Four Square (Scotland) - Stopover Housing Support Service

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

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Service provided by:
Four Square (Scotland)

Service provider number:
SP2004005793

Service no:
CS2004062574

About the service

Four Square is a voluntary organisation with approximately 40 years of experience with homelessness. Four Square Stopover provides a housing support service to 40 young people, aged 16 to 25 years, who are homeless or do not have a safe place to live. The service operates at three locations in Edinburgh. The Stopover component provides emergency accommodation for 16 young people in shared flats. Number 20 provides longer term supported accommodation for six young women in single flat accommodation. Eighteen single tenancy 'Training Flats' provide longer term placements working toward young people securing their own tenancy.

All aspects of the service work with young people to assist them to secure appropriate long term accommodation. The service has very good links with other agencies involved in assisting vulnerable young people. The service aims to provide support to vulnerable & homeless young people by:

Providing good quality temporary accommodation for young people who do not have a safe place to live.

Assisting young people to work towards independent living and being able to have control over their own lives.

What people told us

This inspection commenced on 14 January 2021 and was completed on 12 February 2021 . This inspection took place during the global Covid 19 pandemic. The inspection was conducted remotely using technology. Over the course of the inspection we spoke with 10 young people who were being supported and monitored in the service. These discussions were conducted by telephone. We attempted to speak with four other young people but we were unsuccessful.

The global pandemic conditions, at the time of our inspection, were significantly restricting young people's opportunities to access community resources. The feedback we received from young people being supported within the service reflected that staff were being proactive in helping them to cope with pandemic conditions by advising on how to keep themselves safe and by keeping young people up to date in terms of compliance with government restrictions.

Young people we spoke with told us they were receiving a high level of support from staff. Staff were described by young people as approachable, respectful and helpful. All the young people we spoke with told us that when they moved into the premises their personal accommodation was clean and well maintained. One young person commented that the young people sometimes neglected the communal areas. This issue is discussed again in the section 'What the service could do better.'

Young people we spoke with made the following comments:

'I've not had issues with any staff. They've been helpful to me, like they helped me with applying for benefits and helped me with applying for jobs ... The accommodation is alright. The cleaners come in and cleans communal areas. They deal with maintenance issues - I had a broken heater - I reported it and they fixed it for me ... The staff are approachable. I trust them not to breach confidentiality. The main benefit has been having somewhere to live and being able to be in my own place ...The best thing about the service is staff are supportive, kind and there if I need someone to talk to.'

'Staff have very much been helpful. I have key meetings and they help with anything that needs done. Staff listen and are respectful. I have enough support and get enough contact with staff. I would feel I could approach the manager if I wanted to make a complaint. I can see staff face to face if I wanted to. I see them face to face for keyworking meeting. The accommodation was clean and comfortable. Maintenance issues are dealt with promptly. Staff are approachable ... Staff care about my well being. Staff help me with issues I raise.'

'There's nothing really bad I could say about it. The staff are approachable. There's always a staff member I can approach. I feel well supported. There is support there if you need it.'

'The room was clean when I moved in, it was warm. I feel staff are approachable, staff listen and are respectful. They help me when I need to go shopping, if I need to cook ... Sometimes they can help me calm down. Its also been helpful having accommodation. I get on with every body. I usually got to the shops with a staff member, we talk then ... Staff have given me all the help I've asked for. I've got good relationships with all of the staff.'

'I like living there, can stay in my room if I want to but have got people to speak with if I want to ... The staff are always up for a bit of banter. I feel comfortable with the staff. The room is easy to keep tidy. If there's any repairs needed they're straight on it. They do regular maintenance checks - there was one a few days ago. The cleaners come in every day. Monday to Friday. They clean floors. They clean communal areas. We clean our own rooms. Was happy with the room - felt it was clean and well prepared. Am not in a hurry to move on right away. Want to stay here for as long as possible ... Feel I can trust staff to keep things confidential. Just being here helps my mental health. I like knowing there are people there who I can go and talk to ...Feel like I can relate to the staff here. I have a keyworker and I get on well with him. Staff are very respectful to me. Can't think of anything they need to do better - its all spot on. The best thing is the support system and support plan. They help you to have goals and then how to get to your goals. Staff are like a family.'

