

West Lothian Council Housing with Care- (Dickson Court & Almondvale Gardens) Housing Support Service

Bield Housing Association
Dickson Court
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Telephone: 01506 633117

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 March 2025

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002601

Service no:
CS2022000335

About the service

West Lothian Council Housing with Care was registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide both a support service (care at home) and a housing support service to tenants living in two developments, Dickson Court in West Calder and Almondvale Gardens in Blackburn. The developments are owned by a Housing Association. West Lothian Council is the provider.

A team of onsite staff, at each development, support tenants to maximise their independence through the provision of personalised care and support. Some tenants receive additional support from specialist services as determined by their assessment of need.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10, 11 and 12 March 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:

- spoke with nine people using the service and three of their relatives
- spoke with six staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Overall, the care and support provided to people living in Dickson Court and Almondvale Gardens was very good.
- There had been some changes to the staffing structure which had impacted on the frequency of planned activities and meant that people did not have as many opportunities to mix socially.
- The manager was working with the staff teams to address this.

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.

There were effective systems in place to ensure that people received access to health and wellbeing support, with actions taken to ensure people were safe in their homes and communities. This included supporting people to have assessments and access to moving and handling equipment and mobility aids, as well as accessing hearing and optician input, for example.

People were supported to access health professionals and received support with appointments where needed. We heard from people using the service about how the care and support was responsive and flexible depending on their needs; for example, short-term increased support being provided due to periods of illness or recovery. People were reassured and felt respected and valued as a result of this.

People received support in line with their agreed personal outcomes plan and in keeping with their prescribed medication. This helped keep people safe. Medication systems and practice were overall safe and there were appropriate checks in place in terms of audits and observations of staff practice. The manager was looking at developing a more robust practice around prescription record keeping for people who needed to have medication administered by staff.

People were consulted for their views about the service, including their priorities as part of the service redesign. People felt strongly that the sleepover staff member was the most important aspect of the service they wanted to keep, and the management and staff team worked around this to ensure people continued to feel a sense of safety and security from having sleepover staff on site. This demonstrated person-centred service delivery.

Across both sites, there was a sense of community, aided by some social activities. There had been a recent decrease in the range and frequency of activities across the sites; however, the manager was looking at ways to address this.

People had the option to access a meal provision. We spoke with people who used this and they were very complimentary about this and felt this was an added bonus of living in their homes. Meals were freshly prepared and nutritious. Work was underway to liaise with the facilities team who oversaw food provision and make improvements to the menu based on people's feedback. We noted that people were asked for their menu choices the day before at one of the sites, but could choose on the day, at the other. The manager was aware of this and had begun to address this along with the menu.

Staff interactions with people were relaxed, respectful and demonstrated positive relationships between people. Staff responded to people's needs quickly. Staff provided care and support in ways that boosted people's morale and helped to prevent isolation.

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.

This inspection took place following a period of change for staff. These changes were made as part of a wider organisation review that resulted in a reduction of permanent staff and rota changes. Some staff we spoke with felt a sense of anxiety and frustration at these changes.

We heard from people using the service who described how, as a result of the service review, fewer social events and activities were now available and they felt staff were rushed and under pressure. Although people had been asked their views and elected to prioritise the sleepover element of the service, they were feeling the impact of the staffing changes. The manager planned to look at other ways to promote activities. Despite these challenges, however, we found the staff to be professional, committed and caring.

Staff worked well together and provided support to each other at times of need. This included picking up extra shifts to help with continuity of care and working flexibly with each other. This included making changes to their rota to help accommodate the staffing changes.

There had been an assessment of need to ensure that staffing levels were appropriate to meet people's needs. However, the service was still adjusting to the new staff levels, and there was some impact on staff morale, more notably at one site. For this site in particular, further work needed to be completed to support the staff team to adapt and move forward.

We noted there were gaps in the provision of supervision and observation for staff. We could see this was a result of some of the pressures the service had been under, including manager absence and how the structure of staffing in the service meant that only the manager was available to carry out all supervisions for staff. We spoke to staff who were not clear what the frequency for supervision and observation was. However, feedback from staff was overall positive in terms of getting in touch with a manager and getting support with any issues.

Whilst staff received a good range of relevant training, there were some gaps in training refreshers, in particular moving and handling training, for some staff. We encouraged the management team to ensure that practice continued to be monitored effectively through audits and structured observations to ensure best practice.

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?	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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