

Harpenden Mencap

Stairways

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

Stairways is registered with the Care Quality Commission to provide care and support for up to 11 adults with learning disabilities and physical disabilities, which includes some complex needs. The home is comprised of three separate flats that each have their own staff group assigned. People in each flat have their own bedrooms and have access to communal areas such as the kitchen lounge shower and bath rooms.

At our last inspection we rated the service good. At this inspection we found the evidence continued to support the rating of good and there was no evidence or information from our inspection and ongoing monitoring that demonstrated serious risks or concerns.

This inspection report is written in a shorter format because our overall rating of the service has not changed since our last inspection.

People felt safe living at Stairways, staff had access to good guidance and risk assessments to keep people safe.

Staff received training and appropriate support to carry out their roles effectively.

People`s medicines were managed safely by trained staff who had their competencies assessed. Where people were able they were supported to manage their medicines.

The provider had policies and procedures in place to protect people from the risk of infections and staff adhered to these.

There were enough staff employed through robust procedures to meet people`s needs effectively.

People were involved in planning their care and support, signed their own care plans and consented to the support they received.

People were involved in duties around the home such as cleaning, laundry, cooking meals.

People had opportunities to pursue their hobbies, interest and socialise in house and in the community.

People`s feedback about the service they received was regularly sought and they felt they could voice their opinions in meetings and one to one conversations they had with staff.

People and staff were positive about the management of the service. There were systems in place to ensure the quality of the service was monitored and improved if the need was identified.

People are supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff support them in the least restrictive way possible; the policies and systems in the service support this practice.

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?

Good ●

The service remains Good.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service remains Good.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service remains Good.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service remains Good.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service remains Good.

Stairways

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.

This inspection took place on 23 August 2018 and was unannounced. The inspection was undertaken by one inspector. Before our inspection we reviewed information, we held about the service including statutory notifications that had been submitted. Statutory notifications include information about important events which the provider is required to send us. We also reviewed the provider information return (PIR) submitted to us. This is information that the provider is required to send to us, which gives us some key information about the service and tells us what the service does well and any improvements they plan to make.

During the inspection we spoke with four people who used the service, three staff members and the registered manager.

We reviewed care records relating to three people who used the service and other documents central to people's health and well-being. These included staff training records, medication records and quality audits.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

We found the service continued to be safe. People told us that they felt safe and supported at Stairways. One person said, "I like living here, staff look after me."

Staff were knowledgeable about signs and symptoms of abuse and how to report their concerns. They told us and we saw that they received training about safeguarding people from the risk of harm and abuse. Staff knew where to find information about relevant contact details from outside safeguarding agencies where they could report their concerns under the whistleblowing policy.

Identified risks were managed positively and helped people overcome any obstacles to enable them to be as independent as possible. We found people had risk assessments for all aspects of their daily lives such as accessing the community or actions needed to support people when swimming. There was good guidance to enable staff to keep people safe.

People told us there were enough staff to meet their needs. One person said, "Staff are always here." Staff told us there were enough staff and they were able to effectively meet people's needs. For example, appointments and accessing the community for their daily activities.

Safe and effective recruitment practices were followed to make sure that all staff were of good character, physically and mentally fit for the role and sufficiently experienced, skilled and qualified to meet the complex needs of people who used the service.

People were supported to take their medicines. Staff were trained and had their competencies assessed to ensure they followed best practice guidelines when they supported people with their medicines. There were regular audits carried out by the registered manager to check if people received their medicines as intended by the prescriber. Medicine administration records (MAR) were completed accurately and the stock of medicines we counted matched the records kept.

People were protected from the risk of infections by staff who followed correct infection control procedures when they carried out tasks around the home. The environment was clean and welcoming.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

We found the service continued to be effective'. Staff were knowledgeable about the support people needed. Staff we spoke with demonstrated they knew people well. One person said, "Staff help me go out."

Staff told us they received the appropriate training and support for their role. One staff commented, "We have lots of training, I have done dementia training." They told us, and we saw that they had regular training and refresher training in topics like safeguarding, health and safety, food hygiene and more specialist training such as epilepsy and diabetes training.

Staff confirmed they had regular supervisions where they discussed their performance and development needs. They told us they felt supported by the registered manager. One staff member told us, "I do feel supported. I have a supervision every month and I can talk about any concerns. They ask me if I am happy and we discuss any training needs I might have."

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 MCA. The procedures for this in care homes and hospitals are called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)."

People told us that staff always asked for their consent before they offered them support. We saw that people signed consent forms to agree and authorise staff to share information about them with health and social care professionals. They also signed their care plans to confirm their agreement with its content. One person told us, that they sit down with staff and were involved with their care reviews. Staff we spoke with confirmed this. One staff member commented, "People are always involved with the care plan reviews."

