Formal response to draft Care Inspection Report of 18 February 2019, relating to unannounced inspection of 6 February 2019.

Low Port Out Of School Club
S.C.I.O

Low Port Out of School Club SCIO (Day Care of Children)

Low Port Primary School

Blackness Road

Linlithgow

EH49 7HZ

Service provider no: SP2017012982

Service no: CS2017360066

Date of response: 27 February 2019

Overview

This response represents the views of the staff group of Low Port Out of School Club (SCIO), Emma Donaldson (Club Manager) and the parent trustee group responsible for the governance of the club.

Detailed consideration has been given to verbal feedback received from Care Inspectors during meeting with Emma Donaldson, Debbie Cluness (Trustee Chair) and Alison Cowper (Trustee) on 5 February 2019. In addition the draft inspection report of 18 February 2019 has been reviewed; along with previous inspection reports of February 2013 and August 2016.

The following reports and guidance have furthermore been reviewed:

- *Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services (Care Inspectorate, June 2014)*
- *How the Care Inspectorate re-evaluates (re-grades) services (March 2015)*
- *How the Care Inspectorate uses requirements and recommendations to help regulated care services improve (March 2016)*
- *Care Inspectorate Quality Grades –* www.careinspectorate.com/index/php/inspections/change-of-grades
- *Health and Social Care Standards (June 2017, implemented April 2018)* www.newcarestandards.scot
- *Food Matters* https://careinspectorate.com/media/836652/food-matters-nurturing-happy-healthy-children.pdf

Therefore, this response has considered the above-stated which directly informs our views and this formal response has been collectively approved at the Low Port Out of School Club (SCIO) Trustee Meeting on 27 February 2019.

Introduction

Firstly, we would like to thank you for identifying the many strengths that are evident in all aspects of the club. We pride ourselves on having a dedicated staff group who are committed to delivering high quality childcare founded on the principles of risk benefit and outdoor play. We are pleased that this was recognised and are even more assured that upon consultation with the children, that they themselves identified the team members as one of their favourite aspects of our club. This resonates with our experiences and feedback from parents, caregivers and children alike. We very much want our team to be people that our children trust, value and look forward to having fun with.

We have always been proud of the excellent environment that our children benefit from. We have a wonderful green space both within our school grounds and directly outwith, and our team are committed to finding creative ways to encourage risk benefit play in these areas. In addition, we recognise the needs of the age groups of the children that we support are diverse, and attempt to meet these needs by creating dedicated spaces indoors. We appreciate that you have again highlighted and valued this in your findings.

We furthermore acknowledge that you identified the dedication of our Club Manager, Emma Donaldson. Emma's leadership and strong commitment to delivering the best quality experience that she can for our children permeates all aspects of team practice and we are assured that this was recognised.

The trustee group particularly valued the identification of the management and governance support that they provide. A great deal of personal investment has been given to collectively ensure that we are delivering the best quality childcare experience that we can for all of our children, and the developments that the group has made in the past couple of years has been significant.

As discussed during the meeting of 5 February 2019 we have already implemented, or made plans to implement a number of suggested areas for improvement which reflects our commitment as a service to continuous reflection and improvement.

Our response in relation to the recommendation and requirements are detailed below.

Quality of care and support

Recommendation 1 - It is recommended that the club improve their personal plans to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards.

As discussed during informal feedback with Emma Donaldson, and subsequent trustee meeting of 5 February 2019 the Personal Plan template was sent to us after the last inspection of August 2016 by the then inspector, Pat Bunyan. We made no amendments to this format and trusted in good faith that a format given to us by an inspector of our service would meet the necessary regulatory requirements. Therefore, following this inspection we immediately implemented this format.

It was highlighted to us during our meeting of 5 February 2019 that this did not meet the standards required of an updated version of *"Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services"* (Care Inspectorate, 2014). The updated version was referenced to be published in 2016, however unfortunately when the inspectors were asked for a copy of this version the paper copy they had was from 2014. We were advised that we would find this on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

Despite extensive searching, we have been unable to find the 2016 version on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

Furthermore, it is expected that if an inspector from the Care Inspectorate provides a service with a template in the same year that an updated standard is published that this version would be informed by the new format. We therefore feel that we are being wrongly penalised for accepting the advice and written template provided by a previous inspector.

We do however accept that our Personal Plans could involve the views of our children, as outlined in the *Health and Social Care Standards (June, 2017).*

Following our meeting we have accepted the advice of the inspectors given in relation to how we can improve our Personal Plans and have

already made steps to review and upgrade following advice given. We trust that this is a reflection of our commitment to accept advice and make immediate steps to demonstrate continuous improvement as required. However, we must highlight that this was the commitment demonstrated after the last inspection of August 2016 and the immediate implementation of a template provided to us by a previous inspector for which we now feel we are unfairly being penalised. We would ask that further consideration is given to the above.

