

Castle Care (Scotland) Ltd Housing Support Service

1a Millburn Road
Inverness
IV2 3PX

Telephone: 01463 544 001

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Castle Care (Scotland) Ltd

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2013322100

About the service

Castle Care (Scotland) Ltd is a care at home and housing support service registered to provide services to adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health needs and to older people living in their own homes.

This service operates in the Highlands, mainly Inverness, Nairn and Fort William areas.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 27 February and 4 March 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 21 people using the service and 8 of their family members
- Spoke with 9 staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Reviewed questionnaires return to us prior to visiting
- Spoke with external professionals

Key messages

- People and families reported positively on the service
- Staff had a friendly manner and a professional approach
- The office team were seen as supportive and quick to respond to matters needing attention
- The management and office team were in touch with what was going on for people
- Some improvement was needed and the management team had an improvement plan in place
- People can trust this service to provide a good level of care and support

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?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good. An evaluation of good applies to performance where there are a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh areas for improvement. The strengths will have a significant positive impact on people's experiences and outcomes. However, improvements can still be made to maximise positive outcomes and experiences for people.

People found the service was reliable. Overall, care visit time keeping was satisfactory and people liked their staff members. People benefitted from the support and felt their wishes and choices were respected.

People got practical support with managing their home, help with health conditions and general support to keep well and content in their home. An important element of this was their choice and their independence being supported as much as possible.

The service strove to ensure it had all the essential information about a person's health, care and support needs, so as to provide safe and suitable assistance to them. People, or their representative, agreed with what care and support was needed to be provided. People's health and wellbeing was promoted as the care was carefully thought about.

On occasion, people's health and wellbeing needs could change or become more complex. The staff and management were good at noticing this and would take appropriate steps to help. This could be increasing the care hours or visits. Other times this could be contacting a family member, GP, other NHS partners or other agency. Management were good at communicating and discussing in depth what a person might need for help with other agencies. People can have confidence that the service's focus is on a person's best interests.

The service always aimed to be able to manage what support and care provided well. It considered its resources and staff levels before making decisions about what it can provide. People can be assured that the service, management and staff take a professional and responsible approach to providing care and support. This helped to ensure a consistent and reliable service for people.

The service was aware that the care and support provision for a person will not always go according to plan or a mistake may happen. People can trust this happened rarely and if it did then the service immediately sought to take actions to ensure any concern was addressed. The service aimed to make sure people's care and support was right for them.

There were some areas of service provision and staff practice to be addressed. One was the readiness of staff to always provide support in a safe and suitable way. This was in relation to staff training and induction and making sure staff were always equipped with the right knowledge as to how to provide certain support, for example, with medication or meals. The service has some additional actions to address matters like these. We refer to these under other sections of this report.

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good.

The service followed careful processes to ensure that the staff members were suitable for a care and support role. Safe recruitment ensured certain checks were undertaken on new staff. People can be reassured that the service chose staff carefully. People were kept safe and they can have confidence in the service's recruitment process.

Staff reported getting a suitable induction, including shadowing more experienced staff, learning about the needs of the people they would support, getting to know their supervisors and the expectations of the role. Induction also involved initial training, guidance information and the service's policies. Appropriate learning and support helped new staff to work well and responsibly with people.

Staff felt they worked well as a team. Colleagues would share appropriate information with each other when needed, pass on messages and be cooperative with each other. This helped to make sure people's care and support was responsive and right for them.

People and family members said that staff communicated well with them. Again, this helped to ensure the service and someone's support was suitable and meeting their needs and wishes.

Management were seen as in touch with what was happening for people receiving care and support and they understood what the support worker's role involved. The management team, co-ordinators and others in the office worked well together and with the support worker team. Overall, the management/office team were positive in their communication, willing to listen and respond to matters brought to their attention. People can trust all staff aim to work well together with people's wellbeing and health as their focus.

Staff members were viewed as reliable and having a good, friendly manner. There were, generally, seen as good at building relationships with people and families. People were comfortable with their staff.

Some comments on staff were:

- 'Nothing but praise for the service. Very friendly and their time keeping is good'.
- 'Angels'.
- 'Know them and happy with them.'
- 'Really nice and take their time with my mother.'

Training and ongoing refresher training was in place for staff. Training covered a good range of topics and was helpful in ensuring staff had suitable knowledge and skills for support. The service had acknowledged some further training and development was necessary for staff members to make sure they were working as safely and competently as possible. It was undertaking a training needs analysis which will carefully consider people's wishes and needs, and from that additional training could be identified. One area currently being looked into was end of life care and there was area for improvement for this. See Areas for Improvement 1 and 2.

Some other training was also discussed, for example, regarding support with meal preparation, as it was noted that this was something that could be improved.

Some of the service's monitoring for staff needed further attention. One focus, for instance, was how it was ensured all staff were registered with the relevant professional body, that is, Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The service planned to put a system in place to monitor this better in the future.

Areas for improvement

1. The provider should complete training needs analysis to ensure staff are equipped with the right skills and knowledge for people's individual care needs.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with 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)

2. People experiencing care, who require support to manage specific medical conditions, should have a risk assessment and risk management plan in place. This can then fully guide staff on what action to take if the person's condition deteriorates. In addition, staff should receive training to have an understanding of specific medical conditions, so they have the necessary knowledge and skills to support people.

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

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15)

How well is our care and support planned?

