

Cornwall Council

Lowena

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

We carried out a comprehensive inspection on 23 November 2015. A breach of the legal requirements was found. This was because water temperature was compromised in one room by turning off the cold water supply in order to prevent the risk of a person flooding a room. The person using this room had a documented history of leaving the tap running. This action had resulted in only hot water being discharged which was found to be at an unsafe temperature in this room. This had the potential to put people at risk. Following the comprehensive inspection the registered provider wrote to us to say what they would do to meet the legal requirements in relation to the breach. As a result we undertook a focused inspection on the 6 February 2017 to check they had followed their plan and to confirm they now met legal requirements.

This report only covers our findings in relation to the question 'is the service safe?' You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Lowena on our website at www.cqc.org.uk

Lowena is a respite service that provides care and support for people who have learning disabilities and other complex needs. Lowena can accommodate up to a maximum of 25 people, although due to the nature of the service this fluctuates on a daily basis. The service is owned and operated by Cornwall Council.

There was a registered manager in post. 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.

The service had taken action to ensure all hot water outlets were operational and were discharging water at a safe temperature. We checked the room where we found the cold water tap had been turned off during the November 2015 inspection. This tap was now operational and the hot water temperature was being safely regulated by 'mixer valves'.

Observation of the maintenance records showed there were monthly checks to ensure temperatures were safe and being maintained and that legionella testing was being carried out. This was to ensure there was no risk of legionella bacteria being present and met the approved code of practice and guidance on regulations for Legionnaires' disease.

The service had a new boiler fitted in March 2016 which the registered manager said had improved the continuity of hot water throughout the service. Staff checked the water temperature before assisting a guest with a bath to ensure it was within safe limits.

At this focused inspection we found the registered provider had taken effective action to meet the requirements of the regulations and the breach had been met.

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. Systems had been put in place to safely manage water temperatures.

Regular maintenance and testing ensured water temperatures were safe.

Lowena

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, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

We undertook an announced focussed inspection of Lowena on 17 January 2017. We gave the registered manager short notice as respite services are not always staffed during the day. This inspection was completed to check that improvement had been made to meet legal requirements following our comprehensive inspection on 23 November 2015. We inspected the service against one of the five questions we ask about services; is the service safe? This was because the previous concerns were in relation to this question.

The inspection was carried out by one adult social care inspector. Before our inspection we reviewed the information we held about the service. This included the information from the service regarding what steps they would take to meet the legal requirements.

We spoke with the registered manager. We looked around the service and checked water temperatures in three rooms and one bathing facility. We looked at the services maintenance records in respect of monitoring water temperatures.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

At our previous comprehensive inspection in November 2015 we found the water temperature was not consistent. A communication record highlighted the fact that a cold water supply had been turned off in a room which was used by a person with a history of leaving the sink tap on. This action had resulted in only hot water being discharged which was found to be at an unsafe temperature in this room. This had the potential to put people at risk.

At this inspection we found the service had taken immediate action to address the risk. This included, informing staff through written communication, holding a staff meeting to inform them of the risks of hot water and that all outlets were to be checked and recorded regularly. The registered manager used guidance from the Health and Safety Executive, Managing the risk from hot water and surfaces in health and social care and UKHCA guidance, Controlling Scalding Risks from Bathing and Showering. January 2010(revised September 2012). This was to support them in making the right decisions in order to manage water temperatures safely. By doing this the service recognised the need to review and update individual risk assessments. This meant the registered provider and registered manager responded to the risk in a timely manner.

In the long term the service had installed a new boiler which was more effective in ensuring hot water was discharged at a consistent temperature throughout the service. By fitting new improved thermostatic mixing valves (TMV) in all guest bedrooms this meant people were protected from the risks of hot water and scalding.

A staff member showed us the procedure for checking hot water before a guest had a bath. A thermometer was used and staff were able to record the temperature so that there was a clear audit trail.

Maintenance records showed water temperatures were measured monthly. Not only was this to ensure water temperatures were being discharged safely, but that water temperatures met the approved code of practice and guidance on regulations for Legionnaires' disease. This was to ensure there was no risk of legionella bacteria being present.

The action plan showed staff were receiving training by internal sharing of information and familiarisation with guidance during monthly team meetings.

We judged that the service had taken action to meet the requirements of the regulations and the breach was now met.