Recommendation 2 – It is recommended that the club improve their food choices and include children in food planning. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Care Standards.

We accept that the offer of high sugar cereals at breakfast club is not what all parents would want for their children. Indeed, as discussed at our meeting of 5 February 2019 we advised that this topic is regularly raised and discussed at our Annual General Meetings (AGM's) and in parent feedback questionnaires. However, it has been the viewpoint of some of our representative parent group that they wish their children to eat these particular cereals, that in some cases it is the only cereal that their children will eat, and their worry that their children will not eat a breakfast if this is not provided etc. Furthermore, the in-house school breakfast club facilitated by the local authority provides high-sugar breakfast cereals and this has also been highlighted to us. This has been an ongoing issue for the Club Manager and trustee group to manage. However, since the last inspection we have made the decision to cease all use of high-sugar breakfast cereals and yogurts with immediate effect and have replaced with natural yogurts with fresh fruit and honey to naturally sweeten breakfast options.

However, we must highlight that the previous inspection of August 2016 did not raise this as a recommendation – despite the same breakfast provision and snacks being on offer. Indeed the inspection report highlighted *"We saw some very good examples of healthy eating initiatives in the club. Children enjoyed and learned a lot from planning themed snacks. Tasting a range of foods associated with different countries provided very good opportunities for them to learn about these countries, their foods and traditions. Alongside the club's links with a local supermarket and children's exciting 'farm to fork' experiences,*

children developed interests in food, food production and healthy eating".

Since the previous inspection of August 2016 we have in fact only enhanced every aspect of our food choices and involved children in food planning therefore we are unclear why this year's inspection of the same food provision, participation and planning has resulted in a recommendation when the inspection of August 2016 did not. We have further scrutinised *Food Matters (2018)* and again from these guidelines can only see how we could enhance in this area as opposed to be criticised.

We would therefore appreciate written feedback in relation to the above.

Quality of environment

We continue to be proud of the environment we have created for the children and will continue to strive to make the most innovative use that we can whilst acknowledging the diversity of age range of the children that we support.

Thank you for acknowledging this space and our efforts to utilise this to the maximum potential for our children.

Quality of staffing

Requirement 1- To ensure that unsuitable individuals do not gain access to children through work, the service provider must update their recruitment and selection policy and procedure to ensure they meet legislative and regulatory requirements in relation to safer recruitment and selection of staff.

The Club Manager fully accepts that she did not access references in advance of the most recent recruitment. We offer an unreserved apology for this and fully accept the potential impact that this could have had for our children. In addition, the trustee group acknowledge that this

exposed a weakness in our governance of recruitment and that we need to build in mechanisms to ensure that there is additional scrutiny in this area.

We must highlight that this is the only occasion that this has happened – albeit we fully accept that one occasion is one too many. However, the inspection report reads as if this may have been a regular occurrence and we are requesting if the wording could be changed to reflect the actual position. We are mindful of the potential – and justified – anxiety that this aspect of the inspection report may cause current and prospective parents upon wider publication and would want to minimise this where possible.

Furthermore, as discussed at our meeting on 5 February 2019 we have on three separate occasions within the past year been advised by Disclosure Scotland that it is acceptable for us to commence the employment of a new team member whilst awaiting clearance of their Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check – if that member of staff is never left alone with the children and is always supervised by a team member that holds a current PVG for the club. Therefore, this is why we have adopted the practice that we have and genuinely believed that we were following the principles of safer recruitment accordingly. We would therefore request that this is also reflected in our inspection report as the current format does not reflect this position and will cause unnecessary anxiety for parents.

We also note that during our meeting you advised that it would be possible for us to commence the employment of a new member of the team before receipt of PVG check in exceptional circumstances – if we liaise with yourselves before-hand. We thank you for this offer but will strive to ensure that we do not need to be in this position.

In addition, we are requesting that you advise us what steps are formally being taken by the Care Inspectorate to address this matter with Disclosure Scotland directly. We acted in good faith based on their guidance and therefore do not believe that we are the only Day Care service or equivalent who may be wrongly following their guidance (and being penalised for it in inspection).

During our meeting of 5 February 2019 we also discussed our commitment to involving our children in our recruitment as members of our interview panel. We also highlighted that we ensured that

safeguarding questions were included in our recruitment and selection processes. The inspectors identified these as strengths and we would appreciate if this could be reflected in your findings.

Quality of management and leadership

Recommendation 1 – We recommend that the club further develop and streamline quality assurance systems to ensure that they can identify strengths and areas for improvement internally.

