

Henshaws Society for Blind People

Gateshead Home Support - Henshaws Society for Blind People

Inspection report

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Overall summary

The inspection took place on 16 December 2014 and was announced. This was the first inspection of the service since it was registered with the Commission in 2012, as the service had only recently become active earlier in 2014.

Gateshead Home Support – Henshaws Society for Blind People is based in Gateshead and provides personal care and support to people with sensory impairments in their own homes. At the time of our inspection the service had been supporting one person and their child for three months. We concluded that it was too soon to give the service a quality rating.

The service had 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.

We found that the service was provided by a small team of staff who were skilled and experienced in caring for people with sensory impairments and disabilities. The registered manager and staff had taken steps to ensure the person and their child were safely supported and safeguarded from harm.

Staff were appropriately trained and supported and were effective in meeting the person’s needs. The person received flexible and consistent support and had formed good relationships with their workers. They were able to direct the way their support was given and their support was planned in line with what they wanted to achieve.

The person told us they were happy with the service, that staff were supportive and their well-being and confidence had improved. Their feedback was sought and they had no complaints about the way they were treated or the service in general. The service was well managed and checks were carried out to assure the quality of the service.

Summary of findings

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 was safe.

Systems were in place to make sure the person using the service and their child received safe support.

Staff provided a reliable service that gave the person continuity of care.

Is the service effective?

The service was effective.

The person received personalised support that met their needs.

The service ensured that staff were given training and support that equipped them to carry out their roles.

Is the service caring?

The service was caring.

Staff were caring and supportive.

They had a good understanding of the person as a unique individual and worked with them in an inclusive way.

Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive.

Staff worked flexibly to fit in with the person's needs and wishes.

Support was suitably planned according to the individual's personal goals.

Is the service well-led?

The service was well led.

The registered manager provided leadership to the team and staff felt well supported.

Regular checks were conducted to ensure the standards of the service were maintained and developed.

Gateshead Home Support - Henshaws Society for Blind People

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.

The inspection took place on 16 December 2014 and was announced. We gave the registered manager 48 hours' notice because the location provides a domiciliary care service and we needed to be sure that someone would be in.

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

Before the inspection we reviewed the information we held about the service. This included the notifications we had received from the provider. Notifications are changes, events or incidents the provider is legally obliged to send us within required timescales.

We gathered information during the inspection by talking with the person using the service and their social worker by telephone to get their views about the service. We met and talked with the registered manager and two support workers, looked at the person's care records and at other records relating to the management of the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

The person using the service said they trusted and felt safe with their support workers and had no concerns about how they were treated. They confirmed they had been introduced to each member of staff before they started to provide support. The staff we talked with also felt they had formed trusting relationships in the time they had worked with the person.

The registered manager told us she had initially received an emergency referral to provide services to the person. She confirmed the social worker had provided background information and they had visited the person together to assess their current needs and risks. She had also obtained clarification from the social worker, as the service continued, about potential risks and safeguarding issues which might affect the safety of the person and staff.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of how to support the person and their child safely. They told us about the measures they took to reduce risks, for instance when out in the community and when preparing hot food in the kitchen. One worker commented, "We recognise their vulnerability and the risks." This worker also said they made sure any incidents that occurred were reported and documented.

Staff told us they supported the person to keep their home environment secure and free from hazards. A specialist sensory service had provided the person with a number of

aids to help them do things independently and move safely around the house. The person also had access to the local authority's alarm call and response system in their home in the event of an emergency.

Policies and procedures were in place for safeguarding adults and children, as well as whistle-blowing (exposing poor practice). All staff had undertaken safeguarding adults and children's training. The staff we talked with understood their roles in recognising and preventing abuse and were confident they would report any concerns. The registered manager told us the person using the service managed their personal finances independently. On rare occasions staff made purchases on behalf of the person and these were recorded and receipts obtained.

At the time of our inspection a team of six staff were supporting the person and one worker was designated as key worker, a support worker who took a lead role. The registered manager and each of the staff worked at the care home from which the service was managed. A new support worker was being recruited to work specifically with the person. This worker and the key worker provided the majority of support hours to the person, to ensure consistency.

All staff were trained and experienced in the safe handling of medicines. The person using the service did not take any medicines, though their child needed support with a prescribed treatment. Staff had met with a community nurse who had given them practical advice about administering this treatment. A support worker told us that staff made records to confirm each time the treatment had been administered.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

The person using the service told us they received support with parenting, accessing the community, attending meetings and appointments, making meals, and household tasks. The person said, "It's going really well and has helped me with my independence and not feeling alone. It's really helped my confidence." The person's social worker also told us, "They have been very good for X." One staff member said, "I feel the support we've given has been very effective and we can see how X has benefitted."