'Lockdown was difficult but am getting used to it - have got more peace of mind living here. Found it difficult coping with lockdown before I was living at stopover. When I arrived everything was clean and alright. There's always a staff member to speak with if I want to - they are respectful and approachable. There was a student who worked here who was really focussed on helping me to cook most things. I have become a better cook with that help. I get help with bidding, I got shown how to bid for houses, got shown how to navigate the website. I Used their PC to do this but now I can do it on my phone ... I can't think of anything else I need help with. So they've helped me with everything I've asked them about and if there was something they didn't know they would tell me where to go to or who to speak to. I feel like I'm now doing more than when I was staying in the family home ... now I'm more focussed on myself and how to move forward ... they help me to keep things in perspective. Feeling more positive about life. I did a support plan and I have regular discussions with my keyworker - its helpful. The advice is helpful - they go out of their way to make sure I get answers to my questions. I feel staff listen to me. I didn't like that any pals couldn't come in - I do completely understand it's the rules because of coronavirus. That's made it harder for me. Tensions built up in the family home due to lockdown. Here I don't have any issues with either residents or staff.'

'I had people around me, I had people who were supportive. If I didn't have those people around me I wouldn't have progressed to being able to be in my own flat. They were always there if I needed advice. It gave me confidence knowing I could ask staff if I needed help. I don't think I'd have coped with lockdown if I wasn't there. My room was clean. The room [at Stopover] could have been a bit bigger, it was a wee bit small, it was still fine. Good being in the training flat now, although I kind of miss stopover a wee bit. I was more lazy at stopover - I didn't always cook. I've got my own kitchen space now and I look after it better.

The staff are absolutely approachable. Particularly got on with one staff member - you could have a laugh with him. It was easy to talk to him. He would be the one who would fix things for you. I asked for help writing my CV and applying to college - I got the help I needed ... The other people who were in stopover are now in the flats - we talk to each other and support each other and its helped me to get through to the pandemic. Otherwise would have been 'going mental' stuck inside alone. I can't really think of anything they could improve on. The best thing is meeting all the other people who live there. I've made good friends out of it. I've enjoyed staying at stopover - had a good time - wasn't expecting that. I'm glad I've moved on to the training flat. People are more responsible in the training flats. It feels like a healthier environment. I'm waiting to hear about about getting my own tenancy - a staff member is helping with that. Not in a rush to move on at this point. I quite like it here. I enjoy having people round about me here, especially during the pandemic.'

'Was at number twenty then went to the training flats. It's a very helpful experience - because of the support I get - if I'm stuck with anything, for example, I had difficulties with ... and they phoned up and managed to sort it out. They asked me if they could do so. It was really helpful - it resolved the problem.'

'Staff helped me identify goals and how I was going to reach them. Couldn't think of anything they should do differently. I prefer being in the training flat as its my own space. I'm excited about moving on from the training flat although I might still need help with benefits. I've not got any complaints - what they are really good at is they're very accessible, approachable and friendly. There's always someone I can go and speak to if I need help.'

'We're all close because we've been in lockdown together. I enjoy living here. I like the security of living here. The flat is actually really nice. Its nicer that I would have imagined. I've got my own actual flat. Own kitchen, bedroom, bathroom. They are planning to create a communal open plan living room ...The residents all get on and there's nothing to feel threatened by ever. The staff are nice and supportive and you can have a good conversation with them. They are very approachable. I trust the staff to keep information confidential and they reassure us of that often ... Staff have helped me when I've been struggling with my mental health. I can go and speak with the staff and they help me feel better. The staff help me with my studies. Its been beneficial living here during the pandemic. I've got my own space but I'm not completely isolated. Staff help me with everything. If I need help with anything then I can go to them. Especially during the pandemic they are good with keeping our spirits up. I feel safe here ...They always remain calm and they are very gentle with how they speak. I can't think of anything they could do better. Feel comfortable with the staff and would complain if anything was bothering me. My shower door fell off it was repaired the same day I reported it. Everyone is nice and friendly - the staff and residents. The best thing is the all round feeling of security.'

'They have offered to make my room more personalised although I'm not bothered about it. I drew up a support plan when I first came here. I was able to contribute to the support plan.'

Self assessment

A self assessment was not requested prior to this inspection.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good

Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

As stated earlier, this inspection took place during the global Covid-19 pandemic. The inspection was conducted remotely using technology. We accessed records remotely and we spoke with people either by telephone or by use of digital technology (teams).

