

Edinburgh Mental Health Service Housing Support Service

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Service provided by:
LinkLiving Limited

Service provider number:
SP2004004684

Care service number:
CS2015341373

About the service

Edinburgh Mental Health Service is one of a number of registered Link Living Ltd services provided in Scotland. The service is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a housing support and care at home service to adults and older people with mental health problems living in their own homes.

At the time of the inspection there were around 80 people being supported (referred to as service users in this report). Support packages varied with some people receiving 2 hours of support a week to others receiving up to 40 hours of support a week.

The service was going through a process of geographical realignment at the time of this inspection. This was so that workers in each team covered a geographical area of Edinburgh.

This was to use staff resources more effectively by reducing the travel time staff spent between support visits and to have three staff teams each with its own senior support worker.

Link Living has statements of aims and values including:

- To respond to individual and changing needs
- To promote recovery in personal health and quality of life
- To enable people who have a range of reasons for needing support to lead more independent lives
- To treat people with dignity and respect and develop positive trusting relationships
- To support people in a person-centred way which builds on their strengths
- To assist people to feel more included by being active in their communities
- To empower people to feel more in control of their lives and make informed choices.

What people told us

Before the inspection took place we sent out 80 Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) for the service to distribute to people supported. Twelve questionnaires were returned to us.

The inspector gathered the views of service users from the 12 returned CSQs, met with service users in their homes and phoning and emailing service users who indicated that they would like to participate in the inspection.

The majority of respondents were overall happy with the quality of their support. The following comments were made:

'Since working with my 2 support workers I have felt a sense of security and independence away from my family. Not only do they help me practically but they are an enormous emotional support. I am achieving the goals I have set. My carers are extremely reliable and can provide me with care at short notice. I feel my carers take a genuine interest in me as a person and I have never felt as if they were just doing a job. I always feel physically, mentally and emotionally better after seeing them.'

'Staff are generally good but I feel that Link have to manage their service in a better way. I get on really well with the support workers that know me well but I have been let down by Link on several occasions as I have had days when there has been no-one to support me due to staff sickness. Link recently informed service users that banked hours couldn't be used and I feel this is wrong and Link are making decisions without consulting service users. I would like there to be more opportunities to meet with people who have similar health conditions as

they know what it is like. My support worker had been helping me to try to get different accommodation and knows the problems I have been having.'

'My support worker helps out with bills and other things I need help with, like repairs and furniture packages.'

'I wish to commend Link Living for the extraordinary care and support that I have received particularly over the last nine months. Always a fantastic service. They have been truly magnificent supporting me through an illness. They have taken a lot of the burden off me by helping with appointments. They have been very adaptable and quietly and simply ensured that they could remain with me when appointments ran over their time and made sure they remained with me until I was safe at home. Then there is the emotional support which has never wavered in its excellence and how I would have coped without my support workers I do not know. I really cannot praise Link Living or my support workers highly enough.'

'Overall the service is fabulous and 95% of the staff are excellent. I have been with Link Living for over 7 years and it is only the last 18 months that the service has been unsettled in my opinion. There have been a lot of changes of staff and sometimes this happened without notice and I don't think staff are given enough time to read my file before they meet me.'

'All my support workers meet my needs and I look forward to their good company and visits.'

'I am so lucky to have Link supporting me. The staff are all very good and my keyworker has been helping me to do more things out in the community and at home. I couldn't ask for anything more. I get on well with all the staff and they are all kind and care about me.'

' Since starting with support I have had 5 different support workers of whom one was agency. I have had a support worker who was not turning up on time and cancelling my sessions at short notice. My two workers now have been amazing but this is the individual workers rather than the organisation I feel. I now have a support plan in place and had a review in January 17. I have received a letter informing me that my banked hours have been cancelled and I won't be able to use them and this has ruined some of the plans I had to use them in the upcoming months.'

'I have been with Link Living for years now but I am very unhappy about the changes to my rota and I feel that there is a lack of consultation with service users about changes. I am hurt by this. I have a lot going on and need staff that I know and can relate to. There is a person on my rota that I didn't agree to supporting me. What was agreed at my review a short time ago seems to have been totally ignored and I would like something done about it. My keyworker is a wonderful, intelligent person who knows how to support me and helps me in so many ways and I hope even though rotas are changing I can still have them as my keyworker and have choice in who supports me.'

