

Liberty Lodge Limited

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Inspection report

43 Radnor Park Crescent
Folkestone
Kent
CT19 5AS

Tel: 07546240551

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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

This was an announced inspection carried out on 8 November 2016.

Liberty Lodge Limited (the service) is the name of a house at 43 Radnor Park Crescent in Folkestone. It is also the name of a company that rents the house from a landlord and which provides support for the four people who live in the service. Each person has a tenancy agreement that explains their right to have their own bed-sitting room. The service is registered to provide support for people of all ages including people who need support due to misusing drugs and alcohol, a learning disability, sensory needs or mental health issues. In our report we refer to the people who live in the service as being, 'tenants'.

The company was owned and operated by two directors. One of them was the managing director and one of them was also the registered manager. 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. In our report when we are speaking about both the managing director and the registered manager we refer to them as being, 'the registered persons'.

Staff knew how to respond to any concerns that might arise so that tenants were kept safe from abuse. Tenants had been helped to avoid the risk of accidents and they had been supported to manage their medicines safely. There were enough staff to provide tenants with the support they needed and background checks had been completed before new staff had been appointed.

Staff had received training and guidance and they knew how to support tenants in the right way. Tenants had been assisted to plan and prepare their own meals and they had been supported to receive all of the healthcare assistance they needed.

Staff had ensured that tenants' rights were respected by helping them to make decisions for themselves. In addition, the registered persons had taken the necessary steps to ensure that people only received lawful care that respected their rights.

Tenants were treated with kindness, compassion and respect. Staff recognised tenants' right to privacy and promoted their dignity. Confidential information was kept private.

Tenants had been consulted about the support they wanted to receive and they had been given all of the assistance and encouragement they needed to be as independent as possible. Tenants had been supported to pursue their work commitments, hobbies and interests. There was a system for quickly and fairly resolving complaints.

Tenants had been fully consulted about how best to develop the service. Quality checks had been regularly completed to ensure that tenants reliably received all of the support they needed. Staff were supported to

speak out if they had any concerns, good team work was promoted and tenants had benefited from staff acting upon good practice guidance.

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.

Staff knew how to protect tenants from abuse and they had been helped to stay safe by avoiding accidents.

There were enough staff to give tenants the support they needed and wanted to receive.

Staff assisted tenants to manage their medicines safely.

Background checks had been completed before new staff had been employed.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

Staff knew how to support tenants in the right way and they had received all of the training and guidance they needed.

Tenants had been supported to plan, prepare and enjoy their meals.

Staff had ensured that tenants had access to any healthcare services they needed.

Tenants were helped to make decisions for themselves. When this was not possible decisions were made in tenants' best interests and their legal rights were protected.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

Tenants said that staff were kind and considerate.

Staff recognised tenants' right to privacy and promoted their dignity.

Confidential information was kept private.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

Tenants had been actively involved in making decisions about the support they wanted to receive.

Staff had provided tenants with all of the support and encouragement they needed.

Staff recognised the importance of promoting equality and diversity by supporting people to make choices about their lives.

There were arrangements in place to quickly and fairly resolve complaints.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

Tenants had been consulted about the development of the service.

Quality checks had been completed to ensure that tenants reliably received all of the support they needed.

Staff had been encouraged to speak out if they had any concerns and good team work had been promoted.

Tenants had benefited from staff acting upon good practice guidance.

Liberty Lodge Limited

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 registered persons were 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.

Before our inspection visit we reviewed information we held about the service. This included the Provider Information Return (PIR). This is a form the registered persons had completed to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they planned to make. We also reviewed other information we held about the service such as notifications. These refer to events that happened in the service which the registered persons were required to tell us about.

We visited Liberty Lodge Limited on 8 November 2016 and the inspection team consisted of a single inspector. The inspection was announced. The registered persons were given a short period of notice because the tenants had complex needs for support and benefited from knowing in advance that we would be calling.

