

City Care Partnership Limited

Heaton Vale

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Outstanding 
Is the service safe?	Outstanding 
Is the service effective?	Outstanding 
Is the service caring?	Outstanding 
Is the service responsive?	Outstanding 
Is the service well-led?	Outstanding 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

This was an announced inspection which took place on 30 and 31 August 2017 and 5 September 2017. This was the first comprehensive rated inspection of the service following their registration with the Care Quality Commission in January 2016.

Heaton Vale Care Home is part of City Care Partnership, an independent provider of specialist services for adults with learning disabilities. Heaton Vale is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to provide care and support services for up to 10 adults aged 18 and over who are living with learning disabilities and Autistic Spectrum Condition.

In collaboration with an independent landlord and Manchester City Council, the provider has developed the concept of successful living spaces within the Heaton Norris community in the heart of Stockport.

Bespoke accommodation, person centred care and support is provided to people in 10 self-contained apartments with separate on-site support staff accommodation with easy access to transport links to Stockport and Manchester City Centre. At the time of our inspection, seven people were being supported.

The provider continually aims to make sure that people with severe disabilities and complex support needs are an integral part of the community of Heaton Norris. The service offers people a wide choice of activities, opportunities and work environments to support the safe transition to a more independent model of living.

The service had a registered manager. 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.

On arrival at Heaton Vale the environment was calm, relaxed and welcoming. The registered manager, staff team and people using the service were very keen to share their knowledge and experience of working and living at the service. All of the people we spoke with told us they felt Heaton Vale was a safe place to live and they were supported to have as much freedom of choice and control in their lives as possible.

The service worked collaboratively and with mutual respect for other professionals so that people's social, emotional and physical needs were met. This helped them to lead an exceptionally high standard quality of life. People's care and support was planned proactively with them and identified areas of potential risk had been continually, assessed, monitored and evaluated to help reduce or eliminate any risks to people.

There was a culture of openness and transparency at the service. Staff were extremely positive about the management and leadership which inspired them to deliver a high quality service.

The registered manager and the provider demonstrated exceptional leadership. They encouraged ideas

from staff to benefit the people in their care and maintain a strong, stable staff team with a shared goal.

Staff received a comprehensive induction to the service. High quality training was tailored specifically for staff to ensure the needs of the people they supported were appropriately responded to and met. People were supported by very kind, caring and compassionate staff who routinely went above and beyond what was expected of them to provide people with excellent, high quality care.

Staffing levels ensured people were provided with the person centred support they needed and to have as much freedom as possible. Staff told us the agreed time was always available to support people and this was paramount to ensuring people's wellbeing and development.

The registered manager and support workers were exceptionally knowledgeable and acutely aware of their responsibilities to protect people from abuse and/or harm.

The provider carried out robust recruitment checks prior to people starting work at the service..

Staff demonstrated their knowledge and awareness of the principles of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

Practice observed and records kept demonstrated people received their medicines safely and as prescribed.

People were supported by highly motivated staff in meeting their dietary, nutritional and hydration needs.

There was a strong culture within the service of treating people with dignity and respect. People and the staff knew each other well and these relationships were valued.

The registered manager, staff and provider were always visible and available to listen to people and their relatives to offer them choice and make them feel that they mattered.

People's support plans showed that comprehensive and thorough needs assessments had been completed by a range of health and social care professionals well in advance of moving into Heaton Vale.

People were at the heart of everything the provider did and were consulted and involved in everything.

Feedback from people who used the service and their relatives was used to make changes to the service and to drive improvements. People told us they could raise concerns and these would be taken seriously, investigated and responded to appropriately.

People and their relatives spoke very highly about the service and indicated their experiences had been extremely positive. The management team, support workers and the service were described as "Outstanding", "Extremely professional and knowledgeable", "An exceptional service" and "Absolutely amazing."

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 outstandingly safe

Clear guidance for the management of medicines were in place and records showed people received their medicines safely and as prescribed.

Clear procedures and practices were in place to protect people from potential abuse and unsafe care and staff understood their responsibilities.

Clear, detailed and robust risk assessments were in place to identify any risks to people.

Staffing levels ensured a high standard of support was provided to people being supported.

Outstanding 

Is the service effective?

