

# Care service inspection report

Full inspection

## Edinburgh Young Persons Service Housing Support Service

Link House  
2c New Mart Road  
Edinburgh



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Service provided by: LinkLiving Limited

Service provider number: SP2004004684

Care service number: CS2004061279

Inspection Visit Type: Unannounced

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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	6	Excellent
Quality of staffing		N/A
Quality of management and leadership	6	Excellent

### What the service does well

The service provides young people with a high quality of individualised support based on their needs and circumstances. Staff are very well supported in their training and development. This helps them to continue to develop their skills and knowledge to support people who use the service. The service works flexibly around the needs of the people who they support and has developed effective links with other agencies to match the service provided with the assessed needs of the young people. There were strong quality assurance systems in place to ensure that the outcomes for people using the service were being regularly monitored.

### What the service could do better

The service hoped to broaden the range of support available to young people such as the development of group work and befriending schemes. This was to be done though working in partnership with other voluntary organisations. Online recording systems had been introduced and the organisation planned to carry out an impact assessment to evaluate how well this was working in practice. The service was adapting to changes to how services were being

funded and we were told there were plans to move to an outcome based model of funding.

### **What the service has done since the last inspection**

Since the previous inspection the service now had its own registration rather than being part of a wider registration with other services within the organisation. This provided more ownership of the service for staff and management. The director had carried out a reconfiguration exercise to support the development and retention of a skilled and flexible workforce. This structure meant that staff could progress and develop in their roles and had a clear pathway for career progression.

### **Conclusion**

This is a highly performing service which puts the best interests of people supported at the heart of what it provides. People using the service told us that they were very happy with the support they got and with the quality of staffing and management of the service.

# 1 About the service we inspected

Edinburgh Young Person's Service is registered to provide housing support to vulnerable adults between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five years living in their own homes and in shared accommodation.

It is one of a number of services provided Link Living a voluntary organisation and registered charity.

The service became registered in its own right in May 2016 following a review of all service provision carried out by the director and input from the care inspectorate's registration team.

The service operates from two bases. The positive transitions team provide a core and cluster model of housing support in the Bonnington area of Edinburgh with a local office base in a converted flat with individual tenancies nearby and other tenancies in the local area. This is predominantly for young people moving out of care and the service has strong links with City of Edinburgh Council's throughcare and aftercare services.

There is a staff sleepover there so that young people can access support during the night if they need to. The young person's team supports young people in the wider community and is based at the main headquarters at Link House, New Mart Road, Edinburgh.

The service has a statement of aims and objectives including:

- 'To offer practical, emotional and social support to people in their own homes and to assist them to maintain their tenancy.  
To develop effective relationships with service users supporting them to cope with their lives in a positive and planned way so that they can make informed choices and take responsibility for their actions.'

## Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, SSSC codes of practice and recognised good practice. These must also be outcomes-based and if the provider meets the recommendation this would improve outcomes for people receiving the service.

### Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the "Act"), its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

We make requirements where (a) there is evidence of poor outcomes for people using the service or (b) there is the potential for poor outcomes which would affect people's health, safety or welfare.

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

**Quality of care and support - Grade 6 - Excellent**

**Quality of staffing - N/A**

**Quality of management and leadership - Grade 6 - Excellent**

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.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com) or by calling us on 0345 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

We wrote this report after a short notice unannounced inspection of the service. A care inspectorate inspector carried out the inspection and spent time at the Bonnington Road office where they met staff and service users from both parts of the service.

The inspection took place between 17-24 June 2016 with visits to the Bonnington office on 17-21 June. We allowed time for service users to meet us in person at the New Mart office if they wanted to. We set time aside on 24th June for this and to give service users and an involved agency time to respond to email contact.

We told the service manager about our finding on 30 June 2016.

From the 01 April 2016 the way in which we carry out our inspections has changed. We choose which quality themes and statements that are inspected for better performing services, to be more proportionate and targeted in our work.

All inspections will consider Quality Theme 1, Quality of Care and Support, Statement 3 'We ensure that service users health and well-being needs are met.' We also chose Quality Statement 1.5 so that we could assess how person centred the service was in providing support.

We chose two statements from the Quality of Management and Leadership Theme - 4.3. 'To encourage good quality care, we promote leadership values throughout our workforce' and 4.4. 'We use quality assurance systems and

processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholder to assess the quality of service we provide.'

