

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 24TH SEPTEMBER 2012

REPORT ON: THROUGH-CARE AND AFTER-CARE SERVICE HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICE SCSWIS INSPECTION REPORT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 345- 2012

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 notes the excellent report.
- 2.2 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

4.1 Background

SCSWIS 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.scswis.com.

4.2 The SCSWIS focus of inspection targeted the following Quality Themes.

- o Quality of Care and Support
- o Quality of Staffing
- o 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.

4.3 SCSWIS identified a considerable number of strengths for each of the Quality Themes during the inspection of the Throughcare and Aftercare Service Housing support Service. The following is few selected examples relating to each of the themes.

4.3.1 Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

* The service has adopted an innovative approach to involving young people (and partner agencies) in a structured approach to service development. The "Co-Production" initiative was independently facilitated by the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum and involved young people, staff and partner agencies in a series of meetings which captured the experiences of young care leavers and has formulated them into a forward-moving action plan aimed at improving services for young people leaving care. Among the improvements in progress are new information leaflets devised by young people, and an information fair planned for August which will raise awareness about the service, again with young people being centrally involved in this. Also under development is a peer mentoring scheme which will involve young people who have used the service to share their experiences with others who are not yet ready to move on, with the aim of presenting a realistic view of the challenges they faced, and how they have dealt with them.

* Having identified healthcare needs, we saw some very good examples of how staff helped to ensure that young people's health needs are addressed: these include staff contacting young people at the same time each week to prompt them to apply contraceptive patches, and staff accompanying young people to a long series of dental appointments with the result that the young person's dental health and self esteem were much improved.

4.3.2 Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

* Young people are encouraged to participate in exit interviews in which they give their views about the staff who have worked with them. The manager gave examples of how this had helped to identify and address some staff practice issues.

* The staff provide a range of individualised support packages which meet the needs of young people. Support is provided in a way which takes the young person's current needs and circumstances into account, and aims to build their capacity to manage their own lives over time. On this basis, they provide very flexible support, ranging from regular and frequent 1:1 contact, transport, support for appointments of various kinds, and referral to, and advocacy with relevant agencies.

4.3.3 Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

In addition to the strengths in relation to young people's participation noted under 1.1, we found that the service has been instrumental in taking forward a significant policy change in this local authority through the development of a joint protocol with Dundee City Council's Housing Department which avoids young people having to be formally registered as homeless in order to qualify for housing in their own right.

The Care Leavers policy was born out of feedback from young people who have previously used the service that they felt that the need to register as homeless was a negative experience. We feel that this policy change marks a significant improvement in the way that young care leavers are supported by the local authority, and represents a positive move towards the development of a corporate parenting approach to caring for and supporting young people.

* The manager of the service supports staff and monitors performance through regular 1:1 meetings as well as through informal contact. In discussion, staff confirmed that the support of the manager enabled them to carry out their work effectively, and participate in service development.

* The manager also carries out audits of support plans and case recording; he attends a sample of support plan reviews, and accompanies staff on visits: all of these activities are focused on assuring that quality is maintained.

4.4 THROUGH-CARE & 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

4.5 QUALITY INDICATORS

The Quality Indicators used by the SCSWIS are:-

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

At their recent unannounced inspection on 01 May 2012 the SCSWIS awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good		
Statement 1	6	Excellent
Statement 3	5	Very Good
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	6	Excellent
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, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Care Service Inspection Report Dundee City Council - Throughcare and Aftercare Service Housing Support Service.

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

Date: 12th September 2012

Care service inspection report

Dundee City Council - Throughcare & Aftercare Service

Housing Support Service

Linlathen Resource Centre
1 Rowantree Crescent
Dundee
DD4 8EY
Telephone: 01382 438656

Inspected by: Linda Paterson

Donna McDonald

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 1 May 2012



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Service provided by:

Dundee City Council

Service provider number:

SP2003004034

Care service number:

CS2004079338

Contact details for the inspector who inspected this service:

Linda Paterson

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Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

Quality of Care and Support	5	Very Good
Quality of Staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	5	Very Good

What the service does well

The service works very effectively with young people to provide the support they need to help them to make the transition into living more independently.

