

Real People Ltd

Real People Ltd

Inspection report

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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

About the service: Real People provides a service offering community support, supported living, community respite care and support in transition periods for young people and adults who have learning disabilities and other associated needs. The support provided aims to enable people to live as independently as possible.

People's experience of using this service:

- People told us that staff members were very kind and caring and they looked forwards to their visits. People received exceptional care from staff and the management of the service. The provider truly cared about each person as an individual. And was led by an excellent management team dedicated to delivering the highest standards of care.
- People felt safe and the staff who provided their support made them feel secure. The provider had robust safeguarding procedures in place and staff received training on the subject. Staff understood their responsibilities. The provider supported people to take risks but to remain safe and understand their own safety.
- Staff were safely recruited, and necessary pre-employment checks were completed before staff commenced in post. Staff received a good range of training and support including induction, supervision and appraisals to ensure they were able to deliver their roles safely. Staff felt well supported and equipped to perform their duties.
- People supported with medicines were safe and procedures for risk management was robust.
- Staff were trained in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and assumed people had the capacity to make decisions unless they had been assessed as being unable to do so. People's mental capacity had been considered as part of the care planning process.
- Staff encouraged people to have an active role in their care. They were supported to complete aspects of their care that were within their abilities. They empowered people to gain their independence and supported them to improve and enjoy their lives.
- People were involved in their care reviews, they were given plenty of notice of the review, so they could invite representatives to attend with them, and consider questions and concerns they may want to raise.
- The provider was very responsive to people's needs, and those of their relatives. The provider went the extra mile to ensure that people were living full lives that had meaning to them and engaged them at every opportunity.

- Staff told us they maintained people's dignity and privacy and promoted their independence. People knew how to complain about the provider however there had been no complaints since we last inspected the service.
- People and staff praised the registered manager and people told us they believed the provider to be very well-led. The staff and management shared the same vision of care and excellent support for people at all times. Audits completed by the provider ensured that all aspects of care were in line with best practice and safe. The provider sought feedback from people receiving a service using an annual quality assurance survey.
- The service met the characteristics of outstanding in care and good in all other areas during the last inspection.

Overall rating at last inspection: Good (report published 19 August 2016).

Why we inspected: This was a scheduled inspection based on the service's previous rating.

Follow up: We will continue to monitor information that we receive about the service and will return to inspect as per our re-inspection programme or sooner if we have concerns about the service.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

The service was safe

Details are in our Safe findings below.

Good ●

Is the service effective?

The service was effective

Details are in our Effective findings below.

Good ●

Is the service caring?

The service was exceptionally caring

Details are in our Caring findings below.

Outstanding ☆

Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive

Details are in our Responsive findings below.

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

The service was outstandingly well-led

Details are in our Well-Led findings below.

Outstanding ☆

Real People Ltd

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection:

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

Inspection team:

- The inspection was carried out by one inspector

Service and service type:

- Real People Ltd provides a service offering community support, supported living, community respite care and support in transition periods for young people and adults who have learning disabilities and other associated needs.
- The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of inspection:

- We gave short notice of the inspection because the registered manager and staff were often out supporting people with daily activities. We needed to be sure that all the necessary people were available to speak to.
- The inspection site visit was on 14 and 16 January 2019. We visited the office location to see the registered manager and to review care records and policies and procedures.
- We contacted people by telephone about their experiences of the service on 15 February 2019. We experienced a slight delay in making these calls due to internal inspector changes.

What we did:

- Before we inspected we reviewed the information we already held about the service. We reviewed the provider information return, (PIR). The PIR is submitted by the provider annually and contains evidence about how the service is performing and developments they intend to make. The PIR helps us to plan our inspection.
- We looked at notifications sent to us by the provider. Notifications are reports about specific events that

the provider must tell us about by law.

- During the inspection we looked at three staff records, three people's care records, we saw policies and procedures, records of accidents and incidents and complaints. We looked at quality assurance reports and audits of the service.
- We spoke with the registered manager, the deputy manager, one person who used the service and four relatives of people using the service. We also gained feedback from nine staff members and two professionals that support the service regularly.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm

Good: People were safe and protected from avoidable harm. Legal requirements were met.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People told us that staff made them feel safe. One person told us, "Yes, make me feel confident with cooking." Another person's relative said, "Yes definitely. They look after (relative) all the time, they have eyes everywhere!"
- People were cared for by staff who had been trained in safeguarding. Staff told us they were confident that they could speak with the registered manager if they had concerns about how a colleague was caring for people. They knew about the process of 'whistle-blowing' and would do so if necessary.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- When people were referred to the service, the registered manager completed an initial assessment. The assessment identified environmental risks in people's homes.
- Risks to people were assessed as part of their care assessments. People were involved in how risks to their safety was assessed and recorded. One person said about a recent review of their risk assessments and their involvement, "Yes, Wednesday last week. Makes me feel good."
- The provider supported people to live full lives and assessed risks with them to ensure they remained safe whilst still doing the things they wanted. They involved professionals to support people with how to be safe in relationships and how to live safely on their own. They had also set up a safety group for a certain group of people with the support of external professionals to teach them about personal safety, the dangers of social media, personal conduct and how to say no, and general safety with strangers. The provider had also invited the fire service to come and speak to people about fire safety in their own homes. They also provided people with a 'safety pack' which contained all the information they might need in the event of an emergency.
- Accidents and incidents were recorded, and reports submitted to the registered manager who completed the required notifications to Care Quality Commission or organisations such as the Health and Safety Executive.
- The provider enabled people to make informed decisions about how to manage the risks to their own wellbeing. One person had a history of self-neglect and keeping items for too long. Staff worked with them in a positive and inclusive way to ensure they kept their environment safe whilst maintaining choice and control.

Staffing and recruitment; Using medicines safely; Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Staff were safely recruited, and all the required checks had taken place. Staff told us that when they first started employment they visited people with either a member of the office or a member of staff who knew

the person well. The registered manager described the process as an introduction, the idea is; support staff and the person to get to know each other over a period of time and the introducer will be able to assess whether or not the new member of staff and person will gel. They said it was vital in ensuring that people got to know people to ensure they were not anxious.

- Staff were always on time, people did not experience any late or missed calls and told us that staff were constant, and they received from the same staff and the provider made sure that people met new staff before changes occurred.

- Staff completed training in administering medicines before supporting people and received regular competency-based reviews of their practice. A relative told us that as long as staff were authorised and trained they were happy for them to support with medication and another confirmed that they were happy with the support their relative was receiving with their medicines.

- The service kept a 'learning log' in which they evidenced how the service learns from incidents and accidents to improve the service and ensure that events do not reoccur.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people's care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence

Good: People's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law; Ensuring consent to care and treatment in line with law and guidance

- 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 were supported by staff who had been trained in the MCA 2005 and who understood the five main principles of the Act. Staff asked for consent from people before providing care and support and recognised the importance of people making choices and remaining in control of their lives. Care plans reflected that consideration had been given to decision making and capacity.
- People's needs were assessed when they were referred to the service. Care plans were person centred and showed an integrated approach to assessment and care planning in that all areas of the person's life were considered and planned for as needed.
- The management of the service placed the safety and care of people first. There had been an instance where the registered manager knew they would not be able to care for a person safely who had been referred to them. They worked with professionals to get another provider that could provide the care the person needed. The registered manager said, "The job is not about the money at Real People. We actually care that people receive the right care for them and that staff are capable and providing excellent care."

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Staff completed an induction and mandatory training when first employed by the provider. New staff completed shadowing shifts with established care staff.
- People told us they thought their care staff were well trained. One relative said, "From what I see yes, (relative) always tells me what they do, (relative) is happy with them."
- Staff participated in regular supervisions with their line manager. One staff member told us, "Yes always. I receive regular supervision sessions and feel able to approach any of the management team at any time."

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet; Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care; Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support

- People and their relatives told us that staff knew people well and supported them where required to cook

and complete their shopping. People were supported with their nutritional needs when required and as per their care needs assessments.

- The provider worked very well with other organisations to ensure that people got the right support and improved in health and wellbeing.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect

Outstanding: People were truly respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; equality and diversity