We chose these statements so that we could look at how well staff were supervised in their work and how well they were supported in developing their knowledge and skills. We also wanted to look at how the service audited the quality of its work and promoted involvement of service users and staff in its quality assurance processes.

During the inspection we spoke with the registered manager and 5 members of staff.

We took account of information in the service's self assessment and annual return which the service had completed before the inspection took place.

We met with two service users from the young person's service and two service users supported by the positive transitions project.

We looked at a range of documentation including:

- Thirteen returned care standards questionnaires.
- Nine returned staff questionnaires.
- Service's own service user satisfaction surveys.
- Staff survey information.
- Computerised support plans, review minutes and risk assessments.
- Staff induction and supervision records.
- Team meeting minutes.
- Evaluation of Smart Living Step On Project.
- Accident and incident records.
- Quality audit information.
- Service information booklets.
- Adult support and protection policy.
- Complaint procedure.
- Housing and Support Panel background report.
- Quality monitoring reports for City of Edinburgh Council.
- Quality reports for Big Lottery Funding.

### 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.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk)

## 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.

We were satisfied with the contents of the self assessment which the service completed. This highlighted areas of strength and areas for future development.

## Taking the views of people using the care service into account

We met with four service users in person and looked at responses in the thirteen returned questionnaires.

Comments were made as follows:

- 'This service is amazing. There is no way I would be doing the things I am today without the support of Link Living staff. There were times when I was so low as I was addicted. They have also listened to me about my choice of support worker and I am involved in the staff interviews which I really enjoy and have learned interview skills which have helped me when I am going for interviews myself. Can't tell you enough how good the support is. Always someone there for you.'
- 'My keyworker has been so supportive. I was so low at one point and they were there throughout. They understand my physical health condition and how it affects me. My life has been transformed because of their support.'
- 'Staff are really helpful. Always there when you need them. Always extremely polite. I have always been treated with the utmost respect from start to finish. A really excellent service for existing and future

young people.'

- 'When my support first started I had lots of debt issues. I tried to deal with them myself but it didn't work. With Link Living I managed to reduce my debts to hardly anything and I am now in top health. I don't know where I would be without this help. I am very grateful it was there when I needed it most.'

### **Taking carers' views into account**

No relatives were involved in this inspection.

## 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: 6 - Excellent

#### Statement 3

“We ensure that service users' health and wellbeing needs are met.”

#### Service Strengths

We found that the service was excellent at supporting young people with their health and wellbeing. This included supporting young people to access resources in the community that could help them to maintain their tenancies and develop their independent living skills. Service users support needs were fully assessed and considered before being offered a tenancy at the accommodation based service. The service had also improved the way it carried out pre-admission risk assessments before service users were offered a placement. This was done in collaboration with other professionals. Many young people were transitioning from care settings and staff were skilled in helping them during this challenging time.

We met with people using the service and heard very positive feedback about the staff that supported them. One young person told us that without the support and guidance of Link Living staff, they would never have managed to overcome an addiction, maintain their tenancy and attend college. They told us that staff fully involved them in their support planning and risk assessments and support was provided flexibly at the times when they most needed it. Another young person told us that the service had helped them to attend medical appointments and had been very supportive at a particularly low point in their life. They told us that staff had helped them to become more confident and learn independent living skills as well as help them to get support in managing debt.

Young people were supported to access medical services, including throughcare nurse specialists GPs and dentists and staff helped them to plan ahead for appointments and supported people to attend these.

Before being offered support, young people's needs are fully assessed so that their support can be tailored to match their individual circumstances. As part of this assessment process the service identified if specialist support was needed, such as addiction services, diabetic nurses and/or mental health specialists. Support plans and risk assessments detailed health and well-being issues including the actions that can be expected from staff in certain situations, for example if a person was self harming or expressing suicidal thoughts.

Reviews of support were held on a regular basis and records showed that service users' health and wellbeing needs were being regularly assessed and planned for. Contact sheets were used to record the support and advice provided to people.

The Link Living Step On project was proving effective in supporting young people to develop and learn new skills to give them the confidence to apply for jobs and attend interviews. Young people could attend group sessions and develop their communication and leadership skills. The service ran an independent living skills group work programme for young people with care backgrounds which includes a focus on improving health and well-being. Outside speakers were used to support young people to learn about different topics relating to their health and wellbeing.

