

# Larchwood Care Homes (South) Limited

## Brookes House

### Inspection report

79-81 Western Road  
Brentwood  
Essex  
CM14 4ST

Tel: 01277212709

Date of inspection visit:  
18 May 2017

Date of publication:  
07 June 2017

### Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Good ●
Is the service safe?	Good ●

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

We carried out an unannounced comprehensive inspection of this service on 1 and 2 November 2016. Comments about staffing levels from people using the service, relatives and those acting on people's behalf and staff were found to be variable. Some people and their relatives felt on occasions that there was insufficient staff available to meet their needs or their loved ones needs. Some staff also felt that staffing levels were appropriate whilst others advised that staffing levels were not always maintained and this sometimes impacted on their ability to provide appropriate care for people using the service. Our observations at the time of the inspection showed that the deployment of staff was not always suitable to meet people's needs and communal lounge areas were frequently left without staff support.

As a result of our concerns a breach of regulatory requirement relating to Regulation 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 was made. We undertook a focused inspection on 18 May 2017 to review the above and to ensure that compliance with regulatory requirements had now been achieved. This report only covers our findings in relation to this area. You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Brookes House on our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

A registered manager was 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.

Suitable arrangements were in place to determine the basis for the service's staffing levels so as to ensure these remained suitable and flexible to meet people's individual care and support needs. Observations showed that the deployment of staff was now suitable to meet people's care and support needs and communal lounge areas were staffed accordingly to ensure people's safety and wellbeing. People, relatives and those acting on their behalf were positive about staffing levels at the service. Staff confirmed that staffing levels were maintained.

## 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 enough staff available to meet people's care and support needs.

# Brookes 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 inspection took place on 18 May 2017 and was unannounced. The inspection team consisted of two inspectors.

We reviewed the information we held about the service including safeguarding alerts and other notifications. This refers specifically to incidents, events and changes the provider and manager are required to notify us about by law.

We reviewed the service's arrangements for the monitoring and management of staffing levels at the service so as to meet people's needs. This included a review of five weeks staff rosters for the period 10 April 2017 to 18 May 2017 inclusive and observation of two communal lounge areas. We spoke with 12 people who used the service, seven relatives, four members of staff and the registered manager.

## Is the service safe?

### Our findings

Comments about staffing levels from people using the service and those acting on their behalf were positive. One person told us, "I do feel there is enough staff. I get a lot of help and only have to wait a short time for staff to attend to me." A second person told us, "They [staff] come fairly quickly. They are very good really. I don't like to be a nuisance but they [staff] don't mind and always tell me to call them. A third person told us, "I ring my buzzer and they [staff] do come as quickly as they can. There are enough staff and they do all that I need. I receive good care." Relatives told us they had no concerns about staffing levels at the service and from their observations staff attended to people's call bells and requests for assistance in a timely manner. Staff's comments relating to staffing levels at the service were positive.

Staff told us that staffing levels were appropriate for the numbers and needs of the people currently being supported. Staff confirmed that where there were staffing shortfalls, additional staff via an external employment agency were deployed to the service, except on rare occasions when staff telephoned in sick at very short notice and the agency could not be deployed to cover the shift.

Suitable arrangements were in place each month to determine the basis for the service's staffing levels so as to ensure these remained suitable and flexible to meet people's individual care and support needs. The staff rosters for the period 10 April 2017 to 18 May 2017 inclusive demonstrated that staffing levels as told us were maintained. Where staffing shortfalls occurred, additional staff via an external employment agency were deployed to the service where possible. The registered manager confirmed that where possible regular agency staff were used so as to provide continuity of care and support to people using the service. Additionally, the registered manager and deputy manager provided assistance and support by working alongside staff when required. This was confirmed by staff as accurate and staff told us that they very much appreciated the support provided.

Observations during the inspection showed that the deployment of staff was now suitable to meet people's care and support needs and communal lounge areas were staffed accordingly to ensure people's safety and wellbeing. Where people requested staff assistance or used their call bell to summon staff assistance, support was observed to be provided in a timely manner. This showed there was now consistently enough staff available to meet the needs of the people they supported, and the staffing structure was based around delivering positive care outcomes for people living at Brookes House and not for the needs of the organisation.