

Shakti Women's Aid - Housing Support Service

Housing Support Service

Edinburgh

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 April 2024

Service provided by:
Shakti Women's Aid

Service provider number:
SP2004006510

Service no:
CS2004068972

About the service

Shakti Women's Aid is a voluntary organisation providing a service for black and minority ethnic women and their children, experiencing domestic abuse; empowering them to make informed choices about their lives.

This is a housing support service, with an office base in Edinburgh. The service has been registered since 2004, and is provided to women in the wider community and within dedicated temporary accommodation. The refuge accommodation has four flats, and the service is also able to access temporary accommodation in partnership with Edinburgh City Council.

Additionally, outreach support is provided to black and minority ethnic women experiencing domestic abuse within the following local authority areas - Tayside, Falkirk, Fife, Lothians and Edinburgh. The Shakti children's support service is registered separately.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 4 April 2024 from 09:30 to 17:45, 5 April 2024 from 09:15 to 15:00, 9 April 2024 from 09:15 to 17:30 and 10 April 2024 from 09:15 to 14:15. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information from the service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence.

To inform the inspection we:

- spent time and spoke with women using Shakti services
- spoke with nine members of staff including managers
- reviewed documents
- spoke with four external professionals.

Key messages

- Women were being supported by staff who were warm and encouraging.
- The service empowers women to make choices.
- Women were being connected to their communities.
- The service was incredibly knowledgeable regarding available resources within different local authority areas.
- The service should establish an effective method to record, assess and document decisions regarding welfare concerns.
- Strong quality assurance and auditing mechanisms were not well established.
- The organisation should ensure there is a review and update of their policies and procedures.
- Shakti meaningfully supported women to pursue their aspirations and build on their strengths.
- The provider should ensure all women have a personal plan - including outcome plans and safety plans.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

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| How well do we support people's wellbeing? | 5 - Very Good |
| How good is our leadership? | 3 - Adequate |
| How well is our care and support planned? | 4 - Good |

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

A crucial strength of the service was that women were being supported by staff who were warm and encouraging, with positive relationships having been developed between staff and women. Women commented "Shakti helped me to maintain a stable life and they continue to support me to build confidence" and "I have had great emotional support and they gave me my life back".

Women were respected and listened to, without judgement or pressure. The service was skilfully ensuring that women's identities and independence were being promoted, empowering them to make decisions. Shakti had staff from culturally diverse communities which supported language barriers, cultural issues and recognised diversity.

Women were being connected to their communities and developing relationships in a variety of ways; this included women's group sessions, access to community based services and opportunities to mix with other women in accommodation based services. Additionally, the service was incredibly knowledgeable regarding available resources within different local authority areas, ensuring support from specialist services as required, challenging discrimination and advocating on behalf of women.

Women were being supported to get the most out of life. There were group sessions which strengthened social bonds and encouraged the development of relationships. A number of women were also being supported to access education, training and employment opportunities, with signposting to an impressive variety of other organisations and services - including health, housing, legal and immigration services, charities and local leisure services. These connections increased community involvement, reduced feelings of isolation and promoted financial independence.

Allocation of support was based on risk assessment, with the service offering flexible support depending on women's individual needs, being responsive to crisis situations.

Women expressed that they felt safe, and viewed Shakti as a valuable service to support them to move forwards. Shakti also had strong connections with formal multi-agency meetings which were effectively used to enhance safety and protection, with one woman advising "safety is always a priority for Shakti - for me and the children". To enhance this, the inspection identified that the service should clearly document wellbeing and protection concerns for adults and children, including managerial decision making (area for improvement 1).

Shakti was positively supporting women to access appropriate health care services within their area. Women benefitted from emotional support from the service, specific to their individual traumatic experience, with increased support as required. Shakti also had effective links to specialist secondary mental health supports such as counselling to promote wellbeing and recovery; again recognising inequalities and cultural diversity for black and minority ethnic women.

Women's wellbeing was also supported through group sessions relating to health, exercise and relaxation techniques, with valuable connections to community groups who provided clothing and food items; always reflecting cultural and dietary needs.

Areas for improvement

1. To enhance safeguarding and support wellbeing, the provider should establish an effective method to record, assess and document decisions regarding welfare concerns - including child and adult protection matters.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities (HSCS 3.20).