The feedback we received from both the young people as well as from community based professionals (who were working in partnership with the service), was that a key strength of the service was how well the staff engaged with the young people. We heard that staff prioritised building strong working relationships with the young people they were supporting in the service. We heard from one of the community based professionals, and one of the young people, that the service tried to match staff to young people for key-working, taking into account individuals' particular hobbies and interests. This matching helped to contribute to relationship building between staff and people being supported.

Most of the young people we spoke with told us that the pandemic was a particularly difficult time for them and that they appreciated being at Four Square - Stopover during this time. Young people explained that they especially appreciated the company of staff and other young people at Four Square - Stopover during lockdown periods. We heard from staff and people being supported that lockdown conditions had created more opportunities for staff to spend time with young people. We found that staff had used this time to support young people to cope with the pressures of the pandemic which had included lack of structure and routine. Staff had accompanied young people on community walks which had helped to promote young people's well being and reduce their feeling of isolation.

The young people told us they felt safe within Four Square - Stopover. We heard from the young people that, at the point of moving into the accommodation, it was clean and had been well maintained. We heard that any maintenance issues which were then reported to the service were responded to promptly and were resolved.

We found that there were support plans and risk assessments/risk management plans in place for individuals being supported within the service. This meant that staff were able to access this information to ensure that support provided was informed by assessment of risks and needs. At the time of our inspection the service was making arrangements to use a new support plan template in order to further improve the quality of support planning for individuals being supported within the service. We read support planning records compiled for six individuals within the service. The risk assessments/risk management plans compiled for individuals within the service identified key risk factors for individuals and how these risks should be managed. We found that there were policies and procedures in place for safeguarding children as well as an adult protection policy. We noted that the service had put in place quality assurance systems to ensure they were able to learn from key incidents. We read incident reports which included records of incident debriefing discussions held with relevant staff. We were therefore satisfied that there were measures in place to ensure that risks were minimised.

Young people told us they worked with staff in trying to identify goals which were included in their support plans. People being supported told us that the staff supported them to make progress towards their goals. Young people told us they were encouraged by staff to take good care of themselves and to keep themselves safe. We also heard from young people that they received emotional support and help to cope with relationship issues and pressures. Young people told us that they received assistance and advice to address a range of practical issues. This had included sorting out benefits issues, writing CVs and applying

for college or employment. A number of young people we spoke with were students and we heard that staff had assisted by providing financial advice and/or help with grant applications. Staff engaged in handovers between shifts which helped to ensure that staff coming on shift were made aware of any significant events or developments in relation to the young people. This helped to ensure that staff were able to provide support which was informed by any recent changes in young people's support needs.

We found that staff worked in close partnerships with professionals in local agencies to maximise the quality of support provided to young people within their service. A clinical psychologist visited the service on a regular basis and met with staff. Staff received support and advice on how to maintain their own resilience but also received guidance on how to tailor support to each individual in order to most effectively meet their support needs. We found, for example, that the service had established links with a local charity which regularly provided food donations to the service. These donations were passed on to young people if/as required. This partnership working helped to ensure that supports delivered to young people were streamlined.

We heard from community based professionals we spoke with that staff within Four Square - Stopover were effective at sharing relevant information about the young people they were supporting. Those community based professionals made the following comments:

'They respect young people's rights and ensure those rights are upheld.'

'Staff are very knowledgeable on benefits.'

'Staff are very person-centred. They treat everyone as an individual. Every time I contact them they are very on the ball. I can't think of anything they could do differently. They have been invaluable during the pandemic.'

'Staff and managers liaise well with social work and they know what's going on with each of the individuals. They also monitor the situation with the group of residents and they respond if appropriate.'

We found that staff within Four Square - Stopover brought a wide range of relevant qualifications and experience to their role. Staff we spoke with were caring about the young people they supported. Staff told us that they felt supported in their role by the managers within Four Square Stopover and that they felt they had a voice within the service. Staff felt that the organisation was open to listening to the opinions of individual staff members. We found that there had been a major service review since the last inspection, the service had been restructured. The service had switched to a new IT system which included making use of sharepoint (this system supports accessible and effective information sharing across the staff team).

