

AK Supported Housing Limited

Falcon House

Inspection report

9 Falcon Avenue
Grays
Essex
RM17 6SB

Tel: 01375378813

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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

Falcon House provides accommodation and support for up to four persons who have enduring mental health needs. Communal rooms are situated on the ground floor, there is also a designated smoking area and safe access to a communal garden.

At the last inspection, the service was rated Good. At this inspection we found the service remained Good as Falcon House met all relevant fundamental standards of care.

The service was safe. Staff received regular refresher training for safeguarding vulnerable people and demonstrated good knowledge of how to keep people safe. Robust recruitment procedures ensured staff suitability for their role and appropriate checks were completed. Staffing levels were sufficient to meet people's needs within the service and out in the community. People's individual needs were assessed, risks were identified and minimised with effective support plans in place. Medicines were stored, administered and managed safely.

The service was effective. Staff had adequate training and supervisions to ensure people were supported and their needs were effectively met. The registered manager and staff understood the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and how to support people's independence and to have maximum choice and control of their lives. People were provided information enabling them to choose healthy lifestyles and supported to maintain these lifestyles. Health care professionals were liaised with in order to manage people's change in physical and mental health needs.

The service was caring. Staff were friendly and patient towards people and positive relationships had been created within Falcon House. Staff understood people and their personal preferences. People told us and we saw that privacy and dignity was respected.

The service was responsive. People were involved in the planning of their support for continued wellbeing. People chose and were supported to undertake activities to improve their health, creativity and language skills. Work placement opportunities had also been applied for which people successfully volunteered for. Complaints procedures were in place and made readily available to people.

The service was well led. Views of the quality of the service were sought from people, relative's and health professionals. The registered manager felt supported by the provider and in turn staff felt supported by the registered manager, which displayed good leadership. The registered manager had a visible presence within the service and people, relatives and staff used the open door policy effectively. The quality monitoring of the service was robust and the provider was responsive to feedback from authorities to drive improvements.

Further information is in the detailed findings below.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

The service remains Good.

Good 

Is the service effective?

The service remains Good.

Good 

Is the service caring?

The service remains Good.

Good 

Is the service responsive?

The service remains Good.

Good 

Is the service well-led?

The service remains Good.

Good 

Falcon House

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 checked 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. This was a comprehensive inspection which means we looked at all of the fundamental standards of care.

We inspected Falcon House on the 30 January 2017 and the inspection was unannounced. The inspection was undertaken by one inspector.

Before the inspection we reviewed previous reports and notifications that are held on the CQC database. Notifications are important events that the service has to let the CQC know about by law. The provider also completed a Provider Information Return (PIR). This is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make.

We spoke with four people who used the service, two members of support staff, the registered manager and provider.

We reviewed two people's care plans and care records. We looked at the service's staff support records for three members of staff to check whether they were recruited safely. We also looked at the service's arrangements for the management of medicines and the quality monitoring system and auditing of the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

At this inspection we found that people remained feeling safe and staff continued the same good level of awareness with regard to safeguarding as at the previous inspection. The rating continues to be good.

People consistently told us they were cared for safely at Falcon House and one person told us, "Yeah I definitely feel safe here with everyone." A support worker told us that if they had any concerns of people being at risk of harm they would make certain they understood what the issues were and escalate these to management and if necessary the local authorities or the Care Quality Commission (CQC). All staff had received regular refresher training for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

Recruitment processes were robust and staff were recruited safely. Staff files we looked at contained adequate recruitment documentation. Relevant checks were carried out before a new member of staff started working at the service. Staff we spoke with told us they had interviews and were supported to gain confidence in their role by 'shadowing' experienced members of staff to understand peoples support needs sufficiently.

We found that appropriate arrangements were in place to manage risks to people's health and safety. Peoples care records contained individual risk assessments specific to their own needs. For example we saw that some people were assessed to require additional support from staff when their mental health needs increased. We saw one person's care records detailed exactly how support workers were to support people when their needs increased. When we spoke with support workers they knew well, how to support people with the specific risks individuals may be susceptible to.

People told us there were enough staff to support their needs. One person told us, "Although I can come and go as I please, I know there's always someone here if I need them." The registered manager and staff felt there were sufficient levels of staff throughout the day and night. They told us people were fairly independent but they always made sure extra staff were available on the days people needed support to attend any appointments. Sister services were also situated close by to provide support to each other if required. Our observations during inspection assured us that staffing levels were sufficient.

