

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20 JANUARY 2010

**REPORT ON: THROUGH CARE AND AFTER CARE SERVICE
HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICE
CARE COMMISSION INSPECTION REPORT**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 36-2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the findings and grading awarded by the Care Commission to the Throughcare and Aftercare Service, Housing Support Service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- i. note the contents of this report
- ii. requests that the Director of Social Work monitor the continued progress towards improving this service.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

Background

The Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care is responsible for the inspection and regulation of all registered care services in Scotland. The Commission ensures that care service providers meet the Scottish Government's National Care Standards and that in doing so they provide quality care services. Inspection reports are published on the care services register on the Commission's website at www.carecommission.com

4.1 The Care Commission's focus of inspection targeted the following Quality Themes.

- Quality of Care and Support
- Quality of Staffing
- Quality of Management and Leadership

Each Quality theme is made up of several quality statements and this inspection focussed on six of these quality statements

4.2 The Care Commission identified the following strengths during the inspection of in the Throughcare and Aftercare Service Housing support Service.

- The service had very good arrangements in place to enable service users and, where appropriate, their parents or carers, to participate in assessing and improving the quality of care and support in the service.
- The service used current legislation and good practice guidance as a basis for developing its practice in all areas. This included the involvement of young people in all aspects of support planning and development, a principle which was evidently central to the ethos and operation of the service.
- The service encouraged young people to give feedback about the various aspects of the service in a variety of ways. A sample of support plans evidenced a very person centred and holistic approach to support planning.
- Overall the service evidenced that it was very effective in using the views of young people to influence the positive development of the service.
- The service had very good arrangements in place to ensure that the health and wellbeing needs of young people were met, both in terms of meeting immediate needs and also promoting a healthier lifestyle.
- Very good links had been established with the dedicated nurse for Looked after children.
- The team had developed a protocol with Dundee College to help to support young people to access and maintain college placements with the ultimate aim of helping young people to develop their self esteem and sense of achievement.
- A recent initiative within the service was the appointment of two support workers from Venture Trust to work intensively with young people.
- The service actively encouraged the input of young people in assessing and improving the quality of staffing within the service.
- Young people were actively encouraged to participate in a confidential exit interview with specific reference to the input of their support worker.
- The Inspector found evidence that the service had a positive and motivated workforce which was committed to delivering a high quality service in line with National Care Standards.
- The staff confirmed that training was positively encouraged and they had access to a very varied range of relevant training opportunities.
- The development of a Care Leavers policy in conjunction with the Housing department is a significant move towards normalising the situation of young people in need of housing in their own right and is a positive manifestation of the council's corporate parenting policy.
- Young people had worked in partnership with staff to develop a DVD (commissioned by the service) to provide information to service users and relevant professionals about the services available to young people through the Throughcare and aftercare system.
- The service had some very effective systems for ensuring the quality of the service.
- A recent review of the service involving relevant service providers had resulted in a decision to restructure the service and in particular appoint an independent review officer to ensure that support plans were being progressed appropriately.

4.3 Throughcare & Aftercare Service Housing Support Service

Throughcare and Aftercare service housing support service has been a registered service since November 2004. Throughcare is the process by which the local authority plans with and prepares young people for leaving care. Aftercare is the provision of advice, guidance and assistance for young people who are no longer looked after. The team work with young people to provide assessment planning and support tailored to meet each individual young person needs. The Throughcare and Aftercare team is a partnership between Dundee City Council and the commissioned services of Carolina House Trust

4.4 QUALITY INDICATORS

The Quality Indicators used by the Care Commission are:-

6	Excellent
5	Very Good
4	Good
3	Adequate
2	Weak
1	Unsatisfactory

At their recent inspection on 19 June 2009 the Care Commission awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good		
Statement 1	5	Very Good
Statement 3	6	Excellent
Quality of Staffing - 5 - Very Good		
Statement 1	5	Very Good
Statement 3	5	Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership - 5 - Very Good		
Statement 1	5	Very Good
Statement 4	5	Very Good

There were no enforcements or requirements placed on the service.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1** The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Finance have been consulted in preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1** The following Background Papers were relied upon in preparation of this Report:
- Inspection Report Dundee City Council - Throughcare and Aftercare Service Housing Support Service.

