

Olivia Josephine Care Limited

# The Willows Care Home

## Inspection report

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Date of inspection visit:  
22 March 2016

Date of publication:  
18 July 2016

## Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Outstanding 

Is the service safe?

Good 

Is the service effective?

Good 

Is the service caring?

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

Good 

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

The inspection visit took place on the 22 March 2016 and was unannounced.

The Willows Care Home is situated on the outskirts of Blackpool in a rural setting. It is a detached single storey property, providing accommodation for 16 people who require nursing or personal care. Many of the rooms overlook the large garden and orchard and have direct access to the grounds. All rooms have en-suite facilities including a shower. There is a communal lounge and dining area as well as a conservatory. At the time of the inspection visit there were 14 people who lived at the home.

A registered manager was in place. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

At the last inspection on 10 June 2014 we found the provider was meeting the requirements of the regulations inspected.

Without exception, people and their representatives could not praise The Willows Care Home enough. One relative said, "It's an amazing place. Nothing is too much trouble. I can't recommend it highly enough."

A relative we spoke with said, "The staff are exceptional, the residents always matter as most important no matter what is going on. That is fed down by the management. A first class home."

Comments we received from people who lived at the home told us all staff were exceptionally caring, respectful and sensitive towards them. We also observed staff and the management team engaged with individuals in an affectionate, respectful and loving manner. One person who lived at the home said, "Excellent staff always willing to help wherever they can."

The owner and registered manager had supported staff to provide high standards of care for the benefit of people who lived at The Willows Care Home. This was demonstrated by the outstanding awards in caring for people the service had achieved.

Staff told us the registered manager 'led by example'. This was underpinned by a clear set of values which included promoting each person's individuality, privacy, dignity, choice and rights. During our visit we observed staff acted according to these values when providing support to people in their care.

The management team used a variety of methods to assess and monitor the quality of the service. We looked at a number of audits that had taken place. This ensured the service continued to be monitored and improvements made when they were identified. People who lived at the home and relatives had opportunities to feed back to the management team. This was about the quality of their care through

surveys and meetings. This ensured outstanding levels of personalised care were monitored and sustained.

We found the registered manager had systems in place to record safeguarding concerns, accidents and incidents and take appropriate action when required. Staff had received safeguarding training and understood their responsibilities to report any unsafe care. One staff member said, "We have had training and I would be confident in what to do should I see somebody not treated right."

Risk assessments had been developed to minimise the potential risk of harm to people during the delivery of their care. These had been kept under review and were relevant to the care provided.

The owner and registered manager had completed an assessment of people's support needs. This was before they moved into the home. A person who lived at the home told us they had been consulted and involved in the assessment and care planning. We found evidence of this in records we looked at.

We found recruitment checks were carried out to ensure suitable people were employed to work at the home and there were sufficient staff to meet people's needs. This was confirmed by talking with staff members and looking at records of staff recruitment.

We found sufficient staffing levels were in place to provide support people required. We observed staff could undertake tasks supporting people on a one to one basis in a timely manner. A person who lived at the home said, "I feel there are enough staff around. I know at times they are busy but they don't seem short to me."

Medicines were dispensed in a safe manner and people received their medicines on time. Staff had received related training to ensure medicines were administered correctly by knowledgeable staff. Controlled drugs were being administered at the time of the inspection visit. We found correct documentation was recorded to ensure accurate administration of controlled drugs.

The registered manager understood the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). This meant they were working within the law to support people who may lack capacity to make their own decisions.

Staff had received training and were knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities. Staff told us access to training courses and opportunities to develop their skills were encouraged by the management team.

People who lived at the home were happy with the variety and choice of meals available to them. Meal provision was provided by an outside agency and comments about meal provision included, "You do get plenty and they are nice."

Comments we received from people who lived at the home told us all staff were exceptionally caring, respectful and sensitive towards them. We also observed staff and the management team engaged with individuals in an affectionate, respectful and loving manner. One person who lived at the home said, "Excellent staff always willing to help wherever they can."

