

Penumbra - Edinburgh Supported Living Service Housing Support Service

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Unannounced

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Service provided by:
Penumbra

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About the service

Penumbra Edinburgh Supported Living service (referred to hereafter in this report as "Penumbra Edinburgh") is a housing support and care at home service which has been registered since 2004.

Part of the national Penumbra organisation, the service offers personalised and flexible support to people who are living in their own homes across Edinburgh and also from two houses of multiple occupancy (HMO).

The service aims to offer flexible and responsive support to people who have social and mental health difficulties, while helping people sustain their housing tenancies. It also aims to increase the opportunities to empower people to improve the quality of their lives.

At the time of inspection around circa 200 people were making use of the service. Support hours ranged from a few hours per week for people in their own homes to 24/7 support available within HMOs.

About the inspection

This was a full inspection which took place between 30 June - 11 July 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 11 people using the service and two of their family representatives.
- We also spoke with 10 staff and management from the service.

Key messages

- People valued the support provided. There was a consistent focus on highlighting positive health and wellbeing outcomes from the people we spoke with.
- People consistently said they felt empowered to direct their support. This enabled them to get the most from the service provided.
- Staff were described as being professional, boundaried and respectful during their interactions by people using the service.
- The service are seeking innovative ways to promote greater stakeholder involvement in service development.
- Staff had undertaken a wide range of training relevant to the work they undertake. We were confident staff were able to put their learning into practice when they delivered support.
- Feedback from involved professionals was positive. They had confidence in the service's ability to work in partnership with them, delivering effective support.

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

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 evaluated the provider's performance across this key question as very good. Positive outcomes significantly outweighed areas for development.

People who used the service advised us that staff were good at listening to them. They consistently said they felt enabled to direct the pace and focus of their support, finding this both reassuring and empowering.

It was evident from our conversations with people that person-led approaches helped them engage effectively with the service. We heard "Staff are really supportive and encouraging, it's helped me greatly. I feel listened to and respected, this has helped build my confidence and make positive changes in my life".

Support was offered across a wide range of key areas essential to maintaining health and wellbeing. One consistent theme which emerged from our conversations with people was how much they felt empowered when engaging with professionals from health and social care agencies, "I often feel a bit daunted when meeting with involved professionals. Staff being there with me is important. They advocate for me, ensure I understand key decisions. I couldn't do it without them".

People described positive outcomes around the likes of developing skills of everyday living, exercise, maintaining their tenancies, taking medication as prescribed, budgeting and maximising their income. Some people spoke emotively about past episodes of mental ill-health, stressing to us the key role support had played in helping them build resilience and stay out of hospital.

Some people spoke about support and the focus on reducing social isolation. They told us "I always look forward to seeing staff. There are times I lack confidence to go out and engage with the things I enjoy doing. They help me overcome this. It makes a big difference to my quality of life".

When we spoke with involved professionals, we heard positive feedback around the support provided. Staff understood how to work effectively with people with complex needs. They were described as good at following guidance and escalating concerns around changes to people's presentation appropriately.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated the provider's performance across this key question as very good. Positive outcomes significantly outweighed any areas for development.

Staff in the service were registered appropriately with the Scottish Social Services Council. New workers were recruited in line with best practice guidance. This helped ensure staff were suitably vetted before commencing employment at Penumbra.

There were robust approaches to staff induction. New staff undertook core learning relevant to their work at an early stage of their employment. They were routinely introduced to people they were scheduled to work with, via shadow shifts before they commenced delivering support. This approach was described as significant by people using the service, who told us it helped build their trust and confidence.

Staff told us, "the induction was very thorough, it was really valuable meeting people and getting to know them before I started working with them. I valued feedback from my peers and from the people experiencing support".

Training was well provisioned. As well as a mandatory programme of training, linked to the work undertaken, staff were supported to develop their practice and skills through self-directed learning and bespoke training. Often this learning was associated with specific needs or issues relevant to people they supported.

When we spoke with people using the service, it was clear they felt staff were a significant asset. We heard, "I get on very well with staff. They know me well, respect my views and personal space. This helps me engage with them and builds my trust in the service".

Management sought to match staff and supported people, based on skills, interests and personalities. If any issues arose or people felt they would benefit from a change in staffing, this was well facilitated.

Staff consistently emphasised core values for working with people, focusing on respect, recognising boundaries, valuing difference and delivering effective support. It was clear to us from our conversations with supported people that staff were able to put these values into practice. This was a recurring theme during these discussions.

It was evident that the qualities of staff contributed to building effective working relationships and contributed significantly to the delivery of positive support outcomes.

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
1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect	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
3.1 Staff have been recruited well	5 - Very Good
3.2 Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people	5 - Very Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	5 - Very Good

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