

Care service inspection report

Full inspection

Link Housing Association Ltd - Link Sheltered Housing Service Housing Support Service

Watling House
Callander Business Park
Falkirk



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Service provided by: Link Housing Association Ltd

Service provider number: SP2004006499

Care service number: CS2004068836

Inspection Visit Type: Unannounced

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

Contact Us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

www.careinspectorate.com

 [@careinspect](https://twitter.com/careinspect)

Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

Quality of care and support	5	Very Good
Quality of staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5	Very Good

What the service does well

The service continued to have very good processes in place for ensuring tenants' health and wellbeing needs were met.

We found a variety of ways that tenants could choose to be involved in giving feedback about their experience of support from Link Sheltered Housing Service.

Link Housing Association continued to provide a good quality of service to the people that they support. Tenants told us that they were always treated with dignity and respect.

What the service could do better

Tenants told us that there were changes planned for the presence of the Sheltered Housing Officer in each complex. This remains undecided and is an area of anxiety for some service users.

What the service has done since the last inspection

There has been a change of manager in the service and other changes in the role of some local staff. The effect of these changes were still being worked out at the time of this inspection.

Staff have worked hard to ensure that service users continued to receive a very good standard of housing support based upon their individual needs, choices and wishes.

Conclusion

The staff team remained enthusiastic and committed to meeting the individual needs of the tenants they supported. The service continued to provide a high quality housing support service that is greatly appreciated by tenants. Tenants again gave very positive feedback about the quality of staff in the service and the support they provided.

Changes in the availability of the housing officers at each complex is a very sensitive aspect of support which is linked to the needs of individuals and the funding available to deliver the service. Over the next year, negotiations will help shape the future provision of the service.

1 About the service we inspected

Link Sheltered Housing service operates 12 sheltered housing complexes across Scotland. Each complex is staffed by a sheltered housing officer who works Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. A sheltered housing manager is responsible for the management of the housing support service.

The main aims of the sheltered housing service is to enable older people to maintain an independent tenancy by providing appropriate housing support services within a sheltered housing environment.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, SSSC codes of practice and recognised good practice. These must also be outcomes-based and if the provider meets the recommendation this would improve outcomes for people receiving the service.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the "Act"), its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

We make requirements where (a) there is evidence of poor outcomes for people using the service or (b) there is the potential for poor outcomes which would affect people's health, safety or welfare.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of care and support - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of management and leadership - Grade 5 - Very Good

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0345 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

This report was written following an unannounced inspection of the service on Monday 15 February 2016 between 11am and 3pm and visits to four complexes on Monday 20 March, Tuesday 21 March 2016 and a meeting in Falkirk on Thursday 23 March 2016. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

When we plan how we will inspect a service we review the intelligence we hold about the service. This will include:

- The self assessment we ask the service to complete where they evaluate how they are performing.
- The 'Annual Return' we ask the service to complete where they provide information about the needs of the people who use the service and details about members of the staff team.
- Notifications the service provides to us informing us about events that impact on the delivery of the service.
- Any complaints the Care Inspectorate has received.
- Recommendations and requirements made through inspections or complaints.
- The risk assessment we complete.

This information informs the intensity of the inspection. In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection.

The manager of the care service sent us an annual return and a self assessment form. We talked to the manager, staff in the service and service users during the inspection.

We sent 60 questionnaires for service users/relatives and received 35 responses which we took into account for this report.

We looked at records and documents during the visit. These included:-

- Certificate of registration.
- Public liability insurance.
- Written risk assessments.
- A sample of four care and support plans.
- Complaint to the service.
- Audits and quality assurance systems.

We talked to thirteen service users and to the manager and three sheltered housing staff.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firescotland.gov.uk

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

Services undertake a self assessment before an inspection. The self assessment details strengths, areas for improvement and grades the service thinks are appropriate for their current service delivery based on its performance under quality indicators.

The inspector reviews this information before inspection and reviews some of the evidence that the provider has said demonstrates their level of performance. We discussed the self assessment with the manager and provided some examples of where the self assessment could be more outcome focussed. The service provider told us how the people who use the care service had taken part in the self assessment process.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

'It is great living here. I can leave my house to visit family and I am confident that everything is safe.'

'We are secure here and we only let people we know into the building.'

'This place feels safe. There are no youngsters in the street making you feel worried for your safety.'

'If I hadn't moved here I don't think I would still be living.'

'Moving here was the best thing that ever happened to me.'

'I wish I had moved here years ago.'

'I came here to the line dancing for a year. Then I thought, I could live here. So I did.'

'Things are great here. I moved in 10 years ago. I should get a gold medal!

People are very friendly. We get on well with the warden.'

'You feel safe here. I was in a top floor flat before I moved here.'

