

# Stepping Stones Care Homes (Phoenix House) Limited

## Primrose House

### Inspection report

202 Harborough Road  
Northampton  
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Tel: 01604626272

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### Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service effective?

Good ●

Is the service caring?

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

### About the service

Primrose House is a residential care home registered for up to three people providing personal care to people living with mental health needs. The house was divided into two flats. At the time of inspection there were two people living at the home.

### People's experience of using this service and what we found

People were cared for safely. Risk assessments were in place and reviewed regularly and as people's needs changed. There were safe procedures in place for the administration of medicines and people received their medicines as prescribed.

People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

People were involved in the planning of their care which was person centred and updated regularly. People were supported to express themselves, their views were acknowledged and acted upon. There was a complaints system in place and people were confident that any complaints would be responded to appropriately.

Staff understood their roles and responsibilities to safeguard people from the risk of harm. People were supported to access relevant health and social care professionals.

Staff were recruited using safe recruitment practices. Staff received training to enable them to meet people's needs and were supported to carry out their roles. Staff were happy working at Primrose House and were proud of their relationships with the people they supported.

The management team continually monitored the quality of the service, identifying issues and making changes to improve the care and to help people achieve their goals.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

### Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was Good (published 09 June 2017).

### Why we inspected

This was a planned inspection based on the previous rating.

### Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our re-

inspection programme. If we receive any concerning information we may inspect sooner.

## 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.

Details are in our Safe findings below.

### Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

Details are in our Effective findings below.

### Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

Details are in our Caring findings below.

### Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

Details are in our Responsive findings below.

### Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

Details are in our Well-led findings below.

# Primrose House

## 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. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

#### Inspection team

The inspection was undertaken by one inspector.

#### Service and service type

Primrose House is a 'care home'. People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing or personal care as single package under one contractual agreement. CQC regulates both the premises and the care provided, and both were looked at during this inspection.

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

This inspection was unannounced.

#### What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. The provider was not asked to complete a provider information return prior to this inspection. This is information we require providers to send us to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We took this into account when we inspected the service and made the judgements in this report. This information helps support our inspections. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

#### During the inspection

We spoke with one person who used the service about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with seven members of staff including the registered manager, the business manager, a nurse, an occupational therapist and three care/support staff.

We reviewed a range of records. This included two people's care records and medicines records. A variety of records relating to the management of the service were reviewed, including quality assurance audits, training and supervision records.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

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

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People told us staff helped them to feel safe. We were told, "The staff are really good, I feel safe with them."
- Staff received training in safeguarding vulnerable adults. They demonstrated they understood their responsibilities to protect people from the risks of harm and abuse. They told us they knew who to speak to if they needed to raise concerns.
- Safeguarding alerts had been raised appropriately and clear records were maintained.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- People's risks were assessed at regular intervals or as their needs changed. Care plans informed staff how to provide care that mitigated these known risks. Staff were kept up to date with changes in people's care during handovers and team meetings.
- Records showed that premises and equipment were maintained, and any issues were promptly reported by staff and dealt with to ensure the environment remained safe. Maintenance tasks were reported and responded to in a timely manner.
- Fire risk assessments were in place and staff were able to tell us how to respond in the event of the fire alarms sounding. People had personal evacuation plans and it was clear where people would require extra support to evacuate the building.
- Staff were aware of people's fluctuating mental health and knew how some risks were increased when people felt increasing anxiety. Staff were able to give us examples of how they supported people at these times.

Staffing and recruitment

- Safe recruitment and selection processes were followed. The provider had recruitment procedures in place and they confirmed that these were adhered to. Staff also told us that the necessary pre-employment checks were undertaken before they were offered roles.
- All employees' Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) status had been checked. The Disclosure and Barring Service carry out a criminal record and barring check on individuals who intend to work with children and vulnerable adults, to help employers make safer recruitment decisions.
- People's staffing needs were included in their care plans. People and staff told us there were enough staff to meet people's needs.

Preventing and controlling infection

- People were protected from the risks of infection by staff who received training in infection prevention and control.

- All areas of the home were clean and free of odour, and people were supported to clean their own flats.

#### Using medicines safely

- People were assessed for their abilities to manage their own medicines. Where people required support with their medicines, people received these as prescribed. People who managed their own medicines had checks in place to ensure it continued to be safe to do so.
- Staff received training in medicine management and their competencies were checked to ensure they administered medicines safely.
- Medicines administration was regularly checked, and audits were completed to ensure compliance. Any discrepancies identified were followed up with staff to improve practice.

#### Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The registered manager was pro-active in using every opportunity to improve the service for people. After any incidents, lessons learnt were shared with the staff team to continually improve the service.

# 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.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant 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

- People's needs were assessed before they started using the service to ensure staff understood people's needs and preferences and all staff were kept up to date with changes.
- Details of people's individual needs, including their daily routines, cultural, religious, dietary, relationship needs, and preferences were included in their support plans. This helped staff to fully understand people's individual needs and effectively provide the care they needed.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- People were supported by skilled and competent staff. Staff received an induction that included shadowing experienced staff to learn about their role in supporting each person and completing care duties effectively and safely.
- Staff had completed a range of training relevant to their role and responsibilities in meeting people's individual needs. Staff also had opportunities for continued development. They spoke of having achieved qualifications relevant to their role. A member of staff told us they could ask for further training if they felt they needed it and were confident it would be provided.
- Staff received regular supervision and guidance to support them in their roles. Staff told us the management team and provider were very supportive.

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet

- People's nutritional and dietary needs were assessed and understood by the service. Staff were knowledgeable about people's cultural, religious and other dietary needs.
- People purchased their own groceries and cooked their own meals with support from staff if required.

Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support; Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care.