The owner and registered manager had supported staff to provide high standards of care for the benefit of people who lived at The Willows Care Home. This was demonstrated by the outstanding awards in caring for people the service had achieved. In addition various audits were completed regularly in order to monitor and sustain outstanding levels of personalised care approaches.

There was a complaints policy in place, which was understood by staff. Information on the complaints procedure was available in the reception of the home.

The management team used a variety of methods to assess and monitor the quality of the service. We looked at a number of audits that had taken place. This ensured the service continued to be monitored and improvements made when they were identified. People who lived at the home and relatives had opportunities to feed back to the management team. This was about the quality of their care through surveys and meetings.

## The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

### Is the service safe?

Good ●

The service was safe.

The service had procedures in place to protect people from abuse and unsafe care.

Staffing levels were sufficient with an appropriate skill mix to meet the needs of people who lived at the home. Recruitment procedures the service had in place were safe.

Assessments were undertaken of risks to people who lived at the home and staff. Written plans were in place to manage these risks. There were processes for recording accidents and incidents.

People were protected against the risks associated with unsafe use and management of medicines. This was because medicines were managed safely.

### Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

People were supported by staff who were sufficiently skilled and experienced to support them to have a good quality of life.

People received a choice of suitable and nutritious meals and drinks in sufficient quantities to meet their needs.

The registered manager was aware of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard (DoLS). They had knowledge of the process to follow.

### Is the service caring?

Outstanding ☆

The service was exceptionally caring.

People were empowered to make decisions for themselves and be involved in planning their own care.

We observed people were supported by excellent caring and attentive staff who showed patience and respect to the people in

their care.

Staff undertaking their daily duties were extremely sensitive and caring to people's needs.

The owner and registered manager had multiple systems in place to maintain high standards of personalised care. This was evidenced by the outstanding awards the service had achieved in caring for people.

### Is the service responsive?

Good 

The service was responsive.

Care plans for people who lived at the home were informative and regularly updated.

People who lived at the home participated in a range of activities that were on offer at the home.

People were supported to engage with the local community and to access a variety of recreational activities.

There was a system to receive and handle complaints or concerns.

### Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

The service was extremely well led.

There was an open and relaxed atmosphere at the home.

The registered manager had clear lines of responsibility and accountability. Staff understood their role and were committed to providing an outstanding standard of support for people in their care.

The registered manager actively sought and acted upon the views of others. There was a strong emphasis on continually striving to improve, in order to deliver the best possible care for people who lived at the home. This was supported by a variety of systems and methods to assess and monitor the quality of the service.

# The Willows Care Home

## Detailed findings

### Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

This was an unannounced inspection visit carried out on the 22 March 2016. The inspection visit was carried out by an adult social care inspector.

Before our inspection on 22 March 2016 we reviewed the information we held on the service. This included notifications we had received from the provider, about incidents that affect the health, safety and welfare of people who lived at the home. We also checked to see if any information concerning the care and welfare of people living at the home had been received.

In addition the provider completed a Provider Information Return (PIR). This is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We also reviewed information the Care Quality Commission (CQC) holds about the home. This included any statutory notifications, adult safeguarding information and comments and concerns. This information helped us plan the inspection effectively.

During the inspection visit we spoke with six people who lived at the home, a relative, and three staff members. We also spoke with the registered manager and deputy manager. Following the inspection visit we had a discussion with the owner of The Willows.

Part of the inspection was spent looking at records and documentation which contributed to the running of the service. They included two care plans of people who lived at the home, maintenance records, training records, recruitment records and audits for the monitoring of the service. We also spent time observing staff interactions with people who lived at the home. In addition we undertook a tour of the building to ensure it was clean, hygienic and a safe place for people to live.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

People who lived at the home told us they felt safe living at The Willows Care Home and the way staff supported them. For example one person said, "Yes I feel safe here. Staff are on hand if you need someone." Another said, "They are busy people but are there if needed. That makes you feel safer in that knowledge."