Medicines were administered and managed safely. People told us they received their medications when required. One person told us, "I take my medication regularly; the staff are always on time with it." Medicines were stored safely in locked cupboards and all support workers were trained and competent to administer medicines to people. We saw records that demonstrated people were administered their medicines safely as prescribed. People were also supported to self-medicate where appropriate. Where needed management response to concerns was robust and appropriate. Only trained and competent staff administered medicines. Records showed that the deputy manager carried out monthly medication audits to ensure; safe storage, that people received their medicines correctly and that staff had received up to date current training.

The people living at the service contributed to the cleaning tasks around Falcon House. We saw one person

happily pottering around communal areas sweeping the floor. One member of staff had been delegated to carry out weekly spot checks to make certain people's rooms and communal areas continued to be clean and tidy.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

At this inspection we found that people received effective care from support workers who had the knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and responsibilities, as we found at the last inspection. The rating continues to be Good.

Support workers felt confident supporting people with their needs. They told us and we saw documents that demonstrated they had regular training that kept their knowledge up to date. New members of staff were undertaking the Care Certificate a nationally recognised qualification and existing members of staff were supported to advance their national vocational qualifications. The provider and registered manager told us how they ensured staff acquired knowledge that could be applied within Falcon House to understand and support people. For example, support workers had most recently completed 'prevent strategy' training provided by the Home Office. The provider told us how they had identified the need for support workers to be aware of who may be vulnerable to the threat of radicalisation and violent extremism and that increasing staff knowledge supported the reduction of racism and inequalities to ensure a cohesive, safe environment for everyone to live and work in. The registered manager told us, "The training helped me really understand that anyone can be affected and just how important a supportive environment is."

Support workers were supported effectively. They told us they received regular supervisions every two months and yearly appraisals from the registered manager. We saw documentation of regular supervisions in staff files. Monthly staff meetings also gave staff an opportunity to discuss current issues within the service.

People who lack mental capacity to consent to arrangements for necessary care or treatment can only be deprived of their liberty when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA). The procedures for this in care homes and hospitals are called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). The 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.

People living at Falcon House were not subject to continuous supervision and did have the capacity to make their own decisions. The registered manager and support workers understood their responsibilities under the MCA and respected people's choices and supported them to make their own decisions when needed. For example one support worker told us how they encouraged people to make good decisions when they were deciding what food to buy and eat. We saw documentation in the kitchen and in people's support plans that advised them of the nutritional value of food.

People were supported to maintain a healthy balanced lifestyle by eating and drinking enough and taking regular exercise. Our observations during the inspection assured us that people were choosing to live healthily and being provided support to do so. For example; we saw one person restocking their own cupboards having been shopping, another person was being supported to exercise and another made and sat down to eat a balanced meal. Fruit bowls were in the staff office and communal areas for anybody to

take from. The registered manager passionately told us, "How can you support people to have healthy lifestyles if you are not practicing it yourself."

People's health was monitored and health care professionals were contacted when necessary if any interventions were required. Staff supported people to attend health appointments when required and were knowledgeable about people's medical history. They were observant and vigilant in recording any changes in behaviour and informing appropriate health professionals when required. One health professional told us, "Falcon House are doing a brilliant job, I have no doubt they are providing the best care as they can possibly deliver. My client who lives there is happy with their input."

Is the service caring?

Our findings

At this inspection people told us that the staff were as supportive and caring as they had been during our previous inspection. The rating continues to be Good.

People and support workers had formed positive relationships at Falcon House. One person told us, "They [support workers] are very nice people, they look after me, my health and wellbeing." People had also formed friendships with each other. One person smiled as the front door sounded and told us, "[Person's name] is at the door, I can tell by the way they knock." One person arrived during the inspection, who was in the process of visiting Falcon House with a view to moving in. We saw positive and welcoming interactions from other people and staff towards the person. They told us, "I am really looking forward to living here."

Staff interacted with people kindly and with patience when talking to each other. Support workers knew people well and were aware when people needed additional support to ensure their health did not deteriorate and when independence should be promoted. One person told us, "Everyone here is great, I'm really grateful for everything they [support workers] have helped me with. I know how lucky I've been to have had the opportunity to live here, they give you a lot of support and if I hadn't of come here it probably would've been really different for me. They've [support workers] have made a real difference to my life."

Staff supported people well and respected each of them as individuals. People told us they felt respected living at the service. We saw staff and people speaking respectfully to each other and when people spent time in their own rooms support workers knocked before being invited in which demonstrated respect of people's privacy.

