

Dementia Support Service Support Service

Dementia Support Service
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Telephone: 01294 602 720

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 July 2025

Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003327

Service no:
CS2012306108

About the service

Dementia Support Service is registered to provide care and support to adults and older people with memory impairment and/or dementia living in their own homes and in the wider community throughout North Ayrshire.

The Dementia Support Service can provide guidance, information and support, e.g. attending appointments etc.

The service operates from an office base in Ardrossan, North Ayrshire. The service provider is North Ayrshire Council.

At the time of inspection 65 people were being supported by the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3 and 4 July between the hours of 09:30 and 16:30. 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 five people using the service and three of their family
- spoke with seven staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with four professionals.

Key messages

- Everyone we met spoke extremely highly of the staff and how much they enjoyed being supported.
- People's sense of worth was enhanced by staff who were respectful, knowledgeable and respected them as individuals.
- Management were fully involved in the delivery of the service and modelled good professional practice.
- Management had a very good overview of the service strengths and were able to drive improvements.
- They had made good progress with the self-evaluation tool; this shows a willingness to continue to improve.

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.

Staff were attentive and caring, displaying genuine warmth in their interactions, and we could clearly see that people were happy and relaxed in their company. The small team meant very good continuity to the people they support. Staff were very skilled at building meaningful relationships with people and their families.

People told us they were encouraged to engage in activities of their choice, and that staff brought relevant things to try with the person depending on their interests.

Staff understood their role in supporting people's access to healthcare and addressing health inequalities, even where the role of the service in this is minor. Staff recognised changing health needs and shared this information quickly with the right people.

During our inspection we saw and heard lots of evidence to support improved health outcomes for people because of the care they received. Staff had supported people to access health input and notable actions taken to benefit them. Staff met people's needs as required, for example collecting from the pharmacy and support to attend appointments etc. All whilst maintaining professional boundaries and giving the person and their family member their place.

The staff team were skilled at building trusting relationships; this was especially helpful when the person and their family were negotiating an uncertain path. We heard lots of feedback on how staff had taken their time and went at the person's pace. "Mum is thoroughly enjoying it." "She loves his company; it brings something different to her life." "She has been to places that she's not seen for a long time." "She also got to choose my birthday card; this meant a lot to both of us." "The service is really good; the staff are all nice and kind."

People told us that they enjoyed the support they received. Comments included "I am very satisfied with the care and attention I have received." "I appreciate their help."

"Everything is going great, no complaints at all."

People were enabled to get the most out of life with support to maintain and develop their skills, interests and strengths. This meant people's confidence had been boosted because they had chances to be socially active or given the support they need to participate. New experiences were promoted, and people got the encouragement and support they need to be as active as they could be.

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 governance and quality of assurance of the service were highly effective. The service had introduced the self-evaluation of the core assurances outlined in the Care Inspectorate Quality Framework for support services. There were also clear and robust processes in place for managing complaints, accidents and incidents.

The service actively seeks feedback from people using the service, their families and staff members. There are high levels of confidence in the management team from people receiving the service, their families and care staff. The management team were able to demonstrate a commitment to improving the service and delivering a high-quality care service. This also promoted effective communication and helped ensure that people's views were documented and responded to.

The management team had very good knowledge around the people being supported. They were committed to ensuring people were supported to live as meaningful a life as possible; this support was extended to the families of each person. We found staff and management to be extremely positive about working in this team, they were enthusiastic and highly motivated.

The management team were approachable, supportive and provided practical guidance for staff, people they supported and their families. Staff, people using the service and their families were confident giving feedback because they knew that management encouraged this.

Staff benefitted from regular staff meetings, individual supervision sessions and training opportunities which ensured they had the necessary information and support to enable personal and professional development.

There is an ethos of open communication between management and staff, with regular supervision and staff training and development being a key focus area for the manager.

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.

Staffing arrangements were right, and staff worked well together. Staffing arrangements for the service were determined by a process of continuous assessment. The coordinator had a good overview of the upcoming service requirements; taking account of the importance of matching staff to people, along with considerations of compatibility and continuity. This meant a lot to people and their relatives.

Staff we spoke with all told us they felt well supported in their roles and were all very positive about working in this service. It was evident that staff worked very well together to ensure positive outcomes for people using the service, and this was reflected in the positive feedback from the people we spoke to.

Due to the short-term nature of the service, the planning, assessing and evaluation of hours is established and negotiated throughout the term of 12 weeks support. We heard lots of examples where social work had requested that hours/days be used differently to meet the needs of the person and their main carer. People told us that the service were accommodating and flexible. Comments included, "I really treasure the time I get to myself." "The support is going very well he is supported by X, he takes him out in the car." "It depends on the weather, yesterday they stayed in, they spent time doing things that he enjoys."

Feedback from social work colleagues were very positive. "They are really good at introducing people to services" "They are very flexible and do what they can to support people with what they need." "They are also an invaluable support to families."

"I've found them to be accommodating if we request an extension/ more hours." "This service smooths the way for the person to go to other services."

"We can occasionally extend; the only downside is that it's short term." "Feel like they are just building trust and then it ends." "Rarely we can re-refer but obviously there is a waiting list."
"Communication is always very good, and I highlighted things that I require to know."

The staff team had a level of autonomy when allocating visits. This meant they were flexible and supported each other to work as a team to benefit people. Further feedback from external professionals, "Staff are highly skilled and appear well trained." "I would be able to contact them if needed." "I find Dementia support service a good and effect service for service users."

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.

Personal plans were appropriate to the setting and the specific role the service played in people's lives; which was mainly offering guidance, information and support. People's personal plans were tailored to their needs to the support them at home or out in the community. The purpose of the plan is to improve the quality of life of the person and their main carer.

The coordinator matched the person to the best fitting support worker, who then received the relevant information on the person. This helps them to plan, where to signpost the person and /or their family to and what the person may enjoy. This often came through an introduction to services, visiting places or enjoying activities at home.

The information available to the team was very detailed including input from health and social work colleagues, identified risks and personal support needs. However, we found that the personal plan in the persons home lacked detail on their needs, wishes and preferences. The details were minimal on purpose and held elsewhere to spare the person having access to often difficult to read/accept information. This meant that what was detailed in the plan in the persons home was different from what information the office and staff had access to. Although, to overcome this the service had introduced one-page profiles, this had improved the information available to support staff.
Due to the nature of the service the continuity was very good, so it was always the same staff who had access to this information

As the service is for two hours over an eight-12 week period only, reviews are carried out four-weekly for every person. This ensures that the service ensures their needs are monitored effectively and any changes in their health and wellbeing responded to. Regular and consistent reviewing of progress made towards outcomes took place with either the person and/or their family. This enabled people to maximise control of their outcomes. This also meant that people were involved in directing and leading their own care and support where appropriate.

People and, where relevant, their families, were fully involved in developing their personal plans. Strong leadership, staff competence, meaningful involvement and embedded quality assurance and improvement processes support this happening.

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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