The service has very good links with a wide range of agencies and organisations, including health and housing services, education and employment providers, and they use these links to good effect to help young people to overcome difficulties and reach their potential.

The service adopts a positive approach to involving young people in helping to develop the service.

What the service could do better

The service should consider reviewing the way that it records planned actions and achievements in support plans, so that it can more effectively evidence the positive outcomes for young people who use this service.

It should also take forward its plan to seek feedback from partner agencies and other stakeholder and include these views in assessing and improving the service.

What the service has done since the last inspection

The service has undertaken a major restructure since the last inspection, which has enabled it to define the roles and responsibilities of staff. All involved agree that this has resulted in greater degree of clarity and efficiency in the provision of the service.

The service has also adopted an innovative approach to involving young people and partner agencies in the development of the service.

Conclusion

Dundee City Council's Throughcare and Aftercare Service offers individualised support to young people who are or have previously been looked after by the local authority, to help them to move towards living more independently.

The skilled and committed staff team work effectively with partner agencies to help young people to identify and overcome the challenges they face in making the transition to an independent life.

The service is committed to the ongoing evaluation and development of the service.

Who did this inspection

Linda Paterson

Donna McDonald

Lay assessor: Not Applicable.

1 About the service we inspected

Dundee City Council provides this throughcare and aftercare service to young people who are or who have previously been looked after by the local authority.

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.

The service works in partnership with Carolina House Trust which provides tenancy support to young people.

The service also works closely with the housing department and local housing providers to help young people to secure appropriate tenancies. It also works in partnership with providers of training and employment opportunities, and with health and support agencies, to help to meet the needs of young people.

The number of service users is variable, but the service works with around 90-100 young people at any one time.

Based on the findings of this inspection this 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 5 - Very Good

This report and grades represent our 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. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.scswis.com or by calling us on 0845 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

Before the Inspection, the service submitted a completed annual return and self assessment form as requested.

The views of service users were sought through the use of pre-inspection questionnaires.

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection of the service which took place on 26 April 2012. The inspectors were Linda Paterson and Donna McDonald. We went back to give feedback to the manager on 1 May.

During the inspection, we gathered evidence from a number of sources, including the following:

- Discussion with the manager of the service;
- Discussion with two members of the staff team;
- Informal discussion with two young people who use the service;
- We attended a team meeting;
- We attended a Pathways plan review (with the permission of the young person)
- We looked at a range of documentation including:
 - a sample of support plans;
 - a sample of "My Pathways views documents"
 - team meeting minutes;
 - questionnaires and results of these;
 - care leavers policy;
 - information about the "Co-production" initiative which had involved young people and partner agencies in the development of the service;
- We also asked the manager from Carolina House Trust, which works in partnership with this service for their views.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality

themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firelawscotland.org

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

This was completed to a good standard prior to the inspection. The service identified evidence of strengths and some areas for further development, and told us how service users had been involved in this process.

For future inspections, the service should make sure that all information contained in the document is relevant to the current operation of the service.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

We spoke briefly to two young people who are currently receiving support from the team. Both were very positive about the quality of the support they receive, and one young person said that he "would never have made it through" if it hadn't been for the support from his worker.

In addition, we received 5 completed pre-inspection questionnaires from young people who use the service. Of these, two "agreed" and three "strongly agreed" that they are happy overall with the quality of the service they receive. Two young people made the following comments:

"My first aftercare worker was not useful, but they were changed and now I have a more useful one"

"I would like to put forward special praise for my worker Heather Strathearn who gave me all the support and help I needed and was always there for me when needed. She is a credit to herself and her profession."

Taking carers' views into account

We did not have contact with carers during this inspection.

However, we sought feedback from the manager of the Carolina House Trust Tenancy Support Service which provides support to young people in partnership with this service.

He confirmed that the services work effectively together to deliver a comprehensive and supportive service to young people.

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 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

We found that this service has excellent arrangements in place to enable young people to participate in assessing and improving the quality of care and support they receive.

The manager and staff are strongly committed to making sure that young people influence the nature and direction of their own support plan, and also actively seek their views to inform the overall development of the service.

