

**REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 12 DECEMBER 2016**

**REPORT ON: INSPECTION OF THE HOUSING SUPPORT TEAM BY THE CARE INSPECTORATE**

**REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

**REPORT NO: 380-2016**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to report on findings of the Care Inspectorate inspection of the Housing Support Team.

**2 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee notes the contents of this report.

**3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None.

**4 BACKGROUND**

4.1 The Housing Support Team was inspected in October 2016 by the Care Inspectorate. They published a report on their findings and this is attached as Appendix 1.

4.2 The Housing Support Team was established in 2003, to help people manage and sustain their tenancies across the city. It is a free and confidential service aimed at helping people to live as independently as possible. The service helps people of all ages and backgrounds, which includes people who have been homeless, people with health issues, young people setting up home for the first time and more recently assisting refugee families to set up home and integrate into life in Dundee. Referrals come from a wide range of sources such as council services, NHS Tayside, Health and Social Care and the Voluntary Sector as well as self referrals. The service has recently expanded and now works with tenants from all social landlords as well as those living in private sector housing. Flexible support is provided in areas relating to money matters, finding essential items for a new home, referrals to specialist services, help applying for grants and other support where needed. Each service user has a tailor made support plan, which maps out the goals they wish to achieve and support can last from a couple of months up to a maximum of two years. Support is delivered in tenants own homes and tenant involvement in the running of the service has been a key aspect.

4.3 The Care Inspectorate identified the following key strengths of the service:

- The service's participation practice is very good. It includes annual consultation surveys, service user forums held 2 – 3 times a year, 3 monthly reviews of personal plans, a newsletter, information packs, exit interviews, service user involvement in recruitment and an open and accessible complaints procedure.
- The service ensures that each tenant has a support plan containing an assessment of their needs, a plan of support and any risk assessment. Each tenant has an annual review and Housing Support Officers make case notes to any needs identified or support given. These were found to be specific to the individual needs and easy to read. Tenants spoken with were familiar with what was in their support plan.
- Support plans incorporated Better Futures outcome measuring which tracked peoples' Service progress towards achieving their stated aims.

- Service users were very satisfied with the service. Seventeen service users and three stakeholders were interviewed as part of the inspection. Their views were overwhelmingly positive, with comments such as:
  - “They go above and beyond if you ask me. Without this service I’d be dead.”
  - “They do treat me with dignity and don’t judge.”
  - “They supported to get mental health services.”
  - “They are good listeners and have helped me in my life”
  - “They helped me get my own house.”
  - “They work really well with the homeless units.”
  - “their breadth of knowledge is amazing and they know lots of people in the community
- Staff were well trained and well informed in relation to their role. Members of the team were undertaking mediation training, knew what to do when they encountered possible child or adult protection scenarios and staff held relevant vocational qualifications.

#### 4.4 Evaluations

##### 4.4.1 Requirements for improvement:

- There were no requirements for improvement

##### 4.4.2 Recommendations for improvement:

- There were no recommendations for improvement

#### 4.5 Grading

##### 4.5.1 Care Inspectorate reports use a six-point scale for reporting performance:

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

##### 4.5.2 The following grades were awarded:

Theme	Grading
Quality of Care and Support	<b>5 – Very Good</b>
Quality of Staffing	Not assessed
Quality of Management and Leadership	<b>5 – Very Good</b>

In relation to the Quality of Staffing Theme, this was not assessed by the Care Inspectorate and it therefore retains its 6 – Excellent rating from the last inspection.

## 5 **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.

There are no major issues.

## **6 CONSULTATIONS**

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, the Executive Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

Elaine Zwirlein  
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

GB/EH

18 November 2016



# Dundee City Council- Housing Support Team Housing Support Service

East District Housing Office  
169 Pitkerro Road  
Dundee  
DD4 8ES

Telephone: 01382 307357

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 11 October 2016

**Service provided by:**  
Dundee City Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003004034

**Care service number:**  
CS2004079333

## About the service

This housing support service provides support, assistance, advice or counselling to people with a particular need to enable them to occupy their own tenancy.

The service is available to people whose tenancies are at risk of breaking down. Referrals to the service come from other sections of Dundee City Council's Housing Department, the Social Work Department and health services. Tenants can also make self referrals to the service.