'This is a great place to live. On the whole, everything is fine.'

'We are really happy with the service. The Sheltered Housing Officer is great.'

'The Bield out of hours service is really good too.'

'Everyone looks after everyone else.'

'I really enjoy the theatre trips and away days.'

Taking carers' views into account

We did not speak with any carers during this inspection.

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

“We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.”

Service Strengths

Services undertake a self assessment before the inspection. The self assessment details strengths, areas of improvement and grades the service is deemed to perform at taking account of quality indicators. The service evaluated their performance under this quality statement as 'excellent'. Through evaluation, we concluded the service was providing an excellent service under this statement.

Care standard questionnaires completed and returned to the Care Inspectorate before the inspection indicated that the tenants were happy with the support they received.

The provider continued to provide useful information to new tenants when they first move into one of the complexes. This included regular events such as coffee mornings, bingo sessions, visitors and pets, smoking issues, local classes. All tenants we spoke with knew about the fire and emergency procedures for their home.

We saw useful and up-to-date information displayed on noticeboards in the different complexes we visited. Examples of information posted included: GP and out of hours contact details, laundry and library services, the provider's insurance certificate, fire and emergency plan and how to deal with bogus callers.

The manager presented excellent evidence of how service users participated in assessing the quality of care and support provided by the service. These included individual reviews of support, opportunities to raise complaints and concerns, tenants' newsletters and the sheltered housing forum. We attended the forum and saw how issues were raised and how views were expressed by tenants' representatives during the meeting. We saw that tenants' views were encouraged and were treated with respect by the managers and the tenants' liaison officer. We saw evidence of how the views of tenants had influenced the development of the service.

Areas for improvement

At the time of this inspection, the manager was dealing with concerns raised following an incident involving a tenant. This coincided with discussions about future service delivery in a changing financial climate. This provides challenges for the provider and for the tenants in the sheltered housing complexes.

Grade

6 - Excellent

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 3

“We ensure that service users' health and wellbeing needs are met.”

Service Strengths

Services undertake a self assessment before the inspection. The self assessment details strengths, areas of improvement and grades the service is deemed to perform at taking account of quality indicators. The service evaluated their performance under this quality statement as 'excellent'. Through evaluation, we concluded the service was providing a very good service under this statement.

We spoke with tenants in each of the complexes visited and at the forum. We inspected a sample of four support plans and we spoke with four sheltered housing officers (SHOs) about their role and responsibilities.

Support plans we looked at confirmed that health contacts were recorded and that family support was also noted. This helps ensure that the care needs of tenants are supported. We noted that the trust and the positive relationships between the SHOs and the tenants we met meant that informal support was available in addition to the formal support noted in the support plans. This was appreciated by the tenants we spoke with.

Housing support plan reviews recorded how tenants were involved in commenting on their support and any changes since the previous review. These continued to be important opportunities for those present to discuss all aspects of the support provided, and to ensure that the information contained in the housing support plans was updated where necessary.

The service had developed positive collaborative relationships with other agencies who also provided care to service users. Service users we spoke with gave very positive feedback about the support they had been given to have their health care needs met and they said that they had found the support provided by the service a very helpful and positive experience.

Areas for improvement

We saw that the files maintained for some service users had been developed some time ago and the information may benefit from re-organisation.

We saw that some risk assessments were in place but did not include actions needed to minimise the risks to the person.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 2

“We are confident that our staff have been recruited, and inducted, in a safe and robust manner to protect service users and staff.”

Service Strengths

Services undertake a self assessment before the inspection. The self assessment details strengths, areas of improvement and grades the service is deemed to perform at taking account of quality indicators. The service evaluated their performance under this quality statement as 'Excellent'. Through evaluation, we concluded the service was providing a very good service under this statement.

We spoke with four sheltered housing officers and with the manager of the service. We spoke with thirteen people who use the service.

Since the last inspection, an opportunity to strengthen the management support for the service had been developed. This involved designating to posts as team leader posts. This is an enhanced role for two current post-holders who are also sheltered housing officers.

We found that team leaders had completed a recruitment process and an induction to their new role. Staff told us that supervision meetings had been organised and were about to start. We saw the supervision plan being used. Staff told us that the format of supervision allowed senior staff to keep up-to-date with any issues in the building and with the tenants. There was also a focus on learning in the organisation and training courses were available to sheltered housing staff as part of their personal development plan.

The service continues to use observational practice as a method of supervision. This helps ensure that staff carry out their duties in line with service policy and procedures.

It also means that any tenants can speak privately with the line manager (either team leader or service manager) and gives an added opportunity to raise or discuss any concerns.

