

## Highland Home Carers Ltd - Housing Support Service

**Service name**

Highland Home Carers Ltd - Housing Support Service

**Service address**

3 Stadium Road

Inverness IV1 1FF

**Type of care service**

Housing Support Service

**Provider name**

Highland Home Carers Ltd

**Service number**

CS2003054082

**Date of inspection**

20 March 2008

**Type of inspection**

Announced

**Care Commission Office**

1st Floor, Castle House, Fairways  
Business Park, Inverness IV2 6AA

**Period since last inspection**

## **Introduction**

Highland Home Carers Ltd was registered to provide a Care at Home and Housing Support Services. The services were first registered with the Care Commission in August 2004.

The service mission statement reflected the aims and objectives of the service:

"Highland Home Carers aims to provide a flexible, quality home care and support service, enabling individuals to remain in their own home with assistance in maintaining their current lifestyle and promoting independence where possible"

## **Basis of Report**

This service was inspected after receiving a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) to determine what level of support was necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the CCO which considers: complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service, action taken upon requirement etc. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

Prior to the inspection visit the service provider had completed the electronic annual return and self evaluation documents online. These were taken into account, along with the service provider's history in developing a regulatory support assessment.

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required as a result. The inspection was then based upon the relevant inspection focus area(s) and follow up on any recommendations and requirements from previous inspections, complaints or other regulatory activity.

During the inspection which took place on 20th March 2008, the Care Commission Officer met with the service manager and training coordinator. The Care Commission Officer examined the range of policies, procedures and records relating to the inspection focus areas and themed inspection. Service users and carers views and feedback were sampled via postal questionnaires and telephone interview in relation to service delivery.

This report is based on consideration of the service's compliance with the regulations associated with the Regulation of Care (Requirements as to Care Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 (SSI 2002/114) as well as taking account of the following National Care Standards :

Care at Home and Housing Support Services -

Management and staffing arrangements

Expressing your views

### **Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Reports**

A recommendation had been made in the previous report as regards individual service users having an individual agreement.

This recommendation had been met.

### **Comment on Self-Evaluation**

N/A

### **View of Service Users**

Service users and carers views were sampled using postal questionnaires and telephone interviews. Service users views via questionnaire and telephone indicated a very positive view of the service. Comments ranged from:

"They deal with my problems cheerfully and carefully"

"Supportive to my relative, friendly and willing to help in any way"

"service is a lifeline"

"wouldn't survive without them"

"very happy.....good staff"

"I've trained them into my way of working....they're very good!"

Some service users interviewed by telephone indicated the vital nature of the support they received, stating that the service was maintaining their independence at home, and without which they felt they would be forced into care.

There were some comments regarding communications with the service user/ carers, and of changes in carer personnel, but these were generally resolved by the provider to the service users / carer satisfaction.

### **View of Carers**

Carers who responded via the postal questionnaires, and who were spoken to by phone, indicated a very positive view of service delivery, and described an open and flexible service which was responsive to any issues / concerns that were raised.

## **Regulations / Principles**

**Regulation :**

**Strengths**

**Areas for Development**

## **National Care Standards**

### **National Care Standard Number 3: Housing Support Services - Management and Staffing Arrangements**

#### **Strengths**

The service was inspected under this standard with reference to the key inspection focus areas relevant to this year's inspection schedule.

Child Protection in services for adults-

The service does not deal with children, and has no child protection policy.

Protecting People-

Restraint:

The service has a policy in place which states that Highland Home Carers has a no restraint policy, as staff are working in service user's homes. The policy states that "Care and support workers will receive mandatory training on alternatives to restraint".

In terms of managing difficult behaviours, staff are taught how to deal with challenging behaviour and de-escalation techniques as part of the induction process, by an in-house trainer. Staff are encouraged to remove themselves from any risk situation.

The policy describes the process with regard to risk assessment, management of accidents / incident, and recording thereof, and staff training.

## Adult Protection:

An adult protection policy was in place - "Prevention of Abuse" - which defined abuse, a description of the staff and management's responsibilities, procedures to be followed, and key contact personnel and numbers.

The service had a copy of the area inter-agency Adult Protection Procedures available within the policy and procedure manual.

All staff undertake Protection of Vulnerable Adults training, accessed via the Local Authority . Internal staff training also included specific issues related to adult protection and abuse.

The service had no recorded adult abuse concerns.

## Staff Training and Scottish Social Services Council Codes:

### Staff Training

Staff training needs are identified from the point of interview and appointment. Induction training is thorough and records are kept of training provided over the induction period. New staff have a period of protected employment through "shadowing" experienced staff.

Training is very much operational "hands on" training through supervised practice. Training needs

are identified through the supervision and appraisal process.

The service has a training and development policy - "Staff training and support policy" - which describes the organisations learning and development systems, in terms of access to training and development, participation and application of learning.

The effectiveness of training was carried out via the supervision process and informal discussion.

The care at home service was actively looking into the "Home Care Practice Licence" - an innovative approach to training home carers being developed by Stirling University. It was hoped that this model of training would be validated in terms of recognition by the Scottish Social Services Council. This interesting development was noted.

