

Inspection report

Action Group - Team A - Care at Home Support Service

Norton Park Centre
57 Albion Road
Edinburgh EH7 5QY

Inspected by: Mary Moncur
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection:

Inspection completed on: 28 August 2008

Service Number

CS2004076432

Service name

Action Group - Team A - Care at Home

Service addressNorton Park Centre
57 Albion Road
Edinburgh EH7 5QY**Provider Number**

SP2003002593

Provider Name

Action Group

Inspected ByMary Moncur
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type****Inspection Completed**

28 August 2008

Period since last inspection

7 months

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Introduction

The Action Group - Team A provides a Housing Support and Care at Home service to people with learning disability and/or other support needs who are living in their own homes.

The Housing Support and Care at Home services were registered with the Care Commission in 2004. Although these services were registered separately they are delivered in a combined way. The level and type of support provided to service users is based on their individual needs.

At the time of inspection 68 people were receiving support from the service provided by a Development Manager, 5 Senior Support Workers and 58 Support Workers. Levels of support ranged from a few hours per week to 24 hours per day. Support is provided with a range of activities assisting service users to maintain their home, stay healthy, develop skills to live as independently as possible and be active in their local community.

The Action Group aims "to value, listen to and involve people with a learning disability and other support needs and their carers so every action is judged to be the best". The Action Group - Team A aims "to assist and support people to live a valued and successful life in the general community".

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

Quality of Care and Support - Grade 5 – Very Good

Quality of Staffing - Grade 5 – Very Good

Quality of Management and Leadership - Grade 5 – Very Good

This inspection report and grades represent the Care Commission's 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. Please refer to the care services register on the Care Commission's website (www.carecommission.com) for the most up-to-date grades for this service.

Basis of Report

Before the Inspection

The report was written following an announced inspection. The inspection was planned with the manager and took place over the period 27 May to 28 August 2008. The Care Commission Officer also observed the Action Group's "Have Your Say" meeting on 7 May.

The Annual Return

The service submitted a completed Annual Return as requested by the Care Commission.

The Self-Assessment Form

The service submitted a self-assessment form as requested by the Care Commission

Views of service users

11 service users returned completed questionnaires, 3 of which were also completed by their relative/carer. 2 questionnaires were returned by relatives/carers. 1 relative was spoken to by

telephone.

Regulation Support Assessment

The inspection plan for this service was decided after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of inspection necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the Care Commission Officer (CCO) which considers complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service (such as absence of a manager) and action taken upon requirements. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

LOW

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a low RSA score and so a low intensity inspection was required. The inspection was based on the relevant Inspection Focus Areas and associated National Care Standards, recommendations and requirements from previous inspections and complaints or other regulatory activity.

During the inspection process

Staff at inspection

Development Manager

4 Senior Support Workers

2 Support Workers individually plus others at Team Meeting

Evidence

Discussion with the Development Manager, Senior Support Workers and Support Workers present

Observation of a Team Meeting

Observation of the Action Group's "Have Your Say" service user meeting

Consultation with service users and their relatives/carers through questionnaires and telephone contact

6 staff questionnaires (from a possible 25)

Staff Training Audit and Plan

Staff Training Records

Accident and Incident Reports

Complaints/Concerns/Compliments Records

Annual Evaluation Report

Service Guide

Sample service user personal records

Range of Action Group policies

Inspection Focus Areas and links to Quality Themes and Statements for 2008/09

Details of the inspection focus and associated Quality Themes to be used in inspecting each type of care service in 2008/09 and supporting inspection guidance, can be found at:

<http://www.carecommission.com/>

Fire Safety Issues

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, on 1 October 2006. In terms of those arrangements, responsibility for enforcing the statutory provisions in relation to fire safety now lies with the Fire and Rescue service for the

area in which a care service is located. Accordingly, the Care Commission will no longer report on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function, but, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Further advice on your responsibilities is available at www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

Action taken on requirements since last Inspection

There was 1 requirement made at the last inspection that

All staff should undertake moving and handling training and refresher courses as appropriate and relevant records of training should be maintained. The organisation should ensure that their training of staff in all instances in relation to moving and handling complies with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This is to comply with SSI 114 Regulation 19 Records.