We spoke with staff about registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). This is the body which regulates all staff working in social care sector. At present only the manager of the service is required to register with SSSC, which she has done, but, during the next year, all other staff will be expected to make an application for registration. This involves ensuring that staff have the necessary qualification as well as all the required checks on the person. Staff told us that they either had, or were in the process of gaining the qualification which would be required for registration with SSSC.

Areas for improvement

At the time of this inspection we found that the team leaders were still settling into their new role. While this meant there were times there was no presence at their sheltered housing base, this was raised with us as an issue for some tenants. We discussed this with the manager, the team leaders and other staff. The staff we spoke with did not feel there was a problem but some tenants did. The manager is committed to resolving this concern while addressing other challenges facing the service.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 3

“We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.”

Service Strengths

Services undertake a self assessment before the inspection. The self assessment details strengths, areas of improvement and grades the service is deemed to perform at taking account of quality indicators. The service evaluated their performance under this quality statement as 'excellent'. Through evaluation, we concluded the service was providing a very good service under this statement.

We spoke with staff on duty and to tenants. Interviews with staff indicated that all staff were knowledgeable, motivated and caring. in undertaking their role. All comments from tenants about the staff were very positive. 'Everyone looks after everyone else.'

Staff told us that they felt very well supported by managers in the service. All staff we met were experienced in offering support to tenants and this was reflected in the comments made by tenants. We saw that staff had access to regular supervision both formal and informal. Staff told us that they felt they could contact managers at any time and get advice and guidance to help. Staff also had access to regular team meetings. They told us this was a good way of supporting each other and sharing information. Staff confirmed that the manager kept them up-to-date with any issues.

There was evidence of regular training opportunities for all staff. They confirmed that they were asked to evaluate their learning and consider how they would put this into practice.

We found staff to be knowledgeable and enthusiastic in relation to maintaining and developing their skills to meet the changing needs of tenants. Staff we spoke with said that they really liked their jobs and that they felt part of a very good and supportive team.

Areas for improvement

At the time of this visit, the manager was looking to access local training on adult support and protection. This will help staff confidence in responding to any concerns.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 3

“To encourage good quality care, we promote leadership values throughout the workforce.”

Service Strengths

Services undertake a self assessment before the inspection. The self assessment details strengths, areas of improvement and grades the service is deemed to perform at taking account of quality indicators. The service evaluated their performance under this quality statement as 'excellent'. Through evaluation, we concluded the service was providing a very good service under this statement.

The service has a network for twelve sites each overseen by a designated officer. While cover and support are available, officers have a high level of responsibility and autonomy. We were pleased to see that each officer and team leader we spoke with had a wealth of experience before taking up their current role. The lifestyle appreciated by the tenants was prompted and often directly supported by the officers who gave much of their own time to supporting get togethers which are very much enjoyed by tenants.

We found that some of the social opportunities available on sites were the same (events such as St Patrick's Day celebration) and some very different (theatre trips). Each of the activities offered reflected the interests of the tenants but also the strengths of the officers.

Since the last inspection, two team leader appointments have been made, This will help to strengthen the management oversight of such a dispersed service. We were glad to see that management training and opportunities for learning and developing had been built-in to the team leader role.

Areas for improvement

At the time of this inspection, the team leader roles were still settling into practice. Supervision and appraisal will help to develop the skills required to guide the service through a period of change.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 4

“We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide”

Service Strengths

Services undertake a self assessment before the inspection. The self assessment details strengths, areas of improvement and grades the service is deemed to perform at taking account of quality indicators. The service evaluated their performance under this quality statement as 'excellent'. Through evaluation, we concluded the service was providing a very good service under this statement.

The manager provided very good evidence that they have quality assurance systems and processes which involve tenants, staff and other stakeholders to assess the quality of the service provided. The management team continue to regularly visit each complex and information about when they will visit was on display to give tenants the opportunity to speak to them if they wished. We saw examples of a range of checks and audits used by the service including tenants' consultation meetings, surveys and questionnaires, service user involvement in the scrutiny panel, staff training and induction. These help the manager to oversee the performance of the service. Tenants we spoke to were very enthusiastic about the standard of support that they received. There was evidence of how the provider used these processes to ensure that the service and support offered were of a very good standard.

Areas for improvement

Since the last inspection the service has a new manager and the design of the management team has evolved. In addition, the service is working in a culture of reduced income as social care budgets are constrained. The challenge for the service is to maintain the valued elements of the service provision at such a difficult time.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

4 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

5 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

6 Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

7 Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

8 Additional Information

This service is graded well and has low risk associated so should maybe have been subject to frequency for inspection. Discussed with the manager and as the grades were consistent she said she was happy with the inspection process.

9 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
20 Mar 2014	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed 5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good
30 Jul 2012	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed 5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good
9 Jul 2009	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good

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Contact Us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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