

Abbey Gardens Nursing Home Care Home Service

Lincluden Road
Dumfries
DG2 0QB

Telephone: 01387 255 322

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 July 2025

Service provided by:
Voyage 1 Limited

Service provider number:
SP2004005660

Service no:
CS2003010806

About the service

Abbey Gardens is a purpose-built care home situated in a residential area of Dumfries, close to transport links, shops and community services. The service is registered to provide support to adults and older people with mental health problems, who may have a physical and sensory impairment. The provider is Voyage 1 Limited.

The care home has 32 single rooms with ensuite toilet facilities and is situated on the ground floor. The home is split into four smaller living areas, each with its own communal facilities including a bathroom, small kitchen, living room and dining area.

People have access to an activities room and large communal space in the reception area of the home. There is access to a safe and secure garden from each part of the home offering people access to outdoor space. There is car parking facilities at the front of the premises.

At the time of the inspection there were 32 people living at the home.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 8 and Wednesday 9 July 2025, between 08:00 and 20:00. 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 eight people using the service and eight of their family and friends
- spoke with 17 staff and management
- received 78 completed questionnaires
- received feedback from the Inspection Volunteer who spoke with eight relatives;
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals

Key messages

- People were treated kindly and experienced very good care and support
- Effective clinical governance and monitoring of people's needs meant that people experienced care that promoted their health and wellbeing
- Staff worked well together to ensure people received responsive care and support
- The service should make improvements to their auditing and ongoing maintenance of equipment to support peoples dignity and infection prevention and control
- A review of the current use of the environment should take place to ensure people continue to experience good outcomes.

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 good is our setting?	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.

People we spoke with at Abbey Gardens told us they were happy living in the service and felt well cared for. Relationships between people and staff were warm, respectful and often long-standing. Staff demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the people they supported, with personal interactions marked by humour, empathy and attentiveness. One person told us "I always find the care provided to be of an exemplary standard". This contributed to a relaxed, friendly atmosphere and supports positive emotional wellbeing.

Health and wellbeing outcomes for people were generally very good. Staff were responsive to changes in people's needs and we saw effective monitoring systems in place for food, fluid, weight and bowel health. Clinical oversight of key areas was in place, with monthly audits helping track patterns and improve care. There were well-established links with a range of external professionals such as GPs, dieticians, speech and language therapists, and psychiatric services. We observed an effective multidisciplinary approach taken in a complex case, which resulted in positive outcomes through a balanced approach to risk and quality of life. These relationships helped ensure proactive, person-centred care.

Personal plans were comprehensive and detailed, with rich information that reflected individual personalities and preferences. "Grab and Go" profiles were especially effective in communicating key facts and values in a respectful, easy-to-access format. We highlighted some records which required archiving to avoid confusion where information was recorded in multiple locations. Personal plans were in the process of transitioning to a digital format, which will reduce duplication of information and support improved consistency and oversight.

Reviews of personal plans were taking place six monthly and included family members and people supported. Monthly key worker meetings provided a further opportunity to promote inclusion. We identified that although taking place regularly, these didn't consistently capture the voice of the person. The management team had already identified this area for development as an opportunity to measure progress made towards individual outcomes. This improvement will promote a sense of involvement and ownership for people being supported.

Communication within the staff team was very good, with effective handovers and a culture of staying informed. Most relatives we spoke to told us they were kept up to date, although there were occasional issues with clarity on who to contact and difficulties noted with getting through by telephone. The management team gave assurances they would review contact procedures to ensure families feel fully informed and connected.

People were supported to get the most out of life through a range of meaningful and purposeful activities. Staff supported people to attend community groups as well as participate in everyday activities such as shopping, cooking and budgeting. We heard examples of positive outcomes where people were supported to explore and engage in community activities that were important to them. Although attempts were made to support regular community engagement, feedback showed some people wished for more consistent opportunities for stimulation and participation. Meaningful connection had already been identified as part of the service improvement plan, and we saw staff taking a flexible approach to try accommodate people's wishes and desires on the day. The management team will continue to improve how they evaluate people's

experiences to ensure there are regular opportunities for stimulation and interaction in line with personal choice and preference.

