

Active Healthcare Services Housing Support Service

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 December 2024

Service provided by:
Active Healthcare Services Limited

Service provider number:
SP2015012511

Service no:
CS2015339085

About the service

Active Care and Support Services (provided by Active Healthcare Services) is currently registered to provide a combined housing support and care at home service to children and adults with a learning disability living in their own homes within the community.

The service is provided from an office base in Livingston, West Lothian and support is provided by four staff teams located in West Lothian, Edinburgh and the Lothians, Falkirk and Lanarkshire.

Support ranges from helping people attend social activities, to providing personal care and supporting families who have children on the autistic spectrum.

The service is provided by an operations manager, practice support manager, three area managers, team leaders, senior support workers and a number of support workers. There were 137 people using the service at the time of the inspection.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3, 4, 5 and 6 December 2024. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors 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 14 people and seven of their relatives, and received feedback via our survey from 31 people and relatives
- spoke with 14 staff and received feedback via our survey from 51 staff
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- received feedback from two professionals.

Key messages

- Staff were passionate about the support they provided to enable people to live meaningful lives. This resulted in exceptionally good outcomes for people.
- The managers and staff had created a culture where people's lives were shaped by their wishes and preferences.
- Leaders promoted an ethos where people were valued for their uniqueness.
- People were enabled to get the most out of life, and empowered to explore, maintain and develop their strengths, interests, and skills.
- Staff worked very well together within a culture of strong values, compassion and respect.

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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent

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

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent because performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for people.

People experienced personalised and outcomes-focussed support and were treated with compassion, dignity, and respect. Staff told us they felt privileged to be a part of people's lives, supporting them to achieve their aspirations and to live a fulfilling life. Relationships between staff and people were warm, respectful and positive as a result. This meant people were relaxed and content in the company of the staff who supported them. The strong values of staff were always evident in their interactions with people and relatives told us of improvements in their loved ones' communication because of the strength of relationships with staff. This support benefitted people's wellbeing and enhanced their day-to-day lives.

People's lives were shaped by their wishes and preferences because leaders promoted a culture where people were valued for their uniqueness. People were enabled to get the most out of life, using flexible, innovative and person-centred approaches to support, which empowered them to explore, maintain and develop their strengths, interests, and skills. People took part in a wide variety of community and home-based activities, as well as in the service's hubs, and were supported to build on life skills and encouraged to engage in new experiences. This was done sensitively and in line with people's interests and aspirations. Staff always approached supporting people to identify and achieve their goals in a positive and creative way, which meant that people's goals were truly tailored to their aspirations.

People were supported to be as active as they wanted or were able to be. They had ample opportunities for physical activity, to explore leisure pursuits and to meet others, which all contributed to positive health and wellbeing. Activities were individualised and appropriate for each person.

Staff were highly skilled and invested in building meaningful relationships with people and their families. People's relationships with family members were respected and supported. Staff fulfilled their role in promoting people's autonomy and supporting them to maintain these relationships in an empowering way. Relatives told us that staff contributed to supporting the family unit, and that where people experienced communication barriers, staff helped them to maintain contact with their family members in meaningful ways. One relative said, *"I really like that they support [my relative] to get in touch to arrange for us to meet up"* and *"The support from Active allows us to have a mother and daughter relationship"*. Relatives also commented on their trust in the staff team and confidence in the support they provided to their loved ones, telling us, *"They really do go above and beyond"* and *"I am absolutely delighted with the care and attention that is given by Active Healthcare. I know that my [relative] is in safe hands and am able to relax when his support workers are with him. I know he is well looked after"*.

Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities to promote people's rights and protect them from harm. Measures were in place to minimise unnecessary risks and people were confident that if they did identify a concern, the service would respond quickly and appropriately to maintain their safety. Staff had received protection training and there was an on-call system to ensure guidance was always available from a manager in an emergency. This meant that people could be confident they were valued and kept safe from harm.

People experienced excellent support with their emotional health and wellbeing which had led to significant improvements in some people's emotional wellbeing. Staff told us how they encourage people's independence and support them to create and maintain connections within their communities. Staff were trained in a therapeutic approach that focused on de-escalating and redirecting any challenges people experienced and staff were attuned and responsive to non-verbal cues. Staff recognised negative responses or reactions by people as indications of stress, signs of health or emotional issues, or sensory overload, and responded using appropriate strategies to minimise distress.

People were fully involved in making decisions about their physical and emotional wellbeing through their personal plans. Communication assessments had been undertaken to support each person's unique communication and information needs. There was personalised use of technology when appropriate and in line with people's wishes and choices.

People were involved and empowered to have control over their health and wellbeing, being supported to express their needs and instructing and observing workers around their care, including medication. Relatives told us that the service goes above and beyond to support people when they are unwell, including during stays in hospital.

The service worked in close partnership with people, their families and relevant professionals in developing and regularly reviewing the support provided. As a result, people's support plans contained comprehensive detail and guidance based on agreed approaches and risk management strategies.

