

Gowanlea Care Home Service

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Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
17 July 2025

Service provided by:
Christadelphian Care Homes

Service provider number:
SP2024000723

Service no:
CS2025000295

About the service

Gowanlea is a small care home for up to 11 older people in the Bannockburn area just outside of Stirling. There is a communal living and dining area, a small conservatory area, as well as bathroom and garden facilities. Bedrooms are all ensuite.

The provider is Christadelphian Care Homes, a private limited company. Gowanlea was previously registered with the Care Inspectorate under the same provider when they were a registered charity. They have been newly registered in keeping with the provider's change in status; however, there were no other operational changes.

Gowanlea is the organisation's only care home in Scotland, with another eight homes located elsewhere in the UK.

The manager is on site at various times throughout the week rather than the traditional Monday to Friday.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on 16 and 17 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the service was registered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with four people using the service and had feedback from three of their relatives
- spoke with six staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Gowanlea is a well run care home where people can expect to receive excellent care and support.
- Staff are skilled and equipped with training that reflects organisational values that enable them to provide a high quality care service to people.
- The service works extremely well with their local community to form positive relationships that enhance the quality of life of people living in the home and community members.

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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	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?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent, where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for people.

There were a range of key strengths across the service that contributed to outstandingly high outcomes for people. These included focused support that considered all aspects of need and daily living, including skin integrity, nutrition and hydration and medication support needs, as well as emotional and spiritual wellbeing, and relationships. This support allowed people to continue with social activities they enjoyed before coming to live in the home, as well as maintain strong personal relationships. People continued to have a sense of belonging and being included.

People were supported to access health professionals and input as needed, and suggestions for how to support people with, for example, mobility needs, were clearly documented within people's care plans and actioned by staff. The service was assisted through volunteer roles which helped to reinforce a community culture.

The service had introduced research based breathing activities over the winter months to help prepare for common infections, such as colds and chest infections. This has resulted in a significant drop in infections across the home. The service planned to replicate these activities over the coming winter months and collect data again with a view to sharing the experience and outcomes amongst peers in the partnership area. This reflected that the service worked in an informed way to ensure best outcomes for people.

There was a relaxed and homely atmosphere within Gowanlea that helped people get to know each other and enjoy games and activities. People could spend time in their rooms if they wished to have more quiet time. People told us that staff were respectful, kind and caring. We observed staff responding timeously to people's needs, engaging with people during activities and events, and helping people to make the most of their day in simple but important ways. For example, recognising the importance of touch and sensory stimulation for people with visual impairments to ensure they were included and could benefit.

Staff had extremely positive interactions with people. They had a respectful rapport with people that contributed to the homely atmosphere and also enabled people to feel seen and heard. Staff worked with people's needs and conditions and adapted their routines to suit; for example, by creating true meaningful activity for someone who benefitted greatly from this and linked this to their past career and sense of purpose. By working in this way, people's stress and distress was significantly reduced.

There had been some extremely beneficial intergenerational work with a local nursery school that had become embedded in the regular activities within the home. People spoke highly about how these interactions contributed to their lives, and how everyone was included in this if they wanted to be, regardless of their ability or needs. The service intended to continue building on this.

People were supported well with nutrition and hydration needs. There was a facility for people to make their own drinks if they wished, which helped maximise people's independence and encouraged movement. Specific dietary needs were recorded and planned for with the provision of foods; for example, diabetic friendly foods and snacks. Mealtime experiences were relaxed and unhurried, meaning people could enjoy their meals and chat with each other.

Medication management was in keeping with best practice. The service had an electronic system that helped ensure medications were administered appropriately, for example, at specific times and with sufficient gaps. We received really positive feedback from health professionals about the changes and improvements across the service and how this has impacted positively on outcomes for people. These outcomes included significantly better health and wellbeing, with one person saying they felt their life was saved by moving to the home and being able to access the care they needed.

Engagement and wellbeing activities were varied and in keeping with people's choices and preferences. There were regular resident meetings that looked at planning ahead and reflecting on what went well and what could have been better. This demonstrated how the service actively listened to people's views and responded accordingly. We noted that people were comfortable in raising matters and commenting on things as they came up. This demonstrated that the service was approachable and responsive.

How good is our leadership?

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.

The management and leadership team were highly motivated and effective. There was a strong sense of the forward-thinking vision and person-centred values across the home. Staff values and priorities were focused on the people living in the home, and how things could be continuously improved for them.

There were robust and effective systems in place that provided an overview of the service and helped identify actions that were needed to make continual improvement. There was an effective service evaluation and plan in place that demonstrated key strengths and improvements and was clearly a live document that helped shape the actions the management team took.