Where service users consented to the inspector sharing information any concerns raised during consultations were passed on to the recently appointed manager who was arranging for meetings with her and/or senior staff to take place.

Self assessment

We no longer ask service providers to submit self assessments but do have a look at service improvement plans. This is to check that they are continually improving and involving people supported in the service's improvement planning.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

People were very happy with their support when they had consistent staff who they had built trusted relationships with. We heard of some positive outcomes for service users, for example, people were supported with managing their bills, accessing their local community, attending appointments and their independence was promoted through setting manageable goals. They valued the emotional support that staff gave them as well as the practical support.

People were regularly involved in planning and reviewing their support using the electronic planning system. Support plans included a personal outcomes approach. This meant that health and wellbeing outcomes and identified goals were being recorded and reviewed regularly.

The service were developing the use of volunteers to help reduce social isolation and build more peer support. There were events held such as the annual summer party and we heard from people we spoke with that they enjoyed taking part in these events and meeting other people in similar circumstances to themselves.

Staff worked really well with people, discussing issues that were affecting them and supported them to achieve things at a pace they could manage. We saw kind, caring and enabling relationships when staff were supporting people.

At each review meeting service users were asked if there were any improvements that could be made to their service. The service also checked that people knew how to make a complaint if they were unhappy about any aspect of their service. This meant that people had a say in their own support and knew how to contact senior management.

Some of the review information was difficult to access easily. This should be readily available so that staff have the most up to date review information (**see Recommendation 1**). The provider was taking forward feedback from staff about the electronic support planning system and how well it was working in for them. This was so adjustments could be made to help support staff in their everyday work. Staff feedback indicated that it was sometimes difficult to find time to do all required administrative tasks as sometimes people found it difficult to get involved in reviewing their support.

A risk assessment around a service user's health condition and how it presented needed more detail so that any

new member of staff would have better information about what to expect and how to support the person (**see Recommendation 2**).

The quality of support in some cases had been affected by staff sickness levels and staff turnover. This made it difficult for service users as they wanted people who they knew well and had built trusting relationships with providing their support. We heard that communications could be improved and that some service users felt that the organisation had lost its person centred approach in terms of offering choice in staffing and in informing them when changes to their support were necessary (**see Recommendation 3**).

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 3

1. The provider should ensure that records of service user reviews are easily accessible. This is so current information is readily available for all staff involved in supporting a service user and so that there is a clearer track of how issues discussed at reviews have been carried forward into the support plans and personal outcomes records.

National Care Standards Housing Supporting Services. Standard 4.4. Housing Support Planning

2. The provider should review the quality of information in all health risk assessments to ensure that they contain sufficient detail to guide support staff in how to best support the service user.

National Care Standards Housing Supporting Services. Standard 4.2. Housing Support Planning

3. The provider should check that there are effective communication systems in place to ensure that service users are told about any unexpected changes to their housing support as soon as possible.

National Care Standards Housing Supporting Services. Standard 4.5. Housing Support Planning

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

The provider had very good ways of checking that staff recruited had the right values to provide caring and compassionate support to people. Safe recruitment procedures were used when appointing staff. This included taking up references and carrying out Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks before anyone was appointed.

The service was very good at involving service users in staff recruitment. This meant that service users could influence who was appointed and have their views heard about the qualities they wanted to see in staff. Service users were involved in recruitment of staff at all levels in the organisation. The organisation had a dedicated

staff training and development officer who was responsible for organising training and keeping a database of staff training and qualifications.

Staff at all levels were supported to achieve Scottish Vocational Qualifications in health and social care at the level suited to their role. The organisation supported staff progression with opportunities for internal promotions and the development of leadership skills. Some staff had received training which had really helped them in their work, such as motivational interviewing and training around specific health conditions.

Some staff had long term experience of supporting people with mental health needs and had been on a range of different training/information sessions over the years. Staff told us that where they had identified a specific training need the organisation helped them with this.