The manager described that the training required by a team of staff providing support to a service user with specific moving and handling needs had been provided following last inspection. This service user moved area and no longer receives support from the service. All new staff have Moving and Handling training as part of their induction and staff are provided with refresher training as necessary. The training programme, staff training records and discussion with staff indicated this was the case.

Comments on Self Assessment

A fully completed self assessment was submitted by the service. This was completed to a very good standard and gave relevant information for each of the Quality Themes. The service identified its strengths and areas for future improvement relating to each quality statement. These are reflected in the body of the report. The service gave good evidence of service user and relative/carer involvement and how they planned to implement improvements.

View of Service Users

All but 1 service user, who didn't know, stated they were satisfied or very satisfied that staff treated them with respect and had the skills and experience to meet their needs. 2 of the service users who returned questionnaires said they did not have a personal plan detailing their care and support and 3 said they didn't know. All respondent were either satisfied or very satisfied that they received the care and support agreed. Service users who returned questionnaires said they knew the service had a complaints procedure and felt comfortable about raising a concern or making a complaint. Overall service users who responded stated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service. Comments included

"Efficiently run. Excellent team of support carers. Flexibility."

"I would like more hours. Sometimes staff are only here for a wee while. This can leave me bewildered"

Feedback was discussed with the manager and comments are reflected in the body of the report.

View of Carers

Relatives/carers who returned questionnaires were satisfied or very satisfied that staff treated their relative with respect. Apart from 1, who was dissatisfied, relatives/carers were satisfied or very satisfied staff had the skills and knowledge to meet their relatives needs. 2 relatives/carers did not know if their relative had a written plan detailing their relatives care and support, others said they did have a personal plan. The majority of relatives/carers were satisfied or very satisfied their relative got the care and support agreed. 1 didn't know and 1 was dissatisfied that this was the case. All relatives/carers who responded knew the service had a complaints procedure and felt comfortable about making a complaint or raising a concern. Overall relatives/carers were satisfied or very satisfied with the service. I expressed that at times they were dissatisfied. Comments included

"Excellent service with an efficient Team Manager and staff."

"Previously very dissatisfied for past year however improvement in last 1/2 months. After frequent complaints - high level of staff absence, shifts constantly being changed, staff late for work. Ongoing problems - staff are allowed to regularly change their hours to suit their own personal lives - staff lives seem to have priority over client's lives/needs, lack of training specific to client needs, no longer providing SVQ training, chopping/changing structure due to cuts by Edinburgh council affects team stability."

The relative spoken to by telephone expressed a high level of satisfaction with the service. They found there was good communication, with a monthly letter and regular phone calls. They had had no reason to complain but felt comfortable about doing so if necessary. They found staff were of an age group which their relative preferred and activities were planned based on things their relative enjoyed doing. They found staff had the skills and knowledge to meet their relative's needs, particularly mentioning their health needs.

Feedback received was discussed with the manager. They noted that the relative who had previously been very dissatisfied had experienced improvements. The service was continuing to provide staff with opportunities to achieve qualifications, as noted in the body of the report. The service continues to strive to ensure that service users experience continuity of support staff and are not adversely affected by changes to funding arrangements. This should result in the relative continuing to experience improvement.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service Strengths

The findings in this section are based on Quality Statement 1.1.

Service user records sampled included personal support plans detailing individual's needs, wishes and personal preferences. Records also included notes of support reviews involving others significant in the service user's life. Updated guidance for staff on support review was viewed and the manager described how this is being implemented to improve the review process. Examples of service user's Life Plans were viewed, which identified individual's goals and aspirations along with a plan as to how the service would support the person to achieve these. Life plans viewed had been developed with the service user and others significant in the service user's life.

Service user records included information on contacts with other relevant professionals and how recommendations were carried out in the care and support provided.