The service was outstandingly effective

Staff received a comprehensive induction to the organisation.

Ongoing high quality staff learning and development opportunities were tailored to ensure people experienced effective care and support.

Staff demonstrated their knowledge and awareness of the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, supporting people to have as much freedom and choice as possible.

People's dietary nutritional and hydration needs were effectively met.

Outstanding 

Is the service caring?

The service was outstandingly caring

People were supported by staff who were committed to providing high quality care and had an excellent understanding of their needs.

Outstanding 

People and staff knew each other well. These relationships were based on trust and people were truly valued.

The registered manager, staff and provider consulted and worked closely with people and their families to ensure they were always actively involved in all decisions about the care being provided.

People's rights to privacy and dignity were highly respected, valued and promoted.

Is the service responsive?

The service was outstandingly responsive

The registered manager, staff and provider sought and provided outstanding multidisciplinary support to enable people to achieve an exceptional quality of life.

People's support plans had been planned, developed and agreed proactively in partnership with them.

The provider was continually developing meaningful and appropriate community links so that people could engage and participate in a wide range of activities, employment opportunities, hobbies and interests.

People told us they knew their comments and complaints would be listened to and acted upon and were actively encouraged to give their views and raise concerns or complaints.

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

The service was outstandingly well-led

People, their relatives, staff and appropriate professionals expressed high levels of confidence in the management and leadership at the service.

The service ethos and culture was transparent, open and honest. Staff put people first, and were committed to continually improving each person's quality of life.

Extensive quality assurance systems were in place and fully utilised. There was a strong emphasis on the service to continually strive to improve.

Outstanding 

Heaton Vale

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 of Heaton Vale took place on 30, 31 August and 5 September 2017 and was unannounced. The inspection team consisted of one adult social care inspector.

Before the inspection we reviewed the information we held on the service. This included notifications we had received. A notification is information about important events such as accidents or incidents, which the provider is required to send to us by law.

The provider had completed and returned their 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 received information about the service from the local authority following the inspection. They raised no concerns about the service and made positive comments about the quality of the care and support provided to people living at Heaton Vale.

During the inspection we met four people who lived at Heaton Vale and had discussions with three people. We spoke with two support workers, the area team leader, a practice lead support worker, two senior team leaders, the registered manager, a central support team manager, a company development manager/autism lead, a principle service manager and the central team support assistant practitioner. This gave us a wide insight into staff views across all areas of the service

We used the Short Observational Framework for Inspection (SOFI). This is an observational tool used to help us collect evidence about the experience of people who use services, especially where people may not be able to fully describe this themselves because of cognitive or other impairment.

Following the inspection we made telephone calls to two relatives of people who used the service to seek their views and opinions. We looked at three people's care records to see if their records, three staff recruitment files, staff duty rotas, staff training and supervision records and records in relation to the management of the service, including quality audits, surveys and development plans.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People we spoke with told us they felt safe living at Heaton Vale and with the staff who supported them. One person said, "I love staying here; I do feel safe." A relative of a person using the service told us that Heaton Vale was, "100% safe." Another person's relative said, "I feel [Person's name] is in safe hands. I have no concern's, the service has eased my worries. I am very reassured." The people who we met and spoke with looked comfortable and at home in their accommodation and surroundings.

We looked at how the service protected people from the risk of abuse. We saw safeguarding policies and procedures were in place as well as a whistle blowing procedure (the reporting of unsafe and/or poor practice). The provider had managed safeguarding concerns appropriately and notified the appropriate authorities such as the local authority and CQC in a timely way. Records showed and staff confirmed that safeguarding training had been provided and training records we examined confirmed this. Staff we spoke with were able to clearly explain the whistle blowing procedure and what they would do if they thought someone was at risk of or had been harmed. What they told us demonstrated they knew what action to take so that people were safe and protected.

Clear and robust risk assessment management plans (RAMP) had been completed to enable support workers to safely promote and maintain people's independence. The RAMP's in place took into account people's physical, emotional, cognitive, situational, and environmental factors which might increase the likelihood of a person displaying behaviour that challenged. These records clearly identified the likelihood of a risk occurring and the impact of the risk. Any historical risks were also recorded to enable support workers to monitor and identify risk triggers. For example support plans we looked at had recorded specific strategies for staff to use in particular situations where risks were identified such as, self-injurious and anti-social behaviour. Strategies were clear and detailed giving instructions to, 'distract' and 'offer the person other things to do', 'help the person to engage' and 'help the person to move away from other supported people'. This showed that areas of potential risk had been assessed, identified and appropriate action identified to help reduce or eliminate the risks to the person and other people.