During the inspection visit we spoke with three of the tenants, a support worker, finance manager and both of the registered persons. In addition, we examined records relating to various aspects of the support tenants received including the safe management of medicines, staffing, training and quality assurance.

After the inspection we spoke by telephone with two more support workers, three relatives and a social care professional. We did this so that they could tell us how well they thought the service was meeting tenants' needs and wishes.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Tenants said that they felt safe when in the company of staff. One of them said, "The staff are great with me." Another tenant said, "The staff know me and are good." Relatives were also reassured that their family members were safe. One of them said, "I'm pleased to know that the guys are okay because there are staff around to keep an eye on how they're doing."

Records showed that staff had completed training and had received guidance in how to keep tenants safe from situations in which they might experience abuse. We found that staff knew how to recognise and report abuse so that they could take action if they were concerned that a tenant was at risk. Staff were confident that tenants were treated with kindness and they had not seen anyone being placed at risk of harm. They knew how to contact external agencies such as the Care Quality Commission and said they would do so if they had any concerns that remained unresolved.

We noted that in the 12 months preceding our inspection the registered persons had promptly taken action to protect one person in relation to the management of their finances. This had involved them supporting the person and liaising with social care professionals to ensure that the person's wellbeing was safeguarded.

We also noted that tenants had been provided with varying amounts of support to handle cash that they needed for everyday purchases. This included staff helping them to withdraw funds from the bank and keep them safely until they were needed. One person had asked staff to hold their cash for them. We found that staff had kept accurate records supported by receipts whenever they assisted the tenant concerned to make a purchase so that there was a clear account of how the funds had been spent. A tenant commented about how they were helped to manage their cash saying, "I like staff to help me keep an eye on things so I don't get too muddled."

We noted that staff had identified possible risks to each tenant's safety and had taken action to promote their wellbeing. An example of this involved staff agreeing with tenants how they could smoke cigarettes at home without increasing the risk of there being a fire. Another example was staff discussing with tenants how they could safely enjoy alcohol without endangering their own health or causing a disturbance to other tenants living in the service. Other examples involved staff supporting tenants to remain safe when out in the local community. These included tenants generally letting staff know where they were going and what time they could be expected to return. All of these measures helped to keep tenants safe while not being overly intrusive.

We noted that one tenant had chosen to manage their own medicines with very little assistance from staff. However, other tenants had asked staff to help them and we saw that there were suitable arrangements to provide this support. Records showed that staff had received training and guidance to enable them to assist tenants to use medicines in the way intended by their doctors. Tenants said and records confirmed that staff had provided the assistance tenants needed to take their medicines at the right time and in the right way. Speaking about this a tenant remarked, "The staff help me with my tablets. That's good as I can't be

bothered with it all."

Documents showed that the registered persons had discussed with each tenant what support they wanted to receive. The registered persons said that based upon this and in conjunction with health and social care professionals a decision had been made about how many staff needed to be on duty at particular times of the day. Tenants told us that there were enough staff on duty to provide them with all of the support they needed and we saw tenants being given the individual assistance they needed. In addition, records showed that all of the planned shifts had been filled during the seven days preceding our inspection visit. This helped to reassure tenants that their support would reliably be provided in line with their expectations. A number of tenants commented positively about this, with one of them saying, "The staff are pretty much ace. We take it for granted that they're here."

We examined records of the background checks that the registered person had completed before the newest member of staff had been appointed. They showed that a number of checks had been undertaken. These included checking with the Disclosure and Barring Service to show that the applicant did not have relevant criminal convictions and had not been guilty of professional misconduct. Other checks included obtaining references from relevant previous employers. These measures helped to ensure that the applicant could demonstrate their previous good conduct and was a suitable person to be employed in the service.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Tenants were confident that staff knew how to provide them with the support they needed and wanted to receive. Speaking about this a tenant commented, "Yeah, the staff and me have a chat about stuff and they know what help I need." Relatives were also confident about this matter with one of them saying, "The staff know the four men who live here back to front. Their individual ways and preferences. If they didn't quite simply the place wouldn't work."

