

Inspection report

Aberdeen Foyer - Supported Accommodation Housing Support Service

18 Marywell Street
ABERDEEN AB11 6FS

Inspected by: Gordon McIntosh
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Announced

Inspection completed on: 1 September 2008

Service Number

CS2004069101

Service name

Aberdeen Foyer - Supported Accommodation

Service address18 Marywell Street
ABERDEEN AB11 6FS**Provider Number**

SP2004006434

Provider Name

Aberdeen Foyer

Inspected ByGordon McIntosh
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Announced

Inspection Completed

1 September 2008

Period since last inspection

12 months

Local Office AddressJohnstone House
Rose Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1UD

Introduction

Aberdeen Foyer provides services for young people who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless or are living in unsuitable accommodation. The organisation provides a wide range of support and developmental services for young people, one of which is a Housing Support Service. At the time of this inspection, the Housing Support Service was provided at six supported accommodation premises across North East Scotland. The Housing Support Service was registered with the Care Commission in August 2004.

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support – Grade 5 Very Good

Quality of Staffing – Grade 5 Very Good

Quality of Management and Leadership – Grade 4 Good

This inspection report and grades represent the Care Commission's assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. Please refer to the care services register on the Care Commission's website (www.carecommission.com) for the most up-to-date grades for this service.

Basis of Report

This report was compiled following 5 inspection visits to the headquarters and branches of the care service on 26, 27, 28 August & 1 September 2008

Before the Inspection

The Annual Return

The service submitted a completed Annual Return as requested by the Care Commission.

The Self-Assessment Form

The service submitted a very detailed self-assessment form as requested by the Care Commission, following consultation with staff and service users.

Views of service users

Six service users were spoken with in the course of the inspection visits, four care standards questionnaires were returned completed.

Regulation Support Assessment

The inspection plan for this service was decided after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of inspection necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the Care Commission Officer (CCO) which considers complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service (such as absence of a manager) and action taken upon requirements. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

LOW

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required. The inspection was based on the relevant Inspection Focus Areas and associated National Care Standards, recommendations and requirements from previous inspections and complaints or other regulatory activity.

During the inspection process

The inspection visits were carried out by one Care Commission Officer, Gordon McIntosh.

Evidence

Appropriate policies, procedures and records were examined including; Tenants Charter, Strategic Plan, Alcohol and Drugs, Annual Appraisal Support and Supervision, Blood Borne Pathogens et al, Complaints and Compliments, Confidentiality, Disciplinary Procedures Tenants and Students, Disclosure Statement, Drugs Policy (Service Users), Equal Opportunities, Finance, Grievance, Health and Safety, Recruitment, Violence and Aggression in the Workplace, Volunteer and Placement Policy, Whistleblowing. Records examined included; Housing Support Plans, Minutes of Service User Meetings, minutes of Service user Forum, minutes of Team Meetings, Recruitment Records, Training Records, Supervision Records, Service User Questionnaires, Annual Report and Staff Survey. Discussions took place with the manager, 2 senior support workers, 3 support workers and 6 service users. Practice was observed and public areas of premises inspected. Four Care Standards Questionnaires and five Staff Questionnaires were returned completed. Feedback was provided to the manager at the fifth visit along with discussion of the proposed grading.

Inspection Focus Areas and links to Quality Themes and Statements for 2008/09

Details of the inspection focus and associated Quality Themes to be used in inspecting each type of care service in 2008/09 and supporting inspection guidance, can be found at: <http://www.carecommission.com/>

Fire Safety Issues

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, on 1 October 2006. In terms of those arrangements, responsibility for enforcing the statutory provisions in relation to fire safety now lies with the Fire and Rescue service for the area in which a care service is located. Accordingly, the Care Commission will no longer report on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function, but, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Further advice on your responsibilities is available at www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

Action taken on requirements since last Inspection

There were no requirements arising from the last inspection report.

Comments on Self Assessment

A detailed self evaluation was submitted by the service following consultation with staff and some service users.

View of Service Users

The responses to care standards questionnaires and the statements made in interviews were

entirely positive about the service, the staff and the level of control and participation experienced. Comments included; “ the staff are all good, I get on wi’ a’body now”, “Friendly people who listen, get things done”, “They have been extremely accommodating with me”, “Always there when you need them”, “Really helpful folk, could not have been more helpful”, “Good standards and support is offered”. One person stated that it was really helpful to discuss things but they did not like filling in the action plans.

