

# Harmony Care and Support Service Housing Support Service

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Edinburgh  
EH6 4NX

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Type of inspection: Announced  
Inspection completed on: 31 October 2017

**Service provided by:**  
The Harmony Employment Agency  
Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2005007824

**Care service number:**  
CS2010270075

## About the service

Harmony Care and Support Service provides housing support and care to people in a number of different environments; the person's own home, temporary accommodation, within families and other social networks. The service supports people experiencing complex issues in their lives, including enduring mental health difficulties, drug and alcohol dependence and/or a history of homelessness or rough sleeping. They have frequently been excluded from, or been unable to access, other services across the city due to resourcing and/or the approach of other services.

At the time of our inspection ten people were being supported by the service. A mix of staff, some employed directly by Harmony Care and Support Service and some who worked with Harmony Employment Agency, provided the care and support. This allowed greater flexibility in matching staff to people's needs, interests and preferences.

Harmony Care and Support Service aims "to enable people to live as independently as possible, as per the Scottish Government's Independent Living definition of independence for those with disabilities".

The service was set up and registered with the Care Inspectorate in 2014.

## What people told us

Three people returned care standard questionnaires to us. They all strongly agreed they were happy with the care and support they got from the service. One person commented, "I'm happy with support of regular staff".

We spoke to one person by phone who was very happy with the flexibility of their support, the understanding their worker had for their mental and physical health difficulties and the way the service helped advocate on their behalf. They really appreciated that the service understood that support could not be short term and had stuck with them through difficult times. They also said their relative was very happy as the service gave them "some peace of mind."

One person commented in their questionnaire that they felt they didn't get enough support for their needs. The hours of support the person requires are assessed by City of Edinburgh council, who contract with the service to provide those hours. The service makes every effort to advocate on people's behalf where they feel they require additional time.

We shared that people had said in questionnaires that they didn't know about the service's complaints procedure or that they could complain to us. The service will take this into account when developing information about the service. See "What the service could do better".

## Self assessment

We are not asking services to submit a self-assessment for this inspection year. Instead, we asked the service for their improvement or development plan and discussed any improvements they have made or intend to make. We highlighted the new Health and Social Care Standards, "My support, my life", which we will inspect against from April 2018. We encouraged the service to use these standards to plan how they can continue to develop and improve the service.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

## What the service does well

People were very happy with the quality of care and support they got from the service and the difference it was making to their lives. One person said, "For the first time this year I've been properly maintaining my home and paying my bills. I've been doing some cooking and managed a few outings. I'm focusing on feeling well."

Everyone's support was personal to them. The service asked people what they wanted to achieve from support and made sure they were involved in deciding what would work for them. People's support was flexible and they could feel in control of the support they got, including where and when it was given.

People the service supports experienced very complex issues in their lives and have frequently been excluded from, and/or been unable to access, other services across the city. Staff were creative in how they established relationships with people, finding different ways to engage with people and build trust. People felt respected and valued by staff. Staff had an enabling approach because they believed in the potential of people they support. We were impressed by staff's ability to stick with people, even when faced with very difficult situations. One person said, "I have never had a professional that I've felt I could trust and rely on till I started with Harmony...It's giving me day by day a better quality of life."

The organisation had a strong human rights ethos and the manager was willing to challenge inequalities people experience. People could feel confident staff were recruited safely, in a way that made sure they were competent and valued people. Managers involved people in selecting staff wherever possible. They were innovative in finding ways people could have a say in who supported them to suit their individual circumstances. People experienced consistent care and support from staff who knew them well.

The service audited support records regularly to make sure support was recorded accurately and delivered as planned. They had robust systems for incident reporting that they used to minimise risks for people they support and staff. They had made a number of improvements since our last inspection, including ways people could decide the level of involvement they wanted to have in their support plan and reflective discussions with the staff team to support their development. People could feel confident Harmony Care and Support Service was committed to continuing to improve their service.

## What the service could do better

The service had improved learning opportunities for staff, including introducing practice discussion based on case studies. They had also identified areas where staff would benefit from more in depth learning. While progress had been made, the service should continue to improve how they support staff's professional practice and development (see recommendations).

The service had developed their referral form to include the personal outcomes the Joint Improvement Team have identified as important to people. Where people have had the opportunity to say which outcomes are important to them, the service could review progress in achieving those outcomes with them over time. This would help people see the difference support is making.

The service continues to look at ways people can be meaningfully involved in how the service develops. This includes;

- making sure information is provided in ways that are right for people
- finding ways people can give feedback about their experience of the service that the service can use to continuously improve.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 3

1. All staff should have learning opportunities that reflect the background health issues of the people the service supports.

National Care Standards Care at Home Standard 4 Management and Staffing.

2. All staff should be given clear guidance on what the probationary expectations are. This would include:

- a policy/guidance on probation
- assessed competence throughout the probationary period to enable an informed decision to be made about the individual's practice
- record of all meetings/support with new staff to enable this to link into a probationary review.

National Care Standards Care at Home Standard 4 Management and Staffing.

3. All staff practice should be subject to an appraisal. This would then link into development and training.

National Care Standards Care at Home Standard 4 Management and Staffing.

## 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).

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
17 Aug 2016	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
6 Jul 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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