The registered persons said that it was important for staff to receive comprehensive training and support in order to ensure that their knowledge and skills remained up to date. Staff told us and records confirmed that new staff had received introductory training before they worked without direct supervision. This training was broadly in line with the new national Care Certificate that sets out common induction standards for social care staff. We also noted that established staff had been provided with refresher training in key subjects. These included how to safely support tenants who were troubled by mental health issues and who needed help to manage their everyday lives. In addition, records showed that staff had regularly met with the registered manager to review their work and to plan for their professional development.

We found that staff had the knowledge and skills they needed to consistently provide tenants with the support they needed. An example of this involved staff telling us how they offered encouragement and support to a tenant who was at risk of not maintaining their personal hygiene. We noted that they suitably described how they had gently enabled the person to change their clothes regularly. Other examples involved staff having the knowledge and skills they needed to encourage good standards cleanliness when tenants were handling and cooking food.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 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 make particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible. We found that the registered persons and staff were following the Mental Capacity Act in that they had supported tenants to make important decisions for themselves. This had involved consulting with tenants, explaining information to them and seeking their informed consent. Some tenants gave examples of this when they described how staff had explained to them why they needed to carefully use medicines in the manner prescribed by their doctor. Another example, involved the way that staff had gently encouraged tenants to stay safe by making sure that they budgeted when in the community and so always had enough money for essential things such as bus and taxi fares.

Records showed that on a number of occasions when it appeared that a tenant lacked mental capacity in relation to a particular decision the registered persons had contacted health and social care professionals and relatives. This had been done to help to ensure that decisions were taken in tenant's best interests. An example of this referred to staff liaising with a care manager (social worker) and relative after they had become concerned that a tenant may need additional encouragement to reduce the number of cigarettes they smoked. This had enabled careful consideration to be given about how best to support the tenant

concerned. As a result the tenant had agreed to allow staff to hold cigarettes for him so that they were less tempted to smoke too many of them.

People can only be deprived of their liberty in order to receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA. The registered persons had recognised that a person's care was being delivered in a way that deprived them of their liberty. We noted that in response to this they were liaising with the local authority to ensure that the person's legal rights were protected.

Tenants told us that staff assisted them to go shopping for food and to prepare their meals. This included deciding what meals they wanted to prepare, checking what supplies they already had and making a list of things they needed to buy. A tenant remarked about this saying, "The staff help me with all of that kitchen thing." In addition, we noted that when necessary people had been provided with extra help to ensure that they benefited from having a balanced diet without too much reliance on fast foods. A tenant commented on this saying, "I like fast foods which is okay but the staff like me to eat healthy stuff as well."

Tenants said and records confirmed that they had been supported to receive all of the healthcare services they needed. This included staff consulting with relatives so that doctors and other healthcare professionals could be contacted if a tenant's health was causing concern. A relative commented on this saying, "The staff are very good about this. If they didn't keep an eye open I'm quite sure my family member wouldn't bother that much with their healthcare. When necessary the staff gently but persistently encourage him to see the doctor, which is good."

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Tenants were positive about the quality of support they received. One of them said, "I get on well with the staff most days. If I'm grumpy one day they know to leave me alone." Relatives were also complimentary about this with one of them remarking, "I've always found the staff to be very helpful. They've got the balance right. They're friendly and relaxed without being too much so. Liberty Lodge just feels like anyone's home."

Tenants said they were treated with respect and with kindness. An example of this was a tenant who said, "The staff don't nag at me too much and if they do they're just being kind." Another example was a tenant who told us, "The staff are okay really. I pretty much get on with them all okay." We noted that staff had assisted tenants to make sure they always had enough clean clothes in their wardrobes from which to choose. The registered persons said that this was important so that the tenants could present themselves how they wished. A tenant pointed with pride to the sweater they were wearing and said, "I like to look smart and the staff know that and help me with getting my laundry done."

