

Aspen Care Limited

Aspen Lodge Care Home

Inspection report

222 Weston Lane
Southampton
Hampshire
SO19 9HL

Tel: 02380421154
Website: www.aspencare.co.uk

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15 November 2016

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Requires Improvement ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

We carried out a focused inspection on 12 and 15 November 2016 in response to concerning information about staff and management of the home. This report only covers our findings in relation to the key questions, 'Is the service safe?' and 'Is the service well-led?'

Aspen Lodge Care Home provides accommodation and care for up to 20 older people with mental health needs or people living with dementia. At the time of our inspection there were 17 people living at the home.

The home had a registered manager who had been registered since November 2010. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission 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.

People and their relatives told us they felt safe living at the home. Staff had received training in safeguarding adults and knew how to identify, prevent and report abuse.

There were enough staff to keep people safe and people were treated with kindness and respect.

People liked living at the home and felt it was well-led. There was an open and transparent culture. Staff and people told us they were encouraged to talk to the manager about any concerns.

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 ●

People and their families told us they felt safe living at the home and risks were managed appropriately.

There were enough staff to meet people's needs and staff knew how to identify, prevent and report abuse.

Is the service well-led?

Requires Improvement ●

The provider had still not notified CQC of all incidents' involving people living at the home.

Staff spoke highly of the registered manager, who they told us was approachable and supportive.

Aspen Lodge 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 was a focused inspection in response to concerning information about staff and management of the home. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

The inspection took place on 12 and 15 November 2016 and was unannounced. The inspection team consisted of two inspectors. We previously carried out an unannounced comprehensive inspection of this service on 26 November and 01 & 07 December 2015. We received concerns in relation to staff and management. As a result we undertook a focused inspection to look into those concerns. This report only covers our findings in relation to these issues. You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Aspen Lodge Care Home on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

We reviewed the previous inspection report and information we held about the service including notifications. A notification is information about important events which the service is required to send us by law.

We spoke with ten people living at the home and three family members. We also spoke with the registered provider and seven care staff members. We observed staff providing care and support to people in the lounges, looked at care plans and associated records for three people living in the home. We checked minutes of meetings, accidents and incidents records, quality assurance records, people's financial contracts and some of the provider's policies and procedures.

We could not change the rating for safe and well-led from good and requires improvement because to do so requires consistent good practice over time. We will check this during our next planned comprehensive inspection.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

We carried out a focused inspection as we had concerns about insufficient staff employed at the home and that staff were uncaring which might impact on the care people would receive especially at weekends. Concerns were also raised about the boiler breaking down and as a result two bedrooms were always cold.

We had received concerns that staff brought their children into the home at the weekends while they are working resulting in young children are running around the home and distracting staff, causing a risk to people living at the home. We also received concerns that the cook was no longer working at the home and had not been replaced which meant staff had to cook meals as well as carry out caring duties. However, we found that these concerns were unfounded.

At this inspection we found there were sufficient staff to meet people's care needs. A family member told us, "Always enough staff here." During the inspection we saw that staff were not rushed and responded promptly and compassionately to people's requests for support. We carried out the first day of our inspection at the weekend and found no children at the home. We spoke to staff who told us that this happened just once, and the staff members children were only at Aspen Lodge for a short time, and were picked up shortly afterwards by a family member when they could get to the home. The staff member had been required to cover an additional shift at short notice. Staff informed us that a new cook had been employed at the home, but was on holiday when we undertook our inspection. This was confirmed by a person living at the home who told us there had been a new cook.

Staffing levels were determined by the number of people using the service and their needs. All the staff we spoke with felt there were enough staff on duty. One staff member told us, "I feel there is enough staff. It is quite sufficient." Another staff member said, "If a member of staff goes off sick staff are happy to help." We saw this on our inspection as the cook was on holiday and a staff member had come in to help with the cooking. They prepared and cooked lunch for people and told us, they would be returning in the evening for about an hour to prepare the evening meal. They said "The manager is really flexible with shifts for me as I have children and tells me if the kids are ill no problem stay at home, he's really good. Which is why I am helping out today in the kitchen."

People and their families told us they felt safe and were treated with respect. People said they felt comfortable around the staff and they told us staff supported them. One person said, "Lovely here, honestly nothing is too much trouble, lovely crowd." Another person told us, "Staff here are a lovely bunch and very good. A button came off my skirt and staff sewed it back on for me straight away." A family member told us, "If mum is worried about something staff are very good. No complaints at all or concerns all the staff seem to look after her very well." Another family member said, "Its peace of mind for us to know she is looked after well, I don't need to worry." They also told us, "I feel really happy with everything, staff will let us know if any worries."

We had received concerns that two bedrooms were always cold as the boiler did not work. At this inspection we went into these rooms one was empty but the heating was on, and was not cold. We spoke to the person

who occupied the other room and they told us, it was always lovely and warm. A family member said, "It's always warm here." A staff member told us "If the boiler breaks down the manager gets people in to sort it out. We have had no problems with it lately." We spoke to the registered manager about the boiler who told us, the boiler in the kitchen is only a year old and the other boiler is serviced regularly. Records showed they had an up to date copy of their landlord's gas certificate. This confirmed the boiler was well maintained.