The current club Action Plan operates as the improvement plan. Each team member has a clear role and area of practice responsibility outlined within this plan, which they then in turn lead on and update team members through team meetings or specific focussed sessions. The Action Plan is structured within the four main Care Inspectorate grading areas of Quality of care and support, Quality of environment, Quality of staffing and Quality of management and leadership in order that the team understand and focus on these continuous areas of improvement throughout their day to day practice and view quality improvement as an ongoing process as opposed to specifically inspection focussed. We are therefore somewhat disheartened to find that *"Staff told us they were encouraged by management to contribute activity ideas during team meetings however were not clear about the club's overarching improvement plan or their role within it".*

We have given consideration in recent months to the Club Manager undertaking further learning and development in relation to Management and Leadership, which would include principles and practice in relation to Quality Improvement/Assurance. This had been discussed with her during Support and Supervision sessions but she had felt that this was not the right time for her to undertake further study having only graduated from her BA in Childhood Studies and wanting dedicated time to focus on the operation of the club without the distraction of study and associated study leave etc. This was understood and accepted by the trustee group. However, given informal feedback from inspection we will ensure that Emma Donaldson embarks on this next stage of her management journey and will be supported by the trustee group to

embed a culture of continuous improvement and the implementation quality assurance tools in her overview of club practice.

The trustee group have had a particular focus on parental involvement since the last inspection. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to contact the trustee group at the direct trustee e-mail separate address (separate from Club Manager), attend six-weekly trustee meetings at any time to participate or observe with no pressure to attend regularly, make comments on the club Facebook page (recognising that social media is often simplest for busy working parents), attend the AGM, attend the annual “Drop-in” day where they can join in play activities with their children, meet team members, meet trustee members etc. Parental views are sought both informally and formally at these forums, and also formally through annual parental questionnaires. However, the return rate for the questionnaires has traditionally been low hence why we have invested more in the more informal methods of involving parents and caregivers in the evaluation of the service. The regular and difficult topic of the high-sugar breakfast cereals which has divided the parent group in opinion is example of this. In addition, we discussed at a more recent trustee meeting that parents are more likely to take the time to stop and listen if children are involved hence the Club Manager has been devising alongside children a set of “quick questions” about the service that they can ask parents as they arrive to collect children from club etc. Therefore, we do believe that our commitment to involving children and parents/caregivers in the operation and evaluation of the service is embedded in our principles and practice and the children’s involvement in staff recruitment and selection is a clear example of this.

Recommendation 2 – It is recommended that the club review their child protection policies and procedures to ensure they support staff in keeping children safe in line with current best practice.

All policies and procedures are reviewed six-monthly by the Club Manager and refreshed at team meetings. Dates for current and future review are recorded in the Policies and Procedures folder, and signed by the team member responsible for review.

It is disappointing that a particular notification tool that is referenced in the Child Protection policy was not available at the time of inspection. This has since been rectified. However, we would highlight that the

absence of this tool would not have prevented immediate Child Protection concerns being shared accordingly or placed any child at risk. We have since implemented a “Chronology of Concern” tool that team members can use to be able to identify recurrent or indicators of concern in relation to children that would not necessarily require an immediate multi-agency response, but that may assist to detail a wider picture of concern for the child.

Inspection and grading history

As discussed during our meeting of 5 February 2019, we would like to formally highlight the chronology of previous inspection gradings:

August 2016

Quality of care and support – 5 Very Good

Quality of environment – 5 Very Good

Quality of staffing – 5 Very Good

Quality of management and leadership – 4 Good

September 2015

Quality of care and support – 3 Adequate

Quality of environment – 4 Good

Quality of staffing – 4 Good

Quality of management and leadership – 3 Adequate

February 2013

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

August 2010

Quality of care and support – 4 Good

Quality of environment – Not Assessed

Quality of staffing – 4 Good

Quality of management and leadership – Not Assessed

September 2008

Quality of care and support – 4 Good

Quality of environment – 4 Good

Quality of staffing – 4 Good

Quality of management and leadership – 4 Good

Therefore, when reviewing our inspection grading history the current inspection of February 2019 is in fact one of the most poorly graded inspection in the club's history which is a significant blow to the staff team, manager and trustee group. Of note, is that we would collectively self-evaluate this service in each of the grading areas as being in the most positive position that we have been in over the years. We are delivering innovative and child-centred care to more children than ever before, we have a dedicated and diverse team delivering high quality and inclusive care and play experiences, children and parents are involved in all aspects of the operation and evaluation of the club, we have a motivated manager who is hugely valued by children, staff and parents alike and now have a trustee group collectively responsible for the governance of the club. We would therefore seek formal feedback in relation to this.

In addition, whilst we accept that safer recruitment has had a detrimental impact on other aspects of this year's grading, we would seek feedback

on the specific criteria used by inspectors when using a grade in one area of the inspection to directly affect another.

We trust that you view this response as objective and balanced. We are a committed team who strive to get it right for all of our children and genuinely want to fully understand the rationale adopted in this year's inspection in order that we can use this as a foundation for continuous improvement for our service.

Team, Club Manager and Trustee Group

Low Port Out of School Club (SCIO)

27 February 2019