

Aberdeen City Music School School Care Accommodation Service

Halls of Residence
Riverview Drive
Dyce
Aberdeen
AB21 7NF

Telephone: 01224 214130

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

6 March 2019

Service provided by:

Aberdeen City Council

Service provider number:

SP2003000349

Service no:

CS2005113855

About the service

Aberdeen City Music School (ACMS) boarding was purpose-built to provide a school care accommodation service to a maximum of 40 young people. The building is in close proximity to Dyce Academy where young people attend for education. Music tuition and practice is at the attached music school.

The service state that they "aim to provide a caring, structured environment within which young people are encouraged and supported to become responsible citizens, to reach their full musical, educational, social potential, based on mutual respect for each other and the environment".

The service has been registered since April 2005.

What people told us

Young people were spoken with throughout the inspection, individually, in small groups and during social activities such as dinner and supper time.

Nineteen young people also responded to a survey monkey questionnaire, sent prior to the inspection.

Both, in questionnaire responses, and in discussion, young people were very positive about boarding at Aberdeen City Music School (ACMS). They enjoyed the company of their peers and had good relationships with staff who provided their care. The young people who were new to boarding felt they had been well looked after and had been given good opportunities to meet the rest of the boarding students and settle into life at boarding.

Very few suggestions were made about what would improve life at boarding. There were some mixed views about the evening meal (served across at Dyce Academy) and a number of views that wifi was not always available, with limited or no mobile phone signal.

Two parents returned questionnaires prior to the inspection. One was spoken with during the inspection visit.

Parents were very positive about the care and support their children received. They felt that they were "caring, helpful and approachable, welcoming and accommodating". They also recognised skills their children had developed since living at ACMS boarding (outwith their musical achievements).

Young people and parents felt safe at boarding, however, concerns were raised regarding the walk between school and boarding. This was a short distance, however, parents were concerned that there was no continuous pavement and that speed bumps were broken and not effective in slowing speeding traffic. This was discussed with the Director of Aberdeen City Music School during the inspection.

Self assessment

No self assessment was requested this inspection year.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support

5 - Very Good

Quality of environment

4 - Good

Quality of staffing

5 - Very Good

Quality of management and leadership

4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Young people at ACMS boarding spoke warmly about their relationships with their peers and with staff, and generally enjoyed boarding. Staff had introduced various fun and supportive ways for young people to develop and sustain positive relationships with each other, including students who were new to boarding. These had been really successful and had resulted in a warm, friendly and supportive atmosphere within boarding.

Support included a good induction process for new students, including them being assigned 'buddies' to help them settle in, a welcome pack which included a code of conduct, an assigned member of staff as their 'keyworker' and 'study buddies' from the senior pupil group. Activities had been introduced to ensure the students were introduced to the group in an informal friendly way, and homework club to provide a nurturing and supportive routine which ensured structured and supportive time for the younger students to develop routines and build relationships.

Support plans had been developed to include much greater input from young people themselves. Essentially, with well written and accessible guidance notes, young people wrote their own support plans, detailing what was important to them, their talents and skills, vulnerabilities and anxieties. Action plans provided good information about how support should be provided and were regularly reviewed with young people.

Young people had limited free time, with a busy schedule of music tuition and practice outwith an already extended school day. Staff were mindful of this and organised a range of 'extra curricular' activities which young people could be involved in. Activities included the opportunity for physical activity, but also included opportunities for relaxation and mindfulness, craft activities and games. A young people led activities committee had also organised events which were enjoyed by the group.

Information to promote positive physical and mental health was on display in the communal areas of boarding, downstairs and on each floor. Contact phone numbers were also available for various support organisations and information on how to make a comment or complaint to staff, including the opportunity to pass on good comments. Various external organisations had met with the young people to share information about topics and issues relevant to young people.