The service uses a range of methods to work with young people, and has also involved independent facilitators to make sure that young people are meaningfully involved in service developments.

From the self assessment form, and from evidence gathered during the inspection, we noted the following strengths:

* Staff work very effectively with young people to help them to identify and address the challenges they face in beginning to establish an independent lifestyle. The team has developed a tool (My Pathways Views) to help to capture young people's views, using their own language. This then forms the basis of the Pathways plan which sets out how issues will be addressed. We thought that this was a very effective way of enabling young people to help to determine the kind of support they need and receive.

* We found evidence to show that staff work intensively with young people to tackle the issues they have identified as being important to them. We could see that staff work well with young people to help them to manage their expectations about their plans, for example by helping them to be realistic about their readiness to manage a tenancy on their own, and what skills they need to develop before taking on that responsibility. This helps to ensure that young people are more likely to be successful in securing and maintaining their homes when they eventually get one.

* We found that the service is very pro-active in connecting with young people, using Facebook to provide information about the service, and providing an O2 mobile phone for emergency contact, in recognition that most young people use one or both of these as a main source of communication.

* The service has adopted an innovative approach to involving young people (and partner agencies) in a structured approach to service development. The "Co-Production" initiative was independently facilitated by the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum and involved young people, staff and partner agencies in a series of meetings which captured the experiences of young care leavers and has formulated them into a forward-moving action plan aimed at improving services for young people leaving care. Among the improvements in progress are new information leaflets devised by young people, and an information fair planned for August which will raise awareness about the service, again with young people being centrally involved in this. Also under development is a peer mentoring scheme which will involve young people who have used the service to share their experiences with others who are not yet ready to move on, with the aim of presenting a realistic view of the challenges they faced, and how they have dealt with them.

In summary, the service has demonstrated an excellent approach to involving young people meaningfully in assessing and improving the quality of care and support provided by the service, both through their individual support plans and in relation to the development of the service as a whole.

Areas for improvement

None noted at this inspection.

Grade awarded for this statement: 6 - Excellent

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 3

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

Service strengths

The service has very good arrangements for ensuring that service users' health and wellbeing needs are met.

From the self assessment form and from evidence gathered during the inspection, we identified the following strengths:

* Young people's health needs are identified through the use of "My Pathways" and are recorded in the Pathways plan. The use of young people's own words in "My Pathways" allows for young people to be more open than they might otherwise be: this gave a more realistic feel to the information they provided, for example, descriptions of alcohol or drug use were more reflective of the reality of their lifestyle.

Inspection report continued

* Having identified healthcare needs, we saw some very good examples of how staff helped to ensure that young people's health needs are addressed: these include staff contacting young people at the same time each week to prompt them to apply contraceptive patches, and staff accompanying young people to a long series of dental appointments with the result that the young person's dental health and self esteem were much improved.

* The service has well-established links with health services. In particular, the dedicated LAAC nurse supports young people to access specialist health services, or can provide individual counselling or support

* The service also helps to promote healthier lifestyles for young people through encouraging them to undertake smoking cessation programmes, and by providing gym/leisure passes to encourage more physical activity.

Areas for improvement

We noted a discrepancy in one young person's record of health: this appeared to be a formatting error, but was pointed out to the manager of the service during the inspection.

We also found that the service could improve the way that it records the positive outcomes which have been achieved with some service users. This might be helped by adopting a "smarter" approach to support planning, and recording outcomes more clearly.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 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 has very good arrangements in place to involve young people in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

The service uses a range of methods to involve young people, as described under QS 1.1.

In relation to staffing, we noted the following strengths:

- * Young people are encouraged to participate in exit interviews in which they give their views about the staff who have worked with them. The manager gave examples of how this had helped to identify and address some staff practice issues.
- * Staff did training to develop their skills and knowledge, stimulated by the needs of the young people they were working with, for example, one member of staff had done a course about helping young people with additional support needs because of the particular challenges posed by one young person they were working with.
- * Staff have developed some very useful tools, particularly "My Pathways Views" in order to better help young people to contribute meaningfully to the support planning process.
- * The manager of the service meets young people through home and office visits and attendance at reviews, and through this gathers feedback about staff which is then used to improve practice within the team.

