care inspectorate

L'Arche Edinburgh Support services
Housing Support Service

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Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
Inspection completed on: 21 June 2018

Service provided by:
L'Arche

Service provider number:
SP2003002642

Care service number:
CS2008180509

HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

About the service

L'Arche Edinburgh is registered to provide housing support and care at home to people with learning disabilities who are living in their own homes. These services are delivered in a combined way by the same staff team. The service supports people living in their own flats and also people living in three shared houses in the Leith and Restalrig areas of Edinburgh. Support ranges from a few hours a week to 24 hours a day.

The service is provided **L'Arche** (UK) which operates as part of the **International Federation of L'Arche,** which is grounded in the Christian tradition. The service welcome people of all faiths and none. The service is overseen by a local committee and regional leader, and is managed by a community leader and a registered manager. Support is provided by house leaders, deputes and assistants, some of whom live in the shared houses.

The service states its aims and objectives include:

- to provide personalised, flexible support and care including some 1:1 day activities,
- to value each individual, ensuring that we see people with disabilities having as much to give as to receive,
- to create a sense of belonging, not just to L'Arche but to the wider community and beyond that, the world,
- to be open to people's own spiritual needs, enabling them to draw on the resources that can provide.

At the time of the inspection the service was supporting 16 service users, known as core members.

What people told us

During the inspection we spent time with all of the core members at a community gathering, we spoke with some individually or in small groups such as the listening group. We visited two of the shared houses.

We observed how comfortable people were within their homes and with the staff supporting them. We observed how much members enjoyed socialising, taking part in meetings and seasonal gatherings for celebration, prayer and shared food. We saw warm, inclusive interactions and that each person participated and benefitted in their own, but equally valid way.

People were confident in giving their opinion. The majority of views were positive about L'Arche. One person was unhappy and wished to change the level of support. This was known to the management team who were listening and exploring ways to address the issue. Due to their cognitive ability some people were unable to give their views.

We contacted **relatives** for their views about the service. The feedback we received was very positive and included:

"My relative is very happy. He is very well supported to live a full and active life and he certainly has a much better social life than he would have if he still lived with us. He really appreciates living in the sort of community setting that L'Arche provides, where there are always other people around. A little more variety in what he does during the day would be good, but this is being investigated".

"Excellent, first class care".

"I think L'Arche provides an excellent service. In other services people are isolated and lack opportunities for social interaction. This is not the case with L'Arche, which fosters a sense of home and belonging. Service users are treated with great respect and are increasingly involved at higher levels of decision-making".

"I have no doubt that the first year was very difficult but with the help of staff my relative turned a corner and is now a very happy person. I can't praise the staff enough, who I would say are also friends with our family and keep us up to date with events in my relative's life".

"L'Arche has made a significant difference to my relative's life, the one to one care and attention has brought him on leaps and bounds with his speech and everyday life. I do think communication between staff and myself could be a bit better and I feel the constant turnaround in staff is unsettling for residents".

"I couldn't imagine a better place for my relative. It is a nice, relaxed, happy and safe home. I was worried about at first, it was hard to let him go. The accommodation is purpose-built and wheelchair accessible and had adaptations, which is perfect. The staff are great, but they do change frequently, due to visa issues. My relative has adapted to them coming and going. Some do stay and a small number of staff have been there for four years. Some are very young. Some excel, but some have less maturity and experience. I would like more male staff. Managers are approachable and respond quickly and resolve issues. The manager was supportive to me when my relative was hospitalised. He's almost back at full strength, with the extra care of staff and health staff. It became evident during this time that staff love him. I thanked the staff for getting him back to how he is. I have given advice to the team and they include me. I have guardianship, which helps. I don't see much of senior managers. It was a big loss when the previous leader left".

