

## Ark Western Isles Housing Support Service

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**Type of inspection:**  
Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**  
21 August 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Ark Housing Association Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002578

**Service no:**  
CS2013316340

## About the service

Ark Western Isles is registered to provide a care at home and housing support service to people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health conditions living in their own homes. The provider is Ark Housing Association Ltd.

At the time of the inspection, 16 adults were being supported by the service. Individual support ranged from two hours to 15 hours per day. Support is delivered by one staff team and is provided within people's own homes living in and around the town of Stornoway, Lewis and Harris.

The registered manager and staff team work from the main office base in Stornoway. The manager is responsible for coordinating the overall running of the service.

## About the inspection

This was an announced (short notice) inspection which took place on 16, 17 and 18 June 2025 between 09:30 and 17:30. 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 three relatives
- spoke with staff and members of the management team
- received 17 completed questionnaires (this includes all types)
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documentation
- obtained feedback from stakeholders

## Key messages

- Staff developed meaningful relationships with people based on warmth, respect, and compassion.
- People felt valued as individuals and were confident in how the service responded to their needs.
- People's wellbeing benefitted from regular activity and social opportunities.
- Staffing levels were very good, and people's care and support benefited from a consistent staff team.
- Personal plans were detailed and comprehensive to lead and guide staff.

## 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 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 experienced very good health and wellbeing outcomes as a result of their care and support. Staff interactions with people experiencing care and support were warm, encouraging and focussed on promoting people's independence. Staff were respectful when they spoke about the people they were supporting and showed patience in their interactions.

People's wellbeing benefitted from being treated with compassion, dignity and respect. Staff were focussed on achieving the best possible outcomes for the people they were supporting and caring for. Care was delivered at a pace suitable for each person. People were regularly supported by the same members of staff who spent time getting to know people. This meant that trusting relationships were formed between people and the staff who supported and cared for them.

Feedback was positive about the quality of care and support people received. Comments included " I feel involved and can plan my own life and what's important to me" and "I couldn't do without the service." Relatives' comments included " Ark support my sister but also the whole family, it's an amazing service with great managers and staff, we are so grateful for them and feel blessed to have them in our lives."

People's health benefitted from regular engagement with other health services. People were in touch with social workers, GPs, and a wide range of other specialists including advocacy services. The health professionals we spoke with commented favourably about their working relationships with the service. This multi-agency approach helped people keep well and ensured their health needs were being met and regularly reviewed.

Medication systems were very good. Staff had received training in the administration of medication which helped them gain confidence in their practice. Audits related to the administration of medication regularly took place. We were confident that people's medication needs were being regularly reviewed and monitored.

Personal plans were effective with a very good level of detail. This guided staff on how best to support people. Plans were underpinned by good quality risk assessments which were meaningful and specific to each person being supported. Quality assurance visits took place regularly in people's homes. This helped ensure that the support and care being offered was meeting people's needs.

## 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.

The staff team were valued by people experiencing care. We observed kind and caring interactions between staff and people, and saw laughter, encouragement and inclusion being supported. Some comments we received included: " I greatly appreciate my support and get on very well with the people that provide it." and "The staff and managers are always willing to help and assist when and if they can." Relatives we spoke

with said "We have a good working relationship with Ark staff in Stornoway." This assured us that the staff team were caring and considerate in their practice.

People's services were commissioned by social work services. The level of support commissioned was based upon an assessment of people's care and support needs. Where people's needs changed or increased, the provider liaised with social workers to address any gaps. This was to ensure people's health, safety and wellbeing.

A review of rotas evidenced that there was consistency in staffing, and people were supported by staff who were familiar to them. People were cared for by the right number of people at the right time, promoting effective care and meaningful relationships. Rotas were planned in advance taking into consideration staff and people using the service. Staff shared that the forward planning of rotas allowed them to have a good work life balance.

Staffing arrangements were appropriate to meet people's varied needs and wishes. For example, people received at least three-hour visits which promoted meaningful interactions and effective care and support. When new staff were recruited, they were matched to people using the service through shadow shifts and the service manager then checked in with the people and carers to get feedback. This allowed for continuity of care and people felt at ease and built trust with staff, allowing them to meet their desired outcomes.

Staff had regular group and one-to-one meetings to discuss their practice and wellbeing. A range of forums and surveys gave staff an opportunity to influence service development which gave them a sense of inclusion. This culture enhanced staff performance and outcomes for people.

The service's approach to staffing arrangements and development had resulted in a skilled workforce. Staff had a strong understanding of people's needs and wishes, had developed positive rapport with people, and were highly motivated to enhance their life experiences. There was positive morale across the service and staff told us they felt supported in their role.

People using the service, their representatives and professionals were confident that staff had the skills, knowledge, and training to provide consistent, safe and effective care and support.

## How well is our care and support planned?

## 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in relation to care and support planning and how this supported positive outcomes for people. We evaluated the performance of the service under this key question as very good.

It is essential staff have all the relevant information about each person to be able to deliver care and support effectively. Personal plans were clear for staff to follow and provided details of people's healthcare needs, abilities, and choices. The plans contained details on specific health conditions and information about the support required to help keep people well. We saw transition plans, giving details on specific roles and responsibilities and what needs to be in place. This helped give staff a good understanding of the support needed when providing care to individuals.

Personal plans were detailed, person centred, and outcomes focussed. They were respectfully written and took a strengths-based approach which considered what people were able to do, and how staff should encourage active participation when providing support. Support was provided in a dynamic and flexible way to meet peoples' changing needs and wishes. The staff and management team were creative in the

coordination of activities, holidays and trips away, and supported each other to help people achieve their agreed outcomes.

We saw evidence of six-monthly care and support reviews taking place. The management team had oversight of this which meant people's outcomes were monitored regularly. Reviews captured the involvement of residents and relatives. This helped people to get involved in leading and directing their own care and support.

When people's health needs had changed, personal plans and risk assessments were promptly updated. This ensured care and support delivered was responsive to people's changing needs.

## 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

To ensure that current guidance about IPC is implemented timeously, and that staff knowledge of the standard infection control precautions are refreshed, the provider should arrange appropriate training.

This will support the team to confidently ensure that the right precautions are applied for the circumstances they operate in, to keep people safe.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11)

**This area for improvement was made on 2 June 2022.**

#### Action taken since then

Infection Prevention Control training had been completed by staff. Observations of practice had been carried out and staff were aware of the most up to date guidance.

This area for improvement had been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure that staff are supported to have the right knowledge and skills for the role they perform the provider should:

- carry out an individual staff training needs analysis, also taking into account the needs of new and inexperienced staff
- ensure that any overdue training is planned and delivered as a priority
- ensure training records are updated, and support managerial oversight.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 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 2 June 2022.**

#### Action taken since then

A staff training matrix was in place to record staff training needs and compliance. This had been kept up to date and staff were reminded of when training needed completed. Staff gave positive feedback about training provided and resources available.

This area for improvement had been met.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://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 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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