

Sunflower Home Care Housing Support Service

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Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
8 January 2026

Service provided by:
Highland Hospice

Service provider number:
SP2003002400

Service no:
CS2019374389

About the service

Sunflower Home Care is provided by the Highland Hospice in Inverness. It is registered to provide care to adults in their homes and community within the Glenhurquhart and Boleskine areas. Since April 2024, they have been providing support at home to adults who require palliative care. This service covers the Inverness area.

At the time of the inspection the service was providing support to 21 individuals.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 6 and 8 January 2026. One inspector carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about this service which included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and people who used the service and provider records.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- visited five people in their homes and spoke with five people using the service;
- spoke with four relatives and reviewed three completed online surveys;
- spoke with staff and management and reviewed ten completed online staff surveys;
- reviewed documents; and
- observed staff practice.

Key messages

- People experienced support that promoted their dignity, independence and choice.
- Staff knew people's needs, aspirations and concerns well.
- People and families benefited from warm, encouraging, positive relationships.
- Staff were quick to identify changes in people's health and seek relevant health advice.
- The staff team worked well together, were flexible and responsive to changing situations.
- Care and support planning is thorough, person-centred, and responsive to individual needs.
- Leaders were responsive to feedback from people receiving a service.
- Staff felt well supported by the management team.

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 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

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question. This means there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people who were supported by Sunflower Home Care. There were very few areas for improvement.

People supported by Sunflower Home Care experienced compassionate care. There were strong and positive relationships between staff and supported people. Staff were warm, encouraging and helped people to achieve their individual outcomes. Feedback from people and their families who were supported by the Palliative Care Response Team (PCRT) was very positive. For example:

- "The staff are excellent, every one of them"
- Staff are, "very knowledgeable and efficient, but caring"
- "The care is brilliant and they are always smiling!"

These views were echoed by the people who were supported by the Glenurquhart and Boleskine home care teams:

- "Staff go above and beyond"
- "The care is remarkable"
- "Very pleased with service provided".

We sought the views of external professionals who work with the service, who said:

"The staff care greatly about their service users and will do anything to make the care they provide as person centred as possible".

Care and support was delivered in a person-centred way because staff knew people's needs, aspirations and concerns well. Families and people in receipt of the service trusted the staff and were confident that any issues or concerns would be dealt with and resolved quickly. Everyone told us that staff had the skills and understanding to support them appropriately.

Staff respected peoples' wishes and preferences. This shaped how people were supported in their home, for example, what people liked to eat and drink, their preferred routines and personal care choices. Staff had plenty of time to spend with the people they supported and no one felt rushed.

It was evident that people felt confident about their care because they knew who was coming to support them and when to expect them, even during adverse weather conditions.

Staff were knowledgeable and responsive to people's changing health needs and closely monitored their needs. This was particularly important for people supported by the PCRT, where their needs may change rapidly. They had developed good working relationships with external health professionals, for example working closely with local NHS community nursing teams. This way of working provided confidence that people received the right care by the right person at the right time.

There were systems in place to identify any risks to people's health and wellbeing, for example, the risk of skin damage. However, during the inspection, we identified a need to ensure these assessments are completed accurately and kept up to date to ensure the level of risk identified is accurate. We discussed this during the inspection. The service took immediate steps to address this which included further training.

How good is our staff team?**5 - Very Good**

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question. This means there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people who were supported by Sunflower Home Care. There were very few areas for improvement.

Supported people benefited from a warm atmosphere because there are good working relationships between the staff teams and effective communication between the care teams and management.

It was clear that people's health and wellbeing benefited from the input of a competent and confident staff team who are well supported by their manager. Staff described feeling listened to and felt comfortable raising any issues. They were given plenty of opportunity to discuss their work and how best to improve outcomes for people during formal supervision sessions and staff meetings.

People who used the service and their families had confidence in the staff. They described a staff team who had time to provide them with the care and support they needed. This included engaging in meaningful conversations at the same time.

People experience good continuity of care. Staff enjoyed their work and felt valued:

- "Sunflower care is a fab place to work"
- "The support we receive is great"
- "The service is truly focused on the wellbeing of both staff and the people we support".

Staffing levels were assessed regularly, according to the needs of the people in receipt of care. Staff felt listened to in relation to the hours people required and how arrangements for visits to people were planned. This included allowances for travel time and ensuring staff could take a break during their shift.

Management carefully assessed the number of people the home care teams could support to ensure staff could continue to provide the right level of support. In addition, the staff teams supported each other so people received consistent and stable care and support. They were flexible and responsive to changing situations, helping each other out at the last minute.

How well is our care and support planned?**5 - Very Good**

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question. This means there were major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people who were supported by Sunflower Home Care. There were very few areas for improvement.

Peoples' individual support plans were kept in their home and set out how staff should provide care and support. The level of detail provided ensured that all staff, including new staff, would know how to support a person in their home and be familiar with their choices. This included guidance about the best way to enter a person's home, how to communicate with individuals, and their preferred routines, including the need to encourage a person's independence. It was positive that people's unique history and personal stories were also clearly recorded. Staff could use this information as talking points with people.

We sought the views of external professionals who work with the service, who said:

"Care and support planning is thorough, person-centered, and responsive to individual needs. Plans are developed with service users and families, ensuring preferences and goals are respected".

During the inspection, we looked at how often peoples' personal plans were reviewed and updated.

People supported by the Palliative Care Response Team were reviewed daily. Staff kept their manager up to date about any changes or concerns about a person's health and care needs by email. Any changes to a person's care plan were then made. This ensured everyone involved in their care, including families, were kept up to date.

For people supported by the Glenurquhart and Boleskine home care teams, we found that support plans had been updated within the last six months as part of their formal twice yearly review process. These twice yearly formal reviews included supported people and their family and were up to date. People told us they had been fully involved in decisions about their current and future care and support needs. We discussed the need to ensure assessments and care plans were also updated in between these formal reviews, for example if a person's needs and outcomes change. This will ensure peoples' care plans accurately reflect their current care needs.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

So that improving outcomes for individuals remains a focus, the provider should identify and prioritise improvement activities that will enhance person-centred care and support. This improvement plan should include timescales and roles and responsibilities of staff involved in this.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19); and

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 26 June 2023.

Action taken since then

During the inspection we saw evidence of a robust and dynamic service improvement plan, which had been informed by a self assessment process using the Care Inspectorate's Quality Framework for Support Services, May 2022. This process provided a focus on enhancing person-centred care and support.

The plan clearly stated timescales and included the roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the improvement process.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure safe care, care plans should be specific and clear on caring expectations of staff and family members involved in the care of the supported person. This should include decisions reached at reviews being reflected in the person's care plan.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me.' (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 26 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection in 2023, people's care plans, which included their daily routines, had been updated. They set out who was involved in a person's care and provided details of their preferred choices and routine. People and their families had been involved in agreeing their care plans and told us they had been fully involved in decisions about their current and future care and support needs at their six monthly reviews.

For further information please see section 'How well is support and care planned' above.

This area for improvement has been met.

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 staff team?	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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