We looked at a risk assessment plan for a person who wanted to shop independently. With support from their support worker the person had developed a five step plan which identified possible triggers, risks and strategies to manage the risk. A goal setting and tracking form was in place for the person to record and check their achievement at each stage. Alongside this a comprehensive and detailed independent travel assessment was kept in relation to the person's personal safety and their pedestrian skills. On going review of the effectiveness of the RAMP meant that the person was supported to have full control in the management of their own risk. Through this risk management approach system the person had since achieved planning a trip to Cadbury's World which had been a lifelong ambition. Photographs taken on this trip showed the persons delight and enjoyment sampling the confectionary and browsing through the souvenir shop.

The basis on which support was delivered across the provider's network of services was centred on Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). The central support team lead for PBS told us that within City Care Partnership

the multidisciplinary team of professionals were enthusiastic in promoting the principles of PBS across the provider's services anticipating where things may go wrong and preventing risks from happening, rather than reacting when things go wrong. They said, "PBS principles are about increasing someone's quality of life, their skill repertoire and access to outside resources through positive reinforcement. This support method increased appropriate means of communication for people using the service which minimised the use of physical restraint".

All staff had been trained in CITRUS (Creative Intervention Techniques in Response to Untoward Situations). The deployment of CITRUS techniques was intended to prevent, manage, and as a last resort, restrain aggression safely. The aim was to keep people as safe as possible when displaying behaviour that challenged. Records demonstrated that the use of any form of restraint within Heaton Vale was infrequent. However when CITRUS techniques were used, an incident report was completed which included lessons learnt. Staff we spoke with demonstrated good underpinning knowledge and the appropriate use of CITRUS techniques.

Environmental risk assessments were in place and health and safety audits were carried out on a regular basis by an external contractor. We found checks on windows, doors, lighting and heating had been carried out and were up to date. Records we examined indicated that fire equipment checks and fire drills were carried out frequently. We examined additional records that showed regular checks had been undertaken for electrical appliances and portable appliance testing. This helped to make sure that any environmental and Health and Safety risks to people were identified and minimised.

Accidents and incidents were recorded and reviewed to ensure people remained safe and identified where changes were required to people's support needs to ensure their safety.

Staff were fully aware of the medicines policy and procedure in place and followed them accordingly. The service used a monitored dosage system (MDS) and medicines were provided in blister packs by a supplying pharmacy. MDS is used to help keep track of what medicines are administered. This system can help to reduce the risk of medicine errors and help to make sure that people receive the correct medicine as prescribed. When we checked how medicines were being managed we saw that people's medicines were stored in a security safe box located in designated locked rooms.

Records showed medicines delivered to Heaton Vale had been checked in by two designated support workers who were trained in this topic. When we examined a sample of medication administration records (MAR) a photograph of each person was on their individual MAR to assist support workers in identifying them. MARs were signed and kept up to date to show when medicines had been administered. A support worker signature sheet containing the names of authorised medicine handlers was in place and signed by designated support workers. This helped to ensure medicines were administered to the right person. People we spoke with told us they received their medicines safely and at the correct times.

We checked the controlled drugs (CDs) and found they had been accurately reconciled with the amounts recorded as received and administered. These medicines are liable to abuse and for these reasons there are legislative controls for some drugs and these are set out in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and related regulations. These controls require services to make entries of any controlled drugs stored and administered in a separate register as well as on the MAR sheets. The CD record book contained the remaining balance and a witness signature alongside the person's MAR was signed to confirm administration. This meant that the systems in place in relation to the recording of medicines were being used and followed correctly.

Recruitment procedures in place were robust and safe. We looked at three support worker files which

showed they had been recruited in line with the regulations including the completion of a disclosure and barring service (DBS) pre-employment check and at least two recent references from previous employers. Such checks help the registered provider to make informed decisions about a person's suitability to be employed in any role working with vulnerable adults. We spoke with three support workers who told us that after completing an application form they took part in role play scenario's and team building exercises with supported people and other support workers. Staffing levels ensured a high standard of support was provided to people being supported.