Areas for improvement

None noted at this inspection.

Grade awarded for this statement: 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

We found that this is a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates within a clear legislative framework.

Inspection report continued

From evidence gathered during the inspection, including feedback from young people who use the service, we identified the following strengths:

- * The team operates within a clear understanding of its legislative framework, and uses national guidance ("Supporting Young People Leaving Care in Scotland" regulations, and the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum's "Quality Indicators for Best Practice") as its basis for operation. This guidance is consistent with the relevant National Care Standards for Housing Support Services.
- * We found that most staff are positive and motivated, and are well-supported through regular 1:1 supervision, appraisal and training. They work effectively as a team to develop approaches to supporting young people, and make very good use of their knowledge of local and national resources to help them to improve the range of supports available.
- * The staff are skilled at communicating with young people, and use a variety of methods which take account of youth culture, including the use of Facebook and mobile phones.
- * The staff provide a range of individualised support packages which meet the needs of young people. Support is provided in a way which takes the young person's current needs and circumstances into account, and aims to build their capacity to manage their own lives over time. On this basis, they provide very flexible support, ranging from regular and frequent 1:1 contact, transport, support for appointments of various kinds, and referral to, and advocacy with relevant agencies.
- * The strong team approach means that young people benefit from continuity of contact with the service, so that even if their allocated worker is not available, another member of the team will be familiar with them, and so will be able to help. The team's location in a young-people-friendly building is a positive advantage in terms of enabling young people to come along and feel comfortable in the setting.
- * As described under QS 1.1, the team has developed an innovative approach to engaging young people in developing the service using their own experiences of leaving care and becoming independent. This initiative reflects a team which is motivated to improve the way that it works to benefit young people, and is using up-to-date practice and resources to guide this process.

Areas for improvement

None noted at this inspection

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 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 service has very effective arrangements in place to involve young people in assessing and improving the quality of management and leadership in the service. The service uses a range of methods to involve young people, as described under QS 1.1.

In addition to the strengths in relation to young people's participation noted under 1.1, we found that the service has been instrumental in taking forward a significant policy change in this local authority through the development of a joint protocol with Dundee City Council's Housing Department which avoids young people having to be formally registered as homeless in order to qualify for housing in their own right. The Care Leavers policy was born out of feedback from young people who have previously used the service that they felt that the need to register as homeless was a negative experience.

We feel that this policy change marks a significant improvement in the way that young care leavers are supported by the local authority, and represents a positive move towards the development of a corporate parenting approach to caring for and supporting young people.

Areas for improvement

None noted at this inspection.

Grade awarded for this statement: 6 - Excellent

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 has a range of effective methods which it uses to ensure that the quality of the service is maintained and developed.

From the self assessment form and from evidence gathered during the inspection, we noted the following strengths:

Inspection report continued

* The manager of the service supports staff and monitors performance through regular 1:1 meetings as well as through informal contact. In discussion, staff confirmed that the support of the manager enabled them to carry out their work effectively, and participate in service development.

* The manager also carries out audits of support plans and case recording; he attends a sample of support plan reviews, and accompanies staff on visits: all of these activities are focused on assuring that quality is maintained.

* Young people are given the opportunity to give their views of the service through exit interviews, which are carried out by another partner agency to help to maintain an independent perspective.

* During the inspection, the manager gave examples of how he has used the information gathered from all of the above sources to address staff performance issues.

* As described under QS 1.1 and 4.1, the service has effectively involved young people and partner agencies in taking forward the development of the service.

Areas for improvement

The service should take forward the plan to seek feedback from partner agencies and other stakeholders about the service.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

4 Other information

Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

Additional Information

None noted.

Action Plan

Failure to submit an appropriate action plan within the required timescale, including any agreed extension, where requirements and recommendations have been made, will result in SCSWIS re-grading the Quality Statement within the Management and Leadership Theme as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme for Management and Leadership being re-graded as Unsatisfactory (1).

5 Summary of grades

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

6 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
19 Jun 2009	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very Good Staffing 5 - Very Good Management and Leadership 5 - Very Good

All inspections and grades before 1 April 2011 are those reported by the former regulator of care services, the Care Commission.

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Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànanan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

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