Staff we spoke with told us that they thought the service had benefitted from the organisational review. There had been changes in staffing arrangements since this review which were described as being beneficial to the service and to the people being supported within the service. Staff we spoke with felt that teamworking and communication across the organisation were generally effective. All staff we spoke with, except for one staff member (see 'What the service could do better'), advised us that they received regular formal supervision. We heard from all the staff we spoke with that they were able to access informal supervision as/when required. We heard that the management team met with each other regularly online to support effective service delivery.

We accessed staff training records remotely and we found that the service made use of a centralised database to record the training completed by each individual staff member. This allowed the service manager to monitor completion of staff training to ensure that individual staff members were equipped with

the necessary skills and knowledge to perform effectively within their role. Staff we spoke with felt they had good access to training and professional development opportunities. Training completed by staff had included trauma informed care, supporting women experiencing homelessness, professional boundaries training, safeguarding adults at risk, data protection and equality and diversity training. This training input helped staff to address the range of support needs amongst the young people within the service.

We read recruitment information related to two recently appointed staff members. We found evidence supporting safe recruitment practice. We spoke with a recently appointed staff member who told us they had an induction programme put in place to support their transition into their role. This staff member told us that they felt their induction had been effective in preparing them for their role. We also heard from this individual that they had benefitted from frequent supervision during their probationary period. These quality assurance processes contributed to ensuring that the service delivered to young people was provided by a staff group who were able and prepared to effectively and safely support young people within the service.

What the service could do better

We heard that the pandemic had affected young people and their routines and that this was having an impact in terms of demands on staff. We heard a suggestion that, for the duration of the pandemic, it could be beneficial to increase staffing on the nightshift within Stopover as this tended to be a busy time within the service. We discussed this suggestion with the service manager who agreed to explore if there is a need to increase staffing for nightshifts within Stopover at this time.

We identified that, related to the specific remit of one staff member, their role was not as integrated within the organisation as it could be. This was acknowledged by the service and arrangements have since been put in place for this staff member to be been given a specific slot within staff team meetings. This should help to further develop appropriate information sharing in relation to individuals being supported to make the transition from one part of the service to another.

As referred to above, we found that there was one staff member who, whilst they described feeling supported, had not recently received regular formal supervision. This was raised during the inspection and at the time of compiling this report this staff member had received formal supervision. The service should ensure that all staff receive regular formal supervision.

Given there has been overdose incidents involving young people within the service, the service should access staff training on the administration of naloxone (this is an opiate blocker which when administered in the event of overdose can be life saving).

One young person told us that young people at Stopover don't always maintain the communal areas to a reasonable standard of cleanliness. One community based professional we spoke with (not working with the SU who commented on this issue) also commented that whilst its positive that Stopover staff are not punitive to young people and encourage their independence, there may be more scope for giving direction and guidance to young people in terms of maintaining standards of cleanliness in communal areas within Stopover. This could help support young people to adequately prepare for living independently. We shared this feedback with the manager who was aware of this issue. The manager advised that the service was being pro-active in terms of addressing this problem. The service had provided a range of facilities and cleaning products to encourage and support young people in terms of maintaining acceptable standards of hygiene and cleanliness within the premises. We were told that staff carried out routine checks to monitor standards of cleanliness within the premises. Cleaners visited routinely and cleaned communal areas. We

heard that hygiene was discussed at meetings with young people. The service should continue to provide guidance and direction to ensure that acceptable standards of hygiene are maintained within the premises.

Whilst the service had submitted a number of notifications of incidents to the Care Inspectorate, there were some incidents which were notifiable which had not been notified to the Care Inspectorate. The service should ensure that it submits notifications to the Care Inspectorate in accordance with the Care Inspectorate notification guidance.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

Requirement 1

To ensure that the service learns from serious incidents the provider must put in place a robust quality assurance system that includes the monitoring of key procedures.

This requirement was made on 29 March 2019.

Action taken on previous requirement
The service submitted Quality Assurance information to us in November 19 which included their Quality Assurance Framework, their Quality Assurance Framework Appendix for Accommodation Services, Significant and Critical Incidents procedure for Accommodation and Community Support Services in Four Square (this document specified the need for de-briefing following critical incidents and for immediate actions to be taken to reduce the likelihood of a repeat incident).

Met - within timescales

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
28 Mar 2019	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good Not assessed
25 Jan 2017	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good Not assessed
11 Feb 2015	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
7 Aug 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
24 Aug 2011	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good Not assessed
20 Oct 2009	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing	5 - Very good Not assessed 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
2 Jul 2008	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good

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