

L'Arche Highland Housing Support Service

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Inverness
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Telephone: 01463 239 615

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 May 2025

Service provided by:
L'Arche

Service provider number:
SP2003002642

Service no:
CS2010274868

About the service

L'Arche Highland provides both accommodation and support to people with learning disabilities. Many houses are also staffed with some live-in assistants. This promotes L'Arche's ethos of building a strong community where supported people live and work as equal partners. They also support some people who live on their own in single tenancies. The service is based in Inverness and support is provided in the Inverness area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 15 and 20 May 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 or spent time with eight people using the service and six of their family members
- Spoke with eight staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Received feedback from visiting professionals

Key messages

- People were leading active, enjoyable and fulfilling lives
- People reported liking many things about the service
- People were very well supported in their homes and their community
- People were comfortable with their staff members and got on well with them
- Staff were knowledgeable, considerate and motivated to provide very good support
- Management had strong values and led the service well
- Family members trusted and were very positive about L'Arche

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?	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

This service was very good at supporting people's health and wellbeing. This means it demonstrated major strengths in this area and there are very few areas for improvement. While opportunities are taken to strive for excellence within a culture of continuous improvement, provision evaluated as very good does not require significant adjustment.

People supported (core members) were at the centre of the service's support and purpose. Their wishes and goals in life provided the focus for the service. Staff understood the ethos of L'Arche and this directly informed how they supported people. Knowing what was important to people meant people's support helped them to get the most out of their day and week. People's wellbeing was very well promoted.

Whenever possible, people were supported to keep up with close others such as family and friends. There were many positive reports about this. Also, being active members of their local and the wider community was enjoyable and important to people. People were busy in their houses, getting involved in community opportunities they liked and attending social events of interest. People's strengths, qualities and abilities were fully appreciated. People were respected.

The service made sure they had all the right information about people's health and wellbeing needs and wishes. People's support plans were detailed and provided very good guidance on their needs and wishes. These included matters such as what was important for them when communicating, any health conditions and what could be emotionally unsettling for them. The very good information and guidance recorded, helped each individual have their support needs and wishes recognised and met in just the right way. People can trust the service to know how to assist them to keep safe, well and content.

If a person was becoming unwell or something was not right for them, this was quickly noticed and acted on. The service had established close working relationships with key health and social care partner agencies, and this assisted discussions to take place and advice to be gained. The value of positive relationships and communication with family members or significant others was understood and these relationships were formed, too. This all helped the service to be responsive to or anticipate matters and adapt the support it provided to people in the most beneficial way. People can have confidence their needs and wishes were given careful consideration and helpful attention.

The service understood that people who were supported by the service were best placed to tell them what was good about the service and how the service could develop. In many different ways the service had arrangements in place so that people could provide feedback and offer ideas and thoughts on service provision. This included at their own individual level, house level and the larger service wide level. People's views were listened to and were central to improvements and developments.

People's accommodation was recognised as their home. Their houses had a homely look and reflected their choices. There were a couple of times, however, where we saw that the staff or management type activities had slightly intruded into how people's homes looked. This could be, for example, service information up on a communal space wall when it could have been done in a more appropriate and discrete way. We discussed an example with the manager and she understood the importance of always making sure people were supported in their homes in a suitable way that reflects positive social care values.

How good is our staff team?**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good. The service has major strengths with very few aspects that it could improve in.

Staff were recruited following careful and safe procedures. New staff were provided with a robust induction to their role and standards people supported should expect with their care and support. At L'Arche it was clear the value of respect for people was central and this was promoted well to all staff. People can be confident that their staff members have had all the rights checks undertaken, interviews and information provided to make sure they were suitable and ready to support them.

This service had paid close attention to staff training needs. Staff received a range of ongoing training to assist them to have all the right knowledge and skills to meet people's care and support wishes and needs. Training was reviewed on a regular basis and this meant if a person's needs or wishes changed then new, suitable training could be identified and arranged for staff. When staff were needing to gain qualifications, e.g. Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ), for their role and development this was supported. Staff had the right skills and knowledge for supporting people at L'Arche.

L'Arche had established, robust policies and procedures in place to guide staff. These aided staff to know their responsibilities and support people in a consistent, warm and positive manner. People and families can have confidence in the staff team.

L'Arche staff were motivated and positive in their approach. They were insightful and caring and keen to make sure people supported were, as much as possible, content and getting the most out of their day and week. The senior staff and management team were also very much in touch with what was going on for people. They, too, were enthusiastic and showed commitment to making sure people's support was just right for them. People were listened to and respected.