Records of support visits viewed included comment by the service user on their satisfaction with the support provided. Observation of a team meeting evidenced that these are viewed by the Senior Support Worker and any issues discussed.

In discussion, Senior Support Workers described regular contact they have with relatives and gave examples of changes they have made as a result of feedback received. These included changes of times for when support is provided including introducing some weekend support, changes to where the service user is supported to shop.

The Action Group held monthly "Have Your Say" meetings where people who use the Housing Support and Care at Home services can get together. The meeting observed included information on developments in the Action Group, information on other groups and services relevant to service users and consultation on an updated information pack for service users and a "Communications Contract" being introduced. It was observed that individuals attended for different reasons. For some it was an opportunity to meet other people, others used it as an opportunity to voice issues personal to themselves while others saw it as an opportunity to participate more widely on issues relating to learning disability. The Action Group also facilitated a Carer Group to meet regularly providing parents and carers the opportunity to feedback on Action Group services and participate in developments.

The service implements the Action Group's complaints policy. There had been no complaints received since last inspection. Concerns had been raised by 3 relatives, all of these had been responded to to the satisfaction of the relative. There were a variety of compliments recorded, which had been fed back to the team.

The Action Group had completed an annual evaluation of its Housing Support and Care at Home services. The questions asked were based on the National Care Standards and gave service users and their relatives/carers the opportunity to comment on the quality of care and

support. A service wide and team specific action plan from this evaluation was viewed and the manager described action that had been taken to address the team specific plan.

Following discussion with the manager and staff members present at the inspection, a review of documentation relating to service user and carer participation, observation of a team meeting, observation of a "Have Your Say" meeting and feedback from service users and relatives/carers, this service was found to have very good performance in relation to this statement.

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:
Quality Statement 1.1: 5 - Very Good

Areas for Development

The manager noted that relatively few service users had chosen to complete Life Plans. The service intends to review the format and style of Life Plans with the aim of increasing the number of service users completing Life Plans.

In discussion the manager agreed that the Action Group could consider external facilitation of its Annual Evaluation.

Progress with these areas for improvement will be reviewed at next inspection

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 6: People who use, or would like to use the service, and those who are ceasing the service, are fully informed as to what the service provides

Service Strengths

The findings in this section are based on Quality Statement 1.3.

The service provides The Action Group Housing Support Services Service Guide to everyone who uses or would like to use the service. It contains information on the Principles and Values - What We Believe, Service Provision - What We Provide and Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance - How We Check It. The Guide has been updated to improve the user friendly format with graphics to aid understanding. This updated version was discussed with service users at the "Have Your Say" meeting to gather comments on its accessibility and any suggestions for improvement. In discussion the manager described that contents are explained to service users at the start of their support and copies are made available for their relatives or other representatives.

Individual service user records viewed included a written agreement and personal support plan detailing the support to be provided as well as records of reviews, which have involved people who are significant in the service users life.

In discussion, Senior Support Workers described a process of introducing new service users to the service, which involves meeting with service users and people significant in their lives, providing information on the Action Group and the services it provides, agreeing support arrangements and introducing support staff. They further described the process of leaving the service including meeting the service user and people significant in their lives to agree a plan towards ending the support and introduction to other services if relevant. A number of examples of this process in action were described including one person who moved to a different support provider, one person who moved to a different area and one person who decided, with their family, they no longer required support.

Following discussion with the manager and staff present members present at the inspection, a review of information provided to people who use or would like to use the service and feedback from service users and their relatives/carers, this service was found to have very good performance in relation to this statement.

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:
Quality Statement 1.6: 5 - Very Good

Areas for Development

Questionnaires returned by service users and their relatives indicated that not all service users and relatives are aware of their personal support plan. In discussion the manager agreed that they would take action to raise awareness of personal support plans and to ensure they were available in a user friendly format.

The service intends to introduce a process to monitor reasons for ending the service and to use information gathered to identify any actions required.