We assessed the service's adult support and protection procedures and practices. The service notified the care inspectorate of any adult support and protection referrals. There had been a recent situation which a member of staff had dealt with competently following the correct reporting procedures in order to protect a service user.

All support staff receive a full induction and follow on core training which included as health and safety, emergency first aid and food hygiene.

Specialist training was provided to support effective practice with young

people with specific health and wellbeing issues. Training had included epilepsy awareness; use of sign language; autism awareness; drug and alcohol awareness as well as mental health awareness including eating disorders and self harm. Staff we spoke with told us that wherever they identified a specific training need to help a service user, that the service was very responsive in organising this.

### **Areas for improvement**

We were told that restrictions to funding was affecting the amount of time available to promote healthy lifestyles. The service was hoping to develop volunteer and befriending schemes and to increase the use of group work. The service should continue to sustain and build on the excellent practices seen throughout this inspection, and continue to monitor the health and wellbeing outcomes of people supported.

### **Grade**

6 - Excellent

**Number of requirements - 0**

**Number of recommendations - 0**

## Statement 5

“We respond to service users' care and support needs using person centered values.”

### Service Strengths

The strengths identified in Quality Statement 1.3 also apply to this quality statement. Staff talked about service users in a respectful manner and we observed high quality interactions between support staff and service users. It was clear from talking with staff and service users that the service operated in a very person centred way with service user involvement being high on the agenda. Link Living promoted service user involvement at every level and this included service users being on interview panels and their views on potential candidates being fully considered. The qualities which service users wanted staff to have were fully considered and included in interview questions. This meant that staff employed had demonstrated that they had the right value base for person centred working. This was important in developing a diverse workforce so that service users could be matched with people with shared interests or particular qualities which service users wished for in those providing their support. Staff received training on person centred practice and equality and diversity during induction and beyond. There were a series of training modules including person centred planning which staff would work through with the support of their manager. Observation of practice were carried out and staff supervision was reflective giving staff time to consider how the work with individual service users. The service where possible matched gender preferences when this was expressed as being important to the service user. Review meetings were used to discuss support from the service user's perspective and give them the opportunity to say if there was anyway that their support could be improved. Service users were also asked to sign documents such as review minutes and support meetings to say that they considered them to be accurate. Staff had been involved in training called 'Smooth Moves' which focussed on person centred practice at key transition points in service users' lives. They planned to incorporate this training into the core training calendar. We found that the organisation was very responsive to the views and suggestions of service users and what was expressed in telephone surveys, client questionnaires. Following some feedback that it was sometimes difficult

to contact staff, the service responded by giving all staff smartphones. Service users we spoke with confirmed that they could easily contact their support workers and members of the management team. Of the thirteen questionnaires returned to us, all confirmed that service users considered that they were treated with dignity and respect and had their individual support needs met.

### Areas for improvement

The service had identified in its self assessment that due to changes in contractual arrangements with local authorities that they needed to adapt to the way they provided support to people. There was more emphasis on shorter term task focussed work with service users to achieve specific outcomes. The service hoped to develop the use of volunteers to counteract the effects of this on promoting people's choices and supporting them in developing their individual interests. The service should continue to promote person-centred practice and build on the excellent practices evidenced during this inspection.

### Grade

6 - Excellent

**Number of requirements - 0**

**Number of recommendations - 0**

## Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Quality theme not assessed

## Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 6 - Excellent

### Statement 3

“To encourage good quality care, we promote leadership values throughout the workforce.”

### Service Strengths

All staff we spoke with and those who returned questionnaires confirmed that they received regular reflective supervision and a high quality of support in their work. Staff told us that there was strong management and leadership. This meant that they had clear direction in their work. Staff also confirmed when there were dealing with challenging situations that their managers were very supportive and available to discuss issues with and reflect on their work with service users.

The director had carried out a reconfiguration exercise to support the retention of a skilled and flexible workforce by developing a culture which values and retains staff and supports them in their professional development. This had resulted in a significant improvement to the positivity of the workforce, reduced absenteeism and retention of staff.

Staff training and development plans were in place. New staff had comprehensive induction training, some of which involved service users in the delivery of their training. There was a strong onus on staff training and development and career progression. With the introduction of a clearer career progression scale staff could now work their way up through the organisation and be supported to recognise and develop their leadership skills. We spoke with a worker who had done just that and considered that the support they had received to achieve this had been very good and further support and training was being offered to develop supervisory and leadership skills.