Staff training should be more closely linked to the needs of service users and to develop a baseline training for all staff. Feedback from staff indicated that there was a need for mental health training and addictions training. The mental health awareness course previously delivered had been taken out of the staff training plan. The management team were linking with the training and development officer so that comprehensive mental health training would be delivered to all staff. It was difficult to easily check that all staff providing support to service users with specific health conditions had received the necessary training and peripatetic staff's training needs were to be included in the full training needs analysis **(see Recommendation 1)**.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. We recommend that a staff training needs analysis is carried out and comprehensive training in mental health delivered to the full staff team including peripatetic staff.

National Care Standards Housing Support Services. Standard 3.1: Management and Staffing Arrangements

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

Staff received regular supervision to discuss their practice and look at any training and development needs. There was an annual staff appraisal system linked to a competency framework. This meant that staff could discuss any concerns about people they were supporting and had the opportunity to meet with their senior regularly.

Staff were being now given more autonomy in managing their own rotas with senior oversight of any necessary changes. New teams had been formed to minimise the amount of travel time between visits and to support team development. The manager and seniors asked staff to let them know if there were issues with the new arrangements which would adversely affect service users so that adjustments could be made where possible.

The service had recently appointed an experienced manager who had the skills and knowledge to address issues which had been affecting the overall quality of the service. The service kept the Care Inspectorate informed of events through the notification systems and completed all requested documents in time.

Work had already started on developing the new staff teams and supporting the seniors with their quality assurance roles. A team development day had been planned for so that the team could be involved in contributing their views, shaping the service improvement plan and being involved in small group training and development sessions. This was a positive step in supporting the full team in moving the service forward after a period where there had been a lot of pressure on staff in delivering a consistent quality of support to service users within tighter budgets to deliver the care.

The manager had identified areas where staff could be better supported, particularly when faced with challenging situations and there were now clearer strategies in place to support staff in their practice.

Quality assurance visits were being carried out and planned for with seniors undertaking more visits to service users out in the community. This meant that service users who had experienced a lot of changes to their support had the opportunity to meet with management and be included in discussions about their support and how it was going.

Over the past year there had been difficulties in providing consistency in staffing with some visits being postponed or cancelled at the last minute. Some service users had banked a lot of hours which they had been informed could not now be delivered and this had caused upset.

New management arrangements were now in place and staff and service users had been given the opportunity to discuss issues in person with seniors and/or the recently appointed manager. There had clearly been a lot of pressures on the team in providing the agreed level of support in the way service users wanted. Some service users had been more affected than others, for example if their regular workers were absent, had left the organisation or were unable to provide support at the agreed times.

Staff had experienced several changes to management. Overall we considered that morale was low. At the time of this inspection changes were being implemented so that there were tighter management and leadership systems in place to support a more effectively run service and promote improved outcomes for service users.

We suggested that the service carried out a staff survey and use this feedback to identify where things were working well and what could be improved. The service improvement plan should be developed using feedback from people supported to identify current strengths and areas for improvement **(see Recommendation 1)**.

Although there were quarterly quality assurance systems in place some of the reporting sections such as the medication audit were incomplete so did not evidence that medication management had been reviewed by the management team on a regular basis **(see Recommendation 2)**.

Staff told us that they were responsible for organising cover when they were going on leave and that this was an additional time consuming pressure on them. The inspector identified that there needed to be more control over this at management level to check that the skills and training of staff covering support matched the needs of people supported **(see Recommendation 3)**.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 3

1. We recommend that the service carry out a staff survey to gain feedback from staff about their views on the quality of the service and things that could be improved.

National Care Standards Housing Support Services. Standard 3.4: Management and Staffing Arrangements

2. We recommend that the quality audit records be improved so that they evidence that all aspects of the audit have been thoroughly checked.

National Care Standards Housing Support Services. Standard 3.1: Management and Staffing Arrangements

3. We recommend that management review the current arrangements for staff to organise annual leave cover. This is to ensure that staff covering have the required skills and knowledge base to provide effective support to service users.

National Care Standards Housing Support Services. Standard 3.1: Management and Staffing Arrangements

Grade: 4 - good

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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