An infection prevention and control (IPC) policy with associated procedures were in place to ensure the cleanliness of the service and protect people from the risk of infection. Individual apartments were provided with infection control 'kits' containing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as disposable aprons, shoe covers, gloves and aprons. Support workers had access to the kits to help reduce the risk of cross infection, and knew to use the kit items when providing personal care to people or supporting them to keep their apartments clean and tidy. This ensured a high standard of cleanliness in each apartment was maintained.

Records of an infection control inspection carried out by the local authority health prevention team in May 2017, confirmed this and the service received a rating of 'good'.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People we spoke with told us they thought the leadership at Heaton Vale was outstanding. They said, "I think the staff are amazing because they have taken the time to learn all about [Person's name]" and "Staff know exactly what they are doing. They are a team of well-trained professionals and experts at what they do."

A comprehensive mandatory learning and development and induction programme was in place for new staff and included topics such as the history of learning disability, institutional care, transitioning into the community, moving & handling; first aid; safeguarding, core values, supporting people with autism, person-centred thinking/ planning, CITRUS and maintaining and promoting health. New support workers also completed a mandatory two week period of shadowing (working under the supervision of an experienced support worker), formal observations and monitoring before they were able to work unsupervised, to ensure they could safely and confidently support people independently.

Support workers were subject to a six month probationary period and were required to complete the Care Certificate. This is a set of standards that social care and health workers follow in their day to day working. It is the minimum standard that should be covered as part of induction training of new care workers. Following their induction the new support worker received their continuing professional development (CPD) file. Each CPD file was specific to the individual support workers role and included their job consultation and appraisal documentation.

The service had appropriately adapted the Care Certificate topics in order to make it was more pertinent for supporting people living with autism and learning disabilities. We spoke with a company development manager and autism lead involved in transitioning the Care Certificate who said, "Transitioning the Care Certificate was mapped across the whole organisation to meet identified learning needs and styles of all staff who supported people and mapped across the needs of the supported people. For example, the language within some modules was changed in order to be less ambiguous and more person-centred." This ensured that support workers acquired the knowledge and skills they needed to provide outstanding care and support to people.

We spoke with three support workers about their induction, training and the use of CITRUS at Heaton Vale. They said about CITRUS training, "The training is carried out over two days, the first day is theory followed by a second day of techniques and how to diffuse a potentially aggressive situation" and "A lot of the CITRUS training was about our relationship and approach with/to the supported person, however CITRUS is used as a last resort after all other techniques have been used" and "We can't support people unless we have received training in CITRUS."

All of the support workers made very positive comments about the quality of training provided such as, "Working at Heaton Vale, I have never once felt unable to manage the work I do, and that's due to the training I have received" and "I have become a much better support worker because of the depth and quality of training provided by City Care Partnership. The training is excellent and definitely helps me to

support people effectively" and "In terms of good training and support, this organisation is the best model of learning disability/ autism residential care."

Staff received an annual appraisal and job consultation (supervision) every six weeks, (supervision is known as job consultation within the organisation). This system promoted discussion and evaluation of individual staff performance including best practice and where necessary improvements in practice. Records of these discussions were maintained and ongoing. One support worker said, "Job consultation is great. The team leaders are very supportive. It gives me direction and helps to develop my confidence to support people effectively and demonstrate best practice at all times."

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (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. People can only be deprived of their liberty so that they can receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA. The authorisation procedures for this in care homes and hospitals are called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA, and whether any conditions on authorisations to deprive a person of their liberty were being met. At the time of our inspection, seven people supported by the service had restrictions in place. The Registered Manager maintained a DoLS log to track individual DoLS authorisations in line with the MCA. Applications had been submitted to the relevant authorities.

Records we examined were complete and up to date and restrictions were deemed to be in people's best interest and the least restrictive. For example a person supported to develop new skills had a significantly less restrictive service than when they first moved to Heaton Vale last year. The registered manager advised us that it was highly probable the supported person would no longer require the same level of support or restrictions to keep them safe in future should they continue to develop at the pace they were doing. This meant they could then be supported to achieve their aspiration to move on to a model of support where they had their own tenancy and not need the level of support and restrictions they currently required.

