

New Directions West Lothian - Housing Support Housing Support Service

Bloom House
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Livingston Village
Livingston
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Telephone: 01506 464 446

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 January 2025

Service provided by:
New Directions West Lothian

Service provider number:
SP2003002582

Service no:
CS2017362905

About the service

New Directions West Lothian is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care at home and a housing support service. The services are delivered together and are regulated as a combined service.

New Directions provides individual and group support to people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and other support needs. The service is provided within people's own homes and in the wider community, including the provider's premises at Bloom House. People are supported with a range of activities and developing skills to live as independently as possible.

There were 65 people receiving a service at the time of the inspection.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28, 29, and 30 January 2025. 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:

- spend time and spoke with 21 people using the service
- received feedback from 16 family members and representatives
- spoke with and received feedback from 16 staff and management
- spent time with people and observed activities
- reviewed documents
- received feedback from other professionals.

Key messages

- People were very active and this was benefitting their health and wellbeing.
- There was an ethos of promoting independence and learning.
- Staff worked well together.
- Improvements were being made in managing service delivery, communication, and addressing concerns.

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?	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?

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's health and wellbeing benefitted from being active. There were meaningful activities on offer, both in the local community and at Bloom House. The service had connections with other community groups so that people had access to a range of different activities. There was a real sense of connection between people receiving a service and the staff team. Staff understood the importance of being active and the positive benefits for people's health and wellbeing.

Family members talked positively about the activities on offer. Some of the feedback we heard included:

- "The service provides an excellent service to [my relative]. They enjoy their days and we feel totally confident in them."
- "They ensure an inclusive environment to meet each individual's needs, they expose people to new experiences with the upmost respect and dignity within a nurturing environment."
- "New Directions has a community feel. The community that my [relative] lost after leaving school, which was a massive loss, has been rebuilt by New Directions."

People were learning new skills with a focus on increasing independence. We observed people being encouraged to help out and doing things for themselves during activities. Support was very individualised, focussing on people's capabilities and interests.

Throughout the inspection, we saw different opportunities being taken to promote people's independence and skills, including making a large meal for the 'big lunch' at Bloom House, which was highly complimented by all participants, travelling by public transport, and helping others in activities. Relatives told us of how the activities and supports were improving people's self confidence. One relative told us that "My [relative] is gaining in confidence each week which is also having a positive impact outside of their support". This was helping people have a sense of self worth.

There were good relationships across the whole service. Everyone was valued as a positive member within groups and people were fully included and treated equally. Staff engaged with people at every opportunity, taking time to listen and encouraging them to have their voices heard. People receiving support had built kind and encouraging relationships with each other. We observed warm and fun interactions between staff and people receiving support.

People were confident and happy with their service. We spent time with people where we observed them enjoying their activities and interacting with others. Some people were able to tell us how much they enjoyed meeting other people and their support. Relatives also shared feedback about the service, including:

- "Staff are a lifeline and are brilliant."
- "My [relative] is really well supported and on a number of occasions staff have gone above and beyond to ensure support needs are met."

- My [relative] appears happy and content (and often excited) for their days at New Directions. They speak fondly of their keyworker. When I pick them up I get a nice feeling from the other staff members I have met who are always friendly and warm towards my [relative]."
- "We would just like to say how impressed we are with [our relative's] standard of care and communication we have with their team, they go out of their way to enable [our relative] to enjoy their time with them."

Staff were familiar. People had small teams of staff which enabled staff to be knowledgeable about how to offer support. They communicated well and were able to anticipate what people needed. Staff understood what people wanted from their support. Where new staff were being introduced, time was planned to meet people they would be supporting and shadow experienced staff.

We heard from a number of relatives who were positive about the small teams of staff. One family member told us that New Directions "do their best to match [my relative] up with the correct staff". While another said, "My relative's team is small with five support workers and this is ideal. [My relative] has a really good relationship with every team member and they make sure [my relative] is happy and healthy". This meant that people using the service and the staff team knew each other well.

