

# Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid Housing Support Service

Golspie

Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)  
Inspection completed on: 3 October 2016

**Service provided by:**  
Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid

**Service provider number:**  
SP2005007651

**Care service number:**  
CS2010247623

## About the service

Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid is affiliated to the National Women's Aid Federation.

The aims and objectives of the service are to advocate for women who have suffered harm and also their children both locally and nationally. To offer support and information to women who have been harmed and this includes their children. To provide women affected by domestic abuse to determine their own lives. To recognise and meet the needs of women and children. To promote policies and practices to prevent domestic abuse. To raise awareness of the extent and impact of domestic abuse in society.

The service is overseen by a management team, group of directors and has a dedicated manager.

## What people told us

We spoke with women who used this service and were told that they thought Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid delivered a first class service. Comments noted included the following:

- I don't know where I would be today without the help of Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid.
- My support worker has really helped me to get my life back together.
- I now feel I can live a life where as before I did not see any future.
- Just a great service and just great to have such caring people.
- I can just pick up the phone and there is always someone there to talk to me.
- I am asked about all things to do with my care plan and I this helps me to feel part of my care.
- I don't think I would be here today if it was not for my support worker.
- My children have really benefited from the input from their support worker.

## Self assessment

The Care Inspectorate received a fully completed self-assessment from the provider. The provider identified what it thought the service did well and gave examples of improvements in areas such as, the environment. The self-assessment clearly identified some key areas that the provider believed can be improved and showed how the service intended to do this. The provider told us how the people who used the care service had taken part in the self-assessment process and how their feedback directed the development of their plans for improving the service.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	6 - Excellent
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

## Quality of care and support

## Findings from the inspection

Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid continued to provide an excellent service to women and their children.

The views of women and children were used to make changes, make improvements or highlight ways in which their support could be improved on. Participation was given a high priority by the service and opinions of women and their children valued.

The service also gained feedback from referral agencies. This was used to see how the service was operating and if any changes were required.

The health and wellbeing of women was considered by staff when referrals were made and reviewed on a regular basis when needed.

Risk assessments were in place and these were very clear and detailed. Relevant agencies were consulted when risk assessments were drawn up. This multi agency approach improved outcomes for women and their children in keeping them safe.

Care plans were detailed and contained relevant information. Women and children were consulted fully when these were drawn up. Care plans also contained a section which detailed how the outcomes for women and children had improved. Outcomes were cross referenced with the Women's Aid's National Framework. This meant that the service could see how they were meeting the National objectives. Care plans were reviewed on a regular basis and changes made when required.

Detailed records were kept of contact with women and children and the introduction of online recording had improved this record keeping.

Women were encouraged and assisted when required to access health care services and attend appointments.

Women were supported by a highly skilled, trained and experienced staff. To ensure all staff were considered fit people to work with such a vulnerable client group, all staff were recruited through a robust process. All safety checks were carried out and this included an enhanced Protection of Vulnerable Adults Check (PVG). All staff held or were in the process of gaining appropriate qualifications. At this time, it is not required that staff be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). However, when this timescale is decided all staff will hold the appropriate qualifications to be registered.

Staff underwent training on a regular basis to enhance their existing skills. All staff were held in very high regard by the women they supported and by external agencies. All staff had appropriate policies and procedures to which they could refer for guidance. Policies and procedures were updated on a regular basis.

It was clear from the evidence that we found at this inspection that Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid were meeting and exceeding the requirements of the National Care Standards. It was clear that the care and support being provided to women and children was of an excellent standard.

Women and external agencies we spoke with further confirmed our inspection findings in that the service was "just excellent", "very well run", "really good at working with partner agencies to ensure the safety of women and children".

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 - excellent

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

Women and their children were supported to an excellent standard by the staff who worked at Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid.

Staff were trained to a high level and continued to enhance their existing skills by attending training on a regular basis. For example, mental health issues, facilitating groups and child and adult protection.

Staff held, or were in the process of gaining the appropriate qualification to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Regular meetings were held with staff and the manager in each team and monthly group peer sessions were also held. This resulted in good strong outcomes for service users and ensured a sound understanding of needs and support planning.

The staff team were encouraged to attend networking events throughout the Highlands in relation to their roles. For example, youth forums, Caithness Health Improvement forum and school meetings.

Partner agencies were invited to attend team meetings as guests, to get to know the workers and establish relationships that would be of benefit to service users. This promoted interagency working and developed strong working relationships with statutory and voluntary organisations.

Staff received excellent support from the manager of the service and staff worked very well as a team. This improved the outcomes for service users in that all staff practiced in a consistent way and were aware of each other's caseloads.

Our findings from this inspection were also confirmed when we spoke with external agencies. Staff was described as very professional and very skilled.

Comments noted from service users were also very positive and it was clear that all staff and the manager were held in high regard. Comments included the following:

- My support worker is brilliant and I don't know what I would do without her.
- I get excellent support from this service.
- Staff are compassionate and constructive in the advice they give.
- Always feel supported.

- Staff are always there when I need them.
- This service has helped me to rebuild my self-esteem and my life.
- It's been good from day 1.
- I didn't think anybody would be able to help me at the time, that was until I was referred to Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid.
- A life saver for me.
- Staff have enabled me to deal with the things that have happened to me and I have 100% trust in them.
- When I am struggling staff are there to support me and I really don't know where I would be without Women's Aid.
- My children are supported in dealing with their feelings, it's a service that is helping our whole family.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 6 - excellent

## Quality of management and leadership

This quality theme was not assessed.

## 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](http://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
22 Oct 2014	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
25 Nov 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
16 Feb 2011	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed

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