People and staff confirmed that food menus were discussed weekly and people had alternative option provided if required. One person we spoke with showed us pictures of where they had made a variety of meals. The person confirmed they liked to cook and was supported to cook meals each week. People were asked individually to choose what they wished to eat, these choices were reflected in the weekly menu. People's rooms were personalised, people were involved with choosing colours of paints and their individual furniture for their rooms. Staff confirmed that choice was important and worked with people to ensure they had a voice.

We also saw that people's weight was monitored weekly and people were encouraged to eat a healthy diet. The registered manager told us about one person who historically had trouble maintaining a healthy weight. However, they confirmed the person is now supported with regular exercise and healthy meal options. This has helped them to maintain a healthy weight.

People were supported to access health services as and when they required. We saw examples of involvement from other professionals such as the speech and language therapists, opticians, dentists and GP's when and if required. People's mental health was monitored and regularly reviewed by mental health specialists. This meant that people's health needs were reviewed regularly and changes responded to in a

way that helped to promote their health and well-being.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

We found the service continued to provide support that was caring. People told us they liked living at Stairways because staff were nice and they knew them well. One person said, "I make them [staff] laugh they are my friends, very good friends."

People were supported to keep in touch with their families and to maintain relationships which were important to them. One person said, "I go to see my [family] every week."

We saw that people and staff knew each other well; they were comfortable in each other's company and we observed kind and caring interaction. Staff spoke to people with respect and gave people the time they needed to communicate their wishes. People were confident when they approached the registered manager and staff to communicate their views, discuss plans for the day or raise any questions they had. We saw one staff member discussing with one person what the plans were for the day. We also noted where one person was planned to attend a local walking group, they had changed their mind due to the weather and asked staff to support them to go into the local town instead. We saw that staff were happy to support the person in doing this.

People told us they felt staff protected their privacy and gave them space if they needed it. Staff told us about one person who would go to their room and close the door if they wanted time on their own.

Care plans were reviewed regularly and captured people's opinions, thoughts and wishes. We found that personal documents and records for people were held securely and people had access to the information in their care plans.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People continued to receive care that was flexible and responsive to their changing needs. People told us they were happy with the support they received from staff. One person said, "Staff look after me, they are very patient."

People's needs were assessed prior to them moving in the home and their care and support was regularly reviewed by staff. This ensured that they met their agreed goals and that the service they received was appropriate to their needs. We found that people were supported to explore and experience new opportunities.

People were involved in their plan of care and asked to inform staff of their interests and hobbies. This ensured arrangements were in place to enable people to continue with their individual interests and social activities. People were supported to take on voluntary work, go to cinema and go out shopping. For example, a person expressed a wish to go swimming and arrangements were put in place to facilitate this. The person was new to swimming but really enjoyed the experience, and with the person's agreement they progressed on to have swimming lessons. We were told that their swimming abilities have greatly improved and they attend regular swimming lessons which they enjoy.

People confirmed they had regular resident's meetings to discuss topics such as menu choices and activities. Staff also confirmed that individual one to one sessions took place as this was more appropriate for some people. We saw that people were supported with complaints and concerns and easy read guidance was available. Staff checked daily with people to see if they had any issues or concerns. People we spoke with told us they enjoyed living at Stairways and had no concerns.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

The service continued to be well led. People knew who the registered manager was, they confirmed they felt supported. Staff told us that the registered manager was approachable and supportive. One staff member said, "I feel supported and the registered manager is very approachable."

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.

All staff we spoke with including the registered manager told us that their aim was to provide people with the best possible care and support to meet their needs. Staff were clear on their responsibilities and job roles and they told us that the training and the support they received enabled them to carry out their roles effectively.

The registered manager monitored the standards of the service provided through regular health and safety, infection control and medicine audits. They also regularly monitored the standard of the service provided by sending out surveys to staff, people, relatives and professionals. However, the registered manager confirmed a survey had not been sent this year, but they had signed up to having an independent survey completed by the local authority.

The registered manager demonstrated a very good understanding of people's needs and had a clear vision on how to deliver a high quality service. We saw evidence which confirmed that the provider was meeting their registration requirements. For example, the service had a registered manager in post. Statutory notifications were submitted by the provider. This is information relating to events at the service that the provider is required to inform us about by law.

The registered manager routinely completed visual inspections and talked to people and staff which ensured they were aware of ongoing issues and needs. They confirmed they felt supported by another manager within the organisation. The registered manager also attended networking groups twice a year and had access to web sites such as CQC which ensured they were up to date with best practice. The registered manager confirmed they have a lovely group of staff that work together well as a team.