

East Fife Women's Aid**Service name**

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Service address

Cupar

Type of care service

Housing Support Service

Provider name

East Fife Women's Aid

Service number

CS2004074976

Date of inspection

8 March 2006

Type of inspection

Announced

Care Commission OfficeLargo House, Carnegie Avenue,
Dunfermline, Fife, KY11 8PE**Period since last inspection**This is the first Care Commission inspection for this
service

Introduction

East Fife Women's Aid is a charitable organisation which offers support, information and temporary accommodation for women and their children (if any) where women have experienced domestic abuse.

There are eleven refuge properties; one shared and nine single occupancy. East Fife Women's Aid is registered with the Care Commission to provide a housing support service to women and their children in Fife.

All staff are employed in accordance with East Fife Women's Aid recruitment and selection procedure which includes; two written references (one of whom should be the current or most recent employer), an Enhanced Disclosure Scotland check and an individual interview.

Basis of Report

This was an announced inspection and was carried out in line with The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, the Regulations which follow the Act, mainly Scottish Statutory Instrument 114 - the Regulation of Care Requirements as to Care Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2002.

The service was assessed against the National Care Standards for Housing Support and selected;

Standard 1 - Informing and Deciding

Standard 2 - Your Legal Rights

Standard 3 - Management and Staffing arrangements

Standard 4 - Housing Support Planning

Standard 7 - Exercising Your Rights

The inspection process commenced on 20/02/06 and was carried out by Care Commission Officers Morag Peggie and Lorna Shewan.

Information for the report was obtained from pre - inspection and self- evaluation documentation completed by the named contact Manager prior to the visit and submitted within the agreed time scales.

The views of service users, their relative/representative and staff were sought.

Following discussion with the Manager twenty postcards were distributed to service users. Three were completed and returned.

The Care Commission Officer would like to thank service users for giving up their time to provide information for this report.

Seven staff questionnaires were completed and returned.

The Care Commission Officer appreciated the time taken by staff to provide information for this report

Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Reports

This is the first Care Commission Inspection carried out for this service.

Comment on Self-Evaluation

The self-evaluation document was completed by the Manager and returned within the agreed time scales. Information provided demonstrated an understanding of the National Care Standards, identified strengths and areas for development.

View of Service Users

The views of service users were generally positive and indicated that they were satisfied with the service. Service users indicated that they knew how to raise concerns/complaints within the service. Comments included;

"... I feel safe and comfortable talking to the staff.."

"... this organisation is essential for women and children..."

"... highly trained committed staff..."

"...fairness and equality a major part of service provision..."

The Care Commission Officer appreciated the time taken by service users to provide information for this report.

View of Carers

Although this was an announced inspection visit and prior notification of the date was given, the Care Commission Officers were not approached by carers with views about the service.

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

National Care Standard Number 1: Housing Support Services - Informing and Deciding

Strengths

An introductory pack is available for prospective service users, and this includes; a copy of the service complaints policy, guidance on Data Protection and access to personal files, a map of the local area, a copy of the relevant national care standards, the charter of rights, and health and safety in refuge information. This is good practice.

Areas for Development

It is Recommended (1) that the information pack is further developed to include

- (a) how the quality of housing support service is monitored
- (b) policies and procedures for managing risk and recording and reporting accidents and incidents
- (c) the relevant policies and procedures of the housing support service
- (d) the most recent Care Commission inspection report.

With reference to the National Care Standards, housing support services, Standard 1 (1).

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

Strengths

There is a Residents Occupancy Agreement document which outlines the conditions of occupancy within the temporary accommodation. It is understood that service users have a copy of this agreement.

Areas for Development

There is information within the welcome pack which contains detailed information on the housing support service that will be provided. This is good practice. It is Recommended (2) that this information be further developed to form a written agreement which clearly defines the service to be provided, the terms and conditions for receiving the service, and arrangements for changing or ending the agreement. With reference to the National Care Standards, housing support services, Standard 2 (1). Service users should have a copy of this agreement.

This was the first inspection visit carried out by the Care Commission for this service. The availability of inspection reports for service users and their representatives will be reviewed at the next inspection visit.

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

Strengths

Up until February 2006, the day to day management of the service was operated through a flat management structure. All staff were of equal status, with defined responsibilities for managerial aspects of the organisation. At the time of the inspection visit there were 5.8 whole time equivalent staff (based of 40 hours per week), who work a variety of hours to provide a housing support service to twenty women and their children in Fife. From February 2006, a Temporary Change Manager has been in place.

Strategic direction, policy and procedure decision making is provided by a Board of Directors.

The aim of the service is to offer support, information and temporary accommodation for women and their children (if any) where women have experienced domestic abuse. Residents have occupancy agreements where refuge accommodation is provided. "Follow on support" can be provided for an agreed period of time to women moving into their own tenancies.

