

# Thera (Scotland) - (Inverness and the Highlands) Housing Support Service

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**Type of inspection:**  
Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**  
16 January 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Thera (Scotland)

**Service provider number:**  
SP2007008824

**Service no:**  
CS2016346839

## About the service

Thera (Scotland) - (Inverness and Highlands) provides combined housing support and care at home services to people with learning disabilities living in their own homes and in the community.

The support services are provided in the Inverness and Easter Ross areas. Support can be provided to people in their own homes and in the community over 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The provider of the service is Thera (Scotland).

## About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place between 14 and 16 January 2025. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 three people using the service and four of their relatives, we also received five responses to a survey issued.
- spoke with, or received survey responses from, 18 staff and management
- spoke with, or received survey responses, from eight visiting professionals
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Staff were dedicated and strong advocates of the people they supported.
- The service had focused on sustaining and continuing improvements since the last inspection.
- There was a stable and consistent staff team in place.
- Care plans and assessments were of a high quality and were regularly updated.

## 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

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.

People were supported by staff who showed a very good awareness of their role and duties, including how to report any concerns about a person they were supporting. One professional told us:

"Staff in the service are always respectful, they have a very good understanding for individuals' health needs and when to seek help."

Staff have received specialist training to support people with managing complex health conditions. There was clear evidence of how staff supported people to manage stress and distress, which evidenced that people's wellbeing benefitted from very high quality care and support.

We found strong systems were in place to promote safe administration and management of medication, and staff competency checks were undertaken routinely. Each person had a detailed care plan and support plans were regularly updated, this meant that people received care and support which was responsive and promoted positive health and wellbeing.

Professionals told us:

"Care and support plans are well written and up to date, they work with the multidisciplinary team to ensure that all the person's needs are considered. They will always seek advice as they require additional guidance with specific plans."

"People supported in Highland have their wellbeing put first and staff are very caring and compassionate towards people supported."

We observed staff being attentive and treating people with dignity and respect. Families and people who were supported by the service, told us that their views were sought and reflected in the care provided and personal outcomes. One relative told us:

"[My relative] plays a part in this and they involve [my relative] in selecting who works with them. I've nothing but praise."

Support provided enabled people to access a wide variety of activities, hobbies, and services within their local community. Where people were supported with meal preparation there was a focus on developing an approach that fostered a healthy attitude to food, while taking into consideration preferences and dietary needs.

## 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.

The service had a stable and steady staffing team and there had been no use of agency staff, this meant

that people were supported by a consistent staff team who knew them well. The service carefully matched staff to people based on their strengths to promote compatibility, this was especially important as many people received support from staff 24/7. Staff at all levels of the service worked flexibly to ensure vacant shifts and short-term absences were covered, showing an ability to respond to changing situations promptly.

There was a warm and relaxed atmosphere between staff and the people they supported. Staff knew people's communication preferences well and had taken time to build positive relationships with the people they supported. During visits to observe practice and speak to people supported by the service, we consistently found the staff to be respectful, skilled, and very professional.

Recruitment processes followed best practice guidance, including ensuring appropriate references and checks were completed for new staff. The induction program provided a variety of training including the opportunity to shadow shifts. Additional shadowing opportunities were provided for new staff if they felt this was needed and the induction process was adjusted to meet individual needs, this meant people could be confident they were being supported by staff who were knowledgeable and well trained.

The management team had a very good oversight of staffing schedules, and rotas were created with feedback from both people and staff, this promoted continuity and ensured staff felt valued. Observations of staff practice were completed by the management team routinely to ensure they had oversight of staff strengths and training needs. Staff meetings and supervision took place regularly which promoted a culture of effective communication and reflective practice. Both staff and people supported by the service spoke highly of the management team, telling us they were very approachable and had an 'open door policy'.

## 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 further promote person centred reviews, the provider should find meaningful ways to consistently include the views of people in their reviews. This is especially relevant for people who communicate non verbally.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I am supported to communicate in a way that is right for me, at my own pace, by people who are sensitive to me and my needs' (HSCS 2.8).

**This area for improvement was made on 30 August 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

The service has been both creative and proactive in looking at ways to support person-centred reviews. The service manager provided examples of ways the service has been working with the multi-disciplinary team, advocacy and quality assurance team to supporting people to include their views at reviews.

Family members and professionals we spoke with told us that staff knew the people they supported well and they felt that people's views are taken into consideration at reviews, particularly when people are non-verbal in communication. The views of people were well documented in the reviews we sampled.

**This area for improvement had been met.**

## Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure choices and decisions are being made by the right person when a person is under a guardianship order, the powers stated in the guardianship order should be reviewed at least annually with all relevant persons.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'If my independence, control and choice are restricted, this complies with relevant legislation and any restrictions are justified, kept to a minimum and carried out sensitively' (HSCS 1.3).

**This area for improvement was made on 30 August 2023.**

### Action taken since then

It was clear from our conversations and documents sampled that the service had been proactive in ensuring guardianship powers had been reviewed, updated where appropriate, and were clear at all times as part of ongoing review processes. Staff showed a good awareness of guardianships orders where applicable.

We found appropriate legal documentation in relation to guardianship orders and their powers was included in care and support plans sampled.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://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 staff team?	5 - Very Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	5 - Very Good

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