

# Women's Aid Orkney Housing Support Service

Kirkwall

**Type of inspection:**

Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**

12 July 2018

**Service provided by:**

Women's Aid Orkney

**Service provider number:**

SP2004006828

**Service no:**

CS2004077272

## About the service

This service has been registered since 3 September 2004.

The service provides refuge accommodation as well as an outreach and drop-in service for women and their children who are affected by domestic abuse. The service is staffed during office hours and on call support is available outwith these hours. Staff can meet with clients outwith office hours by arrangement.

The refuge has three self contained apartments and three counselling rooms and a group room. The flats have either two or three bedrooms. The refuge premises have an enclosed garden area equipped with play items for children as well as a recreational space for women and children to use if required.

Women's Aid Orkney aims to:

Provide safe, temporary accommodation, information and support to women and their children who are experiencing, or have experienced domestic abuse.

Raise public awareness and challenge attitudes, through education and publicity, with a view to drastically reducing domestic abuse within the Orkney islands. The service states its aims will be achieved through:

Refuge accommodation, including self contained units, children's play areas and communal areas.

Experienced empathetic staff, all of whom will be relevantly trained.

An information centre providing practical and emotional support and information.

Regular monitoring and evaluation.

The objectives are:

To empower women and their children to live lives free from domestic abuse.

To inform the wider community of the issues surrounding domestic abuse.

To help develop and maintain a multi agency approach to supporting those involved in domestic abuse.

## What people told us

We visited Women's Aid Orkney on 12 July 2018. During our inspection visit we met and spoke with one woman being supported by the service. Following our inspection visit we spoke with three women by telephone. We sent out six Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) to people who use the service and of these, two were completed and returned to us.

We received very positive feedback from the women receiving support from the service. We heard that staff were caring, non-judgemental and very flexible. Although one woman had indicated in her CSQ response that she did not know about the service's complaints procedure when we spoke with her she advised us that she did know how to complain but had had no need to do so.

Women we spoke with made the following comments:

'Women's Aid helped me to get my council flat and they helped me to move away from my ex. They supported me to kit out my new flat ... their support has made a difference to my life. Without women's Aid I wouldn't have had the courage to leave my abuser. They were there when I needed the emotional support'.

'I had practical help when I felt overwhelmed'.

'I get emotional support, I'd feel comfortable talking to anyone of them'.

'I've got a lovely flat in the refuge. Its well maintained and repairs are dealt with promptly'.

'When I arrived I felt very fragile, I feel I've had support to come to terms with what I have experienced'.

'A staff member is always available when I need someone to talk to ... I feel so much better than when I arrived. I had nowhere to turn to, I was isolated, I'd no-one to talk to. They met me off the boat. They brought me food. I'm now getting all this support I've needed for years. I've got this chance to get my life back on track'.

'The support has been amazing, they've been a massive support to both of us, they are flexible about appointments'.

'I struggle making decisions - anxiety gets the better of me. They accompany me to meetings to help me cope. They help me to use different coping strategies ... Its been a lifeline. I don't know how I would have coped without them. They always get back to you'.

'I have high praise for them. I was in an abusive relationship and I called them every day. They supported me and they encouraged me - it was beyond words. I am so glad I got in touch with Women's Aid'.

'I went to Women's Aid out of the blue and they made time for me. I actually don't think I'd be here if they hadn't been there to help me'.

'Staff were very professional and down to earth and always cheerful'.

'They just need to carry on doing exactly what they're doing'.

'I would not be alive today if it hadn't been for all the help and support that I have received from Women's Aid. Its taken a few years but I'm in a much better place. They never gave up on me'.

'Women's Aid have seen me through the toughest time in my life and are helping me come out the other side now. I don't know if I would be alive today without them'.

## Self assessment

A self assessment was not requested prior to this inspection visit.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

|                                      |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Quality of care and support          | 4 - Good     |
| Quality of staffing                  | 4 - Good     |
| Quality of management and leadership | not assessed |

## What the service does well

Women's Aid Orkney delivered a good quality of care and support to women in a safe environment. Women we spoke with told us that they received emotional support which had helped them to recover from their experiences of trauma. Women told us that there had been improvements in their own and their children's wellbeing due to the assistance they had received from Women's Aid Orkney.