The registered manager and staff who currently supported the person were experienced and worked at a care home for people with sensory impairments and disabilities. The staff we spoke with told us they had undertaken all necessary training to help them meet the needs of the person they supported. This included obtaining care qualifications; extensive training in specific sensory techniques; disability awareness; equality and diversity; health and safety; and courses in safe working practices.

The person's key worker said they would be working closely with the new support worker who was being appointed. They told us, "I'll work with her during induction to help her get to know X's needs."

Staff told us they were appropriately supported in their work. Systems were in place for staff to be given individual supervision every six weeks and annual appraisals. The registered manager had also held one meeting to date to discuss the person's service with the staff team.

The person using the service was able to make their own choices and decisions about the support they received. We were told the person's service was due to be reviewed later in the month. The registered manager told us they would be asking the person to discuss and hopefully agree to and give consent to their updated care plan.

Staff said they supported the person with food shopping and preparing and cooking meals. We saw this formed part of the person's objectives within their care plan. One worker said, "We make meals from scratch." The person told us they attended healthy lifestyle classes and said staff were good at supporting them with healthy eating and taking exercise. Staff also told us they were making progress in promoting a varied diet for the person's child.

Staff told us they supported the person, and their child when necessary, to attend health care appointments. For instance, one worker said they had recently accompanied the person to a local gender specific health group for self-assessment of their physical and mental health.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

The person using the service said they had good relationships with the staff and found them to be very supportive. The person's social worker told us the staff were good at supporting the person to speak up for themselves at meetings with social care professionals.

The registered manager and staff understood the person's diverse needs and said they supported them to retain control over their life. One worker said, "X sometimes asks the staff their opinions or to suggest something but ultimately they make their own decisions." Another worker told us, "We're always looking at different ways to help X develop their skills and self-esteem. X is definitely becoming more empowered and confident." The person also accessed advocacy services to help uphold their rights and healthcare support to promote their well-being.

The staff we talked with demonstrated a caring approach which they balanced with promoting the person's

independence. They told us they placed an emphasis on involving the person in all aspects of their support, and in doing things with, and not for, the person. For instance one worker described how they did "everything together" including consulting the person about the records they made of each support visit. Staff were also mindful of the person's privacy and confidentiality issues. They told us, for example, that they only stayed with the person during appointments and meetings if this was what the person had expressly asked them to do.

It was evident that staff took a pride in their work and gained satisfaction from the progress the person was making with their support. One worker told us, "I'd say we've done a really good job in the short time we've been working with X. Even the small things X can do now are achievements." Another worker said they felt the person's service would improve further when their dedicated support worker started.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

The person using the service told us their service was flexible. They said they could change the times of their support hours to suit what they wanted or needed to do. They said, "I'm really pleased [with the service] and have no complaints." The person's social worker said, "X gets a consistent service and they [staff] always try their best to fit in with X's needs and requests. I've no concerns and feel it [the service] has worked out well for X."

We saw that the person's support was planned according to the personal goals they wanted to achieve. Individualised care plans were recorded for each objective, setting out clearly the support they required from staff. The plans were evaluated on a weekly basis and provided evidence of the progress being made. Additional records were kept in the person's home, including a support timetable, accounts of each visit, and a diary to help

manage appointments. At the service a contact sheet was maintained to log communication with the person, such as requests to change support times or times when additional support had been provided.

Staff told us that sourcing activities within the community, and supporting the person to access them, was an important factor in the person's service. They described a range of activities and classes that the person was now taking part in and enjoying. One worker said, "We try to go out as much as possible, it's really helped to prevent X from being isolated."

The registered manager had verbally explained the complaints procedure to the person so they knew what to do if they were ever unhappy with their service. A copy of the complaints procedure in braille had also been provided to the person. We were told there were plans to produce an audio version of the procedure in the near future.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

The person using the service told us the registered manager regularly checked whether they were happy with their service. They said, "I am happy and so is my child, we get on really well with them."

The person's social worker said they had regular contact with the registered manager and commented, "The communication is really good. The manager keeps me updated."

The service had an experienced registered manager who was aware of her registration responsibilities. They provided leadership to the staff team and played an active role in co-ordinating the service. The staff we talked with felt well supported in their roles. They told us, "We get appropriate training and support"; "There's open communication, I can talk to the manager about anything"; and, "I feel overall we give an excellent service"

The registered manager was directly involved in reviews and audits of the person's support. This included carrying out visits to the person, getting their feedback about the service, and checking care records to validate the support given. The registered manager told us they would soon be completing a satisfaction survey with the person to get their views about the quality of the service. We saw this included asking whether they were happy with their support, how they were treated by staff, their daily living and involvement in decision-making.

The registered manager told us they were committed to further developing the service. The registered manager was working on improving the 'service user guide' and continuing to market the service with commissioners and within the local and wider community.