We found that staff knew about things that were important to tenants. This included knowing which relatives were involved in a tenant's life so that they could keep in touch with them and complement each other's contribution. Records showed that this extended to keeping in contact by email with relatives who lived out of the area. A relative spoke with us about this and remarked, "I like how the staff do keep me in the loop. It's not actually their job but they do it all the same and it's just a very caring service."

Records showed that most tenants could express their wishes or had family and friends to support them. However, for other people the service had developed links with local advocacy services that could provide guidance and assistance. Lay advocates are people who are independent of the service and who support people to make decisions and communicate their wishes.

We noted that staff recognised the importance of not intruding into tenants' private space. Tenants told us how they had come to individual arrangements with staff about how and when they wanted people to have access to their bedrooms. We were told that one tenant in particular was very private and preferred that staff did not go into their room unless it was absolutely necessary. We saw that staff respected this tenant's wish while other people were pleased to invite staff into their bedrooms. Speaking about this a tenant remarked, "I like to see the staff and they can come to see me in my room whenever they want. They always knock on the door first though."

Staff told us that they had received guidance about how to correctly manage confidential information. We noted that they understood the importance of respecting private information and only disclosed it to people such as health and social care professionals on a need-to-know basis. In addition, we found that staff was aware of the need to only use secure communication routes when discussing confidential matters with each other. An example of this was staff saying that they never used social media applications for these conversations. This was because other people not connected with the service might be able to access them.

We saw that records which contained private information were stored securely. The service's computer system was password protected and so could only be accessed by authorised staff. In addition, paper records were kept neatly in subdivided files that were secured in locked cabinets when not in use.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

We saw that each tenant had a written support plan that said what assistance they needed and wanted to receive. In addition, tenants said that they had been invited to meet with staff to review the support they received to make sure that it continued to meet their needs and wishes. A tenant summarised this arrangement when they said, "The staff always tell me it's up to me what help I want and they write it down. I could check it but if they've done it for me it'll be right" Another tenant remarked, "I see the staff every day they just know how I want to be helped."

Tenants told us that staff were providing them with all of the practical assistance they needed. We saw that this support was carefully provided so that tenants were gently encouraged to do things for themselves whenever possible. An example of this involved a member of staff suggesting to a person how they could best go about deciding what Christmas presents they wanted to buy. We heard the member of staff reminding the person about the various relatives for whom they might want to buy a gift. They then helped the tenant to consider the sorts of things each relative might like to receive and how much money would be needed to purchase the items. We saw that the tenant enjoyed the activity and later on they commented to us, "Good I'll get on with doing the presents nearer the time." Another tenant commented about the encouragement they received from staff saying, "The staff remind me what I've got on and get me organised if I'm going out."

Staff were confident that they could support tenants who could become anxious and distressed. A member of staff illustrated this by describing how they had learnt to recognise when a tenant was becoming concerned about particular issues. They also explained that this enabled staff to offer reassurance at an early stage when it was most likely to be helpful. We saw an example of this when staff assisted a tenant who was becoming upset about the number of people who had gathered in the lounge to speak with our inspector. The registered manager invited the person to sit in the lounge and then explained to them why more people than usual were in the room. We noted that the tenant was reassured and soon after this left the lounge to rest in their bedroom.

We saw that staff understood the importance of promoting equality and diversity and they had been provided with written guidance about how to put this commitment into action. An example involved the registered persons actively involving tenants in the recruitment of new staff. A person commented about this saying, "I have been in on interviews and I ask dead difficult questions to find out about who might come to work here." In addition, we noted that the registered persons knew how to support tenants who used English as a second language. They knew how to access translators and the importance of identifying community services who would be able to befriend tenants by using their first language.

We found that staff had supported tenants to pursue their interests and hobbies. Tenants told us that staff assisted them to enjoy a range of activities that they had chosen. These included attending a local day opportunities services, visiting places of interest, meeting up with friends and attending social functions. Tenants spoke positively about the variety of interests they enjoyed with one of them saying, "I go out every day and do stuff. I support the local football team and I like to see matches and go the pub afterwards." In

addition records showed that most of the tenants had been able to save up enough money to go on holiday each year. One tenant had been accompanied by staff to stay in a country cottage and another tenant had been supported to visit a number of lifeboat stations on the Isle of White. This latter person said, "It was great as we saw all the lifeboat stuff which is what I had wanted to do."

