

# Aberdeenshire Responders for Care at Home Service (ARCH) Support Service

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

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**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeenshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000029

**Service no:**  
CS2018370743

## About the service

Aberdeenshire Responder Service (ARCH) delivers care and support across the Aberdeenshire area within sheltered housing and the community. This includes planned care, unplanned care, end of life care and physical rehabilitation and enablement.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 2, 3 and 4 February 2026. One inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the provider and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- Spoke and received questionnaires from 21 from people using the service.
- Spoke with two families.
- Received 25 questionnaires from other health and social care professionals.
- Received 33 questionnaires from staff.
- Spoke with seven staff and management.
- Observed practice.
- Reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- People were very happy with the care they received.
- People and families were grateful for the support which enabled people to feel safe at home.
- Staff were kind and respectful. They ensured that people's dignity was maintained.
- There were concerns about the redesign and the impact on people who are supported.
- Staff felt communication around the redesign could be better.

## 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

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.

People received kind and respectful care, whether this was planned or unplanned care. One person said, 'I feel my [relative] is well cared for' and another told us, 'the team delivered care that was timely, efficient and respectful.' We observed compassionate and person-centred care, even in circumstances where staff were providing unplanned care and had limited information. This meant people were treated with dignity and respect.

People predominantly received support due to an emergency, such as a fall or medical concern. People told us responders 'attended without hesitation' and 'without them I would struggle to stay at home.' If needed, staff would contact other professionals, for example, community nurses and if required, the ambulance service. One professional told us, 'could not support the medical needs of many people without the support of ARCH life saving service' and another said, 'the responders on the ground are highly experienced, compassionate and also have the client's wellbeing at the forefront of all they do.'

One professional told us of their concerns due to the redesign and change in criteria people were not receiving support in a timely manner. The service continually reviewed this to ensure the response times were within the four-hour window and based on the priority of the calls. We did not see any evidence of people having to wait beyond this. As a result, people could be confident they would receive the right support when needed.

## How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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

Staff were overall positive about working for ARCH. We were told by one member of staff, 'we work well as a team' and another said, 'I am proud to work for ARCH.' One person told us, 'the carers and responders are very good' and other said, 'I am very happy with the girls.' This meant people benefited from a staff team who were dedicated to providing high-quality care and support.

Staff told us they felt confident in their roles and how they benefited from their training. We reviewed training information and found the level of training to be very good. One professional said, 'the carers and CTC's (care team co-ordinator) who work in ARCH are exceptional' and another said, 'the whole team are committed to offering the best care at sometimes the most difficult time.' Therefore, people benefited from a skilled and well-trained team.

Staff felt able to support each other and were able to contact others, for example the CTC's when needed. Staff received regular supervision that included discussions regarding service delivery and personal wellbeing. This meant staff were better equipped to support people's needs.

Staff told us their concerns about the redesign and how this affected them. They felt that communication from the provider was limited and confusing. The provider should ensure communication with staff is regular and clear thus reducing the worries staff may have.

Due to the geographical area the service covers, the staff told us travel time had increased due to the reduction of staff. Specifically, overnight travel. The service is monitoring this and providing feedback to the provider. As a result, the service is ensuring the safety and wellbeing of staff.

## 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

To support the service with continuous improvement, the provider should ensure the service improvement plan reflects actions identified and the outcome of improvement work.

This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring the service improvement plan is accurate with an overarching view of continuous improvement.

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).

**This area for improvement was made on 21 November 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

The service improvement plan had improved. The plan was more robust with clear delegation and timescales for improvement. Lessons learned were reflected in the plan along with actions taken by the service to improve outcomes for people. Therefore people could be confident the service had a ethos of continued improvement.

**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](http://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

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