"Living in the care of L'Arche has grown into being the happiest time of my relative's life. Through the skill and care of staff he has become a more social person, especially in his home. Some of his relating to his group at home is almost unbelievable, including hugs, laughter. The quality of his life has improved enormously over the time he has been with L'Arche. I feel confident that they understand and support him with sensitivity, thoughtfulness and patience. I trust them to do this well, which is crucial. When things don't go so well I experience them as an open and learning organisation where they use the knowledge gained to improve my relative's future wellbeing. He has been encouraged to carry out more self-care and domestic tasks which has meant he has learnt new skills. He has been encouraged and supported to try new things, take some risks, push the boundaries a little. He continues to learn, develop and change. The issue of staff turnover is about the whole of the care sector but it is always sad to see a good assistant leave (something that happens frequently) especially for my relative with his need for consistency. I realise this can be a nightmare, trying to ensure that sufficient staff are employed and that there is a good balance of experience in each house. Every now and again there is a situation where most assistants are new. My relative tolerates this better now that he is so established and happy in his home, however, in the past these have been highly anxious times. I think there may be ways that L'Arche can look at more incentives for staff (better facilities for live in staff, training and development, salaries) and I understand some research is being done. I don't agree with L'Arche's policy of limiting the years certain senior staff. In relation to my relatives, this is again about consistency and the building up of knowledge over time, which is then lost. Updating documents can sometimes take a very long time, however if they are being used and absorbed, particularly by new staff, they will be invaluable to my relative's wellbeing. Recent versions have shown in-depth understanding of his needs and risk factors and administration is generally much improved".

"Communication could sometimes be better regarding our relative, however, overall an excellent service is provided by the staff in sometimes difficult circumstances. The management is excellent and the staff friendly and caring. We feel our relative is loved and has a busy and full life".

"There are a lot of staff changes which can unsettle clients, which can affect building relationships and trust".

We contacted **professionals and partner agencies** for their views of the service. Comments included:

"A very good service".

"Staff take time to make people comfortable. It's all about the core members. They help people get the most of attending and encourage people to make choices. Core members have a say. The service stands out to me - the care and love".

"The staff were responsive, willing to co-operate and work together to achieve the best outcome for the client. They accepted a suggestion about trying digital technology. They clearly had a good knowledge of the person's needs and abilities and were able to provide the required information. I found both managers available and responsive, working with the client's family and myself. Overall a good experience".

"I find that the service contributes to the clients wants, needs and wishes in a number of ways. The service utilises speech and language as well as occupational therapy input to ascertain clients choice. L'Arche are always keen to address any potential issues that may undermine client safety and wellbeing. The service and staff have a strong sense of humanity. This comes through in the their approach to providing care and support. I feel the staff change over is the only issue that sometimes undermines this. There are times when a client who has multiple pathologies can prove challenging to staff but that has more to do with a lack of experience. Managers are always ready to discuss any matters that arise and act on recommendations".

"We have had good experiences of maintaining communication with L'Arche: they always call back if you leave a message; maintaining specific communication books is very positive. Staff from L'Arche make the effort to attend our reviews. It comes across consistently that the staff really care about the person they are supporting. We've had a good experience of someone we support who moved from home to L'Arche and this is working well and being well managed".

"I have always found the staff to be very respectful and knowledgeable about the core member's need for routines to be respected. I gained further insights into how he is at home at his recent day service review which was attended by the house leader. I was impressed with the person centred, caring approach from the description of how the staff team support him. Much effort has gone into providing him with stimulating activities in his weekly timetable e.g. art classes and music therapy, alongside time at the day service.
I have attended house reviews and observed him at home. He seemed very at ease and I was impressed with the friendly social atmosphere in the house. I've found L'Arche staff easy to communicate with and responsive to emails and phone calls".

"In the past two years Talking Mats has provided foundation training for 24 L'Arche staff. Last year L'Arche funded one of their managers to train staff internally which greatly helps in embedding Talking Mats in the organisation. We have been very impressed with how they are using Talking Mats to support people, using these regularly in care planning and reviews. I believe they were also used to gain the views of core members about applicants for the director's post. In addition they have sent staff on additional seminars on using Talking Mats with people with autism and using Talking Mats to help keep people safe. L'Arche have clearly embraced the core principle of choice and control - supporting those with communication difficulties to express their views and say what matters to them. They have been a great organisation to work with".

"I am very impressed with the knowledge and skills of the staff group. They generally have an excellent understanding of individuals' needs. I have often been impressed with their understanding of the changing health issues of residents, and although they contact me immediately with concerns, they often consider the same adaptations that I would make. The staff group works extremely well with the multi-disciplinary team and contacts us immediately with queries or concerns".