At this inspection we identified concerns regarding the environment. Risk assessments had been completed for the environment and safety checks were conducted regularly of electrical equipment. A fire risk assessment was in place and weekly checks of the fire alarm, fire doors and emergency lighting were carried out. Records showed that staff had received fire training and staff were aware of the action to take in the event of a fire, and fire safety equipment was maintained appropriately. People had individualised evacuation plans in case of a fire, and fire safety equipment was maintained appropriately. However, there was a recommendation from a fire service earlier in the year to upgrade the system to comply with current British standards. We spoke to the manager who has since arranged a meeting next week with the service provider about upgrading the system.

Staff showed that they understood people's risks and we saw that people's health and wellbeing risks were assessed, monitored and reviewed regularly. We saw that people were supported in accordance with their risk management plans. However, on the first day of our inspection we found substances hazardous to health were accessible to people in the garden. These were not secure and placed people at risk. On the second day of our inspection these substances had been locked away. The registered manager who told us, "This was a mistake and they are normally locked away in the shed."

Staff had the knowledge and confidence to identify safeguarding concerns and acted on these to keep people safe. All staff received an update in safeguarding training less than six months ago. One staff member told us, "If I had any concerns I would report it to my manager. If they didn't take any action I would report it to CQC."

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

We carried out a focused inspection as we had concerns about how staff were treated by the registered manager who was also the registered provider. We were told that as a result a lot of staff had left Aspen Lodge Care Home. Concerns were also raised that not all incidents were being reported to the Care Quality Commission.

At our inspection on 26 November and 01 and 07 December 2015 we found that the registered manager had not notified CQC of incidents of altercations with other people living at the home. The home had sent us in notifications and the last one being received in June 2016. The registered manager informed us that the incidents which required reporting had then stopped occurring. At the inspection records showed that staff were monitoring people's behaviour on a monitoring chart and were aware of the procedures to follow, if an incident occurred.

Following the last inspection, we issued an overall rating of 'Good' to the service. Providers are required to display their ratings conspicuously on the premises and on their website. We saw on the first day of our inspection that the previous rating was not displayed in the home. We spoke to staff who informed us that the report is usually in the entrance of the home and a visitor must have taken it with them. On the second day of our inspection the report was on display and the registered manager informed us they would also print out a poster showing the homes rating to place in a frame, so if the full report was taken away the rating would still be displayed. A check of the provider's website showed the rating was displayed there.

People and their families felt the home was well-led and confirmed that they spoke with the registered manager often. One person told us, "Manager will pop in and ask if everything is okay. Staff really care here." A family member told us, "Mum is really happy here. It's nice here like one big family." They also told us, "Manager is very good and goes above and beyond." Another family member said, "I look forward to visiting here and I would definitely recommend this home. The manager is always around. He's here all the time and keeps me updated."

All the staff we spoke to enjoyed working at the home and spoke positively about the registered manager, who they described as "approachable" and "supportive." One staff member told us, "I'm happy here such a lovely place to work. Staff and residents are just like a family." Another staff member said, "Manager is very good and open and supportive to all the staff here. The manager encourages us to improve ourselves. The door is always open and they are a very good person. His priority is always the residents."

We spoke to staff and people's families about the concerns that lots of staff had left the homes employment. A family member told us, "New staff seem to fit in the manager seems to get the right staff here." One staff member told us, "I've been here six months and before I started lots of staff had left. But since I have been here only one member of staff has left. I don't know why they left." Other staff told us they didn't know why staff had left but felt that some had gone onto other employment or retired. All the staff felt there were no concerns and felt the new staff were working well, and there was now a really good team of staff working at the home. One staff member said, "The new staff are fitting in really well." Another staff member said, "All

the staff are a very good team. We understand each other and work well as a team and I am very happy." Some staff we spoke to said the manager just wants everything right for the people living here. One staff member told us, "He is very strict with us about our job. You have to do your job well he just wants everything to be right and the home nice and clean." The staff member felt that maybe some of the staff didn't like this and that was why they might have left. All the staff we spoke to were happy and felt they could talk to him, and wanted to keep up high standards for the home, and encouraged the registered manager feedback.

Staff meetings were carried out regularly. Minutes of these meetings showed these had been used to reinforce the values, vision and purpose of the service. Concerns from staff were followed up and acted upon swiftly. Staff told us they felt they were able to bring ideas to meetings and that they would be listened to and supported. One staff member said, "Feel supported we have staff meetings once a month. They're good, we discuss people's opinions and what's best to do for people. We are all welcome and free to speak and share ideas." Another staff member told us, "We have staff meetings regularly I find them really useful and am able to put ideas forward." The registered manager told us, "Any staff ideas are put forward to the rest of the team. To see if people think it's a good idea or if anything else is better. As my first concern is the resident's."

We received concerns that the registered manager charged people for things that they felt should be included such as birthday parties. We spoke to the registered manager about our concerns who informed us, "We have never charged for a birthday party we just ask the family to provide a cake as that is personal. If not we can buy one in for them, and then will charge for the cake." People and their families told us they enjoyed the birthday parties. One person told us, "There always seems to be a party going on and they are good. One family member told us, "Good parties here, they do a good job and there are no charges here really." They also added, "It's really good I wouldn't change a thing." Another family member said, "Mum's birthday last month and they done a lovely party."

We saw copies of people's contracts which showed that the provider was not willing to handle people's monies. We also spoke to the registered manager about people's finances who told us, "I don't deal with any finance if someone has no family it is dealt with an advocacy service and I then bill social services for payment. I keep all receipts for hairdressers, chiropodist etc."