

INCLUDEM Intensive Support Services Support Service

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Announced (short notice)

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Service provided by:
INCLUDEM

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About the service

INCLUDEM Intensive Support Services is a registered charity providing intensive support to young people and their families. It has services in Aberdeen, Dundee, Stirling, Fife and Glasgow.

Includem believe that every child and young person has endless potential, and that with the right support they can recognise this and make positive life choices to progress to the type of future they want to live. They work with young people and their families to develop a package of support tailored to their specific needs.

About the inspection

This was a short notice inspection which took place on 10 and 11 February 2026. The inspection was carried out by five inspectors from the Care Inspectorate, with visits made to services in Aberdeen, Dundee, Stirling, Fife and Glasgow.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

To inform the inspection, we:

- spoke with 18 young people and 23 family members
- spoke with staff and managers in all of the services
- observed practice
- reviewed documents
- spoke with external professionals
- received and reviewed 159 questionnaires - 17 from young people, 33 from family members, 52 from external professionals and 57 from staff.

Key messages

- Families benefitted from a motivated, enthusiastic staff team, with a shared commitment to supporting them to achieve positive outcomes.
- Includem had the ability, commitment and willingness to provide responsive and flexible support. Alongside the out of hours telephone helpline young people and their families had 24/7 access to support.
- Families benefitted from staff who were solution focussed and had the knowledge and skills to help them make identified changes. Staff were well supported and trained to ensure a high level of professionalism.
- The model of support 'A Better Life' provided a comprehensive framework for staff to deliver skilled support to young people and families. Some young people had made remarkable progress.

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?	6 - Excellent
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?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated key question 1.2 as excellent, where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children/people.

Significant emphasis and time was given to getting to know young people and their families to establish relationships of openness and trust. A strengths-based approach recognised young people and parents as experts in their own lives and experiences, and as such they identified their own goals. We saw and heard young people being at the centre of all discussion and decisions which resulted in outstanding progress for many young people.

A comprehensive assessment ensured that staff worked alongside families to understand what was important to them. The team having the flexibility and a willingness to seek the right support, and the time to do this, was a massive asset. Families benefitted from staff who were solution focussed and had the knowledge and skills to help them make identified changes. The model of support 'A Better Life' provided a comprehensive framework for staff to deliver skilled support to young people and families. This was embedded in practice.

Feedback from parents and young people consistently spoke of being valued, listened to and understood by their support team. A young person told us, "It has helped me feel better about myself".

Young people described being given choice and options over how they spent their time when they were with their support worker. Some of this time centred around building relationships, enhancing social skills and enjoying new experiences, and some spent on focussed work on the goals they had identified. We heard some heart-warming descriptions of support leading to very significant change that young people and families described as life changing. This included strong advocacy to support people back into education, resulting in young people being re-introduced to school, passing exams, and a young person heading to university. This young person said, "They advocate for me in school. They would help. I love learning. School is a place of safety. They made sure I got back...They helped people see I was still me and not autism".

Developing social skills and confidence in a range of situations empowered people, and improved their physical and emotional wellbeing. People were introduced to a range of social activities with, and without support. A parent spoke about improved confidence and ability to engage in activities outside of the house due to support. A young person told us how their support had made an immeasurable difference in her life and how she now had a voice in her own life and was confident enough to share her views in professional meetings (something she never thought possible).

The staff team understood their role in safeguarding young people and adults, and had ongoing training and learning opportunities. Policies and procedures supported good practice. Organisationally, and individually, we heard of high expectations of individual and colleagues' practice. Within the organisation there was always a senior member of staff available to provide advice and guidance, with auditing and quality assurance processes in place which ensured the safety of people using the service. The team supported risk (at very varying levels) with a focus on resilience, protective factors and risk reduction. They worked very well to collaborate with other organisations and agencies to meet the needs of young people and families.

We were hugely impressed by the ability, commitment and willingness to provide responsive and flexible

support. We witnessed examples of immediate and important responses to crisis and need. In addition to the flexible and 'out of hours' working, the telephone helpline ensured that there was 24/7 support. A young person told us this was invaluable to them as their "episodes could be at midnight" and the telephone support was really helpful. They also said it "was the first time someone had understood them and given them strategies they could use that were so much more than just a list". Some family members were anxious about how they would cope when support ended, however, described exit plans which included advice about helpful resources they could access.

Families and young people described opportunities to reconnect and have outings and fun together, thanks to financial support they had been given. We also heard funding had helped people clear debt, and in doing so reduce anxiety. Again, we saw needs lead highly individualised support and an understanding and a commitment to improving people's lives.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated key question 3.2 as very good, as significant strengths were identified which led to positive outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Families benefitted from a motivated, enthusiastic staff team, with a shared commitment to supporting them to achieve positive outcomes. There were structured and effective formal (and informal) processes which supported a confident and capable workforce.

Staff were well supported to ensure a high level of professionalism. They stated that there was very good peer and managerial support and were confident that there was always someone available for reassurance, guidance and support. Staff had the opportunity to reflect on their practice and provide care and support which was aligned to the values and ethos of the organisation.

The voices of young people were extremely important. The Youth Inspire Group had been involved in consultation leading to enhancing the environment for young people visiting the office. We heard some very positive examples of young people being a significant part of staff interviews. We discussed how their views might be better collected in a formal way that might contribute to service development.

Staff described good training opportunities and a culture where learning and development was promoted. Teams were able to access training from a number of agencies. New staff spoke highly of their comprehensive induction, shadowing and mentoring opportunities.

The staff were strongly committed to the values of the organisation. Despite some significant organisational challenges, we found staff morale to be high with a strong commitment to the people the teams supported.

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?	6 - Excellent
1.2 People get the most out of life	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
3.2 Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people	5 - Very Good

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