

The Edinburgh Crisis Centre Support Service

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Announced (short notice)

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Service provided by:
Penumbra

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About the service

The Edinburgh Crisis Centre is registered to provide a support service to people aged 16 years and over with mental health concerns, and for those who offer a caring role for them. The service is open 24 hours a day 365 days of the year and offers community based, emotional and practical support at times of crisis.

The Crisis Centre aims to give people an alternative to hospital, working with people facing an acute crisis in a preventative way. Support can be provided on a face to face basis, or via telephone, text or e-mail

The Crisis Centre is a part of Mental Health and Social Care Services in Edinburgh and has effective working relationships with colleagues across all sectors.

About the inspection

This was a full inspection type which took place between 22 August-29 August 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 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 five people using the service and six staff and management. We reviewed a wide range of documentation and spoke with an involved professional.

Key messages

The Crisis Centre was regarded as a vital wellbeing resource by people who used support provided by the service.

People said the Crisis Centre was easy to access and valued the provision of support on a 24/7 basis.

Staff were viewed by people using support as skilled and supportive. All staff had undertaken a wide range of training relevant to the support they provided.

The service are developing strategies for engaging people in service development and improvement.

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 leadership?	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

People said they felt respected when they engaged with support. These interactions were very much person led. They were provided at a pace which suited the needs and circumstances of the individual.

People described how they were offered vital support at a time of crisis, emphasising how much they appreciated the calm, non clinical environment they found on arrival at the centre.

The centre's straightforward accessibility criteria was a significant bonus, as was the potential to self refer without having to engage with clinical services. This was viewed as empowering for them around managing their wellbeing and staying safe.

Service users described the staff who work at the centre as being kind, supportive and skilled in the way they worked. Whilst the nature of support provided made it impossible for us to observe staff practice directly during service delivery, we saw some informal contact with people using the centre and we heard staff offering telephone support and advice.

Referral and assessment processes associated with using the service are tailored towards making it as accessible as possible. This made using the resource a comfortable and seamless experience for people undergoing times of crisis. The staff team are well established and there is good continuity of support.

The people who work at The Edinburgh Crisis Centre (also referred to as the "Crisis Centre" in the report) were an asset to the service and clearly very committed to their jobs, sharing their skills, knowledge and experience to offer positive outcomes for the people they work for.

We evaluated the provider's performance across this key question as very good. Positive outcomes for people significantly outweighed any areas for development.

People who used the service told us they found the Edinburgh Crisis Centre (also referred to as the Centre) accessible and easy to engage with. They valued the self-referral process, saying this made it easier for them to get the support they needed, "I really like the fact the Centre is open all year round. Crisis doesn't just happen during regular working hours. I found it straightforward to call and arrange a face-to-face appointment. It was quick, well facilitated and without stress".

It was evident from our discussions with people who used the service they felt able to direct their support. Some people highlighted the sense of empowerment derived from their contact with the Centre, comparing this with the challenges of accessing support provided by clinical services. We heard: "the Centre don't overwhelm me with paperwork or repetitious questions. We discuss my safety and well-being in a natural, organic, way. This helps me feel safe and more in control of my life and key decision-making".

Some people commented on the value of safety planning as a way of keeping safe in crisis. This was described as a valuable way of engaging with challenging issues and navigating a safe course when they were experiencing significant emotional distress.

We heard from some people that accessing the Centre had become an established element in maintaining their mental health and positive well-being: "I have used the Centre for many years. During that time my mental health has ebbed and flowed. Sometimes I have been in acute crisis. The one-to-one support I

received was what kept me going. I needed someone to listen. Developing a safe plan helped me process some of the challenges and made me feel I was able to carry on. Other times, I just needed some validation, or reassurance. I really value being able to call and have someone listen".

Support was wide-ranging. As well as direct assistance during crisis, people were enabled to engage with other community services associated with maintaining health and well-being.