People's health and wellbeing benefitted from the support they received. Staff knew people very well which meant that they were able to recognise changes in people's wellbeing. The service had established relationships with health and social care professionals and were promoting positive wellbeing. One person told us that "during a difficult time, my key worker went above and beyond to support my mental health and wellbeing". Changes in people wellbeing being recognised and prioritised.

People had up-to-date personal plans which were being reviewed and updated on a planned and regular basis. These were individualised, containing very good information about people's communication, ensuring that staff were able to support people well.

At the last inspection we discussed the format of risk assessments with the manager. We observed that there was sufficient information around risks and encouraged the manager to keep ensuring that staff continued to have information on how to manage and minimise risk for people. People's family members and representatives were involved in reviewing their loved one's personal plan. This meant that staff had good information which helped them to provide support in the right way at the right time.

How good is our staff team?

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 staff team worked well together. We observed respectful communication within the team and this created a warm atmosphere because there were good working relationships. Staff were encouraged to bring their unique experiences to enhance the lives of people supported. We observed that the team were comfortable sharing their views and listening to each other to ensure they were providing the right care and support to people. Many staff told us that they were happy working for New Directions West Lothian, with one staff member saying "I'm very proud to be part of such a dynamic team".

Staff were well trained. We saw that the team had access to a range of training opportunities with additional training organised specific to the needs of the people being supported. We heard that staff felt

confident providing support and the training provided helped inform their practice. We found that training levels were high. This ensured staff had the right skills and knowledge to meet people's needs.

Overall, there was good communication between the management team, staff, people who received a service, and their relatives and representatives. Where concerns or areas for improvement were raised, these were acknowledged and followed up by the management team. There was a sense of trust and working together.

There were occasions when the service was having difficulty meeting all required support. This was due to changes in staffing levels. Management were working hard to minimise cancelled support by deploying other staff, including members of the management team. However, some people had experienced cancelled support due to staff absences and for those whose support was provided by an alternative member of staff, this sometimes meant that people were receiving support from staff who did not know them well. This was causing upset and disruption to people's routines and lives. At the time of the inspection, the management team were in the process of recruiting additional staff and working on minimising cancellations. We could see some progress. The manager agreed to continue to monitor staffing arrangements and visit times to ensure that the deployment of staff was meeting people's need.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support people to be included and involved in their care, the provider should improve how they communicate with people about changes to their care and any relevant events. This should include, but is not limited to, communicating with people verbally and in writing to ensure that information is shared accurately.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My views will always be sought and my choices respected, including when I have reduced capacity to fully make my own decisions' (HSCS 2.11).

This area for improvement was made on 13 December 2024.

Action taken since then

The service was sharing event information and recording when there were changes made to people's care and support. Staff were sharing information but we agreed that this could be improved further to ensure no information was missed.

We observed improvement in written records of where changes to people's care and support has been communicated and discussed with people and their families.

Due to the short period of time to make this improvement, we agreed with the service to extend this area for improvement.

This area for improvement will be continued to ensure that improvements are embedded within the service and result in positive outcomes for people.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support people to be confident in their care, the provider should respond to all complaints and concerns effectively. This should include, but is not limited to, signposting people to the service complaints policy and procedures.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'If I have a concern or complaint, this will be discussed with me and acted on without negative consequences for me' (HSCS 4.21).

This area for improvement was made on 13 December 2024.

Action taken since then

We observed that the service had appropriate systems and procedures in place to respond to complaints and concerns. However, there had been no complaints or concerns raised since the area for improvement was made and we were unable to assess progress.

Due to the short period of time to make improvements, we agreed with the service to extend this area for improvement.

This area for improvement will be continued to ensure that improvements are embedded within the service and result in positive outcomes for people.

Complaints

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

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 staff team?	4 - Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	4 - Good

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