoted people's overall emotional wellbeing.

People and where relevant, their families, were fully involved in developing their personal plans. There was robust information about each person and this meant staff could deliver personalised care. All family members we spoke to told us they felt included and listened to by staff and leaders of the service.

Some people had enhanced support assessments in place and appropriate professionals had been involved in this process. These provided detailed guidelines for supporting people. These improved people's quality of life and reduced the likelihood of people becoming anxious or distressed.

Risk assessments clearly outlined vital information for staff to keep people safe. These were clearly written, personalised and reviewed regularly. Risk assessments were used to enable people rather than restrict people's actions or activities. For example, they focused on what people could do rather than what they couldn't do.

People had individualised communication plans. This included how people respond to communication from people and how they make requests. This provided staff with robust information of how each person interprets and reacts to the world around them. We observed staff followed these and this supported good outcomes for people.

There were plans in place to support people who were distressed or anxious. These included, identifying warning signs, immediate risks and how to keep people safe and included ways to support people. Behaviour charts were used to try and understand and respect the person's perspective. This ensured people's support was being constantly evaluated to meet their changing needs.

People benefitted from personal plans that were regularly reviewed in line with legislation. Where people were not able to fully express their wishes and preferences, individuals who were important to them or have legal authority, were involved in shaping and directing the care and support plans. One family member shared, "our recent review was very thorough; they spent time with us, they really listened to what we had to say, and it did not feel like a tick box exercise".

## 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
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	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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