

Thorntoun Estate Nursing Home Care Home Service

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Thorntoun Limited

Service provider number:
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CS2003000768

About the service

Thorntoun Estate Nursing Home is a care home for older people and people with learning disabilities, located just outside the village of Crosshouse. The service provides nursing and residential care for up to 76 people. This includes 12 places within The Laurels unit for adults and older people with learning difficulties, seven places for adults with physical disabilities and four places for respite care.

The service is divided into three units and provides accommodation over two floors in single bedrooms, many of which have en-suite facilities. There is lift access to the upper floor. People using the service have access to a range of communal facilities, including lounges and dining facilities. Well-tended gardens are accessible from all three units.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28, 29 and 30 January 2026. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate who were supported by an inspection volunteer. 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 12 people using the service and nine of their relatives, and received 35 completed questionnaires
- spoke with 29 staff and management and received 18 completed questionnaires
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with a visiting professional and received one completed questionnaire.

Key messages

- The management team led by example, nurturing a culture of collaboration and continuous development with staff from all departments working well together. This approach contributed to positive outcomes and experiences for people receiving care and their families.
- Residents benefitted from effective monitoring and responsive support for both their physical and mental health and wellbeing, delivered by a skilled and well trained staff team.
- Staff played an important role in helping residents maintain meaningful personal relationships and stay connected with the wider community. The activities programme was diverse, imaginative and impactful, providing enriching opportunities for residents.
- Staff felt valued and supported by managers who cared about their wellbeing. As a result, staff remained motivated and committed, enhancing the overall experience for residents and their families.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

4 - Good

We identified important strengths that had a positive influence on people's experiences and outcomes, clearly outweighing areas for improvement. We evaluated this key question as good.

Residents and their families expressed strong confidence in the staff team, describing support that had been delivered safely and effectively in response to health and wellbeing needs. People told us they enjoyed positive, trusting relationships with staff. Throughout our visit, we saw that residents benefitted from prompt, regular and meaningful interactions with staff who knew them well and had time to engage with them beyond essential care tasks. People shared examples where physical and mental health had improved since moving into the care home, commenting:

'The nurses act quickly whenever mum is unwell and they keep a close eye on her from day to day which I find reassuring.'

'(Relative) has really improved since coming in. They're eating better and joining in with the activities which is great for us to see. Staff really go the extra mile.'

'We can't believe the difference that the staff have made. (Relative) is doing so much better here and the staff keep us up to date with everything.'

'(Manager) and (depute) are excellent. They think of me as well which is so kind of them and all the staff are wonderful with mum.'

Staff had supported residents to maintain meaningful contact with loved ones and to stay connected with those important to them. The environment felt homely and welcoming, and we observed staff engaging warmly with visitors. Procedures were in place to enable visiting to continue safely during periods of restriction, helping to reduce the risk of loneliness and distress.

The personal plans we reviewed were detailed, person centred and reflective of individual needs, preferences and choices. It was encouraging to find a focus on people's abilities and the promotion of independence. Health needs had been regularly assessed, monitored and reviewed using evidence based risk assessments. We identified effective care planning interventions that had led to positive outcomes across areas such as nutrition, skin care, pain management, mental health and medication management, helping to maximise health and wellbeing. We discussed with the management team how the clinical meeting minutes would benefit from a greater level of detail regarding the impact of planned care in reducing risk and improving health outcomes.

Training compliance was good and this equipped staff with the skills and knowledge they needed to keep people safe and well. Staff demonstrated strong knowledge of individual residents, enabling them to identify and escalate health concerns promptly. Effective communication processes supported the sharing and acting on of essential information. It was evident that collaborative working with external professionals had contributed to safe, timely and effective interventions.

Accident and incident management had been well handled, with clear reporting, reflection and appropriate actions where needed. An open culture of communication and learning helped to reduce the risk of recurrence. Staff were knowledgeable regarding adult support and protection procedures and confident in

their individual roles. It was positive to see robust competencies being undertaken with staff to reinforce good practice in respect of the protection of vulnerable adults.

