

Customer Scrutiny Panel

Executive Summary – Foyer review

Background and Context

mhs owns two Foyers where young people aged 16-25 can live for up to two years and receive dedicated support, training and personal development opportunities. The service is funded by Medway Council whose Housing Allocations Team provide all nominations for prospective residents.

The Endeavour Foyer has been in operation since 2000 and has 27 bedspaces. The Springboard Foyer opened in 2003 and has 9 bedspaces.

Both Foyers are accredited by the National Foyer Federation. Reaccreditation is due in the current year and mhs is working towards 'Advantaged Thinking' that is designed to focus on individual resident's talents, abilities and resources to achieve better outcomes.

The Foyers are audited by Medway Council which requires mhs to achieve at least a Level C in all objectives identified in the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) that sets out the standards expected in the delivery of Supporting People Services. The assessment covers five core objectives of: Assessment and support planning, Security, health and safety, Safeguarding and protection from abuse, Fair access, diversity and inclusion and Client involvement and empowerment. The January 2018 audit covered two standards (Security, health and safety and Safeguarding and protection from abuse). Both services were rated as 'B'. Plans are in place to work towards achieving Level A for the next audit planned for November 2018.

Foyer Service Delivery Model

The Assistant Director of Customer Services has overall operational responsibility for the delivery of non-repair aspects of landlord services to residents. The Foyer Manager, based at the Endeavour Foyer, is responsible for overseeing the management of the Foyers. She is supported by an Assistant Foyer Manager who is mostly based at the Springboard Foyer.

Both Foyers have 24-hour staff cover. Two full-time Support Officers work at the Endeavour Foyer. They work on a rota basis from 8am to 9pm and are supported by a part-time Support Officer. Residents at the Springboard Foyer are supported by two part-time Support Officers. Each scheme has concierge staff who work on a rota basis to provide cover from 6.30pm to 8am. In addition to providing general support to residents they carry out a range of duties such as cleaning, void clearance and minor

repairs. A 'Functional Skills Assistant' is employed on a two-year fixed term contract to provide practical skills and knowledge to residents, such as basic cooking.

Residents at the Endeavour Foyer are supported by two full-time and one part-time Support Officers. Those living at Springboard Foyer are supported by two part-time Support Officers. Each scheme has a Concierge Officer who works from 6.30pm to 8am on weekdays and provide weekend cover from 4pm to 8am.

Summary of findings

Key strengths

Individual flats and communal facilities compare well with many other Foyers that offer bedspaces with shared bathroom and cooking facilities and limited communal areas. The extent and quality of furniture and other essentials is reasonable. The fully adapted bedsit provides a valuable resource for young people who need accessible accommodation. Residents we met are generally happy with their accommodation, have good levels of understanding about the quality of accommodation and services they can expect from mhs and are aware of House Rules and fire and health and safety procedures.

Residents aspirations and needs such as medical, financial, health and well-being, are assessed when they move into the Foyer. They are seen very regularly in the early days. This ensures that they are settling in well, getting used to living in the Foyer and building up knowledge about the service and what is expected of them.

Support plans are developed and reviewed in a timely fashion. Residents confirmed that they are fully involved in reviewing actions and agreeing new tasks. Residents are supported to obtain volunteering, training, apprenticeship and job opportunities. Residents have opportunities to socialise with each other and courage to attend monthly meetings to share information and ideas.

Opportunities to discuss move-on accommodation are taken up as early as is reasonable. Residents are encouraged to attend training events on living independently and how to bid for properties via the Local Authority Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Residents we spoke with showed required levels of understanding about 'moving out' processes and support they could expect mhs after they have moved into permanent accommodation.

Main areas for improvement

A few house-keeping issues are affecting the service: lack of ventilation and over-heated accommodation, ineffective cooking facilities in bedsits, very small showering areas and lack of signs for ramped access into the Foyer. The 'institutional' feel is created by the office facilities at the entrance at Endeavour Foyer, out-of-date and uninteresting notice boards, coupled with 'unwelcoming' training room and residents' lounge. The position is further affected by 'Rules' that are unexplained.

A key risk is potential scalding from hot water in communal toilets at the Endeavour Foyer.

Communication, information and paperwork need attention. The mhs website offers limited information about the Foyer Service, Wi-Fi and IT facilities are limited for both staff and residents alike, and the Residents' Handbook is out of date. Digital inclusion has not fully explored or prioritised. There is duplication of notes from meetings with residents and support planning and review sessions. Resident engagement is at early stages of development.

Although Support Plans are well-documented and the rationale behind use of scores and the risk assessment methodology is unclear.

Support following move into permanent accommodation lacks clarity.

Assessment

Service ratings are classified using a five-point scale of Great, Very Good, Good, Adequate, Unclassified. The overall assessment for the Foyer Service is:

Theme	Rating
Foyer facilities at Endeavour Foyer	Adequate
Provision of support for residents	Good
Move-on accommodation	Good
OVERALL RATING	GOOD

Recommendations

Below is a list of all the recommendations:

Priority	Recommendations
<p>FUNDAMENTAL</p> <p>Fundamental control weaknesses, which expose the Company to a high degree of unnecessary risk</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>SIGNIFICANT</p> <p>Significant control weaknesses which expose the Company to a moderate degree of unnecessary risk.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the potential risk of scalding from hot water in the communal toilets at the Endeavour Foyer. 2. Review Support Plans to improve their effectiveness and support risk management.
<p>HOUSEKEEPING</p> <p>Areas where we have highlighted opportunities to implement a good or better practice, to improve efficiency or further reduce exposure to risk. Such issues are raised directly with management and are not listed within this report.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Put in place measures to reduce excessive heat. 4. Review the effectiveness of cooking facilities in bedsits during planned works/remodelling. 5. Review the size of bathroom area when the scheme is next remodelled. 6. Carry out a disability audit to improve access and facilities for people with disabilities. 7. Work with residents to reduce the 'institutional' feel of the Foyers. 8. Maximise opportunities to publicise the Foyer Service. 9. Improve Wi-Fi access and consider opportunities for digital inclusion and provision of information via electronic methods. 10. Review House Rules and engagement/participation methods with input from residents. 11. Provide residents with all potential housing options for move on accommodation. 12. Clarify arrangements for and endure a robust approach to support following move-on.