The service has adopted all relevant policies and procedures developed by Scottish Women's Aid. Policies and Procedures viewed during the inspection visit included;

- (a) Confidentiality
- (b) Lone working
- (c) Induction
- (d) Code of Conduct
- (e) Staff recruitment and Training
- (f) Whistleblowing
- (g) Closure strategy

Information was clearly written and considered relevant to the support service.

All staff are employed in accordance with East Fife Women's Aid recruitment and selection

procedure which includes; two written references (one of whom should be the current or most recent employer), an Enhanced Disclosure Scotland check and an individual interview.

Staff meetings are carried out on a weekly basis and are attended by all staff, a record of these meetings is not retained. Team meetings are held on a three weekly basis and a record of these meetings is retained. The service currently operates triad support and supervision.

A total of seven staff questionnaires were completed and returned. Staff indicated that there are open communication systems and that they feel well supported as part of the team.

All newly appointed staff are required to undertake induction training. Individual programmes are drawn up by the training and development officer according to the role of the new worker. All staff are expected to undertake Support Skills training which is usually over four days. The induction programme is expected to be completed within the thirteen week probationary period. In service training is compulsory within the service.

Areas for Development

A Temporary Change Manager has been in place since 1st February 2006. The role of the change manager is to facilitate change within the service to ensure the organisation has a long term future and a structure that will enable the organisation to meet future challenges. The change manager is also providing support to current employees. There are plans in motion to appoint a permanent manager to this service.

Staff annual appraisals are not currently carried out to review staff practice and development needs. It is understood that there are plans to implement annual staff appraisals and progress in this area will be reviewed at the next inspection visit.

Ten staff questionnaires were sent out and a total of seven were completed and returned. Comments included;

"... the induction procedure could be structured better the current system can take a long time to complete..."

"... lack of funding for training opportunities..."

"... lack of supervision due to staff shortages..."

Four staff identified that they felt they had training needs which were not being met. Progress in this area will be subject to examination at the next inspection visit.

From discussion with staff it is understood that some staff have photographic identification and some do not. Consideration must be given to ensure all staff have up-to-date photographic identification which can be produced on request.

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

Strengths

All service users have a personal support record and a personal support plan. This is good practice. These documents are completed after a settling in period. Information contained in the plan outlines areas and levels of support. These include financial assistance ranging from claiming appropriate benefits to managing debts, living in the refuge, healthy living, household skills, communication/literacy skills, personal safety, and general support needs.

Areas for Development

It is Recommended (3) that the personal support plan is further developed to contain information on the following; what the service user prefers to be called, which other services must be contacted if there is an important change in health or personal circumstances, an independent person to contact if the service user wishes to make a complaint or raise a concern, who else may be contributing to the support and care package and when the housing support is being provided. With reference to the National Care Standards, housing support services, Standard 4 (2).

National Care Standard Number 7: Housing Support Services - Exercising Your Rights

Strengths

A total of two personal support plans were examined during the inspection visit. The personal support plan defines the service to be provided and service delivery. This forms an agreement with

the service user and the provider. It is understood that all service users are offered a copy of their personal support plan. The information contained in the service user's plans viewed was seen to be detailed and clearly recorded. Records were seen to contain relevant information and are securely stored within a locked facility.

The organisation has clear policies and procedures regarding access to records and confidentiality.

All staff receive a copy of the Scottish Social Services Code of Conduct during the induction period.

Service users interviewed by the Care Commission Officer indicated that they were satisfied with the service. Staff were considered to behave in a professional, polite and respectful manner. Any changes to their support plan were discussed and appropriately recorded.

Areas for Development

No areas were identified.

Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action against this service.

Other Information

A Temporary Change Manager has been in post from 1st February 2006. The role of the Temporary Change Manager is to facilitate change within East Fife Women's Aid to ensure the organisation has a long term future. To provide support for employees and to give day to day direction. It is the intention of the organisation to recruit a permanent Manager for this service.

Requirements

Recommendations

It is Recommended (1) that the information pack is further developed to include

- (a) how the quality of housing support service is monitored
- (b) policies and procedures for managing risk and recording and reporting accidents and incidents
- (c) the relevant policies and procedures of the housing support service
- (d) the most recent Care Commission inspection report.

With reference to the National Care Standards, housing support services, Standard 1 (1).

It is Recommended (2) that this information be further developed to form a written agreement which clearly defines the service to be provided, the terms and conditions for receiving the service, and arrangements for changing or ending the agreement. With reference to the National Care Standards, housing support services, Standard 2 (1)

It is Recommended (7) that the personal support plan is further developed to contain information on the following; what the service user prefers to be called, which other services must be contacted if there is an important change in health or personal circumstances, an independent person to contact if the service user wishes to make a complaint or raise a concern, who else may be contributing to the support and care package and when the housing support is being provided. With reference to the National Care Standards, housing support services, Standard 4 (2).

Lorna Shewan
Care Commission Officer