Mealtimes were relaxed and well organised within the home. Meals were well presented and people told us they enjoyed the food. Staff had a good awareness of people's dietary needs and preferences whilst being seen to encourage a healthy diet. This helped support people's overall health and wellbeing by maintaining good nutrition and hydration.

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 benefitted from warm, respectful relationships due to a committed and skilled staff team. Feedback from people in the home and relatives was overwhelmingly positive, with comments including "staff are exemplary, patient, respectful" and "all the staff at Abbey Gardens are excellent." The staff team demonstrated kindness and compassion, contributing significantly to people's wellbeing.

Staffing arrangements were flexible and responsive to changes in people's needs. An effective and ongoing staffing assessment enabled appropriate staffing cover. Rotas showed stable staffing levels, and there was evidence of surplus capacity being used meaningfully. For example, staff were allocated to support people to access planned community outings, and staff time was protected to support with personal foot care.

Staffing arrangements enabled positive relationships and safe, responsive care. Staff were visible and present during the inspection. We observed staff supporting and engaging with people in a meaningful way. People told us they didn't have to wait long for assistance, and staff were responsive to requests.

Staff worked effectively across different roles in the service to meet individual needs and collaborated to support one another. This contributed to a culture of teamwork and continuity of care leading to better outcomes for people supported.

People felt supported by the management team, and described positive working relationships. Staff wellbeing was actively monitored and promoted, and people appreciated the open-door policy of the management team to support when needed. Regular supervision and appraisals were taking place which staff reported to be meaningful and development-focused.

We observed a positive and inclusive staff culture. Champion roles in areas such as pressure care and nutrition were helping drive improvements in the home. Staff shared examples of training and learning that had directly improved outcomes in response to recent events, for instance, supporting people safely during choking incidents. This ensures staff have the right skills and knowledge to keep people safe and continue to meet their needs.

Recruitment procedures were being revised to support a values based approach and included involvement from people using the service and stakeholders. A range of team meetings were taking place regularly. Minutes we reviewed promoted best practice, incorporated lessons learned from recent events, and supported staff reflection and improvement. This assures us there is a culture of continuous improvement in the service supporting very good outcomes for people.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

People benefitted from a warm, welcoming and homely atmosphere throughout Abbey Gardens. There was a secure well maintained garden with open access which was appreciated. We heard of people engaging in gardening activities independently which they enjoyed. Feedback from relatives indicated the environment was "very pleasant".

Bedrooms were personalised, and people told us they had been supported to decorate and furnish rooms to reflect their personal taste and values. This contributed positively to dignity and a sense of ownership.

Activity spaces were varied and included a large communal room and smaller quiet areas where people could choose to spend time. We saw that the foyer was bright and inviting, and some residents used this space independently at different times of the day. Staff had considered how different environments could support inclusion and choice.

We saw variation across units in the quality of decoration and dementia-friendly design features being consistently applied. Some communal bathing areas were in need of refurbishment to ensure people experience high quality facilities. The management team had noted some environmental improvement areas, and we directed them to the use of "the Kings Fund tool" to guide future changes.

During our visit, we saw staff practice appropriate infection prevention and control within the home. This included domestic cleaning and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Cleaning schedules were in use and these reflected the frequency of cleaning of communal areas and individual bedrooms. However, when we checked, we found some equipment used not to have been cleaned and maintained to a good standard. While environmental audits were in place, they were not effective in identifying and addressing these issues. Auditing processes should be strengthened to ensure that concerns are acted upon promptly and that equipment is appropriately maintained to a high standard. (See area for improvement 1).

Appropriate safety checks and measures were in place to maintain the environment to safe standard.

We observed that the staff smoking area impinged on residents living and garden space. The service should review the current use of space within the environment to ensure people's dignity is upheld and they have a comfortable safe place to live. (See area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. The service should continue to develop the staff's knowledge of quality assurance around the environment improvement programme to ensure that the premises, and equipment used, are clean and well-maintained.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment" (HSCS 5.24).

2. To ensure the setting meets the needs of people, the service should review the current use of the environment and consider how this impacts on the outcomes for people living there. Any actions identified should form part of the overall service improvement plan.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, "The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs" (HSCS 5.18).

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 good is our setting?	4 - Good
4.1 People experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

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