

**Highland Council (Housing) Ross and Cromarty Housing Support Service**

**Service name**

Highland Council (Housing) Ross and Cromarty  
Housing Support Service

**Service address**

Ross House  
High Street

Dingwall IV15 9RY

**Type of care service**

Housing Support Service

**Provider name**

Highland Council

**Service number**

CS2004081023

**Date of inspection**

14 March 2007

**Type of inspection**

Announced (short notice)

**Care Commission Office**

Inverness

**Period since last inspection**

12 months

## **Introduction**

Highland Council Housing Support Service Ross and Cromarty was first registered with the Care Commission on 18 October 2004.

The service was registered to provide a Housing Support Service to 172 tenants living within sheltered housing complexes throughout the Ross and Cromarty area of Highland.

There were 9 wardens, who either lived within the complexes, or visited the complexes to fulfil their warden duties, provided the service to the tenants. The service was managed by the Local Authority and coordinated by the Principal Housing Officer in Dingwall.

"The aims of the Highland Council Sheltered Housing Service are to ensure sheltered housing tenants live in housing suitable for their needs and also have appropriate housing support to help them live independently."

## **Basis of Report**

This report is based on consideration of the services compliance with the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001. The inspection focused on the Scottish Statutory Instrument 114 of the Regulation of Care (Requirements as to Care Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2002,

This service was inspected after carrying out a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) to determine what level of support was necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the Care Commission Officer 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 announced inspection took place from Wednesday 14 March 2007 to Friday 23 March 2007

The Principal Housing Officer had not completed the Annual Return or the Self Evaluation forms prior to inspection.

The Care Commission Officer spoke with the Principal Housing Officer, and 3 Sheltered Housing Wardens. A number of service users were consulted by telephone and one service user interview was conducted face to face.

The Care Commission Officer looked at a range of policies, procedures and records associated with the care of service users and the provision of the service.

Examination of documentation also included ensuring compliance with current regulations.

The Care Commission Officer took all of the above into account and reported on whether the service was meeting the following National Care Standards for Housing Support Services.

Standard 2 Your Legal Rights

Standard 3 Management and Staffing

Standard 4 Housing Support Planning

Standard 6 Choice and communication

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

There were no requirements made as a result of the last inspection.

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

The Self-evaluation had not been completed.

#### **View of Service Users**

A sample of service users across the Ross and Cromarty area were provided with questionnaires. The responses were very positive regarding the service and the wardens in particular. Some comments have been included

Our Warden Service is Excellent Thank You

I look forward to seeing my warden each day, she always has time for me .

Always helpful support .

Very nice .

Satisfied .

If I did not have a daily contact, I would definitely feel very lonely .

We have never complained, we are very happy with the service we are receiving Thank you .

The service is very good .

**View of Carers**

There were no carers interviewed as part of the inspection.

## **Regulations / Principles**

### **National Care Standards**

#### **National Care Standard Number 2: Housing Support Services - Your Legal Rights**

##### **Strengths**

The service had produced a Sheltered Housing Support Plan, which incorporated a written agreement in a format that was understandable to the service user. The Care Commission Officer sampled Agreements across three Sheltered Housing complexes where service users and staff confirmed that all service users now had their own agreement in place.

The service had produced a Sheltered Housing Tenant Handbook, which made reference to the Care Commission, the service users entitlement to see the services inspection reports and how to access a the Care Commission should a service user wish to make a complaint.

##### **Areas for Development**

The service should separate the Sheltered Housing Support Plan from the Written Agreement. (Recommendation 1)

The service should develop the Written Agreement to incorporate costs and services associated with the sheltered housing tenancy to ensure that prospective service users will be empowered to make informed choices. (Recommendation 2)

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

##### **Strengths**

The service had policies and procedures which covered legal requirements including staffing and training, whistle blowing, managing risk and proper record keeping of incidents and complaints.

There was evidence that the following rolling programme of training had been made available to all wardens which included; Dealing with Challenging Behaviour, Mental Health Awareness, Vulnerable Adults and Emergency First Aid.

There was evidence that sheltered housing wardens had the opportunity to meet and to discuss new developments, guidance and practice issue at regular team meetings.

Through the course of the inspection, the Care Commission Officer met with Wardens who had the

knowledge and skills gained from experience of working with people whose needs were similar to those they were supporting.

The service had an induction policy and procedure for new staff.

The Care Commission Officer sampled five staff files. Within these there was evidence in individual files of references being taken up, application forms, contracts and training records. The service had recently commenced the Disclosure Scotland process at an enhanced level with all wardens.

The Principal Housing Officer was aware of the Scottish Social Services Council requirements for registration and wardens had been provided with the Codes of Practice.