We had a walk around the premises and found call bells were positioned in rooms close to hand. This was so people were able to summon help when they needed. We tested the system and staff responded in a timely manner. One person who lived at the home said, "See they do come pretty quick when the buzzer is pressed." Other people who lived at the home confirmed staff responded quickly when they pressed the call bells to summon help.

We looked at how the management team staffed the home and confirmed this by talking with staff and looking at the staffing rota. We found staffing levels were suitable with an appropriate skill mix to support people. We saw the deployment of staff throughout the day was organised. People who required support with their personal care needs received this in a timely and sensitive way. We found staff had time to spend with people on an individual basis. One staff member said, "We have enough staff around to provide the care people need." A person who lived at the home said, "I feel there are enough staff around. I know at times they are busy but they don't seem short to me."

The registered manager had a policy on safeguarding adults and whistleblowing, they contained details of procedures to follow. Staff we spoke with knew about the procedures and what to do if they witnessed any abusive practices. Comments included, "We have had training and I would be confident in what to do should I see somebody not treated right."

We looked at two care records of people who lived at the home. We found individualised risk assessments were completed and evaluated to meet people's needs. Risks to people's wellbeing were assessed. In addition risk reduction methods were used to ensure people's safety was paramount whilst encouraging people to be as independent as possible. For example risk assessments provided clear instructions for staff members when delivering their support. We also saw the registered manager had undertaken assessments of the environment. Where potential risks had been identified the action taken by the service had been recorded.

We had a walk around the building and found it was clean and maintained. We observed staff making appropriate use of personal protective equipment such as disposable gloves and aprons when required. Hand sanitising gel and hand washing facilities were available around the building. These were observed being used by staff on duty. This demonstrated staff were protected from potential infection when delivering personal care and undertaking cleaning duties. We checked a sample of water temperatures. We found these delivered water at a safe temperature in line with health and safety guidelines. This showed the management team ensured people were kept safe by maintaining the premises regularly.

We found equipment had been serviced and maintained as required. Records were available confirming gas



appliances and electrical facilities complied with statutory requirements and were safe for use. The fire alarm and fire doors had been regularly checked to confirm they were working. Records we looked at confirmed this.

We looked at three staff recruitment files. We found required checks were in place. They included an application form that required a full employment history and references. Recruitment records also included evidence of qualifications and criminal record checks. We found the disclosure and barring check (DBS) was obtained prior to any staff commencing employment at the home. This demonstrated safe recruitment checks were carried out by the management team to ensure suitable staff were employed. Staff we spoke with confirmed this. One staff member said, "The whole process was good including the induction training exercise. All my checks had to be in place before I started."

We looked at how medicines were administered. Medicines had been ordered when required, given as prescribed and stored in a suitable locked facility. We looked at medication administration records for two people following the morning and lunchtime medication round. Records showed all morning medication had been signed for. We checked this against individual medication packs which confirmed all administered medication could be accounted for. This meant people had received their medication as prescribed and on time.

Medicines were safely kept. Storing medicines safely helps prevent mishandling and misuse. The people we spoke with told us they were in agreement their medicines were managed for them. They confirmed they received their medicines when they needed them. One person who lived at the home said, "I get my medicine when I should do and always on time."

There were controlled drugs being dispensed at the time of our visit. This medication was locked in a separated facility. We checked the controlled drugs register and correct procedures had been followed. The correct dosage of remaining tablets was accurate to the medication record of one person we checked. This demonstrated medicines were managed safely.

# Is the service effective?

## Our findings

We found people who lived at the home received effective care because they were supported by a staff team that received training to support them. We also found by observing interactions with staff and people who lived at the home, staff had a good understanding of people's needs. For example one person had not put on a jumper over their shirt. A staff member informed others that the person needed to do so as they liked that particular article of clothing on in the morning. One comment from a person who lived at the home was, "The staff know what they are doing that breeds confidence to everyone."