Excellent communication amongst the team supported positive outcomes for people in terms of their physical health and we saw very positive examples of this where people's needs were complex. Regular comprehensive auditing of records enabled staff to quickly pick up on any concerns or trends so that these could be escalated quickly to the right people. Care and support plans were person-centred and holistic, and always centred around what was important to people. Plans were reviewed every six months or when changes were identified, after review and in agreement with the person, their family, and any relevant professionals.

Staff were able to ensure people's needs and wishes were met and their lives enhanced because they had ready access to a wealth of information and up to date guidance. Referrals to other professionals were made timeously and followed up as needed, for example, to speech and language therapy. As a result, staff employed creative approaches to promoting and supporting people's choices and people were empowered to have control of their own health and wellbeing wherever possible.

People and their families were effectively prepared for transitions because the service identified and provided the necessary resources and support. Leaders in the service took a values-based approach in identifying an agreed strategy which was right for the person. Transitions were well planned with clear milestones which were personalised and outcomes focussed, and staff were well prepared so that they were able to recognise and support people with any resulting distress.

People benefitted from a safe and effective medication management system that adhered to good practice guidance, and staff provided support to access community healthcare and treatment from competent trained practitioners, including prevention and early detection interventions. Staff had developed a strong network with health and social care professionals to ensure they recognised changing health needs and shared this information quickly with the right people. This was enhanced by the partnership fostered between the person, their family, and their staff team. Professionals told us they had seen positive changes in the health and wellbeing of the people the service supported because of this.

How good is our staff team?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent because performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for people.

People were kept safe because the service had effective recruitment practices in place with a strong emphasis on values-based recruitment. There was a clear link between the needs of people using the service and the skills and experience of staff being recruited. As a result, feedback about the staff from people who used the service, and their relatives was very positive. Family members confirmed that people were supported by a regular team of staff who had enough time to provide care and support in line with their needs and wishes. Staff were matched with people in line with their preferences and wishes, shared interests and mutual compatibility, and new staff were introduced to people in a way which was right for them.

Consistency of staffing was excellent. Because people were supported by a regular staff team, staff knew them well and understood when to encourage people's self-expression and when they needed to seek support or intervene to avoid harm. This meant that people felt valued, confident and safe, in the company of staff. Staff knew how to effectively communicate any changes to the people they supported and understood the potential adverse impact of poor continuity or consistency for people.

Staff felt honoured to be supporting people to live their lives to their full potential and all of the staff we spoke with told us that their induction had effectively prepared them for their role. Turnover of staff was very low because staff felt supported and valued for the work that they did.

Staff really understood the people they supported because they had access to a wide range of interactive face-to-face training. This meant staff enabled people to have choice and control in making decisions about their own lives and the support they received. One staff member said, *"This service has a strong support system for its staff. Through training and evaluation, we are equipped to confidently care for service users for the best care outcomes"*.

Relatives told us that communication was excellent. One relative said, *"[the manager] has been a great support in organising emergency care and keeping us updated in regard to support"*. Another told us, *"Staff in the team work well together, communicating with each other and myself; putting my mind at ease in a stressful situation"*.

The management team empowered others to become involved in understanding what worked well and what actions were needed to drive improvement. This included, research and good practice guidance as a benchmark to measure outcomes. The service benefitted from the comprehensive support and knowledge within the management team. Leaders within the service demonstrated outstanding core values as well as specialist knowledge of autism, epilepsy and a number of other conditions. They used their skills and knowledge during tailored face-to-face training to ensure that staff providing day-to-day support had the right expertise to support positive outcomes. As a result, staff had a wide knowledge of common co-occurring conditions, for example, anxiety, epilepsy, sensory differences and the impact on people's actions and on their wellbeing.

Staff were innovative and creative in how they supported people because their training and understanding of the people they supported, enabled them to do this. Staff were able to balance autonomy with providing the right support to encourage new experiences and promote independence. The service provided autism-specific ongoing support and development for staff which embedded relevant learning, encouraged positive risk taking, and focused on human rights.

Leaders were proactive in supporting staff to be creative in their support for people and to maximise people's control over their environment. Environments were adapted to reflect the needs of the individual rather than limiting opportunities for movement, skill building or self-regulation.

Staff spoke very highly of the management team and said they were exceptionally supportive both professionally and personally. They spoke of being inspired by the leadership within their service to advocate for the people they supported. One staff member told us, "*[The management team] are excellent in all areas. They support both their clients and staff to make sure that everyone is comfortable. They train their staff to make sure that they deliver high quality, person-centred care and the right support to their service users. They are all professionals in their field*". Another said, "*The managers actively listen to and understand the needs and concerns of service users and staff. This makes us feel valued and heard, and results in better outcomes for the people we support*".

Staff worked extremely well together and we observed a culture of strong values and respect throughout the teams. They told us they viewed their colleagues as hard working, dedicated and passionate about the support they provide to their service users and each other. There was a strong ethos of teamworking and continued learning and development within the staff teams. This had resulted in exceptionally good outcomes for the people they supported.

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?	6 - Excellent
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	6 - Excellent

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