

Short Breaks, 32/34 Pickaquoy Loan Care Home Service

St. Colm's Complex
Pickaquoy Road
Kirkwall
KW15 1RP

Telephone: 01856 871 431

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 March 2026

Service provided by:
Orkney Islands Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001951

Service no:
CS2004060192

About the service

Short Breaks is based in Kirkwall. It is registered to provide respite care to a maximum of four adults. The service is currently offering care and support to individuals who were awaiting transition to alternative and permanent care arrangements. The service had updated their aims and objectives to reflect this. Whilst this was responsive to meet individual needs, it had resulted in reduced capacity for respite stays at the service.

The service aims to provide "a homely and welcoming atmosphere where people can feel comfortable and relaxed". The main part of the home has four single en-suite bedrooms, a lounge, and large kitchen. One bedroom is used by staff. The service also has an attached self-contained flat, which is designed to promote independent living opportunities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17, 18 and 19 March, 2026. 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 three family members
- Spoke with eight staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents
- Received feedback from visiting professionals

Key messages

- People enjoyed and looked forward to staying at Short Breaks
- The staff team were committed to providing person centred support and knew people well
- People had opportunities to be active in their local community when staying at the service
- Staff had good working relationships and found their seniors to be approachable and helpful
- Management were assessing how well the service met people's needs and wishes
- Management had identified improvements and were striving to achieve these

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?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	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?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good. This meant the service had clear strengths in what it provided and these outweighed any areas for improvement. The strengths had a significant positive impact on people's experiences and outcomes. Improvements should still be worked on to ensure people experience a consistent service that meets their wishes and needs well.

People got a lot out of staying at Short Breaks. They enjoyed being there and got on well with their staff members.

Staff had a good level of information about people, and people's care and support plans explained their needs and wishes well. Staff had a good understanding of how to support a person in a way that suited them. Staff members had a compassionate, friendly and relaxed manner. Guidance provided for staff was specific to each person and showed a person centred approach. People can trust that staff had suitable knowledge and skills.

Where people had complex health and wellbeing needs this was recognised. Appropriate assessments of these needs had taken place, and people's care and support plans had sufficient detail to guide staff. The service also had good relationships with key other agencies in health and social care. If someone's health or wellbeing needs changed, then the service would communicate with appropriate agencies, people supported and their families to make sure that the service's support continued to be suitable. People got timely and responsive care and support. People were supported to keep safe and well.

The service had developed positive ways to make sure people felt welcomed and comfortable at the Short Breaks service. As an example of this, people who attended regularly could have their own box of familiar items that they kept at the service. When they arrived, staff would have prepared their bedroom with some or all of these items. This was person centred.

The service kept appropriate records of support provided, for example, when someone was supported with their medication needs or a person had a fall when at the service. If a serious matter arose for a person, staff knew the appropriate people and agencies to contact, for instance a person's G.P. and family. People can have confidence in the staff's response to concerns.

People and/or their family or representative, were able to attend regular meetings (review meeting) to discuss the support and care they received from the service. They could discuss how they were getting on, whether the service was still suiting them and any changes they may like or need in terms of the care and support provided. People views were listened to, acted upon when suitable and respected.

The service had quality assurance measures in place to help in making sure the service was meeting people's expectations and achieving high standards. Mostly, this was good but some had fallen behind schedule. The service was aware of this and intended to improve in this area in the coming months.

There were some aspects of the service that could be considered further and improved. There was a large garden area that could be developed more, made more accessible and attractive for people to use. Some thought had already gone into this.

Importantly, we also discussed how the service was not able to provide as many short break opportunities to people as it usually did and this limited the aims of the service. The service was committed to helping those who were awaiting longer term accommodation to move on to suitable more permanent arrangements.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good.

People and family members were positive about the service's staff. They reported that staff had a respectful, responsible and friendly manner.

The service made sure that staff recruited were suitable for a role in health and social care. Appropriate checks were undertaken, interviews took place and new staff were given a good introduction to their role. This included shadowing more experienced staff members, guidance information and initial training. People can have trust in the service's recruitment processes.

People liked their staff members. Some comments from people and families were:

- 'She's a star'.
- Staff members are 'brilliant'.
- 'A lot of the staff are brilliant'.

Some comments were still very favourable but included some concerns such as:

- 'Wish we could get more staff'.
- 'Don't always know every staff member.'

Staff members reported they felt they had the right training and training records reflected this. Staff worked well together, too, recognising they needed to be flexible at times to manage changes in plans. They felt well supported by their seniors, communication was good and they normally got a speedy reply to any questions or concerns. Staff working well together supported good experiences and wellbeing for people.

The service should look at making sure people and their family members always know which staff will be on and have some information about the staff member. The service could also aim for there to be an even more regular, stable, staff group providing the support in the Short Breaks. This will aid people in knowing who the staff members are and offer more continuity of care and support.

Recruitment challenges in this service were acknowledged. Positively, council and agency staff were seen to make a good team and their focus was on the people supported and their best interests.

Staff feeling supported is an important element of robust care and support provision for people. Some staff were not getting regular formal supervision and some others management oversight activities to support best practice were not always happening. Staff, however, did report feeling well supported in more informal ways such as easily being able to report matters and discuss them with senior support workers. People's staff members had positive values and motivation.

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?	4 - Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	4 - Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.