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

29 December 2009

Inspection report

Dundee City Council - Throughcare & Aftercare Service Housing Support Service

15 Balmerino Road
Dundee DD4 8RW

Inspected by: Linda Paterson
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Announced

Inspection completed on: 19 June 2009

Service Number

CS2004079338

Service nameDundee City Council - Throughcare & Aftercare
Service**Service address**15 Balmerino Road
Dundee DD4 8RW**Provider Number**

SP2003004034

Provider Name

Dundee City Council

Inspected ByLinda Paterson
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Announced

Inspection Completed

19 June 2009

Period since last inspection

12 months

Local Office AddressCentral East Region, Compass House, 11
Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY

Dundee City Council's ' Throughcare and Aftercare Housing Support Service has been registered by the Care Commission since November 2004. It is stated in the services information leaflet that 'The Throughcare and Aftercare' service in Dundee has been provided since May 2003 by a specialist team of resource workers - a partnership between Dundee City Council and the Carolina House Trust. Throughcare is the process by which the local authority plans and prepares for young people leaving care, and aftercare is the provision of advice, guidance and assistance for young people who are no longer looked after. The team works with young people to provide assessment, planning and support tailored to meet each individual young persons' needs.

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

Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good

Quality of Staffing - 5 - Very Good

Quality of Management and Leadership - 5 - Very 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

Before the Inspection

The Annual Return

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

The Self-Evaluation Form

The service submitted a self-evaluation form as requested by the Care Commission.

Views of service users

The views of service users were sought prior to the inspection through the use of questionnaires

Regulation Support Assessment

This service was inspected 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.

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required as a result. The inspection was then based upon the relevant inspection focus areas and follow up on any recommendations and requirements from previous inspections, complaints or other regulatory activity.

The inspection was carried out during an announced visit to the service by Linda Paterson CCO on Tuesday 7 April 2009. It was then agreed to defer feedback to allow time for questionnaires to be sent out top and returned by service users. A meeting was held with the manager of the service to give feedback on 19 June 2009..

Staff at inspection

During the inspection, discussion took place with the manager of the service and one member of the staff team.

Evidence

Evidence was gathered form a number of sources, including the following:

Discussion with the manager of the service;
Discussion with one memembr of the staff team;
examination of a range of documentation including:
a sample of anonymised support plans;
a sample of anonymised supervision records;
team meeting minutes;
annual report;
questionnaires and results of these;
format and guidance about exit interview system;
care leavers policy;
information re Venture Trust initiative.

Action taken on requirements since last Inspection

There were no requirements from the last inspection of this service

Comments on Self Assessment

This was completed to a very good standard prior to the inspection. It detailed key strengths and identified some areas for improvement.

View of Service Users

The views of service users were gathered using pre-inspection questionnaires. Seven service users returned these questionnaires, of which four said that they were "satisfied" and three that they were "very satisfied" with the service provided by the team.

View of Carers

The views of carers were not sought for this inspection.

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

The service had very good arrangements in place to enable service users and, where appropriate, their parents or carers, to participate in assessing and improving the quality of care and support in the service.

The service used current legislation and good practice guidance as a basis for developing its practice in all areas. This included the involvement of young people in all aspects of support planning and development, a principle which was evidently central to the ethos and operation of the service.

An illustration of this, and a key strength of the service, was the support planning process which involved young people in identifying their own support needs, and in a review process which used their own words to record their progress. A sample of support plans evidenced a very person-centred and holistic approach to support planning, and review minutes indicated that young people were supported and enabled to improve the quality of their lives through this process.

The service encouraged young people to give feedback about the various aspects of the service in a variety of ways, including formal and informal complaints procedures and questionnaires. Exit interviews were held with young people who were leaving the service, and evidence was provided to show how this had been used to make changes where this was appropriate. Feedback from young people had had an impact on the structure, management and staffing arrangements of the service, as well as on the individual circumstances of the young people.

Overall, the service evidenced that it was very effective in using the views of young people to influence the positive development of the service.

Areas for Development

none noted

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 3: We ensure that service user's health and wellbeing needs are met.

Service Strengths

needs of young people were met, both in terms of meeting their immediate needs and also in promoting a healthier lifestyle.

The Pathways planning system included a "health and wellbeing" section, developed in conjunction with young people, which contained detailed information about their needs, and specific plans to address them. Very good links had been established with the dedicated nurse for looked after children (the LAAC nurse), who provided individual counselling and support to young people, as well as advice to staff who were supporting young people with health issues.

An examination of support plans showed that young people had been effectively supported by staff to improve their health eg to undergo extensive dental treatment, as a result of the support provided by the support worker.

A healthy lifestyle was promoted through the support planning process, and on a practical level, young people had been provided with "leisure active" passes and accompanied by staff to participate in physical activity.

The service adopted a holistic approach to health and wellbeing, and worked closely with young people to develop their self esteem and sense of achievement. To this end, the team had developed a protocol with Dundee College to help to support young people to access and maintain college placements, and one member of staff described an intensive support plan which had enabled one young person to sustain college attendance as a result.

