

Weston-super-Mare Free Church Housing Association Limited

The Links

Inspection report

7 Uphill Road North
Weston Super Mare
Somerset
BS23 4NE

Tel: 01934625869
Website: www.abbeycare.co.uk

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16 February 2021

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Inspected but not rated

Is the service safe?

Inspected but not rated

Summary of findings

Overall summary

The Links is a residential care home registered to provide accommodation and personal care for up to 13 older people, some of whom may be living with dementia.

We found the following examples of good practice:

We looked around the ground floor of the home, seeing the two reception areas, the main hallway, some of the bedrooms and the nearly completed visitor's area. We kept our movements to a minimum and complied with the provider's visitor's policy. Those areas of the home we saw were clean and tidy. The care team maintained the cleanliness of the home. 'COVID-19' cleaning schedules had been introduced and three times during a 24-hour period, all touch points were cleaned. The registered manager and senior care staff monitored work practice, checked on the cleanliness of all areas of the home, and staff compliance with wearing personal protective equipment (PPE).

Staff entered the home via the front door. They were required to wear a face mask and change from their outdoor clothing into their uniforms. After washing their hands, they entered the hallway and their temperature was checked. Hand sanitising gels were available in both areas and in various places throughout the home.

Visits from healthcare professionals such as GPs, community-based nurses, and allied healthcare professionals were kept to a minimum. Where people needed health care support, the registered manager used the telephone, emails and video calls to share information and gain advice. Nine of the 11 people had already received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Most of the care team had also already received their first dose.

The home has been closed to visitors for the last six weeks but before this an empty room at the rear of the house was being used as a visitor's room. A visitor's hub was being constructed in readiness for when family were able to visit again. Visits from family had to be pre-booked and the visitor was only allowed into the home after a negative lateral flow test (LFT), hand washing, and completion of a health questionnaire. The LFT was undertaken in an outside area. Visitors were escorted to and away from the visiting area and were not permitted to access other areas of the home. The provider had a visitor's policy and a copy of this had been issued to all family and friends.

People were being supported to stay in contact with their family and friends. The care team helped them with telephone calls and video calls. The registered manager had set up a social media group with people's families and sent a generic email each week saying what had and is happening at The Links. At Christmas the staff had held a video party and people's families were able to watch whilst their family member opened presents.

Staff socially distanced from their colleagues and people as much as they were able. When they were delivering personal care, they wore a face shield and apron as well. Each staff member had their own face

shield, and these were cleaned at the end of each shift. Some of the residents remained in their bedroom each day. Those who used the communal areas during the day have been cared for in a 'social bubble' with a small number of other people. The lounge room and the dining room were both changed so each room was a lounge/diner. The rooms have now been returned to a separate lounge and dining room.

The home had admitted two people since the start of the pandemic. Their admission policy had been amended to include two recent negative COVID-19 results prior to admission and then isolation in the bedroom for a 14-day period. If a person was hospitalised, upon return to the home, the procedures would be followed. If the home had an outbreak of COVID-19, people would be isolated in their rooms and the staff would work following the provider's barrier nursing policy.

All staff completed infection prevention and control training as part of the provider's mandatory training programme. Additional training had been arranged on barrier nursing, pandemic awareness, hand hygiene, the COVID-19 toolkit, donning and doffing PPE, and LFT device training. The staff team were tested each week for COVID-19: once a week with the full laboratory test (known as a PCR test) and twice a week with a lateral flow test. People who live in The Links were tested each month however if they were symptomatic, they would be re-tested and isolated until their test results were known.

The service had updated all their infection prevention and control policies and procedures, and had a business continuity plan in place. The registered manager and provider had regular contact with community health services and the local authority COVID team. They kept abreast of any changes in policy provided by Public Health England, CQC and the Department of Health and Social Care.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

We were assured the service were following safe infection prevention and control procedures to keep people safe.

Inspected but not rated

The Links

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.

As part of CQC's response to the coronavirus pandemic we are looking at the preparedness of care homes in relation to infection prevention and control. This was a targeted inspection looking at the infection control and prevention measures the provider has in place.

This inspection took place on 16th February 2021 and was announced.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Our findings

S5 How well are people protected by the prevention and control of infection?

- We were assured that the provider was preventing visitors from catching and spreading infections.
- We were assured that the provider was meeting shielding and social distancing rules.
- We were assured that the provider was admitting people safely to the service.
- We were assured that the provider was using PPE effectively and safely.
- We were assured that the provider was accessing testing for people using the service and staff.
- We were assured that the provider was promoting safety through the layout and hygiene practices of the premises.
- We were assured that the provider was making sure infection outbreaks could be effectively prevented or managed.
- We were assured that the provider's infection prevention and control policy was up to date.