People, relatives and appropriate persons were involved in decision making about people's support and treatment. One support worker told us, "It is important to understand people's individual needs and make them involved to understand their own needs, then they can make good choices about their support." People were aware of their own support plans which detailed how people and where necessary, appropriate persons, had been consulted about their care.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

At this inspection people told us the support workers understood their needs as had been identified during the previous inspection. The rating continues to be Good.

People received personalised care which began prior to their arrival. The pre-admission process was robust for people considering a move to Falcon House. The registered manager advised that prior to the person moving in, they attend meetings and liaised with all appropriate person's and health professionals to ensure they understood the person's needs clearly and if the service could support those needs. People's support records contained completed pre-admission activities, such as, visiting the service and personalising their room. We met one person during the inspection who was in the process of moving to Falcon House. They told us how they had been invited to spend time there to make sure they felt comfortable there. The registered manager showed us the person's support records that were already in place prior to their arrival so support workers would understand their needs prior to moving in. One support worker explained how they tried to make transitions as smooth as possible.

We also met with one person who was leaving Falcon House. The registered manager told us how important it was to support people's transition out of the service as well as in. The person excitedly told us, "They [support workers] have supported me to move into my own place. I really needed to be here to be able to be where I am now. I got my place a while ago but I can stay here and there while everything is set up."

People received personalised care. People's support plans were discussed between themselves and their key workers every three months. We saw documentation which demonstrated how discussions were initiated about how people felt about different areas of their life. People's feelings were monitored and interventions used to improve people's wellbeing when required. People were also supported to attend regular review meetings with health professionals for which the service provided detailed progress reports which ensured clarity of each person's current health needs. People were aware of their support plans and told us they were happy contributing to the plans.

People told us they didn't have any complaints but were confident any complaints would be taken seriously and resolved promptly. The service had a complaints policy, although the registered manager told us that no complaints had been received since September 2015. The complaint received in September had been responded to in good time and resolved effectively, with learning outcomes documented.

People were encouraged by staff to engage in activities and maintain relationships. One person told us, "My family come and visit me here, but you can't have visitors after 10pm, which suits me." Another person said, "I am visiting [relative's name] tomorrow, it'll be nice to see them." We saw from an activities rota and certificates displayed that two people regularly volunteered to work for their local MIND charity. People were also supported to attend college to further their creative and language skills.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

At this inspection people and staff reported to us that the service was well managed. The rating continues to be Good.

Since the last inspection there was a new registered manager in post. They had been in post since October 2015. 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 registered manager had a good understanding of their legal responsibilities and knew when statutory notifications about important events in the home should be sent to us.

The registered manager promoted an open, person centred culture. They spoke to us passionately about their objectives for Falcon House and how they felt a sense of achievement supporting people, especially when people were able to move on and live independently. The registered manager's open culture was clearly demonstrated. They were very visible within the service and people and staff approached them with ease.

Good leadership was present in the service. The registered manager told us how they were supported well by the provider and had weekly meetings to discuss any concerns or issues within the service. This allowed them to manage effectively. The registered manager told us the importance they, and the provider, placed upon furthering staff skills and qualifications. We saw that responsibilities had been delegated to different support workers. The registered manager told us, "It is important for staff to feel a sense of responsibility, that way we all work as a team and understand how the service runs working together." Support workers told us how they felt supported by the registered manager.

The service enabled open and transparent communication. As well as meetings with key workers, we saw meeting minutes demonstrating that the service held residents meetings, monthly, to listen to their views and contributions about how to improve their experience. For example, a fish tank was requested by one person and people were asked what their favourite fruits were to make sure the fruit bowls were replenished with people's favourite fruits. We saw that people's favourite fruits were available to them.

The registered manager had robust quality monitoring systems in place to ensure good quality care was being delivered. Audits were undertaken by support workers and the registered manager counter checked the monitoring daily, weekly and monthly to ensure best practice. Internal inspections were also carried out by manager's of sister services to identify any areas of improvement. The Falcon House internal inspection had been carried out two days prior to our inspection therefore the internal report had not been finalised for us to see.

Annual questionnaires were distributed to people, relatives and health professionals. We saw that questionnaires contained all positive responses from people, health professionals and relatives. One relative reported, 'My family thank you and your team for outstanding care for [person's name]. Glad he is back on

track at Falcon House.'

In November 2016 the Local Authority carried out their own quality monitoring of Falcon House and advised the provider that although the service was good overall the quality assurance needed improving. The registered manager and provider advised us how they had responded to feedback by creating a document to record analysis of feedback from people, health professionals and staff alike. They explained this would enable them to identify where improvements could be made across the service, as opposed to responding to any individual concerns immediately. This demonstrated that the provider and registered manager were open and responsive to feedback from authorities.