Tenants said that they would be willing to let staff know if they were not happy about something. Speaking about this one of them commented, "I like the staff well enough if there was something not right I'd just tell them and we'd get things sorted." Relatives also were confident that they could freely raise any concerns they might have. One of them said, "I've no worries at all on that account. I've never had to make a complaint but if I had to I'm sure it would be sorted out." We noted that tenants had been given a user-friendly complaints procedure that used pictures and signs to explain their right to make a complaint. In addition, we saw that the registered persons had a procedure which helped to ensure that complaints could be quickly and fairly resolved. Records showed that the registered persons had not received any formal complaints in 12 months preceding our inspection visit.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Tenants and their relatives told us that they considered the service to be well managed. A tenant commented about this saying, "I suppose it must be well sorted because things just run right." Relatives were also reassured about this matter with one of them saying, "I do think that it's well managed because they guys get all the help they need to live at the address together while at the same time having the freedom they need to lead individual lives."

Tenants said that they were asked for their views about their home as part of everyday life. One of them remarked, "I have a chat with staff about how things are going. I tell them whatever I want." We saw a lot of examples of staff consulting with tenants. One of these involved a member of staff chatting with two tenants about the festivities they wanted to enjoy during the forthcoming Christmas period.

We also noted that tenants, relatives and staff had been invited to complete a questionnaire to give feedback about how well the service was being run. The results showed that people in general were very satisfied and did not want to make any significant changes to how the service was operated.

Tenants and their relatives knew who the registered persons were and said that they were helpful. Commenting in general on the management of the service a relative said, "Since my family member has been living in Liberty Lodge they've become a much more confident person. They've been encouraged to develop new interests and to be more independent." During our inspection visit we saw the registered persons talking with tenants and with staff. They had a very detailed knowledge of the support each tenant was receiving and they also knew about points of detail such as which members of staff were on duty on any particular day. This level of knowledge helped the registered persons to effectively manage the service and provide guidance for staff.

We noted that staff were provided with the leadership they needed to develop good team working practices. These arrangements helped to ensure that tenants consistently received the support they needed. Staff knew that they were expected to contact the registered persons if they needed advice. In addition, records showed that during the evenings, nights and weekends the registered persons were on call if staff needed to contact them. Staff said and our observations confirmed that there were handover meetings at the beginning and end of each shift when developments in each tenant's needs for support were noted and reviewed. These measures all helped to ensure that staff were well led and had the knowledge and systems they needed to support tenants in a responsive and effective way.

There was an open and inclusive approach to running the service. Staff said that they were well supported by the registered persons. They were confident that they could speak to them if they had any concerns about another staff member. Staff said that positive leadership in the service reassured them that they would be listened to and that action would be taken if they needed to raise any concerns about poor practice.

We found that suitable arrangements were in place to ensure to enable the registered persons to robustly

monitor and evaluate the quality of the service. Records showed that the registered persons had regularly completed quality checks to make sure that tenants were reliably receiving all of the support they needed. These included the registered persons supporting the tenants to liaise with the landlord so that repairs were undertaken. In addition, the registered persons had also helped the tenants to ensure that equipment such as fire alarms were checked regularly and continued to work correctly. Other quality checks included confirming that tenants were being supported in the right way to manage their medicines, obtain healthcare assistance and handle their finances.

We found that the registered persons had provided some of the leadership necessary to enable tenants to benefit from staff acting upon good practice guidance. An example of this involved the registered persons engaging with national advice about the importance of encouraging and enabling people to take steps along their individual journeys towards greater independence. We saw that as a result of this they had enabled a person to move out of the service to their own flat where they were further developing their skills to manage with a much reduced level of support.