Safe medication practice had been informed by staff training and competency checks as well as regular checks and audits. Protocols were in place for the use of psychoactive and 'as required' (PRN) medicines, and it was positive to see that staff practice had minimised the use and the risk of unwanted side effect associated with some of these medicines. We discussed the need to ensure that covert medication records are updated in response to relevant changes. We also found that some PRN protocols would benefit from a greater level of detail regarding the steps taken to alleviate stress and distress prior to administering this medication. We saw staff successfully diverting and comforting individuals with compassion and patience but noted that this had not been reflected in the records reviewed (see area for improvement 1).

We met with highly motivated, innovative activities staff who had a clear focus on delivering opportunities that enhanced people's quality of life. Residents benefitted from a varied, creative and purposeful activities programme that included community connections. Staff valued meaningful engagement and had designed activities that supported relationships, enhanced wellbeing and created a sense of fun and belonging.

Mealtimes were well organised, sociable and supported by attentive staff who provided discreet assistance while promoting independence. Residents told us they enjoyed the food, with snacks and drinks readily available between meals. Catering staff demonstrated good knowledge of individual preferences and dietary needs, offering varied menus. They worked collaboratively with nursing and care staff to meet individual needs, and it was pleasing to see the efforts made to deliver enjoyable experiences during special events and activities.

We discussed with the management team how staff could improve the recording of food and fluids for residents with enhanced support needs. The records we reviewed lacked sufficient detail to fully reflect food and fluid intake and we also discussed how the allocation of staff would prompt more regular opportunities to maximise fluid intake where this proved challenging (see area for improvement 2).

High standards of cleanliness and robust infection prevention and control (IPC) measures were consistently evident with regular checks and audits being undertaken. IPC training and competency checks informed and supported staff practice. This contributed to protecting people from the risk of infection.

Areas for improvement

1. Covert and 'as required' medication records should be reviewed responsively to ensure they align with the current health and wellbeing needs of people experiencing care with 'as required' protocols detailing the non-pharmacological interventions undertaken by staff to alleviate stress and distress.

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

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

2. To meet the needs of people with enhanced nutritional needs, supplementary records should record food and fluid intake in sufficient detail, including fortification. Staff accountability for supporting individual residents should also be implemented to prompt more regular opportunities to maximise fluid intake.

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

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

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We found important strengths that had a positive impact on people's experiences and outcomes. We evaluated this key question as good.

We concluded that residents and their families were able to have confidence in staff because they were knowledgeable, skilled and competent. We saw that residents experienced a good level of interaction with staff from all departments. We observed individual residents responding positively to staff they were clearly familiar with. Feedback about the staff team was consistently positive. Comments included:

'Staff are absolutely wonderful. Anything I ask of them they do. They are on the ball.'

'(Chef) in the kitchen and her team are excellent. The food is really good and they still weigh mum and keep an eye on her intake. The staff know mum and speak to her as a person. I'm kept well informed - excellent.'

'All the staff are great and they all stop to have a chat. We can only say positive things about them all and we appreciate all they do.'

We met with staff who were friendly, knowledgeable and professional. Staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities, valued the work they did and worked well together to deliver stable and consistent support. Good communication, information sharing and prompt reporting of any concerns to senior colleagues enabled the staff team to meet residents' needs effectively.

The recruitment of new staff had been well managed with the required checks in place prior to commencing employment. This protected people experiencing care and it was positive to see a values-based approach to the recruitment of staff.

An assessment process that informed the appropriate number, skill mix and deployment of staff to meet residents' needs had been undertaken regularly. Staff told us they felt valued and well supported by their managers. We saw that staff worked well together as a team, creating a warm atmosphere for residents and their families. We shared the staffing method framework with the manager to complement the existing dependency tool. We asked for this to be implemented to fully consider and link the various aspects of workforce and workload planning that deliver positive outcomes for people as well as supporting the wellbeing of staff. Staffing assessments should be shared with residents, families and staff in an open and transparent way.