View of Carers

No family members were spoken with during this inspection.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service Strengths

Policies and procedures contained outright commitments to full service user involvement in all aspects of care planning, monitoring, reviewing, service delivery and broader service planning. The rights and expectations of service users were spelt out in the application form, the tenants handbook, the brochure and in the tenancy agreement. The first four sections of the tenants' charter are Privacy, Dignity, Independence and Choice and Participation. Verbal explanations were also provided as part of establishing good supportive working relationships and continuing throughout. The staff spoken with were aware of the approach expected and stated that it was emphasised at induction, introductory mentoring, in training, in supervision, at team meetings and at the support worker days which were held six times a year. All the staff spoken with demonstrated a high level of commitment to the approach, the service users spoken with confirmed that this was how things worked.

Service user comments included; "everything was explained, they were very helpful. We did the action plan together, I felt fully involved and they listened to me". "The Action Planning System was really good because it really built up my confidence. I always felt in control, making decisions. They would advise you give you tips." The interactions observed were warm, friendly and focussed. The responses of service users in the organisation survey examined were very positive about issues relating to self determination.

The records examined also demonstrated the approach in action, service users were fully involved, from the beginning, in assessing their support needs and how these might be addressed. The system addressed four main areas; tenancy skills, education/training/employment, personal development and social and recreational activity and included service users' strengths, hopes and aspirations as well as areas for development. There were regular reviews of progress and targets were reviewed as appropriate to achievements or changing circumstances. The plans examined were detailed and up to date.

Areas for Development

The action planning system was followed completely uniformly in all the branches visited, there was a template available on the internal network, the manager intended to create further guidance in consultation with staff and service users.

Service user involvement was emphasised in all appropriate policies and procedures but there was no "Participation Policy or Statement" and so the manager intended to create such a statement in consultation with staff and service users.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 4: We use a range of communication methods to ensure we meet the needs of service users.

Service Strengths

Communication needs were assessed as part of the initial interviewing process. The staff who carried out this function were qualified and experienced. There were back up systems in place. Communication methods varied according to the needs of individuals. The information pack contained a wide range of information which was gone over verbally by staff with service users at a suitable pace. The action plans and targets were discussed fully to ensure understanding.

The housing support service works in close conjunction with other branches of the Foyer organisation, local colleges and other community resources to aid personal development of service users. "The Outside In" helps service users to develop a broad range of communication skills including verbal written and audio visual and to develop self confidence in a wide range of situations. Participation in the Princes Trust award scheme also helps service users to develop these skills.

Forms and processes are designed to be straightforward and were created in conjunction or consultation with individual service users and or the service users forum.

Staff had received training in a variety of issues affecting communication including; values/attitudes/ethics, CALM, Mental Health, Effective Relationship Building. Best practice was shared at development days. Communication skills were a key aspect of person specifications at recruitment.

Regular meetings were arranged between service users and their key workers but all the service users explained that they could speak to any of the staff or management at any time. The organisation was committed to open communication throughout the various levels of the organisation and support service users in contributing to meetings, committees etc.

Areas for Development

The service intends to investigate advocacy options for young people through its young people's forum. A detailed submission had been made to a national body regarding a possible project which would result in a very advanced peer mentoring/peer advocacy service.

The young people's forum will continue to investigate and review methods of communication.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading:

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service Strengths

The recruitment policy requires that service users participate in recruitment processes. Service users sit on interview panels and participate in appointments. Service users are supported to develop the skills necessary for these tasks.

Feedback is sought regularly about quality of service, including staffing. This is done through informal discussion and through the open door policy and by more structured means including surveys, house/residents/tenants meetings, the young people's forum and representation on the board of the organisation. Support is provided to service users in completing questionnaires where necessary, by an employee who is not directly involved in providing support at the individual project. Service users are supported to develop the skills necessary to contribute to meetings and boards. Any issues raised are dealt with either at team meetings or individually with staff through supervision, appraisal or development package. Service users can change support worker if need be. Participation in the young people's forum provides access to senior managers and directors of the organisation.

