

CERA - Argyll & Bute Housing Support Service

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 March 2026

Service provided by:
CERA Care Operations (Scotland)
Limited

Service provider number:
SP2009010680

Service no:
CS2009234912

About the service

Cera - Argyll & Bute care service is registered to provide a combined housing support and care at home.

The service provides a range of support to people in their own homes in the Helensburgh, Garelochhead and Cardross areas. The offices for this service are in Sandbank, Dunoon.

Support teams provide a range of care and support, including personal care, domestic tasks and practical assistance, as well as complex and specialised services.

At the time of inspection there were 80 people using the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 24, 25, 26 and 27 February 2026 between 10:00 and 18:15. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we viewed 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 we:

- spoke with 16 people using the service and 13 of their family,
- spoke with nine staff and management, we also received 11 email responses from staff,
- observed practice and daily life,
- reviewed documents,
- received feedback from two visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Staff used their knowledge of people to provide very good person centred care
- People supported and their and relatives reported high levels of satisfaction with care
- Staffing arrangements supported positive experiences for people
- People experienced reliable care with no missed visits and any delays communicated to them.
- Staff reported feeling 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

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 experienced very good outcomes as a result of the care and support provided. Interactions observed demonstrated warm, respectful, and person centred practice, with staff showing strong knowledge of people's routines, needs, and preferences. Carers were attentive, communicated clearly, and ensured that people were involved in decisions about their care. For example, one person told us, "Carers are great. They do a good job." This meant that people felt valued and respected.

People and relatives consistently reported high levels of satisfaction with care, describing staff as kind, reliable, and responsive to changing needs. A relative explained, "They always turn up and have never let me down. People experienced reliable care with no missed visits and any delays were communicated resulting in people feeling safe.

Staffing arrangements supported continuity, safety, and positive experiences for people. The service deployed small, consistent teams who knew people well and were able to identify changes in their health or routines quickly. People told us staff were reliable and familiar. A person supported told us that "It's always the same faces," while another said, "I have a small, consistent team and I know them all well," this meant that staff were skilled at noticing deterioration and seeking appropriate support. Relatives told us Staff are very observant and will let me know of any issues." Another person said, "I get two visits a day... they smile, talk to me, listen to me, and always look out for me." This helped people to manage their health conditions and stay well.

Staff adapted their approach sensitively for people experiencing distress, cognitive impairment, and complex physical needs including MND, dementia, and swallowing difficulties. People benefited from effective partnership working with district nurses, GPs, and other professionals, enhancing safety and wellbeing.

Medication support was safe and well managed, with the service using electronic MAR systems. Where issues were identified these were escalated promptly and addressed. Care plans were detailed, up to date, and clearly guided staff practice. People valued having access to the digital app, which increased transparency and provided reassurance to relatives.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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

Staff reported feeling well supported by seniors and the management team, describing supervision, competency checks, and observational practice assessments as meaningful and helpful. Training was both on line and in person. There was a culture of encouraging staff to be the best they could be and we saw examples of staff being supported to develop new skills and take on new roles. This resulted in staff feeling valued.

Safer recruitment guidelines and checks were in place . There was a robust induction process in place covering both training and shadow shifts. Staff reported that they worked well together. There were examples where the onboarding process and been tailored to staffs needs providing a positive experience for them and promoting staff retention.

Rota planning was thoughtful and matched staff to people based on skills, availability, and compatibility. Although the system was computerized this was supported and structured by the in depth knowledge staff held about the geography of the area and peoples needs. Staff reported that they had sufficient time to complete required tasks and that the management team were responsive to requests for visit time to be altered. The service demonstrated flexible deployment practices which also assisted in ensuring people needs were met and staffing resources used effectively.

Staff communicated effectively with each other and coordinated tasks during visits, which enhanced people's safety and comfort. The lack of an office in Helensburgh was acknowledged by staff to be a negative point; however, they reported that calls to the office were answered and that they received good support from the management team. This consistent and responsive communication contributed to people feel reassured that staff were well informed and able to meet their needs .

Regular team meetings took place, with the option to join online for those not able to attend in person, and there were weekly PPE drops to ensure staff had adequate supplies. The field care supervisor split her time between Helensburgh and the office, ensuring that she was available to provide support if required. These arrangements meant that staff were well prepared, well supported, and confident in their roles .

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 demonstrate that medication is safely administered the provider should take steps to ensure that recording is accurate and timely. This includes staff being aware of their professional and individual responsibility and following administration training and protocols that are already in place.

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

'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

This area for improvement was made on 21 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff demonstrated a strong knowledge of medication policies and procedures and were clear on when medication would not be given and the actions associated with this. The compliance rate for medication training was high and the 6 monthly practical observations were taking place. This meant that staff had the required knowledge and skills to safely and effectively administer people's medication.

The emar recording system was monitored throughout the day allowing any discrepancies to be identified and followed up providing another level of assurance and oversight.

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
1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect	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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