

Real Life Options Inverurie Housing Support Service

Real Life Options Inverurie
67 Market Place
Inverurie
AB51 3PY

Telephone: 01467 628 871

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 June 2025

Service provided by:
Real Life Options

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2015342035

About the service

Real Life Options Inverurie is part of a large charitable organisation that provides support to people across the UK. This registration provides housing support and care at home to adults in their own homes, in either single or shared tenancies. The support ranges from a few hours a week up to 24 hour support. At the time of the inspection, the service was supporting 22 people.

The service is based in Inverurie. There is an office in the centre of town which is developing as a community hub.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 4 and 11 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 12 people using the service and three of their relatives
- spoke with 15 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- People lived independent and fulfilling lives due to the support they received to participate in a wide range of meaningful community activities.
- The service delivered a high standard of care in supporting individuals who experienced stress and distress, and this improved their quality of life and experiences.
- The service had a well-structured and comprehensive quality assurance system that enabled them to continually improve the standard of care people received.
- People told us they were very happy with their 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?	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 showed a strong commitment to helping people live more independent and fulfilling lives. Staff planned carefully and supported people to take part in a wide range of community activities. These included education opportunities, volunteering, social events, sports, and staying active. Staff worked closely with each person to create weekly plans that matched their interests and goals. This helped people try new things, grow in confidence, and learn more about what they enjoyed. Staff encouraged safe risk-taking to build independence, using a coaching approach, while also making sure people stayed safe. For example, they coached one person to learn how to go out and about on their own and balanced their need for independence and learning new skills, with safety measures to support their wellbeing. People said they were very happy with the care they received, showing that the service made a positive difference in their lives.

The service delivered a high standard of care in supporting individuals who experienced stress and distress. Staff showed compassion and used a person-centred approach, identifying and addressing the underlying causes of behaviour, such as unmet needs, pain, or emotional distress. They collaborated with external health professionals and followed established guidelines, which enabled them to respond consistently and work proactively to prevent distress. As a result, people had a much improved quality of life, they accessed the community and participated in activities, which for some people was not possible before.

Staff supported people well with their health needs. They made sure people got to their health appointments and quickly noticed and reported any changes in health. They followed up on these changes to make sure people got the right help. We did discuss one person's changing needs, but we were reassured that the service had recognised this and planned a multi-disciplinary meeting with external professionals to agree next steps. The service also encouraged healthy living. Some people spoke with excitement about their exercise routines, healthier meal plans, and having special treat days. This showed that staff helped people make positive choices and enjoy a balanced lifestyle.

The service managed medication safely and effectively. Staff gave medication as instructed and followed clear as-needed medication protocols. Regular medication audits were in place, which helped identify and correct any errors quickly, such as missed signatures. All staff received training and had their competency assessed to ensure safe practice. This ensured people's health benefitted from their prescribed medication.

The service had appropriate legal safeguards in place for individuals who lacked capacity, including guardianship arrangements and powers of when required. These measures helped ensure that decisions were made in the best interests of each person. However, during the inspection, we identified one individual who did not have adequate financial safeguards in place. The service recognised this gap and acted promptly to address it before the end of the inspection. As a result, we did not identify this as an area for improvement, but we will review the effectiveness of the measures taken during the next inspection to ensure the individual continues to be protected.

People's health and wellbeing had improved due to stronger infection prevention and control practices. The service updated its guidance and procedures, and staff clearly understood their roles and responsibilities. Staff followed good hand hygiene practices, including regular handwashing and the correct use of personal

protective equipment (PPE). Staff supported and encouraged people to clean their own homes. This helped to keep people safe.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the leadership and how this supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

The management team remained visible and actively involved in the day-to-day running of the service. They knew the people and the services well and maintained clear communication across designated areas of responsibility. These systems helped ensure consistency in care and promoted positive outcomes for people and their families

The service had a well-structured and comprehensive quality assurance system that effectively captured key operational data, including accidents and incidents, the health, safety and maintenance of people's properties, support planning, medication and staffing. This framework provided a solid foundation for monitoring and improving service delivery. We could see that areas for improvement were quickly identified and addressed and this improved the quality of people's care.

The provider developed a self-evaluation tool that helped the service reflect on its strengths and identify areas for improvement. The tool was largely effective and supported improvement. However, the tool did not fully capture the positive outcomes people experienced, which meant the service sometimes underrepresented its achievements. Senior leadership had recognised this and were in the process of providing training and support so people's outcomes can be fully captured and recognised.

The service carried out thorough health and safety checks across all properties. Staff took the housing support function seriously, followed up on all issues, and ensured that repairs were reported and completed. Checks for fire safety, legionella, and cleanliness were well managed. People supported by the service actively participated in these checks, showing good awareness and involvement in maintaining safe home environments.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the staffing and how the staffing supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Staff knew the people they supported well. New staff were given time to get to know individuals through shadow shifts and guidance from more experienced colleagues. The service provided a strong training programme, which helped staff feel confident in their roles and build positive relationships with the people they supported.

The service responded well to people's individual needs and preferences. Staff supported people to achieve their personal goals and followed weekly activity plans that reflected what each person wanted to do. This information was used to plan staff rotas, making sure support was available when people needed it. The service also considered each staff member's skills and experience when deciding who would support whom.

Staff understood their responsibilities and adapted well to changes, helping to keep care consistent and

stable. People had a say in who supported them, which helped build trust and comfort. Staff worked well together and created a warm, welcoming atmosphere. There was good communication across the team, with regular opportunities to talk about their work and how to improve outcomes for people.

Staffing levels were determined by the funding authority, which assessed each person's needs and allocated support hours accordingly. The funding authority was in the process of introducing a new approach to determining support levels, aimed at giving both the service and individuals greater flexibility in how care hours were used. During the inspection, we discussed this development with the provider and offered advice and guidance on the Staffing Method Framework. The provider had already prepared for this change by putting tools in place to support future staffing decisions. We discussed the need to include the views of people using the service, their families and staff, helping to ensure that staffing decisions remained person-centred and responsive to individual needs. We look forward to following this up at the next inspection.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care planning and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Staff supported people using well-developed, person-centred plans that reflected their individual needs, preferences, and wishes. They created these plans in partnership with the people receiving support and, where appropriate, their families or representatives. The plans provided clear guidance on how to deliver care in line with each person's choices and identified needs. Staff regularly reviewed, updated, and evaluated these plans with input from relevant professionals, ensuring they remained current and effective. Although some reviews were still being typed, staff had already made the necessary updates to people's support plans, demonstrating a proactive and responsive approach.

People had control over their care by choosing when their reviews took place, who attended, and what was discussed. Staff used protocols, multidisciplinary team (MDT) input, and care guidelines as live documents to guide consistent and effective support. Risk assessments focused on enabling people rather than restricting them, while still ensuring safety. This approach supported individuals to take positive risks, helping them build confidence and develop their independent living skills.

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 ensure people are protected from infection, the provider should ensure staff follow infection prevention and control guidance and that observations of staff practice are carried out.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states 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 24 July 2024.

Action taken since then

The provider reviewed its infection prevention and control policies, with a specific focus on hand washing and hand hygiene. Observations during the inspection confirmed that staff consistently followed good hand hygiene practices. The service also carried out its own observations of staff practice, which helped ensure that care was delivered in line with current good practice guidelines. This approach supported a safe and hygienic environment for both staff and the people they supported.

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
1.2 People get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good
1.5 People's health and wellbeing benefits from safe infection prevention and control practice and procedure	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
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11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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