

# CERA - Lothians Housing Support Service

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

**Completed on:**  
19 December 2024

**Service provided by:**  
CERA Care Operations (Scotland)  
Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2009010680

**Service no:**  
CS2017358641

## About the service

At the time of the inspection, the service was registered to provide care at home to adults and children in East Lothian with its office based in Musselburgh. The service was offering care and support to 281 adults. Almost everyone were older people and there were no children receiving care and support. The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 15 February 2018 and the provider is CERA Care Operations (Scotland) Limited.

## About the inspection

This inspection took place from 12 to 17 December 2024 after 24 hours notice to the service. The inspection was conducted by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service, intelligence gathered and complaints received.

We evaluated how well people's health and wellbeing was supported and their personal plans as well as the quality of staffing and management.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with 16 service users and 8 relatives
- spoke with 17 staff and two managers
- spoke with four professionals working with the service
- observed how well care staff supported people
- visited the office to see how it was run
- reviewed documents and electronic records.

## Key messages

- People were satisfied with the quality of the care and support received.
- Staff interacted warmly and respectfully with people.
- Most people had regular care staff who were mostly on time.
- Some people were not being told when their visit times changed significantly.
- Managers were accessible and responsive to people experiencing care and staff.
- Personal plans were up to date though needed to focus more on people's outcomes.

## 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?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	4 - Good

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

## How well do we support people's wellbeing?

4 - Good

We evaluated the service as operating at a good level for this key question. There were several strengths with the care provided and how this supported positive outcomes for people.

People we spoke to were satisfied with the quality of the care and support received. The staff interactions were warm, kind and patient. People did not feel rushed by staff when being supported. Care and support were carried out in a dignified way with personal preferences respected. Techniques used to assist people to mobilise and assist people to eat were undertaken in a safe and reassuring way.

We observed and people told us that staff used gloves and aprons appropriately. Staff cleaned and tidied up after themselves. Medication administration was organised with regular audits by management and appropriate training for staff. This ensured that people experienced safe and effective medication.

People's comments included "the carers are all really nice and I get on with them all," "they are all lovely and look after me well" and "they are very nice, very respectful and they clean up behind themselves."

Relatives' comments included "The four regular care staff are very, very good," "really good, have surpassed our expectations when came out of hospital" and "my mum really likes them, they are all very gentle and don't rush her."

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated the service as operating at a good level for this key question. There were several strengths with the leadership and quality assurance.

People we spoke to considered that management were accessible and responsive. The service sought feedback from people experiencing support and their relatives through regular reviews and satisfaction surveys. Any incidents were reported with actions on improvements where needed. Complaints were responded to in a timely manner with appropriate actions when necessary. Regular quality audits were taking place, such as medication, personal plans and the timing of visits. There were action plans in place to assist the service to plan, make and measure improvement. This ensures that there is a culture of continuous improvement for people experiencing support.

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated the service as operating at a good level for this key question. There were several strengths with the staff training and support.

Staff recruitment processes were thorough. Training was of good quality with a high level of completion. Face-to-face supervision sessions and staff meetings were held to assist with effective communication though needed to be more frequent. There were regular quality checks by management regarding observing staff competence. This ensures people experienced good quality care and support based on relevant guidance and best practice.

The planning of the care visits was organised and significantly late or missed visits were not an issue.

However, people were not being told, in writing, the visit times and how long they were. Some people were experiencing regular changes in visit times and not being told when their visit times changed significantly which was causing distress (see area for improvement one). Comments from relatives included "they were arriving on time but always changing the time, which upsets him" and "the times of visits change constantly, I have raised this issue with the office before and it is 80% better but still have frustrations with the timings."

Although, most people experienced a consistent care team visiting them at home who knew people well which ensured people benefit from a warm atmosphere because there are good working relationships. Comments from people experiencing care included "I'd be lost without them all, I would just like the times to be a bit better" and "they do everything that is needed, never feel like they are rushing out the door."

### Areas for improvement

1. The service should ensure people are informed in writing regarding their care at home contract details and any significant changes.

In order to achieve this the service should undertake the following:

a) Inform people, in writing, regarding when their care and support visits take place (morning, lunchtime, teatime or evening) and the length of their visits.

b) To prioritise communicating with people when their visit times change significantly.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well' (HSCS 3.19).

## How well is our care and support planned?

4 - Good

We evaluated the service as operating at a good level for this key question. There were several strengths with personal planning.

People's personal plans detailed each area of care, for example, communication, and had personalised information regarding how best to support someone. However, they did not include the visit times and how long they were. People experiencing care and relatives had electronic access to the daily care notes and real time information regarding visiting care staff.

Six monthly reviews of personal plans, as required by legislation, were taking place with people experiencing care and their relatives. This ensured that personal plans remained right for people as their needs change and to make sure that everyone has the opportunity for their views to be heard.

## Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website ([www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

## Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	4 - Good
1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect	4 - Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	4 - 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?	4 - Good
3.2 Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people	4 - Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	4 - Good
5.1 Assessment and personal planning reflects people's outcomes and wishes	4 - Good

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