

# Real Life Options Elgin Housing Support Service

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

**Completed on:**  
8 June 2021

**Service provided by:**  
Real Life Options

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001558

**Service no:**  
CS2015342048

## About the service

Real Life Options Elgin is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a service to people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health conditions living in their own homes. The service is registered as a combined housing support and care at home service. There is one staff team, currently providing support to eight people, with a local office also located in Elgin.

The service sets out their vision as being, "To be recognised as leaders in enabling people to achieve their potential".

The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate 30 March 2016.

## What people told us

Using video call, we met individually with four people who receive their support from Real Life Options. People we spoke with told us about the activities they enjoyed, and outings they had participated in, or were looking forward to. Some people described ways that their staff teams supported them in their daily lives. People were observed interacting with staff and all appeared content in their company.

An inspection volunteer spoke with five people whose relatives were supported by the service. People were confident that their relatives were receiving a good standard of support and that they were treated with respect and kindness. We heard that the small management team were visible in the service and that people had no hesitation in contacting them. People told us that they were being supported to keep in contact. Individual comments included :

" gets on well with the staff, very well looked after "

" they know him well"

"really supportive. They make sure he can get out to family events and out and about in the community".

"we know the regular carers. Quite a lot of changes but all good".

"I have every confidence in the staff team".

We had some feedback to suggest that communication from the service could be more proactive. We discussed this at feedback and have asked the management team to consider whether they could enhance communication so that this meets everyone's needs and preferences.

## 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

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	5 - Very Good
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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 evaluated the provider as supporting people's wellbeing to a very good standard. This meant the provider evidenced major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people receiving the service.

While staff changes had naturally occurred, people continued to be supported by a consistent staff team, whom they had an opportunity to get to know. Observed interactions were respectful and sensitive. People experiencing support seemed relaxed and at home with staff. Staff spoke respectfully and insightfully, and records were written in a respectful manner.

People were being supported to maintain their health, and to retain and develop their skills. Staff were vigilant to, and followed up on, changes they observed. Medical or health professionals were contacted when this was required. Feedback from external professionals was good, and described a proactive team who quickly involved others whose expertise was required. For example, we were able to see that occupational therapists, GPs and social workers were consulted so that people benefitted from the right support. Professionals we spoke with were confident that the staff teams followed through on the guidance they offered. This meant people's health needs were met, promoted and responded to appropriately. Individual medication needs were well understood, and the service had a good system in place to ensure that medicines were administered in line with good practice.

People get the most out of life. Each person was being supported to enjoy a range of activities, outings and social opportunities that met their needs and reflected their individual preferences. Staff supported people to maintain contact with their family, and with others who were important to them. Access to outdoors was facilitated by the staff team, with people getting the help that they needed to do this. Individuals consequently benefitted from fresh air and exercise, and we met people for whom this was an important part of their daily experience.

The impact of Covid-19 was significant with access to many normally available social and day opportunities being restricted. However, we were confident that despite this the staff team had adjusted their support so that people continued to have interesting things to do which were stimulating and meaningful to them.

## How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated that the provider demonstrated very good standards in terms of oversight and quality assurance in the service.

The management team worked alongside staff members on a regular basis. This allowed them to directly supervise, support, coach and observe staff to ensure they were providing care and support to a high

standard. People using the service, and relatives, knew the management team and we had feedback to confirm that they were approachable and available when required.

Staff told us that they had easy access to the management team, and that ideas or suggestions which would support better outcomes for people using the service were well received. Staff felt well supported and they were confident that any concerns they highlighted about the people they supported would be addressed. Staff felt that they had sufficient time available to ensure a positive experience for each person. We were confident that the manager would escalate any issues to the appropriate agencies if people's needs changed.

The service made good use of staff supervision, staff meetings and observations as well as a range of audits in key practice areas. These factors allowed them to ensure that people were receiving good quality support.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated that the provider evidenced very good standards in how they supported the staff to have the right knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people.

Staff we spoke to told us that they experienced teamwork, and were supported well by managers and by each other. Regular supervision provided opportunities for continuous learning and reflection. The management team worked alongside staff members on a regular basis. This allowed them to directly supervise, support, coach and observe staff to ensure they were providing care and support to a high standard.