In discussion staff indicated it would be useful to have guidance on supporting service users to end the service to ensure a consistency of approach. In discussion the manager agreed to consider developing written guidance.

Progress with these areas for improvement will be reviewed at the next inspection.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Overall CCO Theme Grading:

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service Strengths

The findings in this section are based on Quality Statement 3.1

In discussion with the Senior Support Workers they described regular contact with relatives, in some cases weekly, to discuss and update issues relating to staffing. They also described how they gather informal feedback from service users about staff when they are delivering direct support to service users. Any issues raised are discussed in 1:1 supervision with staff.

Changes to staffing were discussed at a team meeting attended, including taking into account service user preference for gender of staff.

There was some re-organisation of support provision between team taking place during the inspection. Discussion with the manager and discussion at the team meeting attended indicated that this had been planned to minimise change to service users. Limited change to staff providing direct support was involved and new senior staff were being introduced to service users.

The manager described how the Recruitment Manager had attended the "Have Your Say" and Carer group meetings to gather views on what was wanted from support staff and types of questions to ask at interview. This information was now being used in the selection process. Observation of the "Have Your Say" meeting included service users being given information on staff changes, vacancies and progress with recruitment. The service also submitted information on service users being involved in recruitment fairs, providing prospective applicants with information on the service and job role.

The Action Group has completed an Annual Evaluation of its Housing Support and Care at Home services. The questions asked were based on the National Care Standards and gave service users and their relatives/carers the opportunity to comment on the quality of staffing. Overall the results were positive with the majority of respondents stating they were very happy in statements relating to the quality of staffing. An action plan had been developed and the manager was responsible for ensuring it is progressed.

Following discussion with the manager and staff present at the inspection, observation of a team meeting and "Have Your Say" meeting, a review of documentation relating to service user and carer involvement and feedback from service users and their relatives/carers this service was found to have very good performance in relation to this statement.

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:
Quality Statement 3:1: 5 - Very Good

Areas for Development

The service intends to further develop ways to involve service users in the recruitment and selection of staff

In discussion the manager agreed to consider ways service users could be involved in the appraisal and training of staff.

Progress with these areas for improvement will be reviewed at next inspection.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 3: We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Service Strengths

The findings in this section are based on Quality Statement 3.3.

The Action Group has a range of policies relevant to the National Care Standards in place. Staff questionnaires returned indicated that staff were aware of and had access to these policies.

A Training Needs Analysis for the service was viewed. The manager described that this had been completed by the Training Department with information gathered from staff supervision and appraisal and discussion at team meetings. All staff spoken with confirmed that they had had opportunities for training including refreshing their knowledge on mandatory topics or developing their knowledge in relation to meeting service users needs. Senior Support workers described a programme of management training, which they are currently undertaking. They described how this is developing their practice in relation to managing staff and the team. Staff expressed that the Training Department was excellent, developing new training to meet service user need or supporting to access external training where appropriate. All staff also stated that there had been or would be opportunities to achieve qualifications, which would enable them to register with the Scottish Social Services Council.

The manager described that the recommendation from last inspection to ensure that all staff are familiar with best practice guidance documents relating to restraint had been met through discussion at team meetings. The manager described that the area for development to raise staff awareness of child protection issues had also been progressed through discussion at team meetings.

Staff spoken with acknowledged that there had been a number of changes in the Action Group management structure over recent times, however they expressed that they felt morale was high in the service and staff generally felt motivated and worked well as a team. It was observed in a team meeting attended that staff participated actively in discussion relating to service user's care and support and changes and developments within the team.

During the course of the inspection the service addressed a service user's relatives concerns about staff's ability to meet the service user's needs in relation to self harm. They met with the relatives and were able to share the care plan developed to respond to incidents of self harm and to demonstrate the behaviour support techniques that staff had been trained to use.

Following discussion with the manager and staff present at the inspection, attendance at a team meeting, a review of relevant policies and training records, questionnaires from staff and feedback from service users and their relatives/carers this service was found to have very good performance in relation to this statement

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

Quality Statement 3.3: 5 - Very Good

Areas for Development

The service intends to develop its systems to evaluate the impact of training on individual staff members, teams and the service.

