

St Joseph's Services - Circle of Best Practice 2 - Housing Support Housing Support Service

Sycamore House
72 Carnethie Street
Rosewell
EH24 9AW

Telephone: 01314 407 200

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
17 June 2025

Service provided by:
St Joseph's Services, a company
limited by guarantee

Service provider number:
SP2015012454

Service no:
CS2015335960

About the service

St Joseph's Services - Circle of Best Practice 2 are registered to provide a combined housing support and care at home service to adults with a learning disability living in their own home across Midlothian.

Housing Support and Care at Home are also provided across two other registrations:
St Joseph's Services - Circle of Best Practice 1 and St Joseph's Services - Circle of Best Practice 3.

The organisation's head office is in Rosewell, Midlothian.

About the inspection

This was an announced (short notice) inspection which took place between 04 June 2025 and 17 June 2025. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate who inspected all three of St Joseph's Services across Midlothian.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, complaints activity, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with people using the service and their relatives or guardians.
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Staff knew people they supported very well and interactions were observed of warmth, kindness, respect and encouragement.
- People were supported to communicate in a way that was right for them and at their own pace.
- People were central and very involved in how they wanted to be supported and spend their days.
- Staff were well trained and had the skills and knowledge to support people with a range of complex needs.
- Management promoted a learning culture and sought continual improvement of the service.

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

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question. The service demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people's health and wellbeing.

Staff knew people they supported very well and interactions were observed of warmth, kindness, respect and encouragement. There was lots of fun and humour which enhanced relationships and enabled people to feel relaxed and included.

People we visited were proud to show us their lovely homes where they felt safe and comfortable. One person told us they had made new friends since moving in.

People experiencing care had a small team of staff which meant their support was consistent. Staff understood people's health needs and were able to recognise any changes to a person's presentation. People were supported to attend appointments and referrals were made to a range of healthcare professionals including Physiotherapists and Speech and Language Therapists (SALT). This ensured people were being supported well to maintain their health and wellbeing with the right help.

A relative told us of the period following an operation for their loved one: *'I'm sure all of the tenderness from staff has gone a long way to help speed up the long road to recovery.'*

People were supported to communicate in a way that was right for them and at their own pace. Good practices were observed with people who used non-verbal communication. When a person was communicating distress, staff understood what was causing this and were able to take actions to reassure the person.

One relative told us their loved one had *'become so confident these past years'*.

The provider had recruited an 'activity coordinator' (AC) who had enhanced the existing opportunities for people to connect across the organisation. One person told us how, following a conversation, they had been supported to set up a regular 'Pie and Pint' get together. They said: *'I can make friends now, have a pint and not be lonely'*. Another person told us of making new friends at the 'Yarn and Darn' club and the gardening group told us of working alongside Midlothian Climate Action Group where they had learnt new skills about biodiversity and growing vegetables.

Staff had recently received training from music therapists to develop skills to support people with more complex needs to feel included with musical interaction.

People were encouraged to be part of the organisation's development through a 'group of advisors' who worked alongside management. Their role was to be involved as a voice for people being supported. People were also actively involved in the recruitment and training of new staff.

People were central and very involved in how they wanted to be supported and spend their days. Staff were there to support the person to be themselves, to be recognised and to be included thus enabling the person to reach for and achieve their potential.

A relative told us *'St Joseph's is a phenomenal service, everyone is very committed'*.

Support plans held detailed guidance for staff to support people well, however, we advised old paperwork should be archived and to make some information, for example SALT guidance, more easily accessible to staff.

A strong management team had very good oversight of people's health and wellbeing through robust quality assurance processes. A culture of learning and continuous improvement was evident and advice given by inspectors during the inspection was noted. We were confident this would be actioned.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question. The service demonstrated major strengths relating to staffing levels and staff working well together.

The recruitment of new staff was carried out in a safe manner with systems in place to reduce risks to people experiencing care. Processes were in place to ensure potential staff demonstrated the values required for supporting people well. A relative told us: *'They don't just look after our loved ones, they love our loved ones too.'*

Staff were well trained and had the skills and knowledge to support people with a range of complex needs. Some staff had taken on roles as internal trainers or champions in specific areas, for example Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). This recognition to build staff skills kept them engaged and feeling valued and encouraged positivity within the staff teams.

The service had a comprehensive annual training programme which offered flexible days to ensure all staff could attend refresher training throughout the year.

We advised of some additional stand alone training in dysphagia to compliment staff skills.

Staffing schedules identified there were sufficient staff on duty to meet people's needs. When agency staff were deployed, agency workers familiar to the supported person and their team were used. This ensured continuity for people being supported and helped build confidence and a trusting relationship.

A relative told us: *'the staff are exceptional. They're like my family, there's nowhere like it. This current team are just outstanding'*.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question. The service demonstrated major strengths to ensure relatives are involved and their views are heard.

St Joseph's had a very supportive and inclusive approach with involving relatives in the care and support of people using the service, if this was the supported person's wish. Where people had a guardianship or Power of Attorney (POA) in place, staff would consult with them about day to day matters if required. To enhance staff skills, we advised of ways to capture staff's understanding of the legalities of Guardianships and (POA) to ensure their knowledge is clear.

Families who lived overseas, told us of being kept informed regularly of their loved ones wellbeing. One relative told us: *'We feel extremely lucky and grateful that our loved one has such a good team of people in charge of their care and have nothing but admiration and respect for the people who work around the clock providing everything they need. We can sleep easy at night'*.

Relatives and guardians attended reviews for their loved ones, and where unable to attend, their views were still sought. Annual feedback from relatives and guardians was also sought by the service to inform learning and future developments.

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

The service should ensure that staff are appropriately trained and receive refresher training, as and when required, to meet the care and support needs of people. This should also be reflected in robust training records, so the care provider is confident that its workforce is appropriately skilled.

This ensures the care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: '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 10 February 2023.

Action taken since then

A detailed training matrix was in place which enabled management to have oversight of staff training.

The matrix identified refresher training which had taken place and identified when any training was due for renewal.

Training for specific areas was being completed as a matter of best practice, even where not required, for example, epilepsy and rescue medication.

This area for improvement had been met.

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?	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
5.2 Carers, friends and family members are encouraged to be involved	5 - Very Good

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