All staff had received MCA and DoLS training. Support workers we spoke with were knowledgeable about the MCA, issues relating to consent and the need to carry out mental capacity assessments for people who required them.

We examined the health action plans of three supported people and saw they were supported to have regular access to external healthcare professionals, such as a speech and language specialist, psychologist, mental health professionals, general practitioners, dentists and opticians. Each person had a hospital passport to provide hospital staff with comprehensive details about the person's needs and how they communicated. Routine gender specific health checks were taking place and the service had excellent links with dietetic professionals where potential nutritional and hydration risks had been identified and were supported by highly motivated staff in meeting their needs.

Regular physical exercise and eating well was of high priority and was recorded in people's support plans in order to reduce health problems and maintain a healthy body weight. This helped to promote a feeling of good physical health and well-being with people. A relative of a supported person said, "[Person's name's] health has really improved. Before they moved into Heaton Vale they had lost a lot of weight. Now they are eating regularly and engaging; I couldn't have asked for a better place."

The provider had renewed their commitment to the Health Charter for Social Care Providers in 2015 and was the only provider in Greater Manchester to do so until 2017. The Health Charter is designed to support social care providers to improve the health and well-being of people with learning disabilities, thus improving people's quality of life generally. At Heaton Vale, the registered manager had developed processes and recording methods to improve individual's access to health care. This included regularly updating the health action plans of each supported person living at Heaton Vale.

Staff representatives attend monthly Health Charter meetings where information gathered is subsequently cascaded to the rest of the team. Heaton Vale was highlighted as a focus service within City Care Partnership, to take a more practical approach to healthy lifestyles and eating. For example each month everyone in the service is encouraged to try a new recipe with the 'veg of the month' challenge. Supported people and support workers participate each month. This has helped to expand people's food choices, promote life skills such as cooking, budgeting and following recipes. It also celebrates individual's achievements as there is a winner each month and this achievement is shared with the whole organisation. We examined records that showed this initiative had improved people's weight and body mass index (BMI). All changes were monitored and recorded in people's health action plans.

With the permission of two people supported by the service we visited their self-contained apartments and saw they were furnished to a high standard with good quality furnishings such as curtains, sofa, armchair, double bed and dining room furniture. Each apartment was homely and personalised with people's belongings such as soft furnishings, family photographs and artwork. Communal areas were kept clean and tidy by a housekeeper.

The registered manager told us that a high standard of cleanliness was maintained as a benchmark for supported people to achieve or exceed when they moved on to more independent living.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

The service was very caring and supportive. Supported people and their relatives told us the support workers, registered manager and the wider staff team were extremely caring, supportive, attentive and dedicated in their approach. They commended the exceptional quality of the care they received. Comments were made by supported people we spoke with, for example, "I do like the staff in my heart, I get on with them all" and "The staff are really helpful to me and I get my own choice." Relatives of supported people said, "Staff are fantastic; the way they look after [Person's name] is amazing. They listen to him; they are so good with him, they treat him like a brother, like family. Definitely caring; nothing is too much trouble for the staff" and "Staff know [Person's name] well and they actively help him to make decisions about his care; he has choice now. Staff think about [Person's] needs and I know they care by the remarkable changes I have seen in him since he moved to Heaton Vale."

During the inspection we used a short observational framework for inspection (SOFI) to observe support worker interactions with supported people. Support workers showed patience and listened intently to what people were telling them. It was very apparent they were highly skilled at developing strong relationships with the supported people and people felt that they really mattered. One person said "Staff know me and how I can be; they understand me." We observed support workers actively engaged in meaningful activity with people. For example, we observed a support worker supporting a person to carry out their daily laundry routine. The support worker was very attentive but made sure they gave the person the time and physical space to carry out their routine at their own pace. The task was carried out in an unhurried manner. The support worker stood nearby continually reassuring and giving the person verbal praise throughout, affirming the person's achievement when the task was completed. Good eye contact was maintained as they smiled and said, "Well done; good job."