The owner and registered manager had developed a range of training for staff which included induction training, on the job training and both in house and external training. Staff told us they received training to support them to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Training records for staff we looked at confirmed this. One staff member said, "We have so much training the manager always encourages us to take up training courses." Staff also told us they had been supported to obtain professional qualifications to support them in their role and development. One staff member said, "I do want to take some professional qualifications and the managers are right behind me."

The Willows Care Home had been awarded The Investors In People (IIP) Gold Standard Award in March 2016. The owner told us the gold award was for the top 7% of IIP accredited organisations across the UK. IIP is a national framework assisting organisations to improve services through effective management and development of staff. This award demonstrated the commitment to staff training by the owner and registered manager.

Care was based upon the principals of evidence-based, best practice. The service was proactive in ways to support people. For example, assessment tools were used that followed recognised research in the measuring and monitoring of people's anxiety and/or depression. This involved staff utilising the Rating Anxiety in Dementia [RAID] assessment. The RAID is a nationally recognised evidenced based assessment tool. These dynamic methods made a difference to individuals to live meaningful lives. For example a person was not well and required support as they were getting anxious. A staff member stopped what they were doing and immediately responded to the person. The staff member put their arms around them and spent some considerable time with the person. The person who lived at the home responded well and became much less agitated. A staff member said, "Because of our training we know how to react to people who are upset and anxious. I feel so much more confident we can give excellent care to people due to our knowledge." We later spoke with the person who lived at the home, they said, "The staff are so caring. I have not been well but they all calm me down at the drop of a hat."

We looked at staff supervision records to check staff were supported to carry out their duties effectively. Staff told us these supervision sessions took place on a regular basis. However staff also stated the registered manager was available any time to discuss any issues.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making particular decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that as far as possible

people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.

People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA. The application procedures for this in care homes and hospitals are called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

We spoke with the registered manager to assess their understanding of their responsibilities regarding making appropriate applications. From our discussions it was clear they understood the processes in place. Applications had been requested and in place at the time of our inspection. The registered manager told us they were aware of the processes in place and would ensure these were followed effectively every time. We did not see any restrictive practices during our inspection visit and observed people moving around the home freely.

We found staff catered for a selection of food preferences and dietary requirements for people who lived at the home. Meal provision was provided by an outside agency that prepared and delivered meals. For example meals were pre packed and frozen and contained all the nutrients required to help people eat healthily. People were offered an alternative if they did not wish to eat the planned meal.

At lunchtime two people asked us to sit with them. We observed the meal looked appetising and was presented well. Comments from people included, "The meals are generally good." Also, "You do get plenty and they are nice." One person said, "You cannot fault them but would like some home cooking now and then."

We observed the lunchtime meal. We found it to be a relaxed and social experience with people talking amongst themselves and with staff. We observed different portion sizes and choice of meals were provided as requested. We saw most people were able to eat independently and required no assistance with their food. The staff did not rush people allowing them sufficient time to eat and enjoy their lunch. People who did require assistance with their meal were offered encouragement and prompted sensitively.

We found the kitchen was clean and staff had recorded food and appliance checks to maintain effective food safety management. The Willows had been awarded a five-star rating following their last inspection by the 'food standards agency'. This graded the service as 'excellent' in relation to meeting food safety standards about cleanliness, food preparation and associated recordkeeping.

Nutritional risk assessments were completed and monitoring of people's weight took place. This was to ensure any issues or concerns would be highlighted and action taken to ensure peoples health was maintained.

Where people's health needs had changed, staff worked closely with other health professionals to ensure they received support to meet their needs. For example care records confirmed visits to the service from GP's when people required treatment. Documentation was updated to reflect the outcomes of professional visits and appointments.

## Is the service caring?

### Our findings

Without exception people who lived at the home and relatives we spoke with told us they experienced extremely high standards of care from well-trained caring and respectful staff. We were informed staff and the management team were always kind, pleasant and approachable. For example one person who lived at the home said, "Excellent staff who are always willing to help wherever they can." A relative said, "They are all so kind and caring." A survey we reviewed, which had been completed by a relative, commented, 'My [relative] is treated with dignity and respect. We are so glad we heard about the place.'

