

Scottish Autism Lothian Outreach Team (care at home) Support Service

Units 23 and 25
Space
Harewood Road
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Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
9 July 2025

Service provided by:
Scottish Autism

Service provider number:
SP2003000275

Service no:
CS2004073440

About the service

Scottish Autism Lothian Outreach Team, is a care at home service, which shares a team and processes with the Scottish Autism Outreach Team, housing support service. Both services are registered separately, however for the purpose of inspection, both services have been inspected together and share the evaluations within this report.

The services have been registered to provide a service to adults and children with autism living in their own homes and in the community. The service is managed from their base in Edinburgh and provides support across Edinburgh and East Lothian.

The provider, Scottish Autism, has been registered to provide the service since 29 July 2004

About the inspection

This was an announced (short notice) inspection which took place between 2 and 9 July 2025. The inspection was carried out by an 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 seven people using the service and one of their family
- Spoke with 11 staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents

Key messages

- People described being happy and feeling well supported by the service
- People's preferences and support needs were supported well, due to detailed support plans and staff training
- Managers were supportive and available to guide staff
- Managers audited processes well, which reduced errors in medication and financial recording

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 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.

We observed warm and compassionate interactions between staff and people, these had clearly been built on an understanding of the needs and communication requirements for each person. Staff had developed respectful and caring relationships with people, these had a positive impact on people's wellbeing. One relative told us how their relative had grown in confidence and trusted staff. This meant that people's wellbeing had improved based on their care and support.

Staff understood their role in ensuring that people were supported with their health and wellbeing, and had responded quickly and appropriately when people were poorly or needed emotional support. People's medical conditions were supported well. Staff had advocated for people to ensure they received the right kind of care and support from colleagues and external services. This had included healthcare professionals and specialist services. People described being happy with the support they received from staff related to their healthcare. One person commented "they are really good, it's helpful when they remind me about appointments". This meant that people received the right healthcare at the right time.

People were supported to live active and meaningful lives, that supported their health conditions and enabled them to access a range of social and community activities. This included swimming, walking, using the gym, attending creative opportunities, gaming and social groups. This supported people to stay physically fit, while maintaining and expanding their friendship groups, which supported their wellbeing.

Personal plans were very detailed in terms of the health and wellbeing of people. Routines and support plans identified all the steps and strategies required to support the person well. Staff consistently followed these plans, and maintained routines for people. This consistent approach had supported people to achieve their personal outcomes and cope with changes in their lives.

People's medications were being managed well, and audited by senior staff and managers. This helped to reduce errors and ensured medication was recorded and administered appropriately. We discussed the processes used for recording medications with the manager, who agreed to consider updating these processes to ensure all staff had the confidence to manage these independently. We will follow this up at our next inspection.

People were being supported well with cooking and eating healthier and nutritious options, with home cooked meals rather than ready meals being provided wherever possible. People described and showed us their weekly menus, some of which were pictorial to help people know what meals were planned. This supported people to be engaged with planning their menus, shopping for fresh ingredients and being involved in cooking if they wished to.

How good is our staff team?**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 were generally matched well with staff who had the appropriate skills and personality to support them successfully. Staff were gradually introduced to people, to support the development of a positive relationship, with new staff shadowing experienced staff to enable an exchange of knowledge and approaches. People were encouraged to be open about their staff with managers, and any issues were discussed and people's preferences for staff and approaches were listened to and respected. This meant that staffing arrangements ensured that people were supported in a way that was meaningful to them.

The staff rota appeared to work well for staff as it was flexible in terms of staff needs while not impacting on the consistency and support needs of people. One relative described how staff were often early instead of late and very flexible in how they supported people. People generally knew who to expect and when, for many people this was only a day in advance however, this was in keeping with people's support needs. Most people described that they enjoyed having a set staff team of people that they liked, who worked well with each other. This had ensured that care and support for people was generally as consistent as possible.

Staff described how they enjoyed working with their team and that their colleagues were knowledgeable and supportive. Communication between staff was good, with a range of communication processes being used, both in paper and digital formats, which supported staff to share information and gain advice from others. People and relatives were also encouraged to communicate with the team and manager to ensure care and support was right for them. This open communication had supported trusting relationships and enabled care and support to be tailored specifically for each person's needs and preferences.

Staff described feeling supported by their seniors and managers and that they had been given the resources and training to do their job well. Staff described being able to gain support and guidance at any time. One member of staff commented "I don't feel I'm a number. I've been really valued as a person". This meant that people could be confident that staff were appropriately trained and supported to provide their care and support.

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

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