

Innova Care Limited

Poplars

Inspection report

Clockhouse Way
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Essex
CM7 3RD

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Inspected but not rated

Is the service safe?

Inspected but not rated

Is the service well-led?

Inspected but not rated

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Poplars is a residential care home providing personal care and accommodation for up to six people diagnosed with a learning disability and mental health conditions. At the time of the inspection there were four people using the service.

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

There was a relaxed and open culture at the service. We observed people felt comfortable with the staff who supported them. Feedback from relatives and professionals was positive. A relative told us, "All the staff including the (registered) manager have been brilliant with my family member. All I can add to that is the staff are the nicest bunch of people and I couldn't praise them enough for the job they are doing and for keeping [named person] safe."

We expect health and social care providers to guarantee autistic people and people with a learning disability the choices, dignity, independence and good access to local communities that most people take for granted. Right Support, right care, right culture is the statutory guidance which supports CQC to make assessments and judgements about services providing support to people with a learning disability and/or autistic people.

This service was able to demonstrate how they were meeting the underpinning principles of Right support, right care, right culture. There had been a marked improvement in how well people were consulted and involved in their lives. Care was person-centred and focused on promoting wellbeing and supporting people to achieve improved outcomes.

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.

The registered manager had only been at the service for six months and since their arrival they had focused on keeping people safe from risks related to COVID-19. Despite this, they had already made excellent progress in addressing the concerns we found at our last inspection. There was a largely new and enthusiastic staff team who were still settling into the service. Further time was needed to ensure improvements continued and were sustained.

There were effective measures in place to prevent the risk of infection. The provider and registered manager were positive about learning lessons following the COVID-19 outbreak and continued to drive improvements to keep people safe.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk.

Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was requires improvement (published 30 October 2019).

The provider completed an action plan after the last inspection to show what they would do and by when to improve. However, as this was a targeted inspection, we did not review whether enough improvement had been made in all areas and the provider was still in breach of regulations.

Why we inspected

CQC have introduced targeted inspections to follow up on Warning Notices or to check specific concerns. They do not look at an entire key question, only the part of the key question we are specifically concerned about. Targeted inspections do not change the rating from the previous inspection. This is because they do not assess all areas of a key question.

When we last visited the provider had told us they were taking action to promote a more open, person-centred culture and to develop staff skills so they could meet the needs of people who became anxious or presented challenges. We reviewed these actions to ensure people were not being unnecessarily restricted, particularly in light of the national restrictions during the pandemic.

We also looked at infection prevention and control measures under the Safe key question. We look at this in all care home inspections even if no concerns or risks have been identified. This is to provide assurance that the service can respond to COVID-19 and other infection outbreaks effectively.

You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Poplars on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

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?

At our last inspection we rated this key question requires improvement. We have not reviewed the rating at this inspection. This is because we only looked at the parts of this key question we had specific concerns about.

Inspected but not rated

Is the service well-led?

At our last inspection we rated this key question requires improvement. We have not reviewed the rating at this inspection. This is because we only looked at the parts of this key question we had specific concerns about.

Inspected but not rated

Poplars

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.

As part of CQC's response to care homes with outbreaks of COVID-19, we are conducting reviews to ensure that the Infection Prevention and Control practice was safe and the service was compliant with IPC measures. This was a targeted inspection looking at the IPC practices the provider has in place.

We also reviewed whether the provider had taken action to ensure people were supported in an open culture by staff who had the skills to meet their needs.

Inspection team

This inspection was undertaken by two inspectors. One of the inspectors had specialist skills in working with people with learning disabilities.

Service and service type

Poplars is a 'care home'. People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing or personal care as a 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. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

The people we met during the inspection had complex needs and were not able to tell us about their experiences of life at the service. We therefore used our observations of care and other evidence to help form our judgements.

We spoke with the provider, the registered manager and three members of staff.

To minimise the risk of infection we limited the records we looked at whilst on inspection and looked at selected care plans for three people, focusing on plans and risk assessments in relation to behaviour and restraint.

After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found. We had contact with four professionals and two relatives for feedback about the care provided at Poplars.

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 requires improvement. We have not changed the rating of this key question, as we have only looked at the part of the key question we had specific concerns about.

The purpose of this inspection was to review the infection control measures at the service following a COVID-19 outbreak and to ensure people were not being unnecessarily restricted. We will assess all of the key question at the next comprehensive inspection of the service.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse; Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- At our last inspection we found there was a lack of systems and processes to ensure risks to people had been fully assessed and planned. The new registered manager had revised people's care plans, with the input of specialist professionals. There were new personalised behaviour action plans which highlighted what might trigger or cause distress and provided guidance on distraction techniques staff could use.
- We observed during our visit that people were relaxed with staff. Our visit caused some disruption and we found staff knew how to support people, for example using a walk in the garden to help distract a person.
- Staff told us they had never had to use restraint when people became distressed as they followed the guidance and had been trained to protect themselves and the people they support.
- The registered manager had taken exceptional measures to ensure people were not unnecessarily secluded during the pandemic, involving external professionals in making decisions in each person's best interest to minimise restrictions and isolation.
- When we last visited, we found building work was causing people distress. The refurbishment was now complete, and the service was calm and well-ordered.

Preventing and controlling 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 personal protective equipment (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 can be effectively prevented or managed.
- We were assured that the provider's infection prevention and control policy was up to date.

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 requires improvement. We have not changed the rating of this key question, as we have only looked at the part of the key question we had specific concerns about.

The purpose of this inspection was to ensure the provider had put in place the necessary infection control measures following a COVID-19 outbreak. We also reviewed whether they had made the necessary improvements to ensure people were not unnecessarily restricted. We will assess all of the key question at the next comprehensive inspection of the service.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people; Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements

- At our last inspection we found there was no oversight of incidents and accidents and a lack of quality monitoring. At this inspection, we found a new set of quality tools had been introduced.
- We focused on looking at quality monitoring around infection control. Measures were practical, effective and improved safety at the service. Following a quality check the registered manager had ensured all paper signs had been laminated for easy cleaning and repairs were reported promptly.
- The registered manager promoted a culture where people were involved in decisions about where they lived. A person had helped design the desk used by visitors to register and put on personal protective equipment. This represented best practice and reflected the change in culture across the service.
- The new quality checks were written in a person-centred manner, reflecting the involvement of people in keeping their home safe. Where possible, staff and people carried out cleaning tasks together.
- The registered manager had worked hard to ensure the service did not become a closed culture during the pandemic and had promoted the involvement of families and professionals. A person was encouraged to continue attending college on-line.
- The registered manager set high standards and was clear with staff about the responsibilities of their role. There had been a turnover of staff as part of the overall changes. Staff we spoke to were enthusiastic and embraced the new culture at the service. A member of staff said, "I love my job and feel supported it is a great place to work."
- Professionals we spoke with were positive about the changes being introduced and about the enthusiasm of the new registered manager.