

Housing First West Dunbartonshire Housing Support Service

16 Church Street (ground floor homeless team)
Dunbarton
G82 1QL

Telephone: 07385 117 402

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 June 2025

Service provided by:
West Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003383

Service no:
CS2019376955

About the service

Housing First West Dunbartonshire works with adults with complex needs who require support to obtain and sustain their own tenancies. People supported by the service have been or are at risk of becoming homeless. Complex needs include addiction issues, mental health challenges and involvement with the criminal justice system.

Helping people to gain and maintain permanent accommodation is the key priority for Housing First. Part of the approach to achieving this includes building on individuals' existing strengths to enhance their confidence and self-worth with a view to achieve outcomes important to them, for instance reducing or eliminating drug use or taking part in activities outwith their homes, in addition to secure housing.

The provider is West Dunbartonshire Council.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 30 May and 2 June 2025. The inspection was carried out by an inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

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

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with five people using the service and two family members
- spoke with five staff and management
- reviewed documents
- communicated with six social and health care professionals familiar with the service.

This was Housing First West Dunbartonshire's first inspection since its registration with the Care Inspectorate in December 2019.

At the time of our inspection, the service supported 30 people.

Key messages

- People supported by the service and their relatives say it has made positive differences to their lives.
- The staff team are appropriately trained, well supported and committed to their work.
- Health and social care professionals value the work the service does in improving outcomes for people.
- Some expressed the view that Housing First should have additional resources to do more.

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 leadership?	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.

The service operates a co-worker system. This means each person supported has a main or key worker but also a second staff member who provides assistance when the first worker is not available. Both staff get to know the person so the co-worker can easily step in if the key worker is unavailable. This gives people consistency of support which people valued.

People were overwhelming positive about Housing First West Dunbartonshire. Most commented on how the service had given assistance to help them to maintain their homes. This included helping set up budgets and paying bills when due, as well as housekeeping tasks like cleaning. Staff encouraged people to look after their physical and mental wellbeing. This included activities like walking, attending activity groups as well as engaging with key services like harm reduction services to address addiction issues.

Some people told us how the service had helped them gain employment. This included part-time voluntary work in activities in outdoor settings for one individual. For another person, it centred on encouraging existing talent and past experiences to pass these skills onto others.

People supported by the service told us staff were always respectful but were prepared to be politely firm in encouraging them to engage in activities like keeping important appointments, for instance, with health services and social work.

Some people gave examples of experiencing setbacks in what they wanted to achieve. They told us Housing First helped them through these setbacks by listening and helping them regain their commitment to improve outcomes for themselves.

Comments made about the service included:

"Would recommend to people in similar position to help get back on track. Brilliant."

"Have changed my life."

"Without their support I wouldn't go out."

"They listen to me and do everything they can to help me."

How good is our leadership?**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.

The service had experienced a change of management in recent years. Some people supported and staff made clear that this had resulted in improvement in how the service operated and its achievements in working with people.

The service management had introduced a number of initiatives aimed at maintaining or improving outcomes for people and support to staff. These included:

- Supervisory staff reviewed how staff engaged with people using the service. This covered areas like how good communication was, planning and recording. This was used to feedback to staff on their performance and, where appropriate, areas that could be improved or changed.
- Systems to encourage feedback and comment from people supported and appropriate others, including other agencies and families had been introduced.
- Recordings or case notes, where staff detail the contact they've had with people supported and relevant others, were audited to provide reassurance to management that the quality was acceptable and they provided confirmation of people being supported as intended.

Staff supervision happened on a regular basis and staff told us they found it valuable. This provided opportunities for staff and supervisors to discuss how people supported were doing and agreeing any changes to help improve outcomes for them. It also provided space to discuss developmental issues like training. Regular team meetings enhanced this approach and allowed for collective discussion and agreements.

Management ensured staff are kept up to date with relevant training. This included training on protecting vulnerable adults, domestic violence, harm reduction in addiction, infection control and suicide prevention.

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.

Housing First West Dunbartonshire's staff group told us they found their work challenging and rewarding. We found them to be knowledgeable about their work in terms of the challenges people faced including mental health issues, addictions, involvement with police and courts and ways of supporting them. They were committed to working with people to build on their existing strengths, help them find additional skills and achieve desired changes to their lives.

Staff accepted that, on occasions, people would experience setbacks and saw part of their work to, wherever possible, help them regain their confidence to move on.

They regarded their training as relevant and comprehensive. They were confident if they required additional training management would respond positively. All staff were fully up to date with their training plan or arrangements were in place to ensure this happened.

They told us supervision and staff meetings were useful as well as valuable in providing support and direction in their work. They appreciated management scrutiny of how they engaged with people and their

written recordings helped ensure consistency. The feedback they got from such exercises was viewed as relevant and appropriate.

How well is our care and support planned?

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.

Housing First spends as much time as necessary with people to build up and agree with them what supports might be required and how these should be given. An important feature of this is building up people's self-confidence and developing essential life skills to maintain accommodation and engage with relevant resources. For some people, assistance is provided regularly and intensely, with staff being in contact on a very regular basis; for others, the support may be given less regularly and involve occasional visits or phone calls. The service acknowledges some people may disengage permanently or for periods of time and ensures people know they can return to it if they wish.

People receiving support from care services must have this reviewed no less than every six-months. We are satisfied that this happens with this service. Records we reviewed confirm this and people supported tell us they feel involved and listened to at reviews. In addition, the nature of the work done by Housing First means, in most cases, consistent discussions take place with people and relevant agencies which can identify changes required without the need for formal reviews.

Each person had a support plan which made clear what assistance was required and how it should be delivered. We saw, from those that we reviewed, they clearly detailed people's involvement in discussing and agreeing what assistance would be provided. These plans were updated, when appropriate, at times of setback, crisis or other significant changes in people's lives as well as formal reviews.

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 leadership?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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