Statistics gathered over time suggested that this approach had significantly increased the number of young people who had successfully maintained placements.

On a strategic level, the manager and team had developed a training package for health care workers to raise awareness of the specific health issues facing young people leaving local authority care.

A recent initiative within the service has been the appointment of two support workers from Venture Trust who will work intensively with young people to develop skills and a sense of responsibility and self-worth through activity-based programmes. Although at an early stage of development, this project reflects the dynamic and creative approach of this service to promoting the health and wellbeing needs of young people.

Areas for Development

none noted

CCO Grading

6 - Excellent

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Overall CCO Theme Grading:

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 service actively encouraged the input of young people in assessing and improving the quality of staffing within the service.

On leaving the service, young people were encouraged to participate in a confidential exit interview which gathered their views about all aspects of the service which had been provided, with specific reference to the input of their support worker and to the team in general. The responses had generally been very positive, but the manager described action which had been taken as a result of some feedback.

The service had a policy of involving young people in the recruitment and selection of staff, although this had not been necessary recently as there had been no occasion to recruit new staff to the team.

An examination of supervision notes indicated that the needs of young people influenced the direction of training and professional development of staff.

Areas for Development

none noted

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 3: We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Service Strengths

There was ample evidence to show that this was a positive and motivated workforce which was committed to delivering a high quality service in line with National Care Standards, legislation and good practice guidance, as well as incorporating the views of young people into the development of the service.

The self assessment form evidenced a thorough knowledge of legislation and good practice guidance associated with throughcare and aftercare. Team meeting minutes showed that issues of policy and practice were regularly discussed by the team and used to inform the development of the service, eg the Pathways plans had been re-formatted to represent the views of young people more effectively, and a manual drawn up to provide information and

The manager and the team had written and delivered presentations to relevant agencies to raise awareness of the needs and issues faced by young people leaving care. Discussion with the manager and team member showed that the team had access to a very varied range of relevant training opportunities, both through the local authority's own internal staff development system, and through contact with an extensive list of related agencies. Staff confirmed that training was positively encouraged, and led by identified needs of young people using the service: they had, for example, had the opportunity to access specialised training in areas such as money management, domestic violence and autistic spectrum disorders to meet the needs of individuals using the service.

Areas for Development

none noted

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

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 management and leadership of the service.

Service Strengths

The organisation sought feedback from service users in a number of ways, including exit interviews, questionnaires, and individual conversations between service users and their support workers.

As a result of feedback received using these methods, the service had developed and improved in a number of areas, including the following:

The development of a Care Leaver's Policy, in conjunction with Dundee City Council's Housing Department, which avoids the necessity for young people to register as homeless to qualify for priority housing. This development is a significant move towards normalising the situation of young people in need of housing in their own right, and is a positive manifestation of the council's corporate parenting policy.

The format of Pathways plans had been modified to make them more representative of the needs and views of young people. In addition, review minutes use the words of the young people to reflect their progress through their plan.

Young people had worked in partnership with staff to develop a DVD (commissioned by the service) to provide information to service users and relevant professionals about the services available to young people through the throughcare and aftercare system.

Team meeting minutes, supervision notes and discussion with the manager and the team all showed that the views of young people were central to the development of this service.

Areas for Development

none noted

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 had some very effective systems for ensuring the quality of the service, some of which have been described under the quality statements about participation elsewhere in this report.

the development of the service.

The service sought feedback from social workers and residential staff about the impact of the throughcare and aftercare team on the young people. The manager's position as part of the same management team as residential managers facilitated communication and feedback at this level. In addition to this, the service had recently begun gathering the views of stakeholders more formally through questionnaires issued through the local authority contracts department.

A recent review of the service involving relevant service providers had resulted in a decision to restructure the service, and in particular to appoint an independent review officer to ensure that support plans were being progressed appropriately.

Within the team, regular supervision enabled the manager to focus on the quality of individual support plans. He was actively involved in assessing and improving the quality of these. An open recording system encouraged staff to maintain the standard of their records. Team members kept records and statistics relevant to accommodation bases which were used to inform practice. The manager also kept statistics for the Scottish Government which demonstrated improvements in outcomes, for example in relation to numbers of young people in education and employment.

Areas for Development

The service identified that it needed to further develop the ways in which it sought feedback from external agencies.

The team was at an early stage of using "How good is our team" to evaluate its effectiveness, but planned to complete this exercise within the coming year.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

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

Other Information

none noted

Requirements

There are no requirements

Recommendations

There are no recommendations

Linda Paterson

Care Commission Officer