

Highland Council (Housing) Sutherland Housing Support Service

Service name

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Service address

The Meadows

Dornoch IV25 3SG

Type of care service

Housing Support Service

Provider name

Highland Council

Service number

CS2004081025

Date of inspection

14 February 2007

Type of inspection

Announced

Care Commission Office

39-41 Harbour Road, Inverness IV1 1UF

Period since last inspection

Introduction

Highland Council (Housing) (Housing Support) (Sutherland) was registered with the Care Commission on 8/10/04. The housing support service was administered from the council area offices in Dornoch.

The Housing Support Service's stated Aims were:

"To ensure sheltered housing tenants live in housing suitable for their needs and also have the appropriate housing support to help them live independently"

Housing support service staff were based in Ardgay, Lairg and Brora and offered housing support to 32 residents in sheltered housing complexes.

Basis of Report

This service was inspected after receiving a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) to determine what level of support was necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the CCO which considers: complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service, action taken upon requirement etc.

Prior to the inspection visit the service manager had completed the electronic annual return and self evaluation documents online. These were taken into account, along with the service provider's history in developing a regulatory support assessment.

During the inspection which took place from 14th February to 1st March 2007, the Care Commission Officer met with the service manager, staff and service users. The Care Commission Officer met with service users and staff in person, and sought the views of other service users via telephone interview and postal questionnaire. The Care Commission Officer also examined the range of policies, procedures and records relating to service provision and the themed inspection.

This report is based on consideration of the service's compliance with the regulations associated with the Regulation of Care (Requirements as to Care Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 (SSI 2002/114) as well as taking account of the following National Care Standards :

National Care Standards - Housing Support

Standard 2 - Your Legal Rights

Standard 3- Management and staffing arrangements

Standard 4 - Housing Support Planning

Standard 6 - Choice and Communication

Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Reports

It was recommended the staff personal development programme is implemented.

National Care Standards - Housing Support Services - Standard 3 (2) (4)

This recommendation had been met.

It was recommended that relief cover for staff was reviewed, in terms of providing continuity of care for service users.

National Care Standards - Housing Support Services - Standard 3 (6)

This recommendation had been met.

It was recommended that the service provider should develop a statement of aims and objectives specific to the care service being provided

The Regulation of Care (Requirements as to Care Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 (SSI 2002/114)- Regulation (3)

This recommendation had been met.

It was recommended staff receive training in developing support plans for service users.

National Care Standards - Housing Support - Standard 4 - Housing Support Planning (1)

This recommendation had been met.

The positive response from the service manager and provider was noted with reference to these recommendations.

Comment on Self-Evaluation

A concise self evaluation assisted the inspection process.

View of Service Users

Service Users were very positive about the quality of service on offer, and the support they received from the individual housing support staff

View of Carers

N/A at time of inspection.

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

National Care Standard Number 2: Housing Support Services - Your Legal Rights

Strengths

Service users received a written agreement which clearly defined the service that was provided to meet their needs. The agreement set out the terms and conditions for receiving the service, and arrangements for changing or ending the agreement.

Service users received a copy of this written agreement in a format that they could understand.

Service users were provided with a tenant's handbook which clearly explained how the service worked.

Information was written in plain English or in a language and format that was suitable for individual service users.

The handbook contained further information on health and safety issues, equal opportunities, service user's views, and useful contacts.

With service user's agreement, family, carer, friends, staff and managers were involved in discussions with regard to the service.

Service users spoken with described the information as adequate and easily understandable.

The service had in place the appropriate policies and procedures for managing risk and the recording accidents and incidents.

The manager of the service confirmed that the Care Commission's inspection report was made available to service users

Areas for Development

National Care Standard Number 3: Housing Support Services - Management and Staffing Arrangements

Strengths

The service provider had policies and procedures which covered all legal requirements, including:

Staff Recruitment: Including induction of new staff

Risk assessment and Management

Whistle-blowing

Equal Opportunities

Staff Training & Personal Development

Staff Training

Proper record-keeping, including the recording of incidents, accidents, and complaints.

Housing support staff had an awareness of the policies and procedures, but needed time to develop a working knowledge.

The staff providing housing support had the knowledge and skills gained from the experience of working with people whose needs were similar.

Staff in post were longer term employees and had not undertaken any formal induction to their posts, but new staff underwent a formal, planned, induction / training programme on entry to the service.

A training plan was in place for staff which was relevant to their role and the service user's needs.

The service provider's staff and managers were all recruited and selected through a process which included:

Formal Interview

Taking up of references; Medical and Personal

Disclosure (Scotland) checking

Newly recruited staff were permitted a period of protected employment (shadowing) on entry to the service.

Service staff were experienced and had the necessary skills sufficient to meet the service user s housing support needs.

The service had a staff development strategy (Personal Development Planning). Training issues were being addressed by the service manager. Staff had undertaken Vulnerable Adults training.

Staff meetings had been held regularly by the service manager, which staff spoke of, as a positive development. Staff felt more positively involved in the service.

Following comments made by service users in the previous inspection report, the service provider and manager had reviewed the relief cover arrangements for staff and this positive development was noted. This was commented on positively by service users and staff alike.

Staff were not involved in any financial transactions with service users.

Areas for Development

National Care Standard Number 4: Housing Support Services - Housing Support Planning

Strengths

Service users were involved in developing their personal plan and in any reviews.

Service users received copies that had been signed and dated by the housing support staff.

Service user s personal plans set out the way the service was shaped to meet their needs.

Service user s personal plans contained information about:

What service users preferred to be called;

Who should be involved in reviewing their care;

Any special communication needs service user s may have;

What communication arrangements needed to be put in place if the service user s first language was not English;

Any housing support service user s needed to help them with financial or administrative arrangements;

when, and in what circumstances, friends, relatives and carers were to be contacted;

which other services must be contacted if there was an important change in the service user s health or personal circumstances;

an independent person to contact if the service user wanted to make a complaint or raise a concern;

Who else was contributing to the service user s support and care; a

When the housing support was provided and who provided it.

Service user s housing support plans had all been reviewed in the past inspection year.

Service user s spoken with, confirmed that they were told about any unexpected changes to their housing support as soon as possible.

Service user s spoken with, knew about any changes to charges and how and when these would happen.

Service user s knew how to contact the housing support service provider if their housing support worker did not appear when they were expected.

Relief staff cover had been put in place by the service manager ensuring continuity of care, a positive development noted by service users and staff.

Areas for Development

Housing support plans, whilst completed, lacked detail in some cases, and this may be a staff training issue.

National Care Standard Number 6: Housing Support Services - Choice and Communication

Strengths

Service users were given good information about the choices that were available to them and the effect those choices would have on them.

Service users were provided with an introductory pack which clearly explained how the service worked.

With service user s agreement , family, carer, friends, staff and managers were involved in discussions with regard to the service.

Information was written in plain English or in a language and format that was suitable for individual service users

If service users wanted, they could ask for an independent representative or for specialist advice.

Service users were free to carry out these choices unless any specific legal provision applied to them.

The housing support service provider had clear ways of communicating the service user's wishes to the housing support staff.

The housing manager had developed staff meetings to ensure effective communications in terms of service delivery.

Service users spoken with were clear that choice and flexibility were key elements of service provision, and that any changes in service provision were communicated to them.

Areas for Development

Enforcement

N/A

Other Information

N/A

Requirements

No requirements are being made as a result of this inspection.

Recommendations

No recommendations are being made as a result of this inspection.

John H Corbett

Care Commission Officer