

Aberdeenshire Council – South Care at Home Service Support Service

Health and Social Care Partnership
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Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Service no:
CS2018370744

About the service

South Aberdeenshire Care at Home is registered to provide a care and support service to people living in their own homes. The service is divided into nine teams with each team having their own geographic area: Huntly, Aboyne, Banchory, Mid-Deeside, Mearns (Laurencekirk), Portlethen, Coast, Alford and Stonehaven. Each team has their own care team co-ordinators and care staff. The provider of the service is the Aberdeenshire Local Authority.

About the inspection

This was a short notice inspection which took place on 25, 26, 27 February 2026. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. 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 23 people using the service, and 14 of their family
- spoke with 17 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Prior to the inspection we asked the service to send out questionnaires to major stakeholders. We received the following completed responses:

64 from people receiving a service

21 from staff and

two from visiting professionals.

Key messages

- People were very positive about the quality of the service they received.
- People praised the staff for their professionalism, kindness, care and humour.
- The timings for visits were right for people. They said visits were not rushed.
- People recognised the input and value of staff supporting them to become more independent.
- During this period of change to the provider, people were happy with the stability of the staff who supported them.
- Relatives had confidence in the standards of care and support their loved one received.
- The review process was praised, and recognised as being a valuable platform to discuss changes to the care arrangements.
- Relatives felt included and valuable contributors to the care and support of their loved one.

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 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 found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Approximately 50 percent of people receiving a service were involved in our inspection. They were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the service they receive.

People said that they never felt rushed. There was enough time allocated for their visit, to ensure their care and support needs were met to a very good standard. There was always time for a chat. This was respectful and kind care and support.

The service was undergoing changes however, people were generally positive about the stability of the staff group who visited them. The numbers of staff had increased however, people said they were all familiar to them. This stability was important for people. It reduced their anxieties, and ensured there was continuity in the standards of the care provision.

People were positive about the staff referring to them as kind, professional, caring and "a lifeline." Trusting friendships had formed with staff. It was important for people to feel comfortable when the carers entered their home, and the kindness and professionalism of the staff reduced their anxieties. Some people said they were initially reluctant to accept the need for carers however, the efforts taken by staff to build the trust and positive relationships had ensured they welcomed the support they received.

Many people praised the efforts staff took in the period of very bad snow. They said that this was their only human contact during that period, and the presence of a known face was greatly reassuring.

People recognised the skills and knowledge of the staff. They felt staff were well-trained. This meant that people had full confidence in the staff if they required assistance to move. Staff said that the range of training was wide, and there were opportunities to suggest additional training if they felt it would inform their role.

Staff supported people with an enablement and rehabilitation approach. Some people had been discharged from hospital with care packages in place. They recognised the support they received to regain skills and independence. When packages were reviewed and there was a reduction, this was clearly linked into people regaining independence. People were clear that they attributed this improvement to their wellbeing to the "marvellous staff."

There needs to be clarity in relation to staff announcing themselves when they arrive at people's homes. Some people with visual impairment said that some staff announced their arrival, stating their name and purpose of visit. However, this was inconsistent. Family members who lived in same house, again said there was an inconsistency in staff announcing their arrival for the visit. This had the potential to impact on their privacy and comfort. Staff should identify with people and their families, their preferences and ensure this is documented in care notes.

People knew the names of managers, and said they were confident that any concern they had could be discussed with managers. They were assured that any concern would be dealt with appropriately, and the outcome used to consistently inform changes.

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

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Families and loved ones were very positive about the quality of the service provided. This was reassuring and of comfort to them. They referred to the staff as being trusting, professional and very caring.

People had a yellow folder in their home that contained their care plans and daily visit records. Relatives said they had access to this, and could review the plans to assess if the planned care and support was appropriate. The daily records kept them informed of the outcome of the visit by staff. This kept families up-to-date, and gave them the ability to follow up on any information that they had concerns with. This transparency contributed to the high levels of confidence expressed.

There was clear information available on how to raise a concern. Families knew the names of the managers, and all felt that any issue they raised would be dealt with appropriately. This openness empowered relatives to have their say in ensuring people got the care and support they needed.

The care review process was valued. Enough notice was given to enable families the ability to join the review with their loved one. This inclusion made them feel valued, and contributors to the planning of the care and support.

When family or spouses lived with the person who was receiving the care and support, they said that they felt part of the care and support visit. Staff would include them in conversations and ask after their wellbeing. One person was very happy to assist staff when it was needed. This made them feel included and recognised as a valuable carer to their loved one.

Households said that staff were mindful of being in their homes. They valued the importance of the staff's role, in supporting people to live in their own homes. Two spouses said staff were "a blessing" and enabled them to live at home and well with their loved one.

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 well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.2 Carers, friends and family members are encouraged to be involved	5 - Very Good

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