

Lifecare - Cottage Companion Club Support Service

53 Milton Road East
Edinburgh
EH15 2NL

Telephone: 01316 574 101

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 October 2025

Service provided by:
Lifecare (Edinburgh) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003002785

Service no:
CS2006117301

About the service

Cottage Companion club has been registered since 12 December 2005 and provides day services for up to 10 people each day. The service provider is Lifecare (Edinburgh) Limited.

The service is close to the main road and easily accessible with public transport. A minibus service is available for those who need it. The building is set within the grounds of another registered care service and the lunches are delivered daily by this service. The day service is across one level and has separate lounge and dining areas.

About the inspection

This was a full inspection which took place on 30 September 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 got feedback from six people and their relatives.
- spoke with five staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Staff were kind, compassionate and responsive.
- Staff felt supported and able to contribute to service improvement.
- Staff worked well together.
- The service was clean and tidy throughout.
- Plans were person centred and goals focussed.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - 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.

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

Strong adult support and protection and whistleblowing policies were in place. When asked, staff knew when and how to raise concerns through the appropriate channels. This safeguarded people using the service.

Interactions between people and staff were warm and friendly, with staff adapting their communication style to suit each person and situation. People were treated with respect, and their dignity was maintained. When signs of distress arose, staff recognised this early and discreetly offered reassurance. This meant people were supported by staff who were consistently responsive and compassionate.

Activities were varied and selected daily by people using the service. Following feedback from individuals and suggestions from staff, the service is now developing a more structured approach to activities. This will provide greater variety and enable the service to include activities that require more advanced planning. The service also regularly welcomed visiting musicians and occasionally organised excursions. This meant people were able to maintain their interests and promoted choice.

The service was in the process of arranging visits from local emergency services to talk to people about fire safety and raise awareness of scamming. This highlighted that the service considered the wellbeing of people beyond their time in the day service.

Dining observations were very positive, with staff creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere with light conversation, humour and singing. People shared that they enjoyed their food and if they didn't like what was on offer, an alternative option would be arranged. Staff waited until all people were finished eating before removing plates and offered people a second course if they wanted it. This meant people didn't feel rushed and were able to enjoy their meal at their own pace.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well

Staff shared that they felt supported and had good relationships with senior members of the team. Feedback from staff was positive about leadership approaches and the visibility of senior staff. Staff felt that the senior leadership team was approachable and felt able to raise concerns. Staff also felt able to share ideas for improvement and several staff shared that they have had their ideas implemented in the past. Development days for senior staff provided an opportunity to share learning, update staff about changes and provided an opportunity to use a collaborative approach to improve the service. This also provided an opportunity to educate leaders about communicating with their teams. This fostered a culture of continuous improvement. One member of staff shared "(they) are wonderful".

The service regularly obtained feedback from people using the service through client meetings and feedback questionnaires. During meetings, people were encouraged to speak freely about any ideas for improvement and discuss any concerns. People were asked for their opinions about food and activities amongst other things. This meant people were meaningfully involved in development of the service.

Improvement plans were recently developed, allowing the service to prioritise improvements according to urgency and monitor progress. The service has begun strengthening quality assurance processes, creating a more robust system for monthly audits. This will enable the leadership team to identify any learning needs, areas requiring improvement and ways to improve safety for people using the service.

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.

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

Strong recruitment procedures were in place including pre-employment checks. Regular reviews during probationary periods ensured staff were equipped to safely support people using the service. All staff were appropriately registered with Scottish Social Services Council. Most people were up to date with mandatory training and those who were awaiting safe people handling had this booked. A member of staff had recently completed "train the trainer" for this, making it easier for the service to train new and existing staff. Senior staff had completed additional training around leadership, including a development day which provided a networking opportunity and a chance to share learning. Staff shared that they had regular supervision with their leader and supervision sessions were person centred. This meant people received support from people who were appropriately trained and supported.

Staffing was consistent across the service with people working regularly with the same group of people. A key worker system meant people had an allocated member of staff for reviews of care plans. This meant people benefited from continuity of care and were able to build relationships with the staff that supported them.

Staffing numbers were above minimum numbers in rotas sampled and when staff were off sick, this was mostly covered by staff from another service run by the same provider. Agency was occasionally used if necessary. Staff shared that they felt they had enough time to do their jobs well and that senior staff made sure they had time allocated to keep up to date with mandatory training and keyworker duties. Regular volunteers added to an already strong staff group, and feedback from volunteers was that they felt well supported and enjoyed their role within the service. During our observations, volunteers treated people with respect and compassion and it was clear people had built positive relationships with them. Volunteers were included in team meetings and asked for their input with regards to ideas for service improvement. During inspection, we witnessed staff and volunteers regularly supporting each other, offering help and working as a team. This meant people were supported by an appropriate number of staff who worked well together.

One member of staff shared "We all work well together, share tasks and support each other."

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 4.1 People experience high quality facilities

The service is located within the grounds of a separate care provider, in close proximity to the main street and public transport links. In addition, a minibus collection and drop-off service was available for individuals who required transport.

The entrance area was welcoming with a notice board displaying photographs and names of staff, helping people to easily identify those who worked in the service. Alongside this, there were photographs of people who used the service participating in activities, creating a personalised and welcoming environment.

The service was consistently clean, tidy and well organised throughout and staff maintained a high standard of hygiene. People benefited from communal spaces and doorways that were free of clutter. Toilets were clean, well-stocked with supplies and personal protective equipment for those who needed it. All environmental safety checks and risk assessments were up to date, including fire safety and electrical safety. This demonstrated that the service prioritised the safety of people using the service.

There were two main communal areas available for people to use. The lounge was arranged with seating in a circle, encouraging social interaction, group discussion and group activities. The dining area was set out in a circular tables of 4, making it easier for people to interact with each other and enjoy a sociable atmosphere at meal times. Toilets had clear signage in picture format, making it easy for people with dementia to identify them. This meant people had a choice of environments and were able to independently move around the service.

The service had ornaments, an artificial fireplace and wall art to create a homely environment. The service manager shared their plans for environmental improvements including replacement flooring, decorating the setting and improving the outdoor space.

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.

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

Support plans were written in a way that was easy to navigate and were person centred. Most reviews were up to date, and both people receiving support and their relatives shared that they felt included in the care planning process. Staff regularly checked if anything had changed for individuals, ensuring that plans remained relevant and reflected current needs. Goals within the plans were meaningful and promoted independence wherever possible. Each support plan included a dedicated section where the individual could express what they wanted to achieve from attending the service, alongside practical ways the service could help them. This meant people had plans that were meaningful and personalised to them.

A keyworker system meant each individual had a staff member who was responsible for keeping their support plans and risk assessments up to date. This approach made care planning more person-centred, provided consistency and meant people were supported by staff who knew them well.

Risk assessments were completed thoroughly, including potential risks and ways to reduce them. They were person centred, taking into account individual needs and abilities. The service used incident reports to identify whether any additional risk assessments were needed or updates were required. This promoted safety and showed the service was responsive to change.

Support plans included essential information such as the individual's name, address, date of birth, allergies, DNACPR status, GP contact details and next of kin information. This ensured staff had up to date information to enable them to act appropriately and contact relevant people if required.

People had given informed consent for use of their photos, whether for social media, service website, or for internal use only. This protected people's privacy and promoted their right to choice.

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?	4 - Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	4 - 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 good is our setting?	4 - Good
4.1 People experience high quality facilities	4 - 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
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
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