Staff benefitted from a structured training programme with opportunities for additional learning being delivered. The manager had oversight of the staff training programme with alerts to refresh this within timescales. We saw that there had been a good level of compliance with training which supported staff to practice safely and effectively. Staff also benefitted from regular supervision that encouraged reflection on practice and identification of training needs.

Competency assessments and direct observations of staff practice had been undertaken to inform and monitor compliance with good practice. We saw that these had been used across a range of topics, such as medication administration and IPC. This had offered staff an opportunity to reflect on their strengths and address any areas for development. Due to changes in the staff team, some of the competency checks remained outstanding and the management team were in the process of addressing this.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We identified important strengths that positively influenced people's experiences and outcomes. We evaluated this key question as good.

People using care services should benefit from high quality environments that meet their individual needs. The care home provided a comfortable, welcoming and homely setting. Residents and families had been involved in decisions about the environment and spoke positively about the location and facilities, commenting:

'(Housekeeper) and her staff keep the room so clean and she's always popping in to ask me if there's anything she can do for me. The room is deep cleaned regularly - staff are on top of it.'

'It's a lovely location and we enjoy spending time down at the duck pond which is a welcome addition to an already pleasant setting.'

'The place is well looked after - anything needing fixing is dealt with. We think it's a lovely home and (relative) is very comfortable here.'

'We appreciated being able to bring things in from home and the staff were amazing at helping (relative) to settle in and that definitely helped.'

Staff had worked with residents and families to personalise bedrooms, helping individuals feel comfortable and at home in their own space. Alongside single room accommodation, residents had access to a variety of areas where they could spend their time. This offered a choice of pleasant, attractively furnished spaces that allowed people to choose between socialising or spending quiet time alone based on their preferences.

It was encouraging to see that the provider had continued to invest in the home environment with ongoing refurbishment supporting good outcomes for people. We observed residents moving freely around the home, using the space in a familiar and comfortable way. People told us they enjoyed spending time outdoors in the attractively maintained garden and at the duck pond that had been developed the previous year.

The environment met people's needs, with good accessibility that enabled residents to move around independently, with staff available to assist when required. Any necessary equipment was readily available and well maintained, allowing staff to deliver care safely.

High standards of cleanliness and robust infection prevention and control measures were consistently evident, supported by regular checks and audits. Knowledgeable and diligent housekeeping staff played a key role in maintaining a clean, fresh and clutter free environment for residents and their families.

Robust maintenance arrangements ensured the environment remained safe and secure, protecting people from avoidable risks or harm. We saw that planned maintenance checks had been closely monitored and well recorded with any additional repairs having been addressed promptly.

The provider intended to remodel stairwells. In the meantime, action should be taken to restrict access to stairways that could pose a risk for some residents (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To promote a safe environment, the provider should restrict access to stairways that could pose a risk for some residents.

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

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

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

We discussed the need to make some improvements to the care home environment during the feedback meeting and encouraged the provider to implement programme of improvements and refurbishment to the care home environment.

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

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

This area for improvement was made on 28 June 2024.

Action taken since then

The aspects of the home environment that informed this area for improvement had been addressed.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The service should continue to develop the consistency of the content of the information and details recorded within each person's individual care and support plan. This helps to ensure that all staff have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the support needs of the people they care for.

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

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 28 June 2024.

Action taken since then

The personal plans we reviewed reflected residents' care and support needs to a good standard, demonstrating that staff knew each individual well.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The service should continue to develop the consistency of the content of the electronic care plan system and ensure that all staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the various support needs of the people they care for.

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

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 5 July 2023.

Action taken since then

A similar area for improvement regarding personal plans had been met as detailed above. Staff consistently demonstrated sound knowledge of residents' care and support needs.

This area for improvement had 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?	4 - Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
3.2 Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
4.1 People experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

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