- People told us that staff were truly kind and exceptionally caring. One person said, "Yes, they are always kind to me." One relative told us, "Yes, Staff treat service users like they are one of their own family." Another relative told us, "(Registered Manager) and her team are truly amazing. Everything I wanted and more." Another relative said, "Real people was an absolute godsend. All the staff buy into (registered manager's) approach of caring for people as a priority."
- The staff did not only care for people who used the service but also those close to them. There were instances where a person close to a person using the service was in crisis and although they were not being supported by Real People the management and staff went beyond the call of duty to help them, worked with professionals and supported them through their difficulties. They did this because this person mattered to the person they cared for.
- The provider was exceptional in the way they supported people to access the community and not become socially isolated and to make new friends and connections. One person was very withdrawn in social situations, but staff worked with the person to regain their confidence and a recent photo we saw of them with a big smile on their face told the story. The registered manager said, "This is such a big deal this photo. It's not always the extravagant obvious things that are the big things. This smile into a camera is a huge achievement." The same person now also goes on holidays and with the support of staff, slowly built up 30 seconds at a time to use the phone to call their loved ones and share their experiences with them, connecting them. The person had gained valuable contact with their relatives and their relatives now got regular updates on their lives and how much they were enjoying themselves, this has made a really significant difference and change to the person's life.
- The provider used wonderful group activities to help people get to know each other and respect each other's differences. The groups were very diverse, and it taught people about others' beliefs and differences and with the support of staff people have learnt that they are all different but have their own strengths and weaknesses. The management team used this knowledge and matched people with staff that had the skills to help them improve their own skills and lives. For example, one staff member was a very good cook and a person wanted to learn to cook, so they matched them up and this had greatly improved this person's cookery skills which meant so much to their wellbeing and made them more confident about their ability to be independent.
- People were asked questions about topics such as religious beliefs, ethnicity and sexuality at their initial assessment and although the service was currently not providing services to anyone who observed specific religious practices, for example, they had policies and procedures in place to ensure that people were supported according to their beliefs.

- The registered manager told us that they are very aware of ensuring people have equal opportunities. They said, "We help people live their real lives as Real People," meaning that they worked to support people to live the lives they chose and enjoyed. Throughout our inspection we saw this put into practice successfully.

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care

- The provider completed all reviews with people or their relatives where appropriate. One person said, "We plan the day together, if I want to go shopping and what I want to buy." A relative told us, "The service cares about (relative's) everyday life and our futures" and went on to say that the provider was always in contact with them to ensure that any changes or support requirements were updated with them straight away.
- The management and staff shared the same vision of people being part of a family and that all their views and choices mattered equally. One staff member told us, "Each person we support is an individual and has different needs, so it can vary but essentially by ensuring informed choice is given with everything from what they would like for dinner to activities or clothing choice."
- The registered manager told us that each person they cared for was different and therefore the way they communicated with people was different for each person. Some people texted the office team daily to update them on their day, whilst others they would approach more formally to see how they were doing. This gave people a sense of belonging and security, knowing that the staff were interested in their lives and available to them all the time.
- They also used the recruitment process to ensure that the right staff were matched with people to support them and ensure a long-lasting relationship between staff, people and their families.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- The way the provider cared for people meant that they could make positive changes in their lives. There were so many examples of people's quality of life improving because of the management and staff support. These examples included people who were supported to be more independent, taking control of their lives, learning about being part of society. Another person who was initially on a 24-hour care package, supported to be more independent and now on a reduced support plan because they had regained confidence and independence. This was a real achievement for this person and made a significant difference to their life.
- Several other people gained skills like travelling alone on public transport to go to a day service they enjoyed. Some people were given a voice by staff supporting them to become more confident. One person was previously very shy and isolating themselves and with staff support had come out of their shell and now had an active life, engaging with others and accessing the community. This had made a really positive change to their life.
- Staff were passionate about person-centred care and giving people choice in their daily lives. One staff member told us, "We teach the service users how to live independently whilst being on shift with them. To help give the service user guidance in day to day tasks." Another staff member explained about choice and dignity, "Making sure that each individual is treated with respect and dignity and are always offered an informed choice. Promoting daily tasks within their homes and also giving as much choice as possible. Treating each individual in a person-centred way."
- The provider encouraged people to express themselves as they felt that this was the only way people can continue to live a fulfilled life. People were encouraged to maintain their skills. One relative said about their relative's maintaining their independence, "Yes as much as possible. Try and make (relative) do things for themselves." One staff member explained, "I believe that everybody involved in the service live full lives because of the support that we offer, each individual is treated in a person-centred way and activities within a group setting allows everybody to socialise with friends. We promote independence which helps each individual to feel fulfilled."
- Staff told us they would ask before providing support and when assisting someone with personal care

would ensure the person was covered, curtains drawn, and doors closed. One member of staff told us "We always make sure that each individual is treated with respect and dignity and they are always offered an informed choice." They went on to say "We promote daily tasks within their homes and also giving as much choice as possible. Treating each individual in a person-centred way."

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people's needs

Good: People's needs were met through good organisational delivery and person-centred approaches from all staff.