Staff received regular safeguarding training, with a designated child protection officer based at Dyce Academy. The manager of boarding had also completed additional child protection training. Some improvement continued to be required in relation to the recording of incidents of concern (see 'Quality of Management and Leadership' in this report).

Young people were active participants in discussion and decisions about the 'life of the house'. They had been involved in genuine opportunities to express their views on 'rules' and expectations, and whether these remained relevant. Supported by staff, they had produced some really positive, and visual, insights into their views. Practical suggestions made by young people about eating arrangements had also been implemented.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

ACMS boarding was purpose build to provide accommodation to young people attending the music school. It is a short walk from the school and situated close to the shops and public transport in the village of Dyce.

Communal areas and bedrooms are homely, relaxing and reflect the interests of the young people, and activities they have been involved in. Young people have en suite bedrooms which (within some limitations) they can personalise to reflect their own interests. Communal spaces are well used for young people to spend time together, being used for games, crafts and activities, movies and breakfast and supper (main meals are in school). There is a music practice room, though most of the young people practice across at the music school.

The building has no garden, however, staff and young people have planted flowers and herbs in small spaces around the building, which help brighten the exterior somewhat. The walk to school is short, however, poorly lit in winter. Staff do what they can to support the safety of young people at night, however, this remains of concern to some parents (see 'What people told us' in this report).

Cleaning arrangements while the young people are in boarding are adequate, however, arrangements for the deep cleaning of the building while it is closed over the summer holiday period should also be considered. Current arrangements do not allow for the moving of any of the bedroom furniture and therefore restrict any deep cleaning.

At the last two inspections there have been issues with the replacement of essential goods (the cooker, dishwasher etc). Young people also raised issues about the mattresses on their beds being uncomfortable and in need of replacement. In discussion with staff and the Head of the music school it transpires that there is no programme of refurbishment and redecoration, and no budget for the upkeep of the accommodation. The local authority service desk will arrange for the repair of essential items, but not their replacement when necessary. There appears to be some ambiguity about whether the landlord or local authority have responsibility for various aspects of building maintenance. This needs to be urgently addressed by an appropriate person in the local authority, and not staff at boarding (who will not have access to contracts/agreements etc.). The building is now at an age that furnishings need to be replaced (without dependence on charitable donations due to lack of funding). **See Recommendation 1**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The accommodation should be maintained to a high standard, with appropriate arrangements in place for the replacement of goods and a rolling programme of redecoration. Issues in relation to the responsibility for this, and appropriate funding should be resolved.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices' and 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment'. (HSCS 5.21/5.22)

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

The staff team were experienced, supportive, enthusiastic and caring. They knew the young people well and were committed to supporting them to have a positive experience at ACMS boarding. Aside professional qualifications, staff had individual skills and talents which they used to develop the young people's interests and to establish warm relationships. Young people spoke positively about staff and were observed to be relaxed and have fun in their company, and to receive appropriate adult supervision and guidance when needed.

Staff had the opportunity to discuss practice issues at staff meetings and individual supervision. Staff meetings were infrequent as it was difficult to get the whole team together, however, were timed to be as accessible as possible to all staff. Meetings had been used for the usual 'business' matters, and also to develop staff knowledge and understanding of pertinent issues relating to the young people. A new staff induction had been developed and staff deployed to ensure they were able to share strengths and provide peer mentoring.

Staff had completed training relevant to their post, had access to the organisation's online training and were made aware of internal and external training courses which were available. Some staff had also accessed training outwith that offered by the local authority (funded personally). Relevant reading and best practice documents were shared with the team to ensure they were aware of new and best practice.

Staff were registered with the Social Services Council (SSSC) and therefore had to demonstrate their ongoing professional learning and development. Learning and evaluation forms had been introduced which would support staff to look at the learning outcomes from training and demonstrate the knowledge they had gained. Senior staff were researching the introduction of 'open badges' (an online training programme by the Scottish Social Services Council). This would be a useful addition to the training already in place.