Some comments from people and family members on staff were:

- 'They're easy to get on with.'
- 'Communication very good...always approachable.'
- 'Staff really good.'
- 'Excellent confidence in the team's leadership.'

To aid the best outcomes being achieved for people, the service had regular and very good supervision and team meeting arrangements. These provided opportunities for staff to consider matters, share information and discuss any adjustments or changes required to continue to meet people's wishes and health and wellbeing needs. This supported staff to be reflective and continue to learn and develop. People's staff teams worked together very well.

Staff felt appreciated. Communication was very good from management. When difficulties or challenges in providing support arose, staff felt very well supported by leaders and managers. This helped staff to keep a clear focus on people and people's best interests.

The service carefully assessed staffing levels and arrangements to make sure people's support was suitable. The management team advocated in this way for people's outcomes, preferences and best interests.

They recognised if people would benefit from more staff support hours and reported to partner agencies when this could improved. People can trust that, as much as possible, their choices and needs were at the core of the service's approach.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

Assessment and planning for people support needs and wishes was completed to a very good standard. People's outcomes and wishes were carefully considered.

The service had introduced a new way for documenting and recording people's support needs and wishes. This was called 'Nourish' and was an electronic way for keeping people's care and support plans, and for recording people's day to day records and notes. Staff were completing it well. People can be assured their needs and wishes, what's important to and for them is suitably recorded. Staff used the Nourish documents to guide them and helped make they were doing everything safely and in a way that supported people's health and wellbeing.

Key care and support plans specific to each person were developed. These included ones that would highlight health needs and what actions the person and staff should take to keep well and other plans that might identify risks for a person and how these could be reduced. People were supported by staff who had the right information to support their health and wellbeing.

Every six months, or sooner if necessary, people would have a review of their support and care arrangements. This would be a meeting at which their views and wishes would be sought. Often family members and other relevant individuals would attend or contribute to this. The review was a very good way of ensuring a person's support continued to be suitable or if any changes were needed. People and their representatives were listened to.

In addition to a person's reviews, the service had many ways of gaining people's views and thoughts. This could be in a house meeting at which people could advise what was okay and what could changed or planned for, for example, a future event. Also, L'Arche had a 'Listening group' and this provided an opportunity for people using the service to make suggestions, offer advice and propose changes for the overall service provision. People helped to shape and set the direction for the service and for the larger L'Arche organisation. L'Arche called people using the service 'core members' and this described how people supported were core to the purpose of L'Arche. People supported were central in leading and developing the service and L'Arche.

The service had systems for checking people's support and care was being provided well. Documents and recording was checked. Examples of this were people's medication support and their financial transactions. Audits of the practice and paperwork took place and these were done conscientiously and regularly. These steps reduced the chance of error or errors going unnoticed and problems arising. People can be reassured by the service's professional and responsible approach to assisting them to stay safe and keep good health and wellbeing.

Contact and advice from other important partner agencies, such as GP practices or social work was well recorded. Staff were provided with information and updates so as to be able to support people to the best of their ability. People's health and wellbeing benefitted from the service's good collaboration and communication with partner agencies.

Whilst there very many positive aspects about the service, there were some examples of where some essential information could have been recorded better. An example we discussed with the service was the need for more detail when staff were putting hand written notes on people's medication administration records (MARs) and for ensuring, whenever possible, up to date information relating to people's Adults with Incapacity (AWI) documentation was in place and kept in a person's file.

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 ensure people experience safe and responsive care and support, the provider should ensure that staff and volunteers complete training that is relevant to their role within the service.

In order to achieve this, the manager should:

- a) ensure all staff complete mandatory training within appropriate timescales;
- b) develop a training needs analysis for each staff member based on observation of practice, competency assessments and reflective accounts. This should be reviewed annually and inform the annual training plan for the service;
- c) ensure that volunteers working directly with service users are offered and complete basic training.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (HSCS 3.14)

This area for improvement was made on 17 January 2023.

Action taken since then

This was met. Overall, we found that staff were up to date with their training. Completion was at a high rate. Training was suitable and based on observing, discussing and identifying people's care and support needs. Staff's practice was monitored, they received supervision and information from activities like these informed their training. Volunteers at the service received a thorough introduction to people needs, the range of support needs people with learning disabilities may have and the overall ethos and vision of L'Arche.

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?	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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