Planning personalised care to meet people's needs, preferences, interests and give them choice and control

- The provider was very good in their responsiveness and personalised care. People praised the provider for the way they received their support. One person told us about the service and the leadership and said, "10 out of 10". A relative told us that they were so pleased with the service that they had recommended it to others. Another relative said that the staff were, "All for the service user, wants to support you."
- People were always involved in their care and supported to engage in the review of their care and truly be a part of how their care was being delivered. One person's relative told us that staff always involved them, were kind and knew their relative well. A new staff member said, "I have been working here for three months and honestly I have to say that everything they do is lead by the person."
- People were part of the service. One person described staff as family. The registered manager described the service in the same way when talking about staff and people using the service. They engaged with people on every given occasion. All staff and people using the service did Secret Santa together over Christmas, which was very much enjoyed by all. One staff member told us, "I enable the people I support to make choices about the way they live and the care they receive by always working in a person-centred way. I aim to include and encourage service users to be involved in making decisions about their lives."
- People told us staff went the extra mile to ensure people's needs were met in line with their preferences and to maintain their independence. One relative told us that staff were always available and supported them by collecting their relative from different places and bringing them home. They also said they never had to stress or worry, staff always provided care for their relative's needs. Another relative explained how staff supported the person to call them after days out to share their experience with them. They also ensured that the person did day to day tasks for themselves where they were able to, such as collecting their own drinks, which had increased their confidence.
- Staff told us that they felt the people they supported were involved in the service, they were encouraged to regularly choose activities they wish to undertake as a group or as an individual on their own with staff. There were two group holidays each year; also, friends often chose to go away together with staff for support. People were always fully involved in the care they received from staff. And staff believed that the aim of the organisation was to offer excellent support to service users in order to enhance their lives.
- One staff member explained, "Because of the support real People provide they (people) do get to live their full lives, supporting them to be independent in their own homes and we encourage and support them to have a social life with friends i.e. inclusion days and nights." These were social events where people got together to mix and enjoy time together.
- Care plans made clear who was responsible for which aspects of people's care and support. These were personalised and written in a way that really explained how to care for people the way that was personal to them and ensured their wishes and choices was brought to life including aims and goals they had. Care

plans went into great detail about how to communicate well with people and how to keep them safe. The level of detail was exceptional.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- People felt confident that the service would deal with any concerns they raised. One relative said about a recent issue they raised, "Yes, it was dealt with quickly. I have no problems." Another relative when asked about any concerns or complaints raised, "Never had to." Everyone else we engaged with told us they have never had to raise any concerns with the service and found the management team open and easy to engage with at all times.

End of life care and support

- We found people's support plans contained clear information with regards to people's end of life care arrangements. This showed that the provider was being proactive in ensuring that appropriate arrangements were in place should they be required. The deputy manager confirmed that they were not supporting anyone on end of life care at the time of the inspection but that they had clear guidance in place to support people in a person-centred way and would link with professionals to provide people with a dignified death.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-Led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture

Outstanding: Service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the service culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

Planning and promoting person-centred, high-quality care and support; and how the provider understands and acts on duty of candour responsibility

- People couldn't praise the provider enough and told us they had faith in the registered manager and staff of the service. A relative told us, "I can always call," when asked about the registered manager's accessibility. Another relative said, "I can always call her, she is very helpful. I am happy with that situation."
- Everyone we spoke with loved the service and said they would recommend the service to others. One relative said, "Most definitely." A person using the service said, "Yes, they are good."
- The service had a very motivated, stable and committed staff team. Staff members told us they thought the provider was very good to work for and the management team supported them. One staff member told us, "Working for Real people has been a great experience and really rewarding. Team work has always been a priority and working here feels like being part of a family."
- Another staff member told us, "Real people is a brilliant company to work for. They are very understanding of any circumstances that come up in our own family life's. All the staff are brilliant and very understanding and supportive."
- Healthcare and community professionals told us the leadership was exceptional and ensured people received safe and high-quality service. A healthcare professional commented, "We can only commend the fantastic work that is done by the service, we as professionals only hope that more services take a leaf out the service's book, every time we contact the management team there is always a great willingness and commitment in everything they do for people using the service." Another professional added, "I am yet to meet a management team that is as fully dedicated to ensuring all of the people using the service are at the centre of everything the service has to offer."
- The registered manager was very experienced and was dedicated to ensuring that all staff at the service shared their vision. They provided learning opportunities to improve staff skills, and regularly worked alongside staff to ensure that they remained immersed in the service delivery and people's experiences, to continually improve the care people received.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements

- The organisation strongly believed in supporting staff to develop and invested time in their skills, including developing their leadership skills. The deputy manager had been trained by the registered manager to manage in their absence and was an excellent support and management team member. The registered manager also recognised other staff's potential and created roles and recognised training for them to excel

and develop.

