

Guide Communicator Service Housing Support Service

1 Neasham Drive
Kirkintilloch
G66 3FA

Telephone: 0141 777 6111

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

7 November 2019

Service provided by:

Deafblind Scotland

Service provider number:

SP2004004448

Service no:

CS2003053997

About the service

The Guide Communicator Service is registered as a housing support and care at home service, and provides support to individuals with a severe dual sensory impairment. The service registered with the Care Inspectorate in 2011. The provider of the service is Deafblind Scotland which is a national organisation. The new purpose built office based in Kirkintilloch was opened in 2017.

Staff within the service are trained in a range of communication methods including British sign language and tactile sign language. Overall they act as the person's guide.

There were 58 people using the service at the time of the inspection. Support hours varied and were assessed on an individual basis. The majority of people had a few hours support each week.

The aims of the service are to:

Ensure equal access for deafblind people.

Promote independence.

Provide stimulation.

Help maintain links with the community.

What people told us

During the inspection we communicated with 13 people using the service, either face to face or by telephone or email, 10 people returned our questionnaires. Overall, people were very happy with the service. People felt it had improved and their views were being listened to. People commented that the service was invaluable to them, and they could not manage without it. The guides provided high quality communication which allowed people to communicate effectively. Comments included;

'This service has given me the confidence to get out and enjoy life. Without their help I would be basically house bound.'

'Always punctual, never missed a visit and have enjoyed everyone. Very helpful and supportive at all times.'

'I am delighted with the service I receive from Deafblind Scotland. They provide a service that boosts my morale and takes much of the pressure out of my busy life.'

Although the majority of people were very happy with the service some felt improvements could be made, for example, three people commented that there weren't enough guides and this did have an impact on their life. Comments included;

'I sometimes have no guide as not enough working. This affects me as I have no family or friends to rely on.' Another person said 'Sometimes there are days when I don't have any support due to I am told lack of guides.'

The management team were very aware of the issues for some people in not being able to have a guide, and were trying to recruitment more staff.

Others mentioned;

'More funding being available for activities and outings.'

'Improvement to public transport to drop off at the center.'

One person said 'they wanted to use the technology room at the center but did not have transport and had difficulty travelling the distance'.

'I am really happy with the service as long as I get my regular guide as I do not like new guides. I know they need to learn and have said I will accept them for approx 3-4 hours or when my regular guide is on holiday.'

One person commented that there was a 'Lack of interdepartmental communication within staff system, no one knows what is happening re funding, events, accesibility. Bit disjointed'.

Self assessment

We discussed with the managers the use of self evaluation and the new guidance in place. The service have an operational plan that identifies improvements to be made.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Overall, people experienced very positive outcomes from using the service. People described the service as their 'lifeline', 'invaluable', without it people felt very isolated and alone. One person commented 'I am happy with the guides service and feel they give me more independence and freedom'.

People very much enjoyed the guides input as this meant they had someone they could communicate well with. The guides enabled people to be involved in activities they enjoyed, such as cooking, baking, walking and going shopping.

The guides input allowed people to attend their favourite groups or go on outings of their choice, and to visit relatives. One person told us that they travelled to different parts of Scotland with their guide so that they could continue to enjoy their hobby. This had a positive impact on people's wellbeing.

Input from the guides supported people to be empowered, independent, and to make their own choices. For example, one person told us that if they had to attend a hospital appointment they would arrange to meet the guide there, as this gave them more independence.

Another person commented, 'they (the guides) encourage independence by not answering for me, rather pass the question on and let me answer myself. I always make my own choices and the guide supports them'.

People told us the guides were very kind and friendly. Some people had the same guide for many years, they had confidence in the guides and trusting relationships had been formed.

Staff and people were well matched and had similar interests such as, craft work and baking. The service was flexible to meet people's needs, for example, changing days and times of support. People could 'bank' hours and this enabled more flexibility.

The centre provided different activities that were person led. For example, we saw one person had an interest in meccano, and staff had set up sessions for others to join in. People told us how much they enjoyed the activities. This encouraged people to be more independent with travel, and to meet people socially.

The main area for improvement for people was to have more guides. This was more an issue in some localities than others, and for people who wanted a guide in the evenings or at the weekend. Recruitment drives had taken place and some new guides had been appointed. The service was committed to continue to recruit more staff.

We discussed how improvements could be made to the support plans to be more person centered, and risk assessments could be more detailed.

It was good to see that people had the opportunity to have a review of their support. We discussed using separate documents to record the review and to include action points to take forward. The management team were in the process of reviewing documentation and took these points on board.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

This quality theme was not assessed.

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We found there had been improvements to the service, and the commitment of the management team was very positive.

People told us that there had been improvements to the management and leadership of the service. People were aware of the management team and had met the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). People felt their views were 'listened to' and the management team were seen as approachable and responsive.

There were very good opportunities for people to make their views known. For example through reviews, surveys and through various group meetings. Feedback was given to staff so that they were aware of people's views. People had started to be involved in staff recruitment and staff training. This was an area that the management team wanted to continue to improve.

The management team were committed to make improvements to the service. For example, through surveys. A recent stakeholder survey had been completed and the results were very positive. Policies and procedures were being updated to reflect up to date practice and legislation.

Staff we spoke to were very positive about the managers and the CEO. They told us that they were approachable and made them 'feel valued'. Staff felt communication had improved. Staff surveys were being planned so that staff would have the opportunity to share their views.

Improvements had been completed since the last inspection for example, work had been done to develop competency assessments for staff. These will support staff in their learning. We found staff have very good opportunities to develop their skills through qualifications and through practice meetings.

The management team were very aware of the need to recruit more guides and the service operational plan included strategies to make this happen.

Some quality assurance processes were in place but these were being reviewed to ensure they were effective, for example, auditing support plans.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
21 Nov 2018	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good Not assessed
28 Nov 2017	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed 4 - Good
7 Sep 2016	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good Not assessed
11 Aug 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
6 Sep 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 4 - Good
7 Sep 2011	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed 4 - Good Not assessed
18 Dec 2008	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		5 - Very good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good

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