Staff within the team (alongside the depute) had developed really positive ways for the young people to share their views and be hugely involved in support planning. There had been real opportunities for young people to positively consider and challenge existing practice and whether this remained relevant to them. This in turn had challenged staff to consider established practice to ensure this was the nurturing model of care they wanted to provide.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

A management team comprised of a manager and two deputies. With the exception of one day a week the staff were supported by one of the deputies working on- shift alongside them, providing high levels of support and mentoring and an overview of practice.

As stated earlier in this report (see 'Quality of staffing') developments to support planning and young people's participation groups had developed in a really positive way. The team had positively challenged their own views on sanctions and expectations to ensure these were relevant to the young people, and to the model of care they wanted to provide. This was ongoing, however, had already raised some interesting discussion points. The current 'code of conduct' could be reviewed in line with these discussions to consider whether the style of language continues to meet the ethos of the service.

Ongoing quality assurance systems were in place which supported the service to run effectively. These included staff meetings, management team meetings, meetings with the Director of the music school and parent committee meetings. Various systems were in place for auditing and reviewing policies and procedures and for a management team overview of support plans and documentation.

Procedures in place to effectively record and respond to critical incidents should improve. Auditing processes should be in place to ensure this, and clarity of decision-making and responsibility in place to ensure assessment and action planning is supportive and timely. Appropriate notifications must be made to the Care Inspectorate.

(See recommendation 1)

An annual quality and standards report provided information about the achievements of the students and staff throughout the year and collated the responses to the questionnaires completed annually by young people, parents and staff. The document concluded with a development plan, however, this could be more aspirational, and the development of the plan involve the staff team and young people. It would benefit the service to use the Health and Social Care Standards as a tool for self assessment and then create a development plan. **(See recommendation 2)**

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. Effective procedures should be developed for the management of critical incidents. These should include appropriate recording, safeguarding and assessment. Notification should be made to the Care Inspectorate as per guidance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' and 'My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unplanned event'. (HSCS 4.11 and 4.14)

2. The service should complete a self assessment and use this information to develop an aspirational development plan. This should involve the whole team and young people (and any other relevant stakeholders).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19)

Grade: 4 – good

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

Previous requirements

Requirement 1

Organisational procedures for the management of significant incidents and child protection concerns should be effectively implemented.

This includes involvement of the designated Child Protection Officer in early discussion and decision-making.

This is in order to comply with: The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, No 210: 4 – A requirement in relation to the welfare of service users.

Timescale: Immediately and ongoing.

This requirement was made on 15 February 2018.

Action taken on previous requirement

The manager had completed additional child protection training to ensure safeguarding procedures were robust. See recommendation in this report re critical incident procedures.

Met – within timescales

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

ACMS boarding should liaise with key staff at Dyce Academy to ensure that good systems are in place for the exchange of information about students. There should also be effective procedures in place to communicate with parents timeously regarding any boarding closure when parents have been informed that the school will close.

National Care Standards School Care Accommodation Services – Standard 4: Support Arrangements

This recommendation was made on 15 February 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Appropriate procedures had been developed.

Recommendation 2

Support plans should be of a consistently high quality and reflect identified needs and strategies of support. Daily recording and support plan reviews should link to identified outcomes and progress made.

National Care Standards School Care Accommodation Services – Standard 4: Support Arrangements

This recommendation was made on 15 February 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Significant improvements had been made to support plans (see report).

Complaints

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

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
15 Feb 2018	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership Not assessed
8 Feb 2017	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 5 - Very good
17 Feb 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
4 Feb 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
15 Jan 2014	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
11 Dec 2012	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
15 Jun 2011	Unannounced	Care and support 3 - Adequate Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 2 - Weak
7 Sep 2010	Announced	Care and support 3 - Adequate Environment 3 - Adequate Staffing 4 - Good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	2 - Weak
9 Mar 2009	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 4 - Good 3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate
28 Oct 2008	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 4 - Good 3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate

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