Service managers had either completed or were undertaking a six day in-house Leadership and Development programme and there was a leadership forum

where managers could meet and share practice issues. This forum was now open to senior support workers which was a positive step in their learning, development and support.

More recent employed members of staff we spoke with confirmed that they had a high quality of support from their colleagues. We were told that it was a supportive open culture where everyone was able to express their views and were also able to challenge each other if they were not in agreement about any issue. This meant that issues were openly discussed and that managers were responsive to the ideas and suggestions of staff providing support to people on a day-to-day basis.

Comments from staff included:

- 'I have to say that Link living provide excellent training for their staff. They are constantly evolving - taking cues from both staff and service users regarding what is working and what is not and making the appropriate changes.'
- 'Everytime I need specific training I speak with my line manager and the training has been provided by the service.'
- 'I am being so well supported in my new role. It is such a great organisation to be part of and the new structure helps staff to develop and be rewarded for the quality of support they provide. I am really happy in my work and I am really enjoying working with the people I support.'
- 'Link Living is a good place to work. I feel valued and listened to and have my say in how the service is run. We are a great team with a variety of different skills, supportive of one another in our everyday work. I feel we provide excellent support to service users as evidenced in the amazing outcomes and relationships in helping them to achieve these.'

### Areas for improvement

The service identified that the reintroduction of the Information and Consultation forum which involves staff representatives and the director would be of benefit in staff having their views heard. The service should continue to use the SSSC's Step Into Leadership materials to support staff in their professional development.

**Grade**

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 strengths relating to encouraging leadership throughout the workforce, included under Quality Theme 4 Statement 3, are relevant to assuring the quality of the service. Using a collaborative approach with all staff had clearly resulted in improvements in the service and staff and the restructuring of the organisation has had positive effects in retaining and developing staff. The organisation has strong quality assurance systems in place which involved service users and staff as well as other stakeholders. Service user involvement was an integral part of the service. Service users had opportunities to give their views and be involved in the development of the service. There were a range of working groups including the Equality and Diversity Group; Health and Safety Group and Employability Group and staff representatives feed back to the team about developments.

The new computer system Carista 2 was working effectively in supporting staff with support planning; and recording of risk assessments, incidents and complaints. It was also capturing outcome information so that you could see when a short-term or longer term goal had been achieved.

Regular quality audits were carried out by the service manager and results sent to the board of management. This, along with mobile technology (chrome books and smart phones) for each support worker to use was introduced by the director in recognition that the previous technology was not supporting the workforce effectively and was hindering progress. Regular reports across a range of areas relating to service provision and delivery are submitted to the board of management which has service user representation on it. The business plan was developed through consultation with service users and staff and progress made against set targets was reviewed quarterly.

The service issued and collated the responses from annual service satisfaction surveys to service users and staff. Action plans were drawn up and acted upon where any areas for improvement were identified.

As well as having strong internal quality assurance, the service has achieved recognition from external bodies. The service hold the Gold Investor in People Award; Investor in Volunteers Award; Investor in Young People and Investors in Diversity Award. They have also promoted a healthier workforce and have achieved Silver Health Working Lives Award.

Link Living have regular contact with service commissioners and are required to submit monthly and quarterly outcome reports to the local authority. The service was participating in a pilot project which meant that the service manager was involved on attending multi agency meetings. The service had also improved the way it carried out pre admission risk assessments before service users were offered a placement. This was done through collaboration with other professionals.

### **Areas for improvement**

The service should continue to build on the excellent quality assurance processes in place. Further information from involved agencies who could make comment about the quality of the service would widen the scope of feedback.

## Grade

6 - Excellent

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

## 4 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

### Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

## 5 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

### Previous recommendations

1. We recommend that the management team continue to assess the quality of support planning, risk assessments and recording in each service to improve consistency of approach across the branch.

National Care Standards for Housing Support Services. Standard 3. Management and staffing.

This recommendation was made on 30 May 2014

This recommendation has been met. The quality of records, support planning and risk assessments was found to be of a high standard at the Edinburgh Young Person's Service.

## 6 Complaints

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

## 7 Enforcements

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

## 8 Additional Information

There is no additional information.

## 9 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
30 May 2014	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed 5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good
22 Apr 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed Not Assessed 5 - Very Good
17 Sep 2008	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed 5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good

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