

Castlehill Housing Support Services**Service name**

Castlehill Housing Support Services

Service address

4 Carden Place

Aberdeen AB10 1UT

Type of care service

Housing Support Service

Provider name

Castlehill Housing Association Ltd

Service number

CS2004070937

Date of inspection

24 January 2007

Type of inspection

Announced

Care Commission OfficeJohnstone House Rose Street Aberdeen
AB10 1UD**Period since last inspection**

10 months

Introduction

Castlehill Housing Support Service is a registered Housing Support Service provided by Castlehill Housing Association Ltd. The Organisation is a non-profit making charitable organisation which owns 1500 properties in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray and is a Registered Social Landlord with Communities Scotland.

Castlehill Housing Support Service provides housing support services to tenants in 23 sheltered or very sheltered housing developments throughout the North of Scotland. In addition, the service also provides a specialist service to older Chinese people and an outreach service (Key Project) to people living in their own homes who need support and assistance to maintain their tenancy.

Basis of Report

This report was completed after an announced visit carried out by one Care Commission Officer between the period 24 January to 13 February 2007.

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. This service was required to have a LOW level of support that resulted in an inspection based on the national inspection themes and any recommendations and requirements from previous inspections, complaint or other regulatory activity.

The service completed an annual return on-line giving information about the service.

A self evaluation and a safer recruitment theme questionnaire was also completed.

The Care Commission Officer visited the Association's main office and also visited two sheltered schemes.

In total approximately 20 service users were spoken with at the two schemes visited. Discussion took place in groups and individually. A total of 22 questionnaires were returned by service users.

4 staff in total were spoken with at the Associations' main office and at the two schemes visited. 31 staff questionnaires were returned.

The Care Commission also looked at a range of policies, procedures and records including the following:

Whistleblowing policy

Recruitment and Selection policy and procedure

Risk Assessment policy and procedure

Staff personal files

Time was also spent observing staff working with service users at the schemes visited.

The Care Commission Officer took all of the above into account and reported on whether the service was meeting the following National Care Standards - Housing Support Services:

Standard 2: Your legal rights

Standard 3: Management and staffing arrangements

Standard 4: Housing support planning

Standard 6: Choice and communication

Feedback was given to the Housing Director and Housing Manager on all parts of the inspection process on 13 February 2007

Thanks goes to the staff at the two schemes visited for the hospitality given.

Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Reports

There were no requirements made on this service at the last inspection.

Comment on Self-Evaluation

The self evaluation was fully completed and gave an honest and useful appraisal of the service.

View of Service Users

All service users spoken with and all questionnaires returned spoke highly of both staff and of the service they provided. There were no adverse comments made. Both scheme Managers were well thought of and regarded as reliable and committed staff by service users.

View of Carers

One visiting relative was spoken with. This relative was also very positive about the service her mother received.

Regulations / Principles

Regulation :

Strengths

Areas for Development

National Care Standards

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

Strengths

A comprehensive information brochure was given to all prospective service users' prior to accepting the service. This explained to service users' the nature of the service they were to receive and how it would be provided. Also detail of charges was included. The complaints procedure, containing detail of complaining to the Care Commission, was also included.

A detailed housing support assessment was completed from which a housing support plan was prepared in discussion with the service user. Service users' received their own copy of the support plan once completed and signed by both parties. The support plan was reviewed on an annual basis and a record taken of any changes and kept with the original plan. The support plan also gave detail of the support service and other information, including ending the support service.

Copies of the latest Care Commission inspection report was displayed in the communal area at each scheme.

Areas for Development

None identified at this inspection

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

Strengths

A selection of policies and procedures were in place that covered all legal requirements including staffing and training, whistle-blowing, complaints, health and safety, managing risks and recording and reporting of accidents and incidents. The policies and procedures were issued as the Staff Handbook. These were examined by the Care Commission Officer and found to be of a good standard. A copy of the policies and procedures was available at every scheme and could be accessed by service users' if so desired. The policies and procedures had recently been reviewed by the service.

Staff spoken with and staff questionnaires returned to the Care Commission showed that they had a sound awareness of the policies and procedures. A survey of staff qualifications had been undertaken and the service was in the process of developing, in conjunction with the Local Authority and the voluntary sector an approach to meeting SSSC qualification and registration requirements for staff.

An ongoing staff training programme was in place and training was held at different locations to assist staff to attend training.

A comprehensive Recruitment and Selection Policy was in place. Examination of 10% of personnel files showed that the required checks and references had been obtained and that a sound system was in place for ensuring that staff were fit in all respects to be employed by the service. All new staff underwent a planned induction training programme. Questionnaires returned from service users' and discussion with service users' at two schemes indicated that staff had the necessary skills to meet their housing support needs.

Staff had been issued with the SSSC Code of Practice. The service is currently in the process of developing routes to SVQ or equivalent qualification.

There had been no increase or decrease in staffing levels initially agreed with the Care Commission.

Areas for Development

The service is advised as a matter of best practice to implement a system for re-checking Enhanced Disclosure (Scotland) checks every three years.

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

Strengths

The housing support plans were examined in detail at the last inspection and found to be of a high standard. The support plans were found to contain all required detail in accordance with this standard.

At this inspection whilst the plans were not examined discussions with service users' and responses to questionnaires again demonstrated that they had an awareness of their support needs and how these were being met by the staff. None of the service users spoken with or any of the questionnaires returned had any adverse comments of the service they received. Face to face

discussions with service users indicated a very high satisfaction with the service received.

Staff were not involved with the financial arrangements of the service users'.

Areas for Development

None identified at this inspection.

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

Strengths

Castlehill Housing Association strongly supports participation by service users in both their support and tenancy arrangements. To support this approach the Key Project service offered by the Association would assist service users' where required to remain in control of their lives. It can also assist service users' make contact with another professional agency. Previous discussions with the staff in the Key Project highlighted the wide range of problems they were involved in with service users' and of the imaginative solutions staff used to address the problems.

The visits by the Care Commission Officer to the housing schemes were particularly useful in assessing the involvements and role of the staff on site and of service users' daily life. At this inspection one of the schemes visited had a very active events programme with strong service user participation whilst the other scheme visited service users were more inclined to be less event orientated and kept more to themselves. Both however offered service users choice. Staff on site worked hard to meet changing needs and to be constantly alert to the abilities, wishes and choice of the service users. There was a high commitment and enthusiasm shown by the staff at the schemes visited to meeting the needs of the service users.

At one scheme service users' were having difficulty accessing suitable transport to do their shopping. The nearest bus stop was a significant distance away and the walk to the nearest supermarket would be difficult with shopping bags. Staff had pursued various options to try and get a solution to this problem, including the involvement of a local MP. However, whilst none of the options pursued had produced a resolve to the problem staff are to be commended for identifying the problem and trying to do something about it.

Areas for Development

None identified at this inspection.

Enforcement

This service has not been subject to any enforcement action by the Care Commission.

Other Information

None.

Requirements

There were no requirements made as a result of this inspection.

Recommendations

There were no recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

Rod Wood

Care Commission Officer