

Thistle Care Solutions Ltd Housing Support Service

Thistle Care Solutions Ltd
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 June 2025

Service provided by:
Thistle Care Solutions Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2020013528

Service no:
CS2025000129

About the service

Thistle Care Solutions was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 23 December 2020. It provides a Care at Home service to people living in the Falkirk and Fife areas.

The service is currently supporting around 200 people. The service is provided by a team of permanent staff, including a management team.

The aim of the service is:

"To provide care and support for people who need assistance to remain independent within their own homes. We provide a range of care and support services to assist people with their daily activities. Thistle Care Solutions is committed to providing a high quality, consistent support service tailored to suit each of our service users individual needs, promoting independence and choice throughout the community."

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18, 19 and 20 June 2025. 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 and visited several people using the service and their relatives.
- spoke with several members of staff and management.
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- People liked the staff supporting them and found them to be dependable and reliable
- People found the service to be responsive
- The service are currently implementing a new care planning system which is a work in progress
- Reviews were not always being held in good time
- The service had good quality assurance mechanisms in place to support good 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?	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?

5 - Very Good

In this part of the inspection report we considered the following quality indicator:

Quality Indicator: 1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support.

We assessed the service as Very Good for this quality indicator which means overall we evaluated this key question as Very Good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

People told us that the service met with them to discuss their needs and how they wished their care to be provided prior to the start of the service. Their care was provided in a way that respected their dignity and their independence. Activity was built into everyday tasks with which staff supported people, thereby encouraging people to maintain or improve their existing skills and functioning. People told us that the service were easy to contact and that they were asked regularly if things continued to work well for them. Whilst the service communicated well with people and we were told the service was responsive, formal reviews were not always being held in good time as they should be. (See Area for Improvement 1).

The service assessed the level of support which people required to take their medication correctly, to move safely and to eat and drink well which supported them to maintain their health and overall wellbeing. People appreciated the support they received which enabled them to live at home safely, with one person saying "Thistle Care provide morning and evening care visits for my elderly mother who suffers from Alzheimer's Disease and restricted mobility. The carers are always pleasant, polite and efficient, they provide invaluable reassurance to our family when it comes to keeping Mum living independently at home for as long as possible" whilst another said "My dad is very well supported by the staff of Thistle Care. The support is consistent and the carers know my dad and his preferences very well. Communication with me and my dad is excellent."

The service ensured the safety and wellbeing of people using the service in a variety of ways. Accidents and incidents were appropriately recorded and analysis of these took place in order to alleviate or minimise risk to people as far as was possible. The service has well established relationships with external professionals in the area. We saw good communication and joint working to effect positive outcomes for people regarding issues which were outwith the remit of the service. This included requesting further assessments to reflect changing or increased needs and practical supports, such as the provision of equipment which made life easier for people going about their day. They kept a log of any protection concerns relating to people they supported and actions taken to ensure people's safety. We saw one incident regarding the mis-administration of medication where appropriate actions had been taken to ensure the person's wellbeing but which was not raised as a protection issue or reported to the Care Inspectorate and this was discussed with the service at feedback. The service in general should ensure that notifications to the Care Inspectorate include more useful detail. Staff ensured that people were wearing their MECS bracelets/ pendants so they could summon assistance easily if on their own and ensured the security of their property when leaving the house.

Good training was offered to staff regarding infection prevention and control and we observed good practice including very good hand hygiene whilst out shadowing workers during inspection. Staff told us they had access to plentiful PPE which we saw being used appropriately. This helped to protect people from the avoidable spread of infection.

People told us they were supported by the same people, meaning they had the opportunity to form a comfortable working relationship and that they experienced a consistent level of support from people who knew them. One person said to us "All staff are kind and respectful and attend to my care plan with professionalism. Thanks Thistle" and "Our family love what the carers do for our mum and thank them very much."

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that care and support continues to meet people's needs the provider should formally review individual care plans and risk assessments and make certain that outcomes from these inform individual care plans.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 1.19 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' and 2.17 'I am fully involved in developing and reviewing my personal plan, which is always available to me.'

