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**REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 26 APRIL 2016**

**SUBJECT: VALIDATION INSPECTION OF HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICE  
BY THE CARE INSPECTORATE**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides the Communities Committee with details of a validation inspection of the Council's housing support service by the Care Inspectorate.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III F (4) and (9) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to homelessness and the preparation of the housing quality plans and other such housing related plans as may be required to ensure effective implementation of strategic housing matters.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-**

- i) considers and notes the Care Inspectorate report;**
- ii) welcomes the positive comments made by the Care Inspectorate in relation to the quality of the care and support provided; and**
- iii) notes that there are no outstanding requirements arising from this inspection.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Care Inspectorate is the regulatory body for care services in Scotland. It replaced the Care Commission from 1 April 2011. The Care Inspectorate inspects the quality of services in terms of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011.
- 3.2 The Care Inspectorate are in the process of reviewing how it currently inspects and supports improvement in care and support services and is making some changes on how they will carry out future inspections. One of these changes involves the introduction of a validation inspection which is a test to establish how well the service is performing and where necessary it will recommend new ideas on a small scale, quickly and effectively. The results

are then measured and any adjustments made before rolling out tried and tested change.

#### **4. THE INSPECTION PROCESS**

- 4.1 The inspection carried out on this occasion was a short notice inspection. As part of the inspection, the Care Inspectorate took account of the completed annual return and the Council's self-assessment of its housing support service. The self-assessment seeks to identify the current strengths of the service and areas where the service feels that it needs to improve or further develop.
- 4.2 As part of the validation inspection, the Care Inspectorate sent out 50 questionnaires to service users, eight questionnaires to staff, spoke with five service users and spoke with the service manager, one housing support officer and one housing support worker. They also examined a range of documents and policies to ensure that high quality services were being delivered.
- 4.3 A copy of the draft Inspection Report is attached as **APPENDIX I**.
- 4.4 The Care Inspectorate validated three of the four quality themes:
- Quality of care and support;
  - Quality of staffing; and
  - Quality of management and leadership.
- 4.5 Environment was not assessed.

#### **5. OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

- 5.1 The final report graded the service as follows:-

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Quality of care and support	5	Very Good
Environment – not assessed	-	-
Quality of staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5	Very Good
<b>Validation Outcome</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Very Good</b>

- 5.2 A number of key strengths were validated during this inspection process:

##### Quality of care and support

- 5.3 The service was providing support to around 180 households at the time of the inspection. This ranged from a very limited service to those requiring a more tailored support package which could cover sustaining their accommodation, health, emotional support finance, life-skills and education. The Care Inspectorate acknowledged that this flexibility meant that people could be supported at an early stage, before problems escalated, but could

also be supported through the homelessness service to get and maintain a tenancy.

- 5.4 The Care Inspectorate were also satisfied that the Council provided detailed information for people using the service on what housing support was, how it could support people and also how people could complain if they were dissatisfied with the service that they had received. This meant that people had a clear understanding of what the service did at an early point.
- 5.5 The Care Inspectorate reviewed the housing assessment and support matrix and found evidence that these plans were well-maintained and had been regularly reviewed. The service used a negotiated approach with people to agree what support was needed.
- 5.6 Service users interviewed during the inspection indicated that the support they had received had helped them make positive changes in their lives, in dealing with debt, gaining and keeping tenancies and in education and employment. This showed that as well as having sound structures in place the service was also working hard and successfully in supporting people to achieve the outcomes they had set for themselves.

#### Quality of staffing

- 5.7 The Care Inspectorate acknowledged that the service continued to provide staff that were recruited, inducted and supported to a high standard. People using the service were also involved in recruiting members of staff which helps to demonstrate to potential staff from the beginning that people using the service will play a key role in the service they receive. The Council was praised for including the Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC) code of conduct and the National Care Standards for housing support services in their staff induction process and further evidence gathered showed that staff were well trained, felt supported by senior staff and that they relished the challenge of their supporting role.
- 5.8 Service users interviewed were also positive about the support that a number of positive comments were gathered by the Care Inspectorate during their inspection. These included:

“I cannot fault them”

“Made the difference between saving and losing my house”

“I don't have a negative comment to make about the service”

#### Quality of management and leadership

- 5.9 The Care Inspectorate were satisfied that the service continued to be managed well, with a high level of leadership, support and monitoring of key quality indicators in place. The manager for the service had a regular presence within the service, being accessible to members of staff and to people using the service. There was a mixture of support and supervision provided to staff and a culture of encouraging development and offering opportunities for staff to take additional responsibility where appropriate.

- 5.10 The validation inspection also found that there were positive systems in place to audit or check on how the service was performing with some of these coming from the Council quality programme and some having been developed within the service.

**6. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- 6.1 There were no requirements or recommendations arising from this inspection.

**7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Moray 2023 A Plan for the Future/Service Plan**

Moray 2023 and the Service Plan (Priority 1- Local Housing Strategy) identify the need to provide housing support to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This helps the Council to promote healthier citizens and adults living healthier, sustainable independent lives safeguarded from harm.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

There are no policy or legal implications associated with this report.

**(c) Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**(d) Risk Implications**

There are no immediate risk implications arising from this report.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising from this report.

**(g) Equalities**

There are no equalities issues arising from this report.

**(h) Consultations**

Consultation on this report has been carried out with the Acting Head of Housing and Property, the Operations Manager (Housing Support), the Principal Accountant (Deborah O'Shea), the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Legal Services Manager and Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer) who agree the contents.

**8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 This report informs the Communities Committee of a validation inspection of the Council's housing support service by the Care Inspectorate.**

Author of Report: Richard Anderson, Head of Housing and Property

Background Papers: Held by the Head of Housing and Property

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