The service provides an assessment of needs and offers a package of support including:

Setting up home, benefits advice, access to furniture, access to training and employment, liaison with other support agencies to provide tenants with support, any other support to maintain tenancies.

## What people told us

17 service users and three stakeholders were interviewed as part of this inspection. Their views were overwhelmingly positive. Here are some examples of what they said.

Service users:

- Staff are generally on time but if they are delayed they will ring me.
- I have a good relationship with my housing support worker and can talk to them about anything.
- They help me to attend court appointments and stay out of trouble.
- They go above and beyond if you ask me. Without this service I'd be dead.
- They act on my behalf to get things sorted in my life such as benefits and form filling.
- They do treat me with dignity and don't judge.
- They supported me to get mental health services.
- They are good listeners and have helped me in my life.
- They read correspondence to me because I have sight problems and something as simple as that keeps me going.
- They helped me get my own house.

Stakeholders:

- They work with our service in a very integral way for the benefit of service users.
- My service and theirs uses the same outcomes model for seeing how people are managing their lives and this really works well.
- They work really well with the homelessness units.
- Kind people who go above and beyond to support.
- They do what they say they are going to do.
- Their breadth of knowledge is amazing and they know lots of people in the community.
- They are very good at following up on child, and adult, protection issues.

## Self assessment

A competent self assessment was submitted by the service for this inspection.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

<b>Quality of care and support</b>	5 - Very Good
<b>Quality of staffing</b>	not assessed
<b>Quality of management and leadership</b>	5 - Very Good

## What the service does well

Care and Support:-

Strengths:

- The service's participation practice was very good. It included annual consultation surveys, service user forums held 2 - 3 times a year, 3 monthly reviews of personal plans, a newsletter, information packs, exit interviews, service user involvement in recruitment and an open and accessible complaints procedure.
- The service ensured that each tenant had a support plan containing an assessment of their needs, a plan of support and any risk assessments. Each tenant has an annual review and Housing Support Officers (HSO's) make case notes in relation to any needs identified or support given. These were found to be specific to individual needs and easy to read. Tenants spoken with were familiar with what was in their support plan.
- The plans incorporated Better Futures outcome measuring which tracked people's progress towards achieving their stated aims.
- There was evidence of co-working with other parts of the housing department in order to provide a joined-up service to people. There was close liaison, for example, with local homelessness units.
- There was plentiful evidence of housing support officers signposting people to other services such as mental health or addiction services.
- Staff were well trained and well informed in relation to their role. Members of the team were undertaking mediation training, knew what to do when they encountered possible child or adult protection scenarios and staff held relevant vocational qualifications.

Areas for consideration:

- The service had recently moved office and were now in a hot-desking environment. Staff felt that this was a big change for them and some were having difficulty adjusting. This was discussed with the manager of the service
- There had been short-term issues with staffing levels due to sickness and extra work undertaken by the team to house refugees for Syria but staff had provided cover for service users. The manager of the service was aware of these issues and had plans to address staffing shortfalls.

## Management:

- There was clear use of quality assurance in the areas of staff performance, participation, support for service users and training.
- The manager of the service attended wider regular meetings within the housing department and with other housing providers in the area. This helps him keep abreast of developments in housing law and benefits as well as how other providers are tackling issues.
- Representatives from the team also meet with tenants action groups such as the Federation of Tenants. This also kept the team up-to-date with developments in this area.
- The provider's staff development and information teams also support the service with updates on policies and procedures. Thus keeping the team up-to-date with how changes might impact upon people.
- The service was clear about its development plan keeping it focussed on how best to deliver effective services this was evidenced in its housing department unit plan.
- The manager of the unit was undergoing continual professional development - he had recently undertaken training in coaching.

## Areas for consideration:

- One service user spoken with felt that because his housing support worker was off sick that his case was stuck. This was looked into by the inspector who found that another worker had been allocated to his case and had already met with him.
- It was felt by the inspector that the management of the service should acknowledge staff feelings around their moving office and work with them to find the best ways to address this change.

## What the service could do better

Despite the areas for consideration noted above this remained a very well functioning service with very positive feedback from stakeholders and service users.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

## 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).



Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
29 Oct 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 6 - Excellent 5 - Very good
16 Oct 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
30 Jan 2013	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
26 May 2009	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good 5 - Very good

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