We spoke with staff about the attitudes of the management team in terms of the support and care they provided for people who lived at the home. Comments included, "[Registered manager] is so nice and caring, it rubs off on all the staff." Also from a relative, "People just love the attitude of the owner and manager, they are excellent in the way they care for people." Staff we spoke with were impressed by the dedication and high standards set by the management team. This was further demonstrated by the outstanding standards the service had achieved in caring awards. Awards included the Investors In people (IIP) Gold Standard Award. Also the beacon award for the 'National Gold Standards Framework (GSF)'.

Staff told us this made them more dedicated to provide a caring quality service for the people who lived at the home. We confirmed this by our observations of interactions between staff, management team and people who lived at the home. For example the registered manager was involved in the day to day conversations with people. We observed on many occasions the registered manager sitting and chatting with people; comforting them if they wished to be. One staff member said, "Yes I would have no hesitation in having my [relative] live here as I know the caring way in which residents come first is paramount to the manager and owner."

The aims and objectives of the service were to provide excellence in care. To help achieve this management team worked with the Care Home Liaison Team (CHLT). The purpose was to improve end of life care and reduce the number of people unnecessarily admitted to hospital. Procedures had been introduced to support this, such as specialist training of staff and close monitoring of people's health needs. This demonstrated the service was extremely caring. This was because systems were employed to ensure people continued to be cared for at The Willows Care Home.

We spoke with health professionals who stated the owner and registered manager were passionate about providing excellent care and improving people's lives. For example they told us that the work the home had undertaken with the CHLT had had a positive effect on the care for people at the home. This meant a reduction in falls, infections and hospital admissions.

Staff told us it was important for the management team that staff spent time socially with people who lived at the home to get to know them and form relationships. This was confirmed by our observation during the day. We found staff spent time with people as a group and individually on a one to one basis.

The owner and registered manager worked with the National Gold Standards Framework (GSF) in aiming to

achieve excellence in end of life care. The Willows Care Home had achieved the highest award from GSF because of their excellence in providing care. The GSF is an external organisation supporting providers to develop evidence-based approaches to optimising care for people approaching their end of life. The owner, registered manager and staff had received training and quality assurance assessments to check they were meeting the required standards. The service had received the highest award which was known as the 'beacon' award achieved by their excellence in care provision. One person who lived at the home said, "I am not surprised they have these awards. This place is outstanding in every way."

The Beacon status is the highest award in the Gold Standards Framework programme, for end of life care. At the time of achieving the award in 2014 The Willows Care Home was the only residential care home to hold Beacon status on The Fylde Coast area of Lancashire. Homes work towards the standards laid out in the framework, and are then independently assessed in order to attain accreditation. Since then the home has worked to maintain those standards and the owner has been asked to judge the 'national care home awards'. This showed how the service was thought of by outside agencies who look at how care homes support and care for people.

During this inspection there was no-one being cared for at the end of their life. However our observations and discussions with people who lived at the home confirmed the standards laid out in the framework benefitted people. Also not only those at the end of their life but all people who lived at the home. An example of the impact of this, we found a person had been admitted in 2015 near end of life with no mobility and extremely ill. Since then the person has thrived and shown remarkable recovery to the point of communicating with others and mobilising with aids. One staff member said, "It's credit to all the staff how [resident] has come on." A person who lived at the home said about the person, "[Resident], the staff had shown tremendous support and kindness to her that's why she is doing well."

Staff spoke with people in a respectful, caring manner and demonstrated an excellent awareness of their support and care requirements. For example we observed people came first. People who lived at the home were the centre of everything the staff did. Nothing was too much trouble. Staff always stopped what they were doing to take time out if a person wanted them to spend some time with them. A relative we spoke with said, "The staff are exceptional, the residents always matter as most important no matter what is going on. That is fed down by the management. A first class home." One staff member said, "That is what is so good about this home the residents always come first."