An annual training plan was in place, which was overseen by two key members of staff, which included induction training, mandatory training, and non-statutory training. Training was targeted around care and support staff's specific role definition.

A training spreadsheet was maintained where training was easily tracked.

Mandatory training included - First Aid, Moving & Handling, Fire Safety, De-escalation, Rights & Responsibilities, and professional issues.

Home care staff underwent specific training related to their role: Catheter Care, Pressure Area Care, Palliative Care, and training on specific care issues: Multiple Sclerosis, Diabetes, MRSA, Autism, Cerebral Vascular Accident, epilepsy, PEG feeding, medication, visual and feet care, and record-keeping.

Scottish Social Services Council Codes - Staff Qualifications:

The service are actively looking at the Home Care Practice Licence (HCPL) being developed by

Stirling University, in the hope that this will be an accredited qualification for their home care staff in terms of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

Support workers are undertaking SVQ (2) and (3) training in order to meet the requirements of the SSSC.

The service employs staff with a range of other qualifications - registered nursing staff, staff with Higher National Certificates and degrees.

Staff are also able to access "external" training as a need is identified and training undertaken included: Protection of Vulnerable Adults, Epilepsy, CVA training, and advocacy (via the Highland User Group)

#### Quality Assurance

The service involved itself in quality assurance on a number of levels, which provided a qualitative, internal and external audit of service delivery and this is commended.

The service itself carries out service user surveys using a "service evaluation form" which looks at key components of service delivery, from the service user perspective, with questions centred around: Flexibility of the service, awareness of 24 hour emergency system, response from the service, confidence in staff, reliability, quality, and includes a space for comments on possible improvements.

The survey results were generally very positive but did raise issues surrounding knowledge of the emergency service and communication which the service was addressing.

The service also carried out a staff survey via an employee questionnaire looking at issues of employee ownership, the service mission statement and values, objectives, and motivational issues surrounding their job security, terms, safety, facilities, training, opportunities, flexibility, recognition and communication.

The service was formally audited by the Baxi Trust, one of its funding agencies, with regard to its employees perception of the service provider as an employer.

The service had also taken part in a Social Accounting and Auditing pilot scheme by the Cooperative Development Scotland (CDS) which looked at the service mission statement, values, objectives, activities, stakeholder analysis, core objectives, economic and environmental impact. It was hoped that the information gathered would help the service to improve practice thereby benefiting service users and employees.

### **Areas for Development**

The training system was robust and innovative but evaluation of the effectiveness of training, whilst being carried out informally should be developed, by use of evaluation processes (supervision/ meetings/ appraisal), observed practice, personal development systems and feedback from the service users and carers.

## **National Care Standard Number 8: Housing Support Services - Expressing Your Views**

### **Strengths**

The service was inspected under this standard with reference to the key inspection focus areas relevant to this year's inspection schedule.

Service users were encouraged and helped to make their views known on any aspects of the care at home/ housing support service. The service had carried out a service user evaluation survey with a 57% response rate, which indicated a very positive and supportive view of the service provided. A recurring theme regarding a lack of communication between the administration office, care staff and service users or their carers had also been identified.

Telephone interviews with service users and questionnaires returned described an open and accessible service, with effective communication for the most part.

Telephone interviews with service users and questionnaires returned demonstrated that service users knew how to make a complaint or raise concerns with the service provider about the service.

Service users were made aware of the procedure for making complaints directly to the Care Commission via the service information pack.

Service users who responded to telephone interview and questionnaire were positive that the service provider dealt with concerns and complaints quickly and sympathetically.

Service users were helped and supported to use an independent and confidential advocacy service if they wanted. Staff had information about advocacy services that would help service users in this way.

If service users had an independent representative, staff would listen to what she or he had to say on their behalf.

Service users were encouraged to play a part in the Care Commission's inspection of the service. Service users participated through responding via postal questionnaires and telephone interview.

### **Areas for Development**

The service had (5) complaints / concerns on record, all resolved internally by the service. No complaints had been received by the Care Commission. Complaint records examined were fragmented and difficult to track.

It is recommended that the complaints policy, procedure and records are reviewed and updated to ensure that they are robust and demonstrate the appropriate processes and resolution.

**Enforcement**

There has been no enforcement action against this service since the last inspection.

**Other Information****Fire Safety Issues**

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, on 1 October 2006. In terms of those arrangements, responsibility for enforcing the statutory provisions in relation to fire safety now lies with the Fire and Rescue service for the area in which a care service is located. Accordingly, the Care Commission will no longer report on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function, but, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Further advice on your responsibilities is available at [www.infoscotland.com/firelaw](http://www.infoscotland.com/firelaw)

**Requirements**

No requirements are being made as a result of this inspection.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the complaints policy, procedure and recording is reviewed and updated to ensure it is robust, fit for purpose and demonstrates resolution.

This is in order to comply with The Regulation of Care (Requirements as to Care Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 (SSI 2002/114) - Regulation 25

**John H Corbett**

**Care Commission Officer**