Within the services Sheltered Housing Support Plan and the Sheltered Housing Tenants Handbook, service users were informed and encouraged to make choices in relation to service user/warden frequency of contact. Service users and Wardens provided further evidence that these choices were recorded and agreed upon through the Sheltered Housing Support Plan.

There was evidence that the Principal Housing Officer had recently completed a Personal Development plan with all the Wardens.

The Sheltered Housing Procedures Manual incorporated instructions to be followed should a warden be involved in any financial transaction.

### **Areas for Development**

The service should make the following policies and procedures available to the wardens employed by the service; whistle blowing, managing risk, and staff supervision.

The service should ensure that arrangements are in place to maintain the contact agreements made between service users and wardens when the warden is on annual leave, sick leave etc. The service user should be kept informed of any change in arrangements.

The service should ensure that all wardens are issued with receipt books in accordance with The Highland Councils Sheltered Housing Procedures Manual pages 82-83

The Principal Housing Officer has identified the need to implement The Highland Councils Supervision policy and procedure with all Wardens.

## **National Care Standard Number 4: Housing Support Services - Housing Support Planning**

### **Strengths**

The Care Commission Officer sampled Housing Support Plans across three Sheltered Housing complexes where service users and staff confirmed that all service users now had their own Housing Support Plan in place. All Housing Support Plans had been completed by the wardens and in conjunction with the service users. All service users were provided with a photocopy of their plan. The sheltered Housing wardens who were interviewed demonstrated an awareness and sensitivity to service users in gathering information especially around sensitive issues.

A review of service users' details had been completed where it had been 6 months since the original support plan had been completed. Relevant information contained within the Housing Support Plans and reviews was communicated to the local Resource Centres where out of hours alarm calls were handled.

The service's housing support plan incorporated the following headings:

What service users preferred to be called?

Who should be involved in reviewing their care?

Any special communication needs service users may have;

What communication arrangements needed to be put in place if the service user's first language was not English?

Any housing support service users needed to help them with financial or administrative arrangements;

When, and in what circumstances, friends, relatives and carers were to be contacted

Confidentiality issues and limitations on confidentiality

Which other services must be contacted if there was an important change in the service user's health or personal circumstances

An independent person to contact if the service user wanted to make a complaint or raise a concern;

Who else was contributing to the service user's support and care?

When the housing support was provided and who provided it

There was evidence to support the fact that service users knew how to change their personal plan for either planned or unplanned events (for example, going to hospital, or on holiday, or on a day out), or how to end their housing support service.

There was evidence to support that service users were confident that the housing support service provider would check with them regularly (within three months of the service starting and at least once a year after that) The service met their needs that were identified in their personal plan.

There was evidence to support that service users knew how to contact the housing support service provider should the need arise.

### **Areas for Development**

In line with the Tenants Handbook and Sheltered Housing Procedure manual, specific training should be made available to Wardens in relation to best practice guidance on record keeping, support planning and reviews.

The service should review their risk assessment procedure to ensure that individual risk assessments are incorporated into the development of housing support plans.

## **National Care Standard Number 6: Housing Support Services - Choice and Communication**

### **Strengths**

From taking up the tenancy, service users were given choice over how much contact they felt they needed. The wardens took time to go over this information with new service users. There were Housing Support Plans in place which recorded the service users' choices in relation to the housing support service.

Information was readily available to service users within the Sheltered Housing Tenant Handbook and the Housing Support plan. The service had produced an aims and objectives leaflet.

Team meetings were held regularly where information was exchanged between the wardens and Principal Housing Officer.

There was evidence to support that in between meetings the Principal Housing Officer wrote to wardens updating them on changes in procedures, training events, changes to policies, etc.

Through staff interview, the Care Commission Officer confirmed that confidentiality was given a high priority throughout the service. Service users were informed of any information that would require to be disclosed.

### **Areas for Development**

The service should give consideration as to how service user specific information gets passed to a relief warden and or carer if the site warden is on holiday, sick etc

## **Enforcement**

## **Other Information**

## **Requirements**

## **Recommendations**

Recommendation 1. The service should separate the Sheltered Housing Support Plan from the Written Agreement information.

National Care Standards for Housing Support Services - Standard 2 Your Legal Rights and Standard 4 Housing Support Planning.

Recommendation 2. The service should develop the Written Agreement to incorporate costs and services associated with the sheltered housing tenancy to ensure that prospective service users will be empowered to make informed choices.

National Care Standards for Housing Support Services - Standard 2 Your Legal Rights and Standard 4 Housing Support Planning.

**Shona Knight**  
**Care Commission Officer**