We observed all staff maintained people's privacy and dignity throughout our visit. For example, we saw staff knocked on all doors before entering. They also without exception call people by their preferred address. One person who lived at the home said, "The staff are like family and they treat me like that. They call me how I want to be known as. All the staff are so respectful and wonderful towards me." People had their bedroom doors closed if they chose to and their relatives were offered private space to visit them if they wished to.

Two staff members had been trained in and assigned the role of 'dignity champion' at the home. These staff had responsibility for identifying and circulating current good and excellent practice within the service. For example they had themes, including abuse or caring attitudes this would involve discussions with staff members on subjects. One staff member said, "We highlight different topics to give people the opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns." For example staff told us in practice when a person had been distressed or upset they would be more aware or confident of how to support the person. A staff member said, "It is a very good way of learning from staff when we have these discussions on different topics of how to deal with situations." Care was based upon the principals of evidence-based, best practice. Despite not being a dementia home the service was innovative and proactive in ways to support people who lived with

dementia. This made a difference to individuals to live meaningful lives.

We spoke with the registered manager about access to advocacy services should people require their guidance and support. They had information details should people and their families require the service. This ensured people's interests were represented and they could access appropriate services outside of the service to act on their behalf.

## Is the service responsive?

### Our findings

People who lived at the home and relatives told us they felt care provided met their individual needs. People also told us they responded to any changing needs that may happen. For example any changes in health or family issues. One person required a GP and during the visit the doctor called to see the person. This demonstrated the service responded when someone was not feeling well. One person who lived at the home said, "They always make sure we are well. Anything wrong and they would call the doctor right away."

Care records of two people we looked at were developed from the assessment stage to a plan of care, where the person who received the care and relatives were involved where possible. One person who lived at the home said, "Yes dear we all went through my history and health issues and planned out the best way to support me." People who had been unable to participate in the care planning process had been represented by a family member or advocate. Records were personalised to the individual to ensure support met their requirements. We found evidence of people's involvement in their care planning by their own signing of the documents.

Care records we looked at were informative and enabled us to identify how staff supported people with their daily routines and personal care needs. People's likes, dislikes, choices and preferences for their daily routine had been recorded. Care plans had been signed by staff confirming they had read them and understood the support people required.

One care record we looked at identified the person had been ill and suffered some weight loss. An action plan had been developed that included a weekly food intake chart and a visit from the GP. The person had gained some weight and records demonstrated the progress for staff to follow. This demonstrated the service responded to any health issues to ensure people received correct care and attention by appropriate health agencies. One staff member said, "We make sure any person who is not well is attended to promptly and action taken to make them better."

People who lived at the home told us they were encouraged to participate in a range of activities during the day. Comments from people about social events and activities included, "I really like the new activities and the gardening." Also, "I enjoy the games such as dominoes." We found people were supported to follow their social preferences on a one to one basis. For example one person enjoyed walking around the gardens and surrounding areas with a staff member. We observed this was provided during the day and the person had one to one support. The person who lived at the home said, "It is lovely that someone is able to take me out for my walks."

The owner and registered manager had a complaints procedure which was made available to people on their admission to the home. We saw the complaints procedure was also on display in the reception area for people to read. The procedure was clear in explaining how a complaint should be made and reassured people these would be responded to appropriately. Contact details for external organisations including social services and CQC had been provided should people wish to refer their concerns.

At the time of our inspection, the registered manager had not received any complaints in the previous 12 months. However people told us they knew how to make a complaint and who to contact they should wish to. One person who lived at the home said, "Never had reason to shout about anything. If I had a problem it would be sorted out straight away." Another person said, "[Registered manager] always checks to make sure everything is ok. I know if there was something that I was not happy about it would be dealt with."



## Is the service well-led?

### Our findings

Staff told us they found the management team at The Willows Care Home supportive and led the service extremely well. Comments from staff included, "[Registered manager] is an excellent manager, always has time to spend with you if you have an issue." Also, "The home is organised and well run a fantastic home for people." It provides a base to ensure the residents are cared for extremely well." In addition one staff member said, "Both [registered manager] and [owner] are fantastic, so good to work for and always supportive to staff and the residents. I would not want to work anywhere else."

