

Eden Mencap Society

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Inspection report

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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 announced comprehensive inspection took place on 3 March 2016. The provider was given 24 hours' notice of the visit because the location provides support and personal care to people living in their own homes and we needed to ensure there were people in the office to assist with our inspection. This location also provides supported living services.

Eden Mencap Society is a registered charity supporting children and adults, who have learning disabilities in the Eden Valley of Cumbria. The agency provides services that are based in a person's home and a supported living service. The service has an office base in Penrith. The supported living service is provided to people in order to promote their independence.

The service runs horticultural and catering schemes for people attending the centre. There is also a community based café and this placement builds on skills and prepares those receiving services for employment.

There was a registered manager in post at the time of our inspection. 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.

People and their relatives told us this was a good service that provided safe support to those who used Eden Mencap.

We found that the service was safe and members of the staff team were aware of their role and responsibility to keep people safe. There were sufficient staff to provide the appropriate level of care and support.

Staff had completed training in the protection of vulnerable people. They knew part of their role and responsibility was to keep people safe from the risk of harm or abuse.

We saw that the provider had appropriate recruitment policies and procedures in place which ensured only suitable people were employed to care for vulnerable people, some having complex needs.

Risk assessments covering all aspects of care and support were in place and reviewed every month or more often if people's needs changed.

We found that staff training was up to date. Following their induction some staff then completed other specific training according to the needs of the people they supported.

We saw that medicines were handled correctly and in line with peoples' prescriptions.

People were included in all decisions about their care and their rights were respected. The service followed the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice. This helped to protect the rights of people who were not able to make important decisions for themselves.

Staff received regular supervision and appraisal that ensured good work practices were maintained.

Staff had formed close relationships with the people they supported. Privacy and dignity were respected at all times. People were encouraged to access activities in the community which helped them to retain their independence.

There was an appropriate internal quality monitoring procedure in place to monitor service provision. Checks or audits were completed in respect of medicines administration, care plans, personal involvement, health and safety and risk assessments. These checks ensured people were cared for and supported in the way people preferred.

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.

There were sufficient staff on duty at all times to provide support to people.

Robust systems were used when new staff were recruited and people could be confident the staff who visited their homes or supported them in the community were suitable to work for a care service.

Care staff were aware of their responsibilities to protect people from harm. They were aware of how to recognise and report concerns about vulnerable people.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

People were included in all decisions about their care and their rights were respected.

All staff completed training before working on their own in people's homes.

Staff received regular supervision and appraisal that ensured good work practice were maintained.

People received the support they required to eat and drink and to maintain their health and wellbeing.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

Staff knew the people they supported very well and were able to support people who had complex needs.

Staff were given time to build relationships with the people they supported.

An advocacy service was available if this became necessary.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

People were included in planning and agreeing to the care they received.

Care plans were based on robust assessments that were frequently updated so that people's changing needs could be met.

People were able to raise issues with the service in a number of ways including formally via a complaints process.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

The service was open to feedback and immediate action was taken where aspects of the service required improving.

Staff were well supported by the organisation, the registered manager and by other line managers.

There was an effective quality assurance system in use that had brought about improvements to the service offered to people.

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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 announced inspection took place on 1 March 2016. The provider was given 24 hours' notice of the visit because the location provides support and personal care to people living in their own homes.

The inspection was carried out by one adult social care inspector.

Eden Mencap Society is a registered charity supporting children and adults, who have learning disabilities in the Eden Valley of Cumbria. The agency provides services that are based in a person's home and has an office base in Penrith.

Eden Mencap also provides a supported living service in the Eden Valley. Supported living services involve a person living in their own home and receiving care and/or support in order to promote their independence. The care they receive is regulated by the Care Quality Commission, but the accommodation is not. The service currently operates in three supported living houses and two one bedroom flats in Penrith. The registered manager is planning to increase the number of supported living houses in the near future.

Before the visit we reviewed the information we held about the service, such as notifications we had received from the registered provider. A notification is information about important events which the service is required to send us by law. We planned the inspection using this information.

We checked our records but could find no trace of a Provider Information Return (PIR) being sent to the registered manager for completion. The PIR 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 to eight people who used the service and were in the centre or the community café for part of the day we conducted our inspection. We also spoke to three relatives of people who received support from the

service. We spoke to five members of staff, the chair of the Board of Trustees and spent time with the registered manager. We also spoke to the finance officer and a student social worker who was on a work placement, as part of their course, at the service.

We discussed the running of the service with the registered manager who outlined plans Eden Mencap were considering in order to expand the community based service currently in place.

We looked at four care/support plans and the personnel files of three recently appointed support workers. we also looked at other documentation concerning the running of this service.

We discussed staff training and the system in place to monitor the quality of the service provided to people.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

During our inspection visit to Eden Mencap we spoke to five people who were in the centre on that day and three people who were helping in the community based café. The café offered placements for those who were supported by the staff at the agency. These placements provided work experience and opportunities for people to build on their skills and prepare for employment in the surrounding area.