Areas for Development

The questionnaires examined did not include the opportunity for service users to sign/identify themselves if they wished.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Statement 2: We are confident that our staff have been recruited, and inducted, in a safe and robust manner to protect service users and staff.

Service Strengths

There were appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure safe recruitment. Appropriate checks were carried out and references sought. A checklist was in place in the files examined and appropriate documentation and person specifications for interviews. The records examined showed no gaps.

There were appropriate training and development opportunities for staff at induction, in

service and qualifying levels. The induction process had been revised and strengthened since the last inspection. Service users were consulted regarding training needs of the staff group and contributed to some programmes and to presentations given to outside bodies.

Staffing structures at projects had been reviewed prior to the last inspection and changes introduced since the last inspection. Service users reported that they could still access staff when they needed to and that the on call system was available for "Anything important".

There were appropriate supervision and appraisal systems in place. The supervision records examined were complete and up to date. Appraisal targets had been revised to sit more comfortably within the yearly work cycle of the service. Exit interviews were carried out and a staff survey completed. The service does not have a staff retention problem but wished to ensure that it was doing all that it could.

Areas for Development

The supervision system had been reviewed and guidelines produced which were being piloted at one branch. The appraisal system was also under review at the time of this inspection.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 4 - Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service Strengths

The service provider has a strong commitment to service user participation in the development of services. This is done at all levels through individual contact, project meetings for service users, a service users' forum, "The Young People's Forum". The forum brings service users representatives into contact with senior management and directors of the organisation. The group is convened under a constitution and contributes to the development and review of all policies and procedures. At the time of this inspection the forum was working mainly on revising the service users' handbook/house rules; and was to meet with the board to discuss proposed changes.

Service users were consulted about training needs and contributed to some programmes. Service users were encouraged to engage with external groups and contributed or delivered presentations to various bodies about the work of the Foyer. The proposal to create a peer mentoring service arose from service users' feelings about the need for services which could help avoid the sort of family crises which lead to homelessness for young people.

The service users spoken with stated that when they raised any issues with staff e.g. about their support, problems in the project or difficulties with fellow residents, the issues were dealt with "right away".

Areas for Development

The Young People's forum is to work on the proposed participation strategy. The induction process for managers is to be reviewed and revised. A bespoke training programme for managers was under development at the time of this inspection.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 4: We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide.

Service Strengths

The service engaged with several external agencies regarding quality assurance including

IIP, Scotland's Health at Work, Foyer Federation, also with contractual and regulatory bodies like Supporting People and Care Commission. Service users were encouraged and supported to participate and contribute to all of these processes and reports were available to staff and service users and discussed. The organisation had received Scotland's health at Work Gold Award and been accredited by the Foyer Federation.

A Quality Assurance Policy had been introduced since the last inspection and established as a prime responsibility for one of the Senior Management Team.

Questionnaires and surveys had been carried out with staff and service users.

The manager was fully aware of her responsibilities with regard to notifications to SSSC and Care Commission.

Areas for Development

The service was about to embark on a quality assurance partnership with a local university through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership.

The questionnaires for service users had not taken place at all projects prior to the self evaluation being completed and so could not contribute to that process.

CCO Grading

4 - Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

1

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action against this service since the last inspection.

Other Information

1. Local guidelines on child protection and adult abuse to be consulted appropriately in the development of policy.

NCS Housing Support Services, Standard 7.2.

2. An appropriate policy and guidelines be developed with regard to risk assessment.

NCS Housing Support Services, Standard 3.1.

3. An appropriate policy and guidelines be developed with regard to handling service users' monies.

NCS Housing Support Services, Standard 3.8.

4. Supervision be carried out according to the service policy and be recorded appropriately.

NCS Housing Support Services, Standard 3.1.

5. All training to be recorded appropriately.

NCS Housing Support Services, Standard 3.1. & 3.3.

The recommendations had been addressed appropriately. Recommendation 2 was under development.

Requirements

No requirements were made during this inspection.

Recommendations

1. Questionnaires be revised to include the opportunity for service users to sign if they wish. Standard 8.

2. Surveys for service users be arranged to contribute to self assessment process. Standard 8.

Gordon McIntosh

Care Commission Officer