We found that, in addition to the emotional support provided to women and their children, the service delivered practical assistance in a range of ways. Women and their children were able to access refuge accommodation to escape from domestic abuse. Women told us that the accommodation was of a high standard and that any necessary repairs or maintenance were carried out promptly. We heard that, if required, women were given advice on how to improve their parenting. Women told us that staff were knowledgeable about support and information available from other agencies and directed women to these services when necessary. We heard that staff offered to accompany women to appointments with other agencies. Women were given assistance to complete forms and when ready, were given assistance to progress onto their own tenancies/independent accommodation.

We noted that the service used the electronic case management system, Oasis to log electronic records of the support being provided to women and children. This meant that all staff were able to readily access up to date information on personal circumstances to ensure that support delivered responded to individual's current support needs. We looked at adult and child protection procedures and were satisfied with practices and procedures in place to ensure service users were protected.

We found from speaking with professionals based within local external agencies that Women's Aid Orkney staff engaged in effective partnership working. We were told by external professionals that staff at Women's Aid Orkney were professional and that families benefitted from the support provided by the service. Inter agency working included the service's participation in the local MARAC (multi agency risk assessment conference) as well as attendance at children's planning meetings (multi agency meetings held when children are subject to some form of formal supervision). This multi agency working helped to minimise the risks of harm and to ensure that there were no gaps in the service received by women being supported across a range of agencies. The service manager represented Women's Aid Orkney at the local domestic abuse forum. This helped to ensure that the specific needs of the women being supported by the service were identified and addressed.

We found that Women's Aid Orkney was a busy service and the staff worked hard to meet the high level of demand facing the service. The service has recently been successful in securing funding to increase their staffing levels. We noted that there were regular staff team meetings, individual staff members we spoke with told

us that team working was strong. One staff member commented: 'I feel cared for as a staff member and we are supportive of each other as a team'.

Staff told us they had good access to training and they felt they had knowledge and skills required to meet the demands of their role. A specialist trainer in trauma recovery had recently visited the service and delivered a training input to the staff team. Staff we spoke with told us they received regular formal supervision and that they felt well supported within their roles.

## What the service could do better

The service should implement systems to ensure that service users consistently have detailed, up to date support plans in place which are reviewed regularly.

We noted that a number of staff for different reasons, unrelated to management, had left their posts within Women's Aid Orkney. This meant that the staff team included a number of new staff members. The service should prioritise staff retention and should continue to attempt to consolidate the new staff team and support staff to engage in consistent practice. The service should ensure that staffing pressures do not impact negatively on the quality of care and support provided by the service.

The service should attempt to maintain the provision of a group support programme for women being supported by the service. This could enhance the support currently available by further helping women to overcome their social isolation and to build their confidence. The manager agreed to give consideration to carrying naloxone within the service. Naloxone is an opiate blocker which when administered in the event of overdose can be life saving. The service should give consideration to overcoming the problem of disabled access to part of their premises.

Progress with the above areas of development will be followed up at the next inspection.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 1

1. The service should implement systems to ensure that service users consistently have detailed, up to date support plans in place which are reviewed regularly.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS 1.15).

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Inspection and grading history

| Date        | Type                     | Gradings  |
|-------------|--------------------------|---|
| 18 Jul 2016 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support 5 - Very good<br>Environment Not assessed<br>Staffing 5 - Very good<br>Management and leadership Not assessed  |
| 10 Jun 2014 | Unannounced              | Care and support 4 - Good<br>Environment Not assessed<br>Staffing 4 - Good<br>Management and leadership 4 - Good                |
| 20 Sep 2013 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support 3 - Adequate<br>Environment Not assessed<br>Staffing 3 - Adequate<br>Management and leadership 3 - Adequate    |
| 8 Aug 2012  | Announced (short notice) | Care and support 4 - Good<br>Environment Not assessed<br>Staffing 4 - Good<br>Management and leadership 3 - Adequate            |
| 20 Jul 2011 | Announced (short notice) | Care and support 5 - Very good<br>Environment Not assessed<br>Staffing 5 - Very good<br>Management and leadership 5 - Very good |
| 26 Mar 2009 |                          | Care and support 5 - Very good<br>Environment Not assessed<br>Staffing 4 - Good<br>Management and leadership 4 - Good           |

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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
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[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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