All the people we spoke to told us that they felt safe being supported by the staff at Eden Mencap. Some people had limited communication skills but all were relaxed and at ease with the staff who supported them.

We spoke to relatives who told us they knew their relative was safe being supported by staff from Eden Mencap. One person said, "I have no worries at all about the staff who support my relative. I know they are absolutely trustworthy and they have helped them for a number of years now". Another relative said, "This is a good agency. My [relative] loves it and he is very independent now. The staff are fantastic".

When we spoke to staff we asked how people were protected from the risk of bullying and avoidable harm. Staff explained that they had all had training that ensured they were able to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Staff were able to demonstrate their knowledge about different and types of abuse and how they would raise concerns about them. Many of the people who were supported by Eden Mencap go out into the communities most days staff were aware of their responsibility to ensure people's safety when they were out and about involved in various activities.

In the supported living part of the service staff were responsible for the administration of people's medicines. There was no person currently supported by Eden Mencap able to take responsibility for their own medicines. All staff had completed training in the safe handling of medicines and also the administration of medicines that were specific to people's medical and/or physical needs. The pharmacy who supplied the medicines to those who used the supported living service had also provided staff training that ensured medicines were administered safely and in line with people's own prescription and needs.

We saw, from documentation and through discussion with the staff, potential risks to people's safety had been identified and their records held information for care staff about how to reduce the risk. The staff we spoke with told us they knew how to keep people safe. The service was very much in favour of positive risk taking because the management and trustees saw their role as one which prepared people who lived with a disability to live fulfilling lives in the community and in their own home.

We saw that risk assessments were in place that covered people's time at the centre and also when they were out taking part in their various activities or education.

We looked at the recruitment records for three recently appointed members of staff. We saw that thorough checks had been carried out to ensure the staff were safe and suitable to work in people's homes and to care for them through the supported living service.

Staff and management we spoke to during this inspection confirmed that checks and references were taken prior to their employment. As part of the recruitment process staff skills and knowledge were assessed and suitable induction training was planned and completed. This meant that people who used the service could be confident that the staff who supported them in their own home or in the family had been recruited using safe procedures.

All prospective staff had a formal interview with the management and an informal interview with a group of people who were supported by Eden Mencap. It was agreed by all members of the staff team that the interview with the people who used the service was the more difficult of the two. This part of the recruitment process evidenced that people who used this service were given a voice regardless of their disability. The registered manager told us that this process always ensured that only suitable people were employed by this service.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People who used this service told us that the staff who supported them had the knowledge and skills to provide the care they required. One person told us, "The staff are fantastic". Relatives told us, "The staff are very good indeed. They are well trained and the manager is careful to match the staff with the people they support".

We saw, during our visit to the service, that staff understood the needs of the people they supported. We asked the staff about the training they received and one said, "I had a very good induction programme and other training followed on from there". Records evidenced, through certificates on people's files, that training had been completed in safeguarding vulnerable people (children and adults), the Mental Capacity Act 2005, moving and handling, safe administration of medicines, infection control and dementia care. Staff also received further training specific to certain medication prescribed to people who were supported by Eden Mencap. Staff also completed the 'care certificate' training and could go on to higher levels if they wish.

We spoke to the registered manager about matching the staff to the people they supported and she said this was a very important part of the assessment process. She told us, "It is very important to match,, wherever possible staff, who have the same or similar interests to the person that they will be supporting. It is better all round and we have found in the past this has always been very advantageous for the people we support".

When we spoke to people who used this service they were very clear they made their own decisions about what they wanted to do and where they wanted to go. They were given their choice and were very much involved in the planning of their support package.

The registered manager demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA). 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. 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. Staff had completed training in this and the team leader we spoke to had been involved in best interest meetings when these were necessary.

Health care needs were assessed and the services of the mental health team were accessed when required. We spoke to a member of the learning disability team and they told us that the service was well run and effective at meeting the needs of people living with a learning disability. Doctors were called when required and the district nursing service visited when it was necessary.

Each person had a 'hospital passport' that formed part of their care documentation. These contained important information and medication details to inform hospital staff if anyone was admitted to or attended hospital. These were up to date and any changes were noted and the document amended. This would be in

the case of a change in medication following a reassessment by the doctor or consultant.

Staff supervision was on-going and staff meetings were held regularly during which the care plans could be reviewed and updated. Staff also told us the manager had an 'open door' for anyone wishing to speak to her.

People who lived in the supported living houses were encouraged to eat a healthy diet and assist in the preparation of meals. They went out with the staff to do the shopping and buy food to prepare meals. They told us they enjoyed buying their favourite food.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Eden Mencap supported people in a variety of ways. The staff provided personal care to people who lived in the family home and others who lived as a small group of up to three in a house in the community. We spoke to five people who were supported to live independent lives in the community and they told us they were more than happy with the support they received. They said, "The staff who support us are all lovely. They are all very kind and help me and the others in the house all the time".

We spoke to relatives on the telephone and they said the staff were very good and supported their family member just the way they wanted. One relative said, "The staff that support my family member have a lovely attitude and care very much about how they support them".