Self assessment

We are not requesting self-assessments from providers for this inspection year. Issues relating to quality assurance, acting on feedback from people using the service and the quality of the service's improvement plan are considered throughout the inspection.

The Scottish Government has launched new Health and Social Care Standards. Services should be raising awareness about the new standards and explore what they mean in their specific setting. The standards should also be shared with people experiencing care and their representatives. The new Standards are available at: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00520693.pdf

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

The service provided safe, compassionate individual care within a big-hearted, welcoming community where everyone's strengths and gifts were celebrated. Core members were at the centre of the community and their wellbeing was prioritised. People had trust in the staff and the organisation and some core members told us of the value they placed in membership of L'Arche. It was clear they had a sense belonging and worth.

People were well supported to communicate their feelings and wishes, at their own pace and these were responded to. There was an ethos of joint responsibility and decision-making. Communication tools were well used to enable core members to shape and control their own lives.

There were opportunities to have a say in how support could be better for everyone, for example: through representing others at L'Arche participation events and influencing national policy. This inspection coincided with an internal review of the Edinburgh community, which looked at the progress being made towards meetings its community plan. This included wide consultation and evidenced a respectful culture with open dialogue. Concerns, ideas and suggestions could be raised freely and all members of the community could influence the development of the service.

There were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people, such as feeling settled, leading a full and varied life, learning new skills, gaining confidence to speak in groups, visits to other L'Arche communities, learning domestic tasks, taking gradual steps towards greater independence, taking up work or volunteering, looking after each other. The service promoted independence with a risk enablement approach but also listened and responded to anxieties when things felt too much.

People's health benefitted with home cooked meals, sometimes with home-grown produce. Care adapted to changing needs and people had the right equipment and aids. They received comfort through periods of illness. There was very good collaboration with other agencies. For example: advice had been sought about how best to support someone with eating; the service was seeking external input for positive behaviour support.

Support plans were person centred and detailed interests and preferences. They were clear, up to date and

meaningful. They included 'easy read' information and pictures to enable people's involvement in developing and reviewing the plans. The review process had improved, ensuring core members and relatives were regularly asked what was working well and what needed to change. Others involved in a person's life were also involved.

Staff were safely recruited and received appropriate training to meet the needs of the core members. There was good progress towards achieving a qualified workforce, registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). There were opportunities for staff to get together to discuss their work and a weekly newsletter kept staff well-informed. Feedback from core members informed each staff member's annual review (appraisal). Although the service recognised that staff turnover was a concern for some members and relatives, staff worked hard to ensure that core member's experienced stability.

The management team was settled and experienced. Managers were active in leading the community and were well-known. This meant they were in touch with people's lives and concerns. They motivated staff and modelled L'Arche values and core member's rights, ensuring these were understood and informed staff practice.

There were development/progression opportunities for staff and training was provided for those moving in to management.

The service was committed to continuous improvement, for example: there were new internal reporting systems, policies were updated in line with legislation and good practice; core member's future needs were taken into account with planning; action had been taken to meet a requirement and areas for improvement at the last inspection. The management team was reflective and open to learning, such as when staff expressed concerns about practice or staff vacancies. They were working to address the challenges presented by visas for overseas staff, who were seen as valued contributors to the L'Arche model of care.

The whole community engaged with the inspection process. It was clear that there was pride in the organisation, its work and achievements.

What the service could do better

We suggested a standardised format for recording review meetings, which should detail agreed actions. The manager acknowledged that the service was sometimes slow to complete written updates to support plans and agreed to address this.

We would like to see more regular supervision, as records indicated this had fallen behind for some staff. Supervision supports staff in the complex, responsible and emotionally challenging work they undertake and is an expectation of the SSSC. The manager was confident that new monthly reports would help identify missed targets. We amended and carried forward a recommendation about this.

The service acknowledged that gaps in management positions should be avoided in future. We encouraged consideration of all recruitment options.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. In order to support and develop the staff team to support core member's outcomes, staff should receive regular supervision.

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.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
13 Jun 2017	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good Not assessed
29 Aug 2016	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed 4 - Good
28 Aug 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 4 - Good
29 Aug 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
26 Sep 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
25 Oct 2012	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
7 Jul 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good Not assessed
11 Nov 2009	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good

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