

Comely Green Housing Support Service

Linkliving Limited
6/3 Whyte Place
Edinburgh
EH7 5TA

Telephone: 01316 526258

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

1 November 2019

Service provided by:

LinkLiving Limited

Service provider number:

SP2004004684

Service no:

CS2015341372

About the service

Comely Green is one of a number of care services provided by the LinkLiving Limited organisation. The service is registered to provide a combined housing support and care at home service to adults and older people with mental health support needs living in their own homes.

The level and type of support people receive varies according to their assessed care and support needs. Support is provided to people living in the Edinburgh area. There is an office base at Comely Green where a number of people supported have their own tenancies and there is a new Hub facility close by at Meadowbank which has provided a central community base for people supported to get involved in events and activities as well as build social networks. The service was providing support to around 106 people at the time of the inspection.

The service aims to:

- 'Provide flexible support options to people, to help them take more control of their lives, to help people to build social support networks and to support people to look for work or training/voluntary opportunities.
- Use a person-centred approach to encourage and empower people to be part of their local community by making connections and leading ordinary lives.'

What people told us

We received feedback from people supported through returned care standards questionnaires and from meeting people in the community. Overall feedback was very positive with a few negative comments being about changes to staffing arrangements and choice of support worker gender.

Comments were as follows:

'The support workers are my lifeline without whom my life just wouldn't exist.'

'LinkLiving are an excellent service and all the support workers are awesome.'

'LinkLiving have been constantly excellent with me. They match great workers with me. They always make sure I have cover.'

'My key worker (name) is superb. Very good at mirroring and exceptional at 'hearing me'. She is very good at listening too. I am often moved to tears.'

'I feel safe with my support workers. I'm exceptionally frightened to go outside and often do not leave my flat except with them.'

'I am heart and soul mentally broken. LinkLiving work to understand me.'

'I am very happy with my support worker and have been using the service for a number of years.'

'Help is very satisfactory - I would hope there is support for the carers when under pressure!'

'I have a preference for female workers but feel that this has slipped away recently as a lot of male workers coming for my support due to staff absence.'

'It has taken a long time for me to open up and accept support. The staff have been so understanding and kind. I don't want to talk to family and find it really good being able to talk with people who care about me. The staff have helped me to break things down into manageable steps as everything was feeling overwhelming. They listen to what I want and what is important to me.'

Self assessment

There is no requirement for care services to provide self assessments for the inspection year 2019/20. Issues relating to quality assurance, feedback from people using the service and their relatives along with the quality of the service's improvement plan are considered throughout the inspection.

From 1 April 2018, the new Health and Social Care Standards replaced the National Care Standards. These seek to promote and improve outcomes for people who experience care. Services should now be providing support in accordance with these standards.

These are:

- 1: I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.
- 2: I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support.
- 3: I have confidence in the people who support and care for me.
- 4: I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support.
- 5: I experience a high quality environment if the organisation provides the premises.

The full standards can be viewed at:

<https://scotgov.publishingthefuture.info/publication/health-and-social-care-standards-my-support-my-life>

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

What the service does well

Staff were caring and compassionate and demonstrated a sound value base, treating people with dignity and respect and supporting them to reach their potential.

A person supported commented:

'It has taken a long time for me to open up and accept support. The staff have been so understanding and kind. I don't want to talk to close relatives about my anxieties and find it really good being able to talk with people who care about me. The staff have helped me to break things down into manageable steps as everything was feeling overwhelming. They listen to what I want and what is important to me.'

Reviews of support were held on a regular basis so that each person supported could discuss their current support needs and give their opinions of the service provided and plan for future needs. Personal choices and wishes were listened to and respected.

A service user forum had been held at the new community hub located close to the service base. This had allowed people to express their views about their service, network with other people supported and give their ideas and suggestion for activities they would like to try and plan events. A service user told us how much they had enjoyed attending the cooking group and had enjoyed sharing a particular talent with the group of people who attended.

Improvements had been made to medication management with more robust auditing systems being introduced to ensure that people got the right medication at the right time and that staff were administering and recording medication well. Staff told us that the person-centred risk assessment training had supported them in their practice. There was much improved information about indicators of when a person's mental health may be deteriorating so staff would be more alert to this and seek appropriate assistance and advice as necessary. The service should continue to build on the positive progress made in person-centred support planning.

