

Mental Health Community Support Service @ Annsbrae House Housing Support Service

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

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Service provided by:
Shetland Islands Council

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About the service

Mental Health Community Support Service at Annsbrae House, operated by Shetland Islands Council, is based in Lerwick and supports adults aged 16 and over with severe and/or enduring mental health conditions.

At the time of inspection, seven people were living in tenancies on-site in Lerwick, with an additional 40 people receiving outreach support across Shetland.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 4, 5 and 10 September 2025 between 09:00 and 17:00 hours. Two inspectors carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

spoke with seven people using the service

spoke with six staff

observed practice and daily life

reviewed feedback from eight pre-inspection questionnaires from people experiencing care, family members, staff and professionals

Reviewed documents.

Key messages

People were supported with kindness and compassion by staff who knew them well.

People were supported with the right kind of individualised help and support to help meet their outcomes.

Managers and staff reflected the organisational values and aims of the service.

Care plans should adopt a more asset-based, person-centred approach, with improved recording of individuals' outcomes and achievements.

Staff should be given protected time to access specialised training in complex mental health, further enhancing their knowledge and practice.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	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?

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 were treated with compassion, dignity, and respect. Staff used their knowledge and skills to deliver care with warmth and kindness. One person shared, "Staff are friendly and helpful." Another person told us "I feel safe here and I have everything I need around me". One professional told us that staff have individual's wellbeing at the centre of all activities. Staff responded to people in a polite and respectful way which demonstrated a strong understanding of their needs. This sensitive approach helped people feel safe and validated.

Staff supported people to develop independent living skills such as budgeting, cooking, and housekeeping; which built confidence and self-belief. People shared how the service helped them connect with community activities. One person proudly spoke about having a job, while another shared their achievement of walking to a local coffee shop independently, using coping strategies when needed. These skills helped people become more socially connected and, for some, prepared them to move into their own tenancies with reduced support. Within the community of Annsbrae, people took pride in where they lived, the flats are due to have refurbishments with new kitchens, bathrooms and in some flats new windows to be installed. People told us they were excited for this to start as it will contribute positively to their overall health and wellbeing, enhancing both the quality and comfort of their living conditions. The service played a vital role in enabling people to remain on the island, gain confidence, and be actively supported within their local community.

Individual care plans were in place for each person, which outlined key elements of support tailored to their specific needs. These plans included guidance on areas such as medication administration, nutritional support, and personal care. We observed evidence of input from a range of health professionals within these plans, which demonstrated a multi-agency approach to care delivery.

However, some action plans contained limited detail and did not sufficiently capture strategies to support people to achieve their personal outcomes. In several instances, care plans appeared task-focused rather than person-centred. A more personalised approach to highlight individual achievements, preferences, and strengths would better support trauma-informed care practices.

Medical diagnoses were hard to locate within risk assessments. A one-page summary would help new staff quickly get to know the person and provide more informed, compassionate support. This is something the service have self-identified in their service improvement plan and will take forward and implement revised training for staff. (See area for improvement 1).

Multi-agency reviews were in place and coordinated by the service. Staff reported that organising these reviews can be challenging due to difficulties in aligning availability across professionals. Review documentation showed a good understanding of individuals' care needs and the support required. However, the service has identified that reviews require further development to better capture personal outcomes.

Areas for improvement

1. The provider should ensure care plans take a more personalised approach by clearly highlighting individual's achievements, preferences, and the support needed to reach their outcomes. This would help strengthen trauma-informed care practices and ensure support is tailored to the person.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience stability in my care and support from people who know my needs, choices, and wishes, even if there are changes in the service or organisation' (HSCS 4.15)

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

There was positive morale across the service and people described it as a pleasure being able to help people and see them achieve their goals. A member of staff shared, "The team are amazing, we are tight knit, and we support each other, good times and bad". Staff shared that management were always accessible and promoted an open-door policy. We observed good communication between management, staff, and relatives throughout the inspection.

Staff were recruited safely in line with national guidance with appropriate checks, references, and professional registrations. Training provided by the service was thorough and promoted in person courses, e-learning, and self-development. Staff have expressed a desire for more specific training, particularly around complex mental health as they feel this is lacking. While there is self-directed learning, it would be more effective to offer dedicated in-person training days which is protected only for the team. This would support deeper learning and engagement. To move this forward, clear leadership and coordination are needed to ensure training is prioritised and accessible. This will ensure people experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources. (See area for improvement 2)

Staffing arrangements were appropriate to meet people's varied needs and wishes. A review of rotas evidenced that people were supported by staff who were familiar to them. There was consistency in staffing and people were cared for by the right number of people at the right time, promoting effective care and meaningful relationships. We recognised the pressure upon the service with staff shortages or absences but management were proactive around arranging cover and staff were quick to offer support and provide additional cover where needed. This meant that care was not interrupted for people who continued to have ongoing activities and positive outcomes.

Staff were supported through regular team meetings, supervision, and observations of practice. We did note that some of the minutes from these meetings were brief and asked the manager to encourage more reflection. Reflection can further enhance staff understanding, evidence good practice, and improve outcomes for people, as well as support staff's wellbeing.

Staff had access to an Employee Assistance Programme through Shetland Islands Council, which they described as beneficial in supporting their health and wellbeing. A strong culture of peer support was evident, and staff said they look out for each other, something they felt was important given the challenges of the role.

Some staff expressed hesitancy in raising concerns due to workload pressures and a desire not to burden

senior colleagues. They also shared that challenging situations could feel overwhelming and that formal, protected debrief sessions as a team would be valuable in promoting emotional resilience and reflective practice.

The recruitment of an additional senior staff member was viewed positively, with staff anticipating improved workload balance and enhanced support for wellbeing.

Areas for improvement

1. The management team should ensure the staff team have access to complex mental health training to help staff further enhance their knowledge and skills.

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)

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?	4 - Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	4 - Good

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