Staff were trained appropriately to carry out their job roles. There was a training plan which identified what training was needed and had been carried out. Staff told us they had access to good quality training that meant they could feel confident in their role and continually develop their practice. This in turn gave people experiencing the service confidence that they received support from staff knowledgeable in the issues that affected them.

A comprehensive induction along with an extensive and in depth period of shadowing and coaching helped to ensure that new staff were well-prepared and confident in their role. This crucially meant that people using the service had a realistic opportunity to get to know new staff, and become familiar with them, and that staff were competent in meeting their needs before they properly commenced into the role.

Maintaining the required staffing levels often presented challenges. Recruitment has been problematic, and managing cover impacted in different ways on the whole staff team. However, we were confident that this did not impinge on the experience of people using the service. The staff and management team were extremely flexible in their response to staffing shortages, ensuring that individuals experienced continuity of care from staff they knew, and that the right levels of support were consistently in place.

## How well is our care and support planned?

**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated the service as very good in relation to how well care and support was planned .

Support plans were up to date and person centred. They clearly identified how a person wanted to be supported, their needs and what was being done to promote their independence and choices.

Individuals and their relatives were involved in support planning, and reviews were taking place. We were confident that support plans would guide staff to provide consistent support in the way that best suited the person and ensured needs were met. Support plans and records were being regularly evaluated to check that people were being enabled to progress towards achieving good outcomes. Care Plans were being used effectively to influence individual support, and continuity of care.

## How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?

5 - Very Good

### 7.2 Infection prevention and control practices are safe for people experiencing care and staff

We evaluated the provider as supporting safe infection prevention and control practices to a very good standard. This meant the provider evidenced major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people receiving the service

As this was a virtual inspection there were some limitations on our opportunity to observe practice. However, we did see that staff supporting people in their own homes were wearing appropriate PPE, and were socially distancing when this was possible. Staff we spoke with were well informed about the use of PPE, and also confirmed that supplies were plentiful. Staff were able to describe the precautions that they were required to carry out to support a safe living environment for people.

Staff were routinely allocated to support people in a way that minimised transmission of infection, so that they reduced the number of contacts each person using the service experienced. During a small outbreak of Covid-19, strict staff cohorting was successfully established, and this was key to their effective management of the incident and remains central to their staff contingency plan.

### 7.3 Leadership and staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of people experiencing care

To ensure people received good quality care based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice the provider had made training specific to Covid-19 and infection prevention and control available for staff. Staff spoken with confirmed that they had access to updated guidance for IPC and that management supported them to effectively put this into practice. This included good hand hygiene, how to use personal protective equipment (PPE) and infection prevention and control. The management team conducted regular observations of practice, often by working alongside staff, to satisfy themselves that the required standards were being met.

The staff group were confident and competent when supporting people during the Covid-19 pandemic. They told us what they did to keep people safe from infection and their knowledge reflected public health guidance on infection prevention and control.

## What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

### Requirements

#### Requirement 1

1. The provider must ensure that people's care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event. Additionally, the provider must ensure that people's care and support meets their needs and is right for them.

By 15 December 2019, the provider must improve how people's care and support is organised. In order to do this the provider must:

- a) Review staff practice in Buckie, gaining assurances that staff members are competent in fulfilling their job roles.
- b) Review staffing levels and the deployment of staff to ensure the right numbers of staff are available to meet the needs of people.
- c) Arrange staff learning and support around expected practice as outlined within the Health and Social Care Standards and the Scottish Social Services Councils, Codes of Practice.

**This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19); 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15) and 'My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event' (HSCS 4.14), and in order to comply with Regulation 4 (1) (a), (b) and 15 (a), (b) (i) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).**

This requirement was made on 15 October 2019.

#### Action taken on previous requirement

Following on from the last inspection the provider cancelled the service provision in Buckie. The basis of the requirement was concerned with the Buckie component of the service, and was not, as evidenced in the report, directly relevant to the Elgin service. We have had no further concerns in relation to the issues cited in the requirement as requiring addressed.

**Met - within timescales**

### Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website ([www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

## Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 People get the most out of life	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
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
How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	5 - Very Good
7.2 Infection prevention and control practices are safe for people experiencing care and staff	5 - Very Good
7.3 Leadership and staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of people experiencing care	5 - Very Good

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