- Staff had regular appraisals and supervisions where they have the opportunity to discuss their development and any suggestions or issues regarding the service. They were highly motivated and enthusiastic about their jobs and very proud to be a part of the service. One staff told us it is, "A joy to work for a very supportive and understanding organisation."
- Staff told us that the management team cared about them and the people and no issue was too big or small, they would always speak to them and gain support. The registered manager told us, "Staff all have management contacts and know they can contact us at any point, whether that be to talk working or personal." One staff told us, "They have been very supportive to me in times of health and personal situations."
- The provider had a strongly collaborative and inclusive culture. Their ethos was team work in all instances. The deputy manager told us, "We work as a team and no one person is too big for any job. In the situations management need to step up, they do." Staff felt involved and that their opinions and voice mattered. One staff member mentioned, "So far it has been the best job I've had. I feel very supported, included and valued by everyone I work with at real people."
- The provider sent annual quality assurance forms to staff, people and outside professionals. The outcome of these were used to continually improve the service.
- The provider also carried out regular reviews with people and the families to ensure they are happy with the service. The deputy manager explained, "We also have good personal relationships where they know we can be approached."
- The registered manager ensured that statutory notifications were completed in a timely manner.
- The registered manager understood their responsibilities under the Duty of Candour. The Duty of Candour is a regulation that must be met by all providers and details the actions that they should follow when things go wrong, including making an apology and being open and transparent.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics; Continuous learning and improving care; Working in partnership with others

- The provider was an integral part of the community. The registered manager consistently engaged with people who used the service and staff to develop services that reflected the needs and preferences of people living in the community. The registered manager had set up several community groups so that people could engage with each other and gain confidence and learn how to socialise. Other groups were created with the help of outside professionals to teach people about personal safety and help improve their wellbeing whilst protecting them, because they were so vulnerable. This gave them confidence in their ability to keep themselves safe, whilst engaging with others and their community, making them less isolated and more independent. Greatly improving their personal sense of achievement and wellbeing.
- The registered manager told us that their aim was to support both the person and their family to ensure they felt comfortable using the service. The registered manager informed us that they held meetings with relatives and people using the service as this gave the provider an opportunity to identify specific areas of improvement and gave relatives an opportunity to give feedback to staff.
- Staff felt valued and listened to at all times. They were involved in the running of the service and because of the open family-style approach followed by the management team, everyone using the service felt this way too. Some people communicated with the office staff daily, which made them feel connected to the running of the service and made them feel they mattered.
- One staff member told us, "So far it has been the best job I've had. I feel very supported, included and valued by everyone I work with at Real People." Another staff member told us, "This is the best job I have had, I love going to work, I think this is an excellent company to work for. The training is regular, and management are always on hand to help with any questions I have."
- The registered manager found inventive ways to improve the service and engage staff, whilst developing

them to continually deliver excellent care. For example, the service had a 'colleague of the year' scheme, where staff are awarded for their outstanding work. Staff voted for each other to ensure their inclusion in this award choice. The registered manager said, "It is important to empower my staff. They are a supportive team and it is important for me to show my appreciation."

- The registered manager placed a strong emphasis on using past and present incidents as learning experiences for both staff and people using the service. This included having a learning log which detailed each incident and actions taken to resolve the incident. In cases where this would not work the manager and staff looked at alternative ways of supporting people. It was evident throughout our inspection that the management and staff were dedicated to continual improvement.
- They also held an annual general meeting to speak to staff about future plans and improvements.
- The registered manager gave examples of how things have changed because of reviewing their practices, feedback and staff input. Paperwork was now more robust and came in so regularly that they had a clear picture of people's needs at all times.
- The provider had also created a newsletter for staff, for transparency and to improve communication. This included giving staff timely information and discussing learning topics. The registered manager confirmed that a newsletter will be starting soon for people who use the service after a recently concluded consultation with them to get their views on this.
- The registered manager worked collaboratively with other organisations, charities, health and community professionals to plan and discuss people's on-going support within the service and looked at ways on how to improve people's quality of life. They used the information they gathered to make positive and life affirming changes to people's daily living. For example, they had engaged with commissioners to support people to seek appropriate placements even when they could not support, they worked with MENCAP and other services, such as the fire department and a charity to support people with living safely in their own homes to enrich their lives and promote their independence. We found countless more instances where the provider worked with a multitude of professionals and people's families and friends to improve their lives.