Progress with this area for improvement will be reviewed at the next inspection.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Overall CCO Theme Grading: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1: We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service Strengths

The findings in this section are based on the Quality Statement 4.1.

The Action Group's Board of Directors includes service users and parent/carer members and takes an active role in developing the corporate plan and reviewing progress with action plans.

The Annual Evaluation completed by the Action Group provided service users and their relatives/carers the opportunity to comment on statements relevant to the quality of management, for example "We are always trying to make our service to you better", "The service does what it promises to do", "We value, listen and involve you". Overall responses to these statements were good or very good. From feedback received an action plan has been developed and relevant managers have been responsible for ensuring the plan is actioned.

The Action Group hosts regular "Have Your Say" meetings for service users and facilitates a Carers Group to hold monthly meetings. These provide an opportunity for service users and their relatives/carers to discuss and comment on any aspects of the Action Group's services including issues relating to the quality of management and leadership. The Action Group also holds Members Days where members of the Action Group can meet together to get information on developments, make comments and suggestions and get involved in workshops. The opportunity to attend a Members Day was discussed with service users at the "Have Your Say" meeting observed and a number of people planned to go.

Following discussion with the manager, a review of documentation relating to service user and carer involvement in the improvement of management and leadership and feedback from service users and their relatives/carers this service was found to have very good performance in relation to this statement.

Based on this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:
Quality Statement 4.1: 5 - Very Good

Areas for Development

The service intends to consider methods of obtaining feedback more specific to the quality of management leadership of Team A and the wider Action Group

Progress with this area for improvement will be reviewed at the next inspection.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

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 findings in this section are based on Quality Statement 4.4

The manager described the quality assurance system as having been developed by the Action Group to achieve Chartermark standards, a recognised customer service award. Accreditation for this award involved consultation with service users, relatives/carers and other professionals the Action Group works in partnership with.

The Action Group had also achieved the Investors in People standards.

The Action Group's Annual Evaluation provided the service with information on the quality of the service. From feedback received an action plan is developed with the relevant manager having responsibility for ensuring action is progressed. The "Have Your Say" group and Carer Group also provide opportunities for service users and their relatives/carers to provide feedback on the quality of service.

Service users are asked to rate the quality of support at each support visit. Support workers complete a monthly report detailing any issues with regard to support provision or other issues impacting on their work. It was observed at a team meeting that these were being completed and submitted. It was described that Senior Support Workers review these, identify any issues and take any necessary action. It was also described that a summary of the information gathered is discussed with the Development Manager to ensure issues are being addressed.

The service has been able to evidence how it has met requirements and recommendations made at previous inspections.

The manager was aware of their responsibility to make notifications to the Scottish Social Services Council and Care Commission. The manager confirmed that there had been one incident relating to staff dismissal which had been notified to the Scottish Social Services Council. There had been no other consideration to dismiss or misconduct which would have required notification to the Scottish Social Services Council or Care Commission.

Following discussion with the manager, observation of a team meeting and a review of documentation relating to quality assurance the service was found to have very good performance in relation to this statement.

Based on the findings of this inspection the service has been awarded the following grades:
Quality Statement 4.4: 5 - Very Good

Areas for Development

The provider had found the process of achieving Chartermark to have been useful in developing quality assurance processes and intends to improve its quality assurance systems to achieve a higher level of Chartermark accreditation

In discussion the manager described how the service receives informal feedback from stakeholders. They agreed the service could consider developing a more formal system for gathering feedback from stakeholders.

The Chartermark award evaluates the quality of service across the Action Group. In discussion the manager agreed they could consider developing local systems and processes to assure the quality of Team A's service.

Progress with these areas for improvement will be reviewed at the next inspection.

CCO Grading

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action against this service since the last inspection.

Other Information

There is no additional information relevant to this report

Requirements

There are no requirements

Recommendations

There are no recommendations

Mary Moncur

Care Commission Officer