- The service worked in partnership with health and social care professionals to maintain people's health and emotional wellbeing; this included GPs, dentists and mental health professionals.
- There was detailed information in people's care files to inform staff about people's health, behaviour and well-being. Personalised guidance was in place for staff to recognise when there was deterioration in those needs and to provide people with the support they needed.
- People were supported to receive good care when they had to transfer between services. For example, each person who came to live at the home had a phased introduction to the service and staff got to know them and their needs before they moved in. This ensured consistency of care and support.

Adapting service, design, decoration to meet people's needs

- The home was in a good state of repair and well equipped to meet people's needs.
- People's flats were decorated and fitted to a good standard and there was ample living space.

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 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.

In care homes, and some hospitals, this is usually through MCA application procedures called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA, and whether any conditions on authorisations to deprive a person of their liberty had the appropriate legal authority and were being met and found that they were. Staff demonstrated they understood the principles of MCA, supporting people to make choices. People confirmed the staff always asked their consent before providing their care. One person told us, "When I needed a lot of help the staff were brilliant, always checking I was okay and checking with me that I wanted them to help me."

- Staff completed mental capacity assessments to establish people's insight and understanding of their care needs. This enabled people to make informed decisions about their care, or health and social care professionals make best interest decisions about people's future care which included the wishes of the person.
- No-body required a DoLS but staff were informed and trained on the principles of DoLS and understood when a DoLS would be required.

# 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.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people were supported and treated with dignity and respect; and involved as partners in their care.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- People told us staff were kind and friendly. One person told us, "The staff are always there if I need them, I get lots of support."
- Staff took pride in people's progress and spoke positively about the people they cared for. One staff member told us, "[Person] does really well, they have made lots of progress."
- Staff understood the importance of promoting equality and diversity. Care plans contained information about people's religious beliefs and their personal relationships with their circle of support.

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

- People were encouraged to be involved as partners in their care and staff provided the support they needed to make decisions for themselves, or to participate in decision making.
- The provider had information to refer people to an advocacy service where people needed additional support to make decisions. Advocates are independent of the service and they support people to decide what they want and communicate their wishes.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- Staff supported people to maintain their dignity. One person told us, "Staff always knock my front door and wait for me to answer, they never just walk in."
- People were encouraged to be as independent as possible and were supported to engage in activities around the home and outside in the community. We saw many examples of people's independence improving as a result of receiving support from the service.
- People's information was stored securely within the office, and all staff were aware of keeping people's personal information secure.

# Is the service responsive?

## Our findings

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

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people's needs were met through good organisation and delivery.

Planning personalised care to ensure people have choice and control and to meet their needs and preferences

- People and where appropriate, their relatives and other health professionals had been involved in creating and updating their care plans.
- Care plans were detailed and highly personalised. They were regularly reviewed, and changes made as appropriate. They included information for staff on how best to support people with personal care, eating and drinking, medicines, managing emotions, behaviour and risks. They also included information about their health needs and the care people required to manage their long-term health conditions.
- People's care plans reflected their preferences and cultural needs. Staff used this information to ensure people received their care in the way they preferred.

Supporting people to develop and maintain relationships to avoid social isolation; support to follow interests and to take part in activities that are socially and culturally relevant to them

- People were supported to maintain relationships with people that were important to them. Family and friends were able to visit people and spend time together as they wished.
- People were able to pursue activities they enjoyed. One person told us, "I really enjoy the voluntary work that I do, I help grow fruit and vegetables and work in the park grounds."

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 onwards all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). The standard was introduced to make sure people are given information in a way they can understand. The standard applies to all people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss and in some circumstances to their carers.

- During the assessment process people's communication needs were assessed and discussed, a care plan was completed which supported people's requirements.
- The provider complied with the Accessible Information Standard, they ensured people with a disability or sensory loss had access and understood information they were given.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- People knew who to speak with if they were unhappy and wished to make a complaint.
- People and staff were confident that if they did have a complaint they would be listened to and the issue addressed.
- There was a complaints procedure in place; the provider had received no complaints.

End of life care and support

- The service wasn't supporting anyone at the end of their life, however, systems and processes were in place to ensure people received the right support if they were receiving end of life care.
- People were given the opportunity to record what was important to them at the end of their life. This was personalised and gave people the opportunity to record who they would or wouldn't want to inform if they became seriously ill.
- It was recorded on people's advanced statements if they wished to donate their organs in the event of their 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.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people

- The home had a positive person-centred culture. Staff told us there was a strong feeling of teamwork and that the good relationship and communication between staff and managers allowed people's needs to be met.
- We found an open and transparent culture, where managers and staff were committed to further improving the service for the benefit of people using it. Staff told us they were proud of the relationships they built with people using the service.

How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong; Continuous learning and improving care

- The registered manager was aware of their responsibility to keep people informed of actions taken following incidents in line with the duty of candour.
- The management team supported staff to learn from incidents and actions taken. Learning was shared during regular team meetings and de-briefs with the staff and people using the service following any incidents.

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

- The management team carried out a range of regular audits and checks to ensure people continued to receive high quality care. Where issues were identified, the registered manager acted to improve the service.
- The staff and management team worked together to ensure people received a good service and people's risks were well managed.
- The registered manager understood their regulatory requirements to report incidents and events to CQC.

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

- The registered manager sought feedback from people and where applicable their relatives. We saw that issues and suggestions were acted upon and comments were positive.
- People's equality characteristics were considered when sharing information, accessing care and activities. For example, people's care plans contained information about their spiritual and cultural needs, and what support they needed to meet these.
- The registered manager worked closely with commissioners and health and social care professionals

involved in people's support to ensure people received appropriate care. They collaborated with them to achieve good outcomes for people. This included continually encouraging and supporting people to develop their skills, improve their health and wellbeing, and live as independently as possible.