Signposting was an important part of the preventative work undertaken. The Crisis Centre have well established links to clinical and statutory services, as well as the likes of advocacy, support on housing issues, carers networks and substance support services. This information sharing was routinely identified as being a valuable part of the Centre's work when we spoke with people who experienced support.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated the provider's performance across this key question as very good. Positive outcomes for people significantly outweighed any areas for development.

The Crisis Centre had a range of quality assurance-based processes which support service development and improvement.

People who used the service are invited to complete a feedback questionnaire. This had wide-ranging questions, covering the likes of quality of staff, staff skills, knowledge and experience, access to the Centre, as well as the impact of support in helping alleviate or manage crisis.

Quality assurance questionnaires can be completed in person or on-line. This made the provision of feedback accessible to people using the service.

When we considered a sample of completed feedback forms, we noted consistently positive views on the support provided, as well as some suggestions for further development.

The service had a developed stakeholder survey for people who used support. This explored key outcomes and had a more detailed focus on exploring service development themes. The findings from the survey were consistently positive, with a high level of satisfaction expressed across all aspects of how the Crisis Centre operated.

In addition, management had a current service improvement plan, with a focus on quality assurance and future development. The improvement plan considered the service provider's aims and objectives, measuring quality approaches and links to commissioning. There were timescales for achieving key goals and the plan outlined who would progress them organisationally.

The development of a self-evaluation, aligned with the Care Inspectorate's "Self-evaluation for improvement - your guide", would compliment existing approaches to quality assurance, helping the service identify what's working well. We discussed this at feedback and received an undertaking that self-evaluation was part of future service development planning.

When we spoke with people who used support, they said they would like a broader range of opportunities to contribute to service improvement. A recurring theme emerged from our conversations around facilitation

of forum where people could meet, discuss and share views on the service. Management acknowledged this as an on-going area for development.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated the provider's performance across this key question as very good. Positive outcomes for people significantly outweighed any areas for development.

We considered how the service recruits staff, noting that new workers were recruited in line with best practice guidance. This helped ensure staff were suitably vetted before commencing their employment.

Not all staff were required to register with the Scottish Social Services Council. Where this was applicable, staff were registered appropriately, in accordance with their roles.

When we spoke with people who used support, it was clear they viewed staff as a significant asset. We heard, "Staff are excellent. They listen without judgement and are never overbearing. I feel I can communicate with them and always feel listened to". Another person told us, "I can't emphasise enough how vital staff are for me. They are knowledgeable, good at listening and communicate effectively with me. I trust them and feel they are very skilled in the way they offer support. Without them, I wouldn't be here speaking to you now".

It was evident from our own conversations with staff that they understood key issues associated with crisis, mental health and keeping safe. All the staff we spoke with identified values-based approaches to their work. They consistently spoke about respecting people's views and choices, working with them in ways that were non-judgemental and enabling.

We considered staff training records, noting they had undertaken a wide range of learning relevant to the support they provided. Training was diverse and well provisioned. As well as a mandatory programme of training, linked to the work undertaken, staff were supported to develop their practice and skills through self-directed learning associated with specific needs or issues relevant to people they supported.

We felt confident that staff were able to put their learning into practice and use their skills and experience to facilitate effective well-being outcomes for people they supported.

There was a good consistency of staff working in the service. People who used support commented favourably on this, saying that continuity was a key element in helping support their engagement with the Centre.

Staff advised us they worked well as a team. Management were viewed as supportive and accessible. Peer support was a vital part of the way the team operated and helped staff navigate the challenges of working with people in crisis.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated the provider's performance across this key question as very good. Positive outcomes for people significantly outweighed any areas for development.

It was evident from discussions with people who used the Crisis Centre that they were empowered to direct the assessment and personal planning approaches associated with their support.

We heard, "I don't like lots of paperwork, it's off putting and sometimes feels like a barrier to accessing services. Here I can engage with personal planning in a way that suits me. It's done at my pace and that helps me a lot".

Although the service offers a planned programme of support, this was not provisioned in a linear, directive or service-led manner. These approaches helped people build trust in their service and helped ensure they were able to work in partnership with the Centre.

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 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
3.2 Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people	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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