The Willows Care Home had a statement of purpose which outlined the service provided. It also set out the service's mission statement to constantly strive to ensure that The Willows Care Home should always be a happy place in which everyone can enjoy their life, whether that be to live or to work. Throughout our visit we observed that the registered manager and staff acted according to these values when providing support to the people in their care.

We spoke with the registered manager about the culture at the home. They told us, "The resident is at the heart of everything we do. We want people to feel they are amongst friends and family. This is their home and we come to help them." Our observations and conversations with people who lived at the home and their family members confirmed that The Willows was a well led service.

Staff spoken with demonstrated they had a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Lines of accountability were clear and staff we spoke with stated they felt the owner and registered manager worked with them and showed leadership. Staff told us the registered manager was always helping out and one staff member said, "[Registered manager] is so helpful and just one of the staff really." The staff told us they felt the service was well led and they got along well as a staff team and supported each other.

Staff and resident meetings were held on a regular basis. We confirmed this by looking at minutes taken of meetings. Staff told us they attended meetings so that they could discuss any issues and look to improve the quality of care at the home.

The staff had daily handover meetings to discuss the day's events. These meetings discussed people's care and information was shared to staff coming on duty. The meetings kept people informed of any issues and enabled staff to discuss the running of The Willows Care Home. Staff told us these meetings were useful and kept staff up to date with information concerning people. This helped provide the best care for people.

We found people who lived at the home and family members were encouraged to comment about the quality of the service through bi-annual satisfaction questionnaires (surveys). We reviewed completed forms from the last survey December 2015. From 19 completed surveys 17 had excellent comments and two ticked the 'good' section to questions asked about the quality of care provided. Responses were very positive about the quality of care provided, the environment and management of the service. Comments included, 'we are all very happy, we could not ask for better care' Also, 'we couldn't ask for anything better'. The registered manager told us feedback from the data analysed would be given to staff at meetings. They

would then discuss areas of improvement and ensured the service continued to develop.

Other feedback we saw included, 'The staff not only meet all my friend's daily care needs, but have taken a great deal of trouble to get to know her. A strong emphasis has been placed on her dignity and well-being. My heartfelt thanks to everyone at The Willows.' Also, 'Through staff encouraging me, and promoting my independence I can now walk on my own with the use of a stick.' And, 'My mother spent her final few months in The Willows Care Home. She was treated with care, compassion, and most importantly dignity. The management and staff strive constantly to make The Willows a home rather than a care home whilst maintaining total professionalism. They all have a great sense of humour and a smile. This is a care home which is not depressing, it is cheerful, bright and pleasant and often filled with laughter. I cannot recommend the management and staff highly enough.'

The registered manager actively sought and acted upon the views of others. There was a strong emphasis on continually striving to improve, in order to deliver the best possible support for people who lived at the home. This was supported by a variety of systems and methods to assess and monitor the quality of the service. Regular audits had been completed and any identified issues following an audit had been addressed. This was confirmed by documentation we looked at and talking with the registered manager. Audits included monitoring the environment and equipment, maintenance of the building, medication and care records of people. This was to ensure they continued to develop and provide quality care for people.

In striving to improve to deliver the best possible support for people who lived at the home, The Willows has been recognised by the 'NHS Gold Standards Framework' for end of life care as a 'beacon' home, the highest possible award available. The owner and registered manager carried out additional checks throughout the year to ensure staff continued to meet the requirements of the standards. In 2014 The Willows Care Home was a finalist in the 'National Care Home Awards' held in London, and became a runner up. One person who lived at the home told us, "When you know about these awards and see how fantastic the management and staff are towards people it gives you confidence this is a very good home."

The owner and registered manager worked closely with the local authority contracts team in providing outstanding care. The service was required to meet standards as care providers and staff engaged with this team in auditing all related processes. The local authority told us The Willows were outstanding because their records were excellent and the management team and staff were totally committed to improving people's lives. Comments from staff included, "It is so well run and everybody is tuned in to provide the best care for the residents."