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

In this part of the inspection report we considered the following quality indicator:

Quality Indicator 3.3: Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together

We assessed the service as Very Good for this quality indicator which means overall we evaluated this key question as Very Good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The service had a well established induction process which involved a mix of classroom based time and shadowing time with management staff available throughout to ensure that staff felt introduced to the service, the people they would be supporting and their role well.

The service had expanded their management team roles to better support staff as the business had expanded. They would also like to provide opportunities for staff to support each other in champion roles, with wellbeing champions and an adult support and protection champion already in place. One staff member said "We have recently implemented new systems that seem to be working well. It has taken a lot of time and hard work to move all the information over, however we have managed this as a team. We work to how to support the service user in a way that works for them, and encourage independence at all times."

People's wishes and preferences were considered when matching them with staff, people could select the gender of a staff member for example. The service paid good attention to staff's knowledge and skills in relation to the people they were supporting. The office was a friendly environment where staff could call or drop in and talk through any issues arising. The office staff were available to the staff team working in the field via on-call. If issues arose which required further discussion the service consulted with their staff and took their views seriously.

People liked the staff who supported them and found them to be reliable and professional. People were usually supported by the same people and knew who would be attending. They found the service responsive to them when they contacted them, and that it was easy to exchange pertinent information. One person told us "My dad has nothing but praise for the support and care from (two named staff members).

He says they both are extremely conscientious. I would agree as would my sisters. I live over an hour away by car and work long shifts so it is extremely reassuring that my dad is getting the care and support to help him stay at home. There is also good communication from the service if they have any concerns. There is also the option to have access to updates on my dad on email." Another said "We are happy with the care X receives. All carers are pleasant and friendly, always have a bit of banter with him."

Staff had good access to ongoing training and the management team ensured that staff were confident in putting their training into practice in a variety of different ways, including medication competency checks, spot checks, supervisions and team meetings. One staff member told us "I'd like to emphasise the importance of ongoing training from my company. Carers are essential members of the healthcare team, providing valuable support to service users and helping to ensure their comfort and well-being." whilst another said management "Guides us through on how to provide person centred care and support." We saw some examples of staff either not following procedure or needing more guidance in order to support people effectively and were reassured that the management team recognised this and acted quickly to ensure people's wellbeing. This included providing extra training and development for staff as required.

How well is our care and support planned?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where there were strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people.

Quality Indicator: 5.1 Assessment and personal planning reflects people's outcomes and wishes

The service has been implementing changes to their care planning over the last while with a view to making them more person centred and outcome focused. This work is still in progress as the service transfers information from their legacy digital care planning to their new system. This meant that the service held relevant information about people but it was not yet always coherently recorded within the new system. Staff in the field had good access to current care plans on their phones and these could be updated quickly should any aspect of a person's care change which meant people's needs were met responsively. These included risk assessments which helped to ensure support was delivered in a way that kept people and staff safe. The service are considering ways in which the range of risk assessments could be broadened. Whilst shadowing staff working in the field we saw that care plans were followed.

People could access their care plan via the digital care planning app if they wished to. When visiting people during inspection we saw up-to-date paper copies had been provided within people's homes. These included a new service user pack which included their service agreement and contact information for the service. People found it easy to contact the service whether directly or by conveying information via their carers and found their carers to be dependable and reliable.

The service checked with people in the early stages of providing their support to ensure that things were working well or if any changes needed to be made. Following this care plans were formally reviewed. Good attention was paid to people's requests, wishes and preferences.

Staff had received training to improve the quality of outcome focused care notes. A good record was kept of the care which staff had provided which related directly to the care plan. This included what people had been eating and drinking and how they presented. People were usually supported by the same staff members which meant staff knew people and what was normal for them. This meant they could adjust support if required.

The service audited daily notes and used these to ensure the quality of support being provided. We saw the service used these as a learning opportunity with staff to ensure they sought guidance if unsure and followed procedures correctly with further training provided where necessary.

We did not see that the service had up-to-date contingency planning in place within their new care planning system and should ensure this in place in order that people's care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event.

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?	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?	4 - Good
5.1 Assessment and personal planning reflects people's outcomes and wishes	4 - Good

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