

Scottish Autism - South West Scotland Services Housing Support Service

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 March 2026

Service provided by:
Scottish Autism

Service provider number:
SP2003000275

Service no:
CS2004058239

About the service

Scottish Autism - South West Scotland Services is a combined care at home and housing support service which is provided to adults with autism living in their own homes. The provider is Scottish Autism. The service's office is based in Lanark, South Lanarkshire. At the time of the inspection, support was being provided to 27 people living in the Lanark, Biggar, and Carluke areas of South Lanarkshire.

The service provides flexible packages of care and support to meet people's needs in leading full and enriched lives and being valuable members of their community.

The range of services includes personal care and support, medication support, and support with domestic tasks. People are also supported to access community transport, services, and events as well as attending places of employment.

The registered manager coordinates the overall running of the service. Senior autism practitioners locally help manage staff teams who provide direct support to people.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 2 and 4 March 2026 between 10:00 and 13:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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 one service user and two family members
- visited eight service users within their own homes
- received completed questionnaires from 18 service users and 24 staff
- spoke with 13 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- People received the right care and support which had led to them experiencing very good outcomes relating to their health and wellbeing.
- The service responded quickly to changes, helping maintain positive outcomes for people.
- Strong partnership working supported people's health and safety.
- People were supported by professional, knowledgeable, warm, and highly motivated staff that strived to achieve the best possible outcomes for people.

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
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.

Warm, trusting relationships helped people feel calm and reassured. Everyday support was respectful, kept people safe, and supported choice. Staff followed each person's routine and pace, communicated clearly, and helped people make decisions. Tasks were adapted so people could take part and build independence. This meant people felt safe, involved, and more independent in their day-to-day life.

Staff understood people's health needs and how best to support them. Health changes were picked up early and acted on quickly, reducing the risk of health problems getting worse. People were supported to attend health appointments and follow up actions were completed without delay. This meant health needs were monitored closely and people received the right support at the right time, which reduced the risk of health problems getting worse. Feedback from families and professionals highlighted improvements in people's health and wellbeing.

Medicines support was safe and consistent, so people received the right medicine at the right time. Guidance was followed for ordering, storage, and administration of medications.

Staff worked well with families and other professionals to coordinate support. This helped people experience consistent care, with shared information and timely responses to health concerns. Families told us they were involved in decisions when people could not share their wishes. One family member described the service as being the "gold standard autistic care provider."

Managers checked the quality of support regularly, so people received safe care. Where issues arose, these were reviewed and used to improve practice across the staff team. This reduced the risk of the same issue recurring.

Community activities supported wellbeing and independence. People could choose activities that matched their interests and preferences and this helped build confidence and motivation. Planning ahead reduced worry and helped people take part. One person said, "Our [relative] has been professionally supported to lead an independent life with SA for [...] years. I cannot praise them highly enough."

Overall, people benefited from very good care. People were treated with kindness, needs were picked up early, and support was tailored to keep people safe and well.

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 people. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Staff worked well together and people told us managers were approachable and quick to respond. People and families also spoke positively about the staff team, with one person commenting that "staff go the extra mile." This showed that people felt respected and well supported by staff who were friendly, helpful, and considerate.

Staffing levels were planned using individual dependency assessments and people's views. This helped match staffing to people's needs, routines, and risks. The service recognised there were vacancies and said it was continuing to recruit. People, relatives, and staff told us staffing levels were usually appropriate and met people's needs. Risk and dependency information also helped the service respond quickly when needs changed, so support was provided safely and at the right time.

New staff shadowed experienced colleagues, which helped them build skills and confidence before working alone. This meant people were supported by staff who understood their role and could provide safe, consistent care from the outset. Staff worked effectively together and dealt with issues quickly, which supported continuity for people. People also told us staff communicated well, listened to them, and helped them feel valued. One relative described "working equally as partners" with the service.

Team leaders gathered feedback from staff, people, and families and used this in supervision sessions to support learning, problem solving, and improve confidence of staff. Staff wellbeing was prioritised through regular check-ins and reflective discussions, which helped staff feel listened to and valued. Wellbeing action plans helped staff identify triggers, protective factors, and the support that worked best for them.

After challenging incidents, the service provided practical support to help staff regain confidence and continue supporting people safely. Staff could also access confidential counselling through a designated employee assistance programme. These supports contributed to an open and supportive culture, which helped staff work effectively and provide reliable support to people.

Overall, the team culture was encouraging and supportive. Staff described good communication and said managers took steps to help them feel safe and heard. This helped staff carry out their roles well and supported a stable, responsive service for people.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question, where significant strengths in aspects of the care provided had led to positive outcomes for people.

People and their families were actively involved in developing personal plans, which helped ensure wishes and preferences were respected. This meant plans focused on what mattered most, with staff and families working together to tailor support.

Care reviews were completed within the required timescales. Reviews showed that people, and their representatives where needed, were kept informed and involved in decisions.

People's plans were generally accurate and person-centred and gave staff clear information about people's health needs, preferences, and daily routines. Risk assessments and recording tools were used consistently and needs were reviewed regularly to make sure people received the right support. When needs changed, plans were updated promptly. This meant support stayed responsive and reflected people's current situation.

Personal plans also described how to communicate, support meaningful engagement, and encourage independence with people. This helped people feel understood, involved, and treated with dignity.

The service had clear epilepsy guidance and instructions for giving 'as needed' medication for staff to follow. This helped make sure that people received the right support quickly and safely.

Overall, personal plans contained helpful information and supported safe care. However, plans were long and some information was repeated. This made it harder for staff to find key information quickly. Some parts of plans focused on tasks rather than outcomes and we found a small number of inaccuracies. However, the provider had started quality assurance work to check and improve personal plan content. This should help make sure personal plans are clear and support more consistent care for people.

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

The provider should improve the recording of 'as required' medications to reflect the outcome of giving the medication and if it was effective. This is so that people can be confident that they have benefited from receiving medication in the way that it was prescribed.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice, and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14); and 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

This area for improvement was made on 26 September 2024.

Action taken since then

The service had improved how it recorded 'as required' medication. Staff documented why the medication was given, the dose, and whether the medication was effective. This meant patterns could be seen and reviewed, and staff could make informed decisions about future use. People could be confident that they had benefited from receiving medication in the way that it was prescribed.

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
1.3 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
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and personal planning reflects people's outcomes and wishes	5 - Very Good

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