We were confident that any adult support and protection (ASP) issues were reported and responded to in a timely manner. Actions were taken as needed, in order to keep people as safe as possible and ensure their wellbeing. People's health and wellbeing was supported through a range of audits including medication audits, that were being used to improve practice, identify learning needs, and support staff to be transparent and confident in their practice. This had helped to create an open culture where staff felt supported and listened to.

Staff and management meetings took place regularly and provided linked up information so that staff at all levels could be informed about changes or actions. This helped ensure changes and improvements were managed well.

Staff supervision and support was in place with staff saying they felt well supported and able to voice their views and opinions without any concerns. This helped to create a whole team approach which was evident across the service.

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.

We observed positive, respectful working relationships amongst staff that offered reassurance, kindness and compassion to people living in Gowanlea, as well as a sense of fun and energy.

Staff rotas demonstrated staff were allocated in line with the assessment of need across the home. Agency staff cover had been needed at times to cover absence, vacancies and planned leave. There was some consistency in agency staff being used which offered a better degree of consistency for people living in the home. When the service was fully occupied, there were pinch points during the day and evening. This had been recognised and extra shifts were offered to contracted staff to alleviate this; however, these were not always able to be filled. This meant that some shifts, especially in the evenings, could be more pressured for staff. We asked the management team to look at different ways they could manage this resource issue and add value to people's evenings. Recruitment was ongoing to bolster the staff resources through the bank staff register. This could help alleviate use of agency staff and provide more flexibility.

Staff values and attitudes were clearly about the best outcomes for people living in the home. Staff had people they were supporting and caring for at the heart of what they did. Staff were motivated to spend more time with people, getting to know them and enhancing their day-to-day quality of life.

Staff morale was felt to be good and staff were able to describe how they felt well supported and valued. There were some challenges in the home as a result of people's changing needs and these had been recognised, with additional support being sought from relevant professionals to support staff to meet people's needs.

Induction procedures were in place and were used effectively to help staff get to know their roles and how to perform. Staff received fairly regular supervision and felt there was always someone around to support them. They were clear that they did not feel they needed to wait for a supervision meeting to raise any issues. Staff had opportunities to complete qualifications and enhance their skills, with career progression opportunities available.

Training compliance was very good, with a wide range of relevant learning and development opportunities available for all staff. Specific training for staff who were able and keen to take on additional responsibilities was available, and staff described being well supported with this. This helped create a working culture where staff felt valued and supported, and contributed to significant length of service for many staff, which provided very good consistency to people living in Gowanlea.

How good is our setting?

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.

The home is within a converted traditional Victorian building. As such, there were some constraints with the environment; however, the team had worked hard to maximise the potential of the building and create a homely and comfortable environment for people. There was level access to outdoor space, comprising of a small seating area with flowers and edible plants that had been grown in conjunction with the local nursery, as part of the intergenerational project. Off this area is a community park that people can access through a gate. There was a lounge and dining area, with an accessible drinks station for making soft drinks or tea and coffee. This helped to promote activity and independence. There was a separate lounge area that was used for quiet space and for relatives to catch up with their loved ones.

People's rooms, ensuites and communal areas were clean and pleasant with no malodours evident.

People were able to decorate their rooms by personalising their spaces with their own belongings if they wished. People were supported to enjoy activities they used to do before moving into the home, for example, watching birds and wildlife on feeders and in the garden area. This provided people with relaxing pastimes.

The home was overall, well-maintained with regular decoration and attention to any repairs or renewals actioned. We noted some space constraints within the communal areas that required staff to be responsive in ensuring people's safety. We suggested the manager could look at the Kings Fund Tool to consider further improvements across the environment.

A recent refurbishment of the laundry area provided an improved facility with clearer areas for clean and dirty laundry, as well as a system for keeping track of people's belongings. Overall, Gowanlea offered a comfortable, clean and safe home environment.

How well is our care and support planned?

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 were really impressed with how personalised and informative the care plans were. Care plans effectively conveyed who the person was, in relevant and positive ways, whilst recognising their needs and risks. The language used within plans was highly respectful and dignified. This reflected the values displayed across the home. Care plans were supplemented by monthly needs analysis that enabled flexibility in staffing should someone's needs change. This meant that the service could provide responsive care and support.

We were able to see how accurately the plans reflected the lived experience of people living in the home. In addition, we noted the valued involvement of families and friends in contributing to the care planning process, through capturing people's history and previous roles. We saw how effectively this was used in helping formulate a plan of activity for one person, in keeping with their career before retirement.

People's care plans contained a strengths-based element. People living in Gowanlea were encouraged to continue doing things they were able to do for as long as possible. We could see how this linked to the various activities and events that were offered within the home. We advised that at times, information in care plans may need to be more descriptive and discussed some examples of this. Overall, the quality of care planning was very good.

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?	6 - Excellent
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	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?	5 - Very Good
4.1 People experience high quality facilities	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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