4 - Good

We evaluated this as good.

People who were new to the service, or their representative, had opportunities to express views on what support they wanted from the service. The service also gained information from partner agencies, such as the NHS, to make sure they were in a good position to offer care and support that met a person's needs and wishes well. The service continued to check with the person on a regular basis that all was well with the care and support it provided. People can have confidence that their needs and wishes were recognised.

All people supported had a care and support plan. This was the service's main document for detailing a person's relevant health conditions, needs and wishes. It provided guidance for staff to follow. It had good practical information and laid out how to meet a person's needs and wishes. People's six monthly review meetings were generally up to date

The service kept suitable records of the care and support provided and staff completed medication administration records (MARs) and running notes as necessary. These were completed to a satisfactory standard. For the most part, people can have confidence in the service's record keeping but some improvement was required.

The service was good at communicating and having meetings when needed with people, family members and other agencies. This helped to make sure the service was informed as it could be about people's ongoing needs and wishes. People can have trust the service aimed to have a careful and attentive approach to their care and support.

Some of the quality assurance and monitoring activities undertaken by the service could be improved. These activities were one of the essential ways the service keeps itself informed about various aspects of service support, the service's effectiveness and it's meeting of legal responsibilities. People's six monthly review meetings were, generally, up to date. However, this could be better monitored. Some of the review meeting and other documentation completed by staff was sometimes not completed to a sufficiently detailed and accurate standard. As an example, names of people or staff (and job title) could be consistently completed to a better level. This will make sure no confusion could arise at a later date.

We discussed with management that a more consistent, clear and simple approach to ensuring monitoring of the service's provision will be beneficial. There was an existing area for improvement for which more actions were needed to fully evidence that it was met (see Area for Improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support people's needs and wishes being met, the provider should ensure that people's support plans are current, detailed, and where relevant, include anticipatory/end of life information.

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

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.' (HSCS 3.14)

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 people's health and wellbeing, the service provider should ensure that care and support documentation has:

- a) sufficient detail and explanation to guide staff to assist people in as beneficial way as possible and
- b) that care and support information is regularly checked and people, or their representatives, have the opportunity to discuss and review their care and support plans on at least a six monthly basis.

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

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.' (HSCS 1.15)

and

'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 26 August 2024.

Action taken since then

This area for improvement was not fully met. However, other areas for improvement in this report, when addressed, should sufficiently cover the matters highlighted in this area for improvement and result in positive outcomes for people. Therefore, this area for improvement has not been repeated within the main body of the report.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support people's health and wellbeing, the provider should make sure staff are suitably supported and have opportunities to develop and improve their knowledge and practice. This could cover a range of activities supportive of staff's practice and should include, but not limited to, supervision meetings.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with 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

The Scottish Social Services Council Code of Practice which state that:

'As a social service employer, you must have the culture and systems in place to support social service workers to meet their Code of Practice.'

This area for improvement was made on 26 August 2024.

Action taken since then

This was met. Staff confirmed having regular supervision and reported it benefitted their knowledge and was supportive. There are other areas for improvement within the report which focus on learning needs of staff.

Previous area for improvement 3

People experiencing care, who require support to manage specific medical conditions, should have a risk assessment and risk management plan in place. This can then fully guide staff on what action to take if the person's condition deteriorates. In addition, staff should receive training to have an understanding of specific medical conditions, so they have the necessary knowledge and skills to support people.

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

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15)

This area for improvement was made on 26 October 2023.

Action taken since then

This was not met. The service was currently working on developing staff's knowledge further and ensuring staff have good knowledge on end of life care and all the necessary information on people's health and care needs and wishes. The service had set dates in the near future to achieve the improvements needed.

Previous area for improvement 4

People who experience care and require support with medication should have this provided as per best practice. As part of any initial assessment, the service should ascertain how medication supplies will be provided for people to ensure they do not run out and record this in a person's plan. Managers should undertake audits to ensure staff are following best practice when supporting people with administration of medication to monitor compliance.

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

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11)

This area for improvement was made on 26 October 2023.

Action taken since then

This was met. Minimal issues arose regarding people's medications supplies. There were good arrangements in place. There were very occasional issues in relation to administration of medication and staff practice but these were always responded to promptly and corrected. It was demonstrated that the service took a responsible and robust approach to approach to people's medication support arrangements.

Previous area for improvement 5

The provider should complete a training needs analysis to ensure staff are equipped with the right skills and knowledge for people's individual care needs.

This is in order to comply with:

Health and Social Care Standard 3.14: 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.

This area for improvement was made on 8 October 2025.

Action taken since then

This was not met. This was one of the service's current improvement actions in its service improvement plan (SIP) and there were dates set for achieving the improvement needed. The service improvement plan had sufficient detail and appropriate actions to provide confidence that the necessary improvement will be completed.

Previous area for improvement 6

To support people's needs and wishes being met, the provider should ensure that people's support plans are current, detailed, and where relevant, include anticipatory/end of life information.

This is in order to comply with:

Health and Social Care Standard 1.15: My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.

This area for improvement was made on 8 October 2025.

Action taken since then

This was not met. This was one of the service current improvement actions and there were dates set for achieving the improvement needed. The service improvement plan had sufficient detail and appropriate actions to provide confidence that the necessary improvement will be completed.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	4 - Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	4 - Good
5.1 Assessment and personal planning reflects people's outcomes and wishes	4 - Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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