Staff who had received Applied Suicide Intervention and Skills Training had found this to be really helpful in supporting people well and in an informed way when they are presenting with suicidal thoughts. The trauma informed practice training had also been well received, raising awareness of the issues which might affect a person's everyday functioning.

There was a positive, supportive culture within the team with strong management and leadership systems in place to support staff in their roles.

A person supported commented on the management and leadership of the service:

'(Manager's name) captains a very smooth and well oiled ship.'

We received very positive feedback from involved health and social care professionals about the quality of support people experienced as well as the effective communication with them when people needed support. This collaborative practice we heard was promoting better outcomes for people and was helping people to stay in their communities and avoid being re-admitted to hospital. Staff picked up on any adult support and protection issues and reported any concerns in line with the organisation's adult support and protection procedures.

Recently appointed staff told us that they had experienced a really good induction into the organisation. They had found team colleagues to be very supportive and welcoming and they had shadowed staff so that they could learn about the needs, wishes and choices of people they were going to support:

A member of staff commented:

'LinkLiving has been great at providing the right guidance, training and encouragement for my first role as a support worker. I am confident in the people I work alongside and feel part of a great team that works together to ensure an excellent standard of support is provided to service users.'

Staff had access to training and development opportunities and there were regular opportunities to meet with colleagues and to meet with their line managers to discuss their practice.

LinkLiving had a strategic plan in place which set out future objectives for the organisation. This included building on progress made in developing opportunities for people supported to reach their potential through participating in a range of community activities. This was supporting people to develop social networks, build self-esteem, learn new skills and reduce social isolation.

What the service could do better

The service should continue to monitor the quality of support plans and risk enablement plans and build on the progress made to date. Where topical creams were being applied we advised the use of skin care charts and more detailed guidance in the support plans for staff to follow.

The service improvement plan needed further development so actions identified for development were clearly set out and linked to a quality framework. The service planned to refer to the self-evaluation guidance recently issued by the Care Inspectorate to care providers to support and guide improvement in this area.

The recent appointment of a quality assurance officer should support service managers in carrying out quality audits linked to the rights based Health and Social Care Standards. This will support capturing the quality of outcomes for people who use the service more effectively and further promote service user involvement.

The quality assurance officer was also linking up with the learning and development officer to identify current and future staff training and development needs. The service should continue to build on the very good practices seen to be in place during this inspection using feedback from people supported to continually improve and develop the service.

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.

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

Recommendation 1

The provider should continue to monitor how medication is being administered and recorded across the service and ensure that there are clear systems in place to show that action has been taken when there are gaps in the administration of medication records. The provider should also check that all 'as required' medication protocols easily accessible to staff before they administer the medication.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that 'Any treatment or intervention I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

This recommendation was made on 9 January 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The provider had taken action to improve medication management systems and to make sure as required protocols were clearer in detail and easily accessible to staff before administering the medication. The service should continue with the very good progress made. This recommendation has been met.

Recommendation 2

The provider should review the senior support worker role to ensure that all aspects of the role are manageable including monitoring the quality of staff practice, providing supervision in line with the organisation's policy and auditing the quality of support plans, evaluations and risk assessments.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement ,with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.'(HSCS 4.19.)

This recommendation was made on 9 January 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The senior support role and quality audit systems had been reviewed. The workload was now more achievable for senior support staff. The provider should continue with the very good progress made to date. This recommendation has been met.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that staff received mental health first aid training and trauma informed practice and recovery/ strength based models of support.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 'I receive high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11.)

This recommendation was made on 9 January 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The provider had taken action to roll out trauma informed training across the team. Some mental health training had been delivered and further training was planned for. The service was making good progress on this recommendation.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the provider ensures that all events as outlined in the notification guidance for care providers are notified to the Care Inspectorate.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that 'If I might harm myself or others, I know that people have a duty to protect me and others which may involve contacting relevant agencies.' (HSCS 3.24.)

This recommendation was made on 9 January 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The provider had ensured that notifiable events were being reported to the Care Inspectorate in line with the Care Inspectorate guidance for care providers. This recommendation has been met.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
10 Oct 2018	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership
		4 - Good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good
5 May 2017	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing
		5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	Not assessed

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