How good is our leadership? **3 - Adequate**

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Shakti had recently taken positive action to expand their senior leadership capacity. To maximise this, the service requires to continue to strengthen these roles and responsibilities, ensuring multiple demands are being sufficiently managed with oversight at all levels (see requirement 1).

There were some systems in place to monitor service delivery - these included board meetings, reports to commissioning services and monitoring tools. However, strong quality assurance and auditing mechanisms were not well established. Developing this structure, alongside adopting the Care Inspectorate framework to support self evaluation, would maximise experiences of women using the services and support the growth of staff practice (Requirement 1). To further strengthen quality assurance, the service should establish a formal structure for recording and oversight of incidents, including reporting to the Care Inspectorate as required (area for improvement 1).

The inspection identified that the organisation did not have effective managerial oversight of staff training, making it difficult to determine training expectations and training gaps for staff. A number of staff were not familiar with training requirements within the service. Strengthening this will support individual staff learning needs, improved practice and subsequent enhanced outcomes for women (area for improvement 2).

The service had laid effective foundations for a delivery plan, however to support the improvement process, Shakti were aware of the importance of ensuring this is concluded without further delay. This plan should have sufficient detail to measure progress and guide the future direction of the service.

As a matter of priority, the organisation should ensure there is a review and update of their policies and procedures. This will support staff to be consistent regarding their practice and ensure best practice guidelines are being followed. This includes, but is not limited to child protection, vulnerable adults, recruitment and complaints (see requirement 2).

Women were confident to give feedback or raise concerns with the service, with a complaints procedure in place that ensured women were advised of actions and outcomes.

The organisation continued to work hard to increase knowledge of black and minority ethnic women's experiences of domestic abuse to other professionals, services and agencies through presentations, training and promoting legislation changes.

Requirements

1. By 16 August 2024, the provider must consistently adopt effective quality assurance and auditing processes to support improvement.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a. strengthen roles and responsibilities, ensuring comprehensive oversight at all levels
- b. ensure internal quality assurance processes including regular audits are being undertaken by managers to promote wellbeing and positive outcomes for people.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210)

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes (HSCS 4.19).

2. By 16 August 2024, the provider must support staff to ensure they are following best practice and guidelines.

To do this, the provider must at a minimum:

- a. review and update their policies and procedures to reflect current best practice guidance - this includes, but is not limited to child protection, vulnerable adults, recruitment and complaints
- b. ensure that all staff are supported to understand any changes to the policies and procedures, including those with lead responsibilities for safeguarding and protection.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210)

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice (HSCS 4.11).

Areas for improvement

1. To support people's wellbeing, the provider should ensure a consistent approach to the recording and oversight of incidents, including reporting notifiable incidents to the Care Inspectorate.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities (HSCS 3.20).

2. To support people's development and ongoing wellbeing, the provider should ensure there is an effective method to collate staff training to ensure staff are undertaking the required training for their role, with management having oversight of this.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes (HSCS 3.14).

How well is our care and support planned?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on people's experiences.

Shakti Women's Aid had a valuable system in place to capture and record personal planning, identifying a wide range of support needs for the women. The service was also meaningfully supporting women to pursue their aspirations, build on their strengths and develop self confidence.

Not all women were aware of their formal care plan, and the voice of women was not always evident within the planning or review documents. The service must also ensure that all women have safety plans, support plans and outcome reviews that are current, individualised and proportionate (area for improvement 1).

The service was effectively responding to crisis based support, identifying warning signs and immediate risks and exploring with other agencies how these risks could be managed to improve safety. This was done by use of a recognised risk assessment tool.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure people are being supported effectively, the provider should ensure all women have a personal plan - including outcome plans and safety plans - that are current, take account of the individual's wishes and are consistently reviewed on an agreed basis.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

My personal plan is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices (HSCS 1.15).

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

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| How well do we support people's wellbeing? | 5 - Very Good |
| 1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect | 5 - Very Good |
| 1.2 People get the most out of life | 5 - Very Good |
| 1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support | 5 - Very Good |

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| How good is our leadership? | 3 - Adequate |
| 2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well | 3 - Adequate |

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| How well is our care and support planned? | 4 - Good |
| 5.1 Assessment and personal planning reflects people's outcomes and wishes | 4 - Good |

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