We were unable to observe people being supported in their own home but we were able to observe the interaction between the staff and the people who were attending the centre on the day of our inspection. We saw warm and relaxed interactions and it was obvious people knew the staff well and vice versa. There was light hearted banter between the two groups with plenty of jokes. People were relaxed with the staff who showed a very caring attitude to those they were supporting.

Eden Mencap had robust policies and procedures in place with regards to respecting the privacy and dignity of the people the service supported. Staff we spoke to told us, "It is very important indeed to respect people's dignity and their privacy. I wouldn't like it if mine were not respected and I do all I can to treat people with respect all the time".

The service provided a family advocate to enable families to access support from other agencies should this be necessary. The advocacy service 'People First' which is based in Carlisle had been used in the past but the registered manager told us it was not always possible to obtain their services.

An advocate is a person who is independent of the service and who supports a person to share their views and wishes. This ensured that people had access to independent advice and information.

We saw that, on occasion, staff had provided care and support to people at the end of their lives. The registered manager had arranged suitable training for staff to enable them to support people appropriately and they worked together with other agencies during these times.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

We saw, from people's care plans, that everyone who had been referred to the service by the local authority's adult social care team had been fully assessed by the registered manager. This assessment covered physical, mental and emotional needs and set out clearly what level of support was required to meet those needs and prepare people to live independent lives in the community.

We spent time at the service looking at care and support plans. They all outlined in detail what the care needs assessment was and what care and support was required to meet people's needs and enable them to live independent lives. Each plan contained a personal profile and information concerning the person's social life. Goals to be achieved were set and as these were met so new goals were introduced.

Details from the assessment of needs formed the basis of each individual plan of care. We saw, in the care plans we looked at, that every aspect of people's care was documented and that people were very much involved in formulating their own support plan. Relatives were also involved in the care planning process.

There was information with regards to communication and the best way staff could communicate with each person. Where the person had limited or no verbal communication charts were in place to support the staff to communicate in the most appropriate way.

Eden Mencap was very flexible when it came to responding to any changes in people's needs. Where people were supported by the care agency, times and lengths of visits could be changed to suit the person being supported and also their families. The registered manager said that this flexibility meant that people could be supported in the way that suited the individual best.

Care plans were reviewed regularly and reflected the changing needs of the people who were supported by Eden Mencap. The team managers were responsible for reviewing the care plans and ensured they were kept up to date.

Staff had a good understanding of people's backgrounds and lives and this helped them to support them socially and be more aware of things that might cause them difficulties. We saw that the service provided to individuals concentrated on supporting them to maintain their independence when they lived in supported living accommodation.

People who were supported by the staff at Eden Mencap took part in various activities during the day. Many of them went to day centres to take part in such things as drama productions, social gatherings, swimming and attending the gym at the local leisure centre. Some took part in gardening activities in the community and some were learning to cook.

The people we spoke to told us they all enjoyed their activities and hobbies. There was a large photographic display at the service illustrating the different ways people were enjoying themselves. Some people go on holiday and one person has saved up and had booked the holiday of a lifetime, a cruise, with a staff member.

accompanying them.

This service had a suitable complaints procedure in place and a record was kept of any concerns that had been made. The Care Quality Commission had not received any concerns or complaints. Staff assured us that they had never had cause to complain about anything but if they had they would be confident that the registered manager would deal with the matter appropriately and in a timely manner.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

We found that Eden Mencap had a qualified and experienced manager in place who was registered by the Care Quality Commission. She had been in post for a number of years and was also the Chief Executive Officer of the service.

People who used the service, their relatives and the staff we spoke to told us that the service was well managed. People who used this service told us they could speak to the registered manager at any time. They said, "She is always about and sees us often when we are at home".

We spoke to members of the care staff team and those who worked in the administration office and they all said they thought the service was well run. They said the registered manager was very approachable and that there were very clear and open lines of communication throughout the service.

There were three team managers who dealt with the various strands of support provided to children, adults and those attending the day care facilities. We were able to speak to two of them and they both told us they were well supported by the registered manager. Management meetings were held and minutes were available to read. These meetings gave opportunities for members of the senior staff team to make suggestions about how to improve the care and support already provided. The registered manager told us, "I rely on my managers to support the staff and the people who use our service and come up with suggestions about how we can improve".

All the staff we spoke to told us that they felt well supported. The registered manager was supported by the team leaders who worked with staff and offered support and guidance. We saw there was a good staffing structure within Eden Mencap that ensured the service maintained its cultural vision and values.

Monitoring of the quality of care and support provided was done on both a formal and informal basis. Questionnaire surveys were sent out with the registered manager completing an analysis of the replies and dealing with issues raised in the replies. More informal quality monitoring including drop in visits to the supported living services were done by the team manager. These visits were used to chat with people living there and the staff that were on duty.

The registered manager organised meetings for people who used the service and their relatives to give the opportunity of discussing the operation of the service. Regular meetings of the board of trustees were also held to discuss a variety of topics pertaining to Eden Mencap.