It was apparent that staff were proud to support the people living at Heaton Vale. Support workers we spoke with said, "Some of the people we support have experienced a lot of trauma in their life. We all adapt to the needs of the supported person; it is for us to encourage and support them to develop and achieve their aspirations," and "We are always reinventing ways of supporting people to make their lives much better and much more positive," and "The function is adapted to the person. This is something they haven't experienced before. For all of the people living at Heaton Vale, they had to adapt to fit into the environment they lived in or the systems in place; It's not like that at Heaton Vale."

Heaton Vale worked in excess of service expectation to support people using the service. For example a relative of a person told us how [Person's name] wanted to celebrate their 22nd birthday after spending their 21st birthday in hospital. The relative said, "The staff organised a limousine to transport [Person's name] to their favourite restaurant with two support workers who treat him like family. It was wonderful because off duty staff turned up to surprise [Person's name]. I believe at Heaton Vale they go the extra mile for people. You wouldn't get that service anywhere else."

The provider used innovative person-centred 'social stories' in an outstanding way as a method of sharing information at Heaton Vale. Social stories were used to teach people social skills such as rules and

expectations, the consequences of appropriate/inappropriate behaviour and understanding another's point of view. The services Central Support Team (CST) and speech and language therapist had delivered training sessions to upskill the practice leads so that social stories could be developed more dynamically and in response to supporting people in decision making and supporting capacity. For example we examined a person's social story that provided visual representations of their different levels of communication. Symbols, pictures, drawings and colour were presented visually and non-threateningly in order that the person could easily understand. This meant that the service continuously sought ways to provide people with information about their support and involve people in decisions about what they wanted to do.

The CST is a specialist group of professionals who ensure that the residents at Heaton Vale receive bespoke packages of care and support. They also provide support and person specific training to the staff team at Heaton Vale and are an in-house resource meaning that they are able to source specialist support immediately and internally without the need to apply to community based teams. The CST worked collaboratively alongside external professionals such as a behaviour analyst and clinical psychologist to develop complex behaviour assessments and focus on primary preventative measures. This ensured people being supported received high quality, intensive, care and support underpinned by best practice. During the inspection we saw that appropriate referrals had been made to Independent Mental Capacity Advocates (IMCAs).

IMCAs are legal safeguards for people who lack capacity to make important decisions. They are mainly instructed to represent people where there is no one independent of services such as a relative or friend able to represent them. This meant people who used the service always had an independent person representing their best interests and to ensure their voice was heard and opinions respected.

People and their relatives told us they were encouraged to keep in touch and maintain good relationships with each other. Relatives we spoke with told us they were always made welcome when visiting their relative and the service. One relative said, "I can arrange for [Person's name] to visit my home whenever. Staff bring [Person's name] to family celebrations and party's and are consistent in supporting [Person's name] to maintain our relationship."

A support worker we spoke with told us people were at the centre of everything they planned and did. They said, "People here are at the heart of everything we do; they are consulted and involved in everything. It's our job to encourage healthy family relationships. It's great when we see families rebuilt and relationships growing."

Support workers understood how to support people with dignity and respect. Without exception, people told us that staff respected their privacy and their right to make their own decisions and lifestyle choices. One person told us, "My privacy is always respected even though staff spend a lot of time with me." Staff were highly motivated and displayed kindness and compassion. We heard and observed many examples of staff talking with people respectfully and as equals. We heard laughter, chatter and friendly banter.

We overheard a conversation between a person and support worker comprising of general day to day chit chat about the days planned activities. The conversation moved to fashion, shoe sizes and what the supported person felt like wearing that day. We heard the person and support worker complimenting each other about their style of clothes, discussing the latest iPhone and shopping at the Trafford Centre in Manchester before the support worker said, "I'll leave you to get ready in private; I'll be back after you've had your shower and when you're dressed."

It was extremely apparent that a trusting relationship had formed between the person and the support

worker and the support worker ensured the person's needs around privacy and dignity.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People told us they received support which was in line with their needs and preferences. They told us that the support provided was based on them as a person. A person being supported said, "Staff do a good job and help me a lot. They support me with my shopping, help me to cook tea and help me to keep my flat tidy and drive my car so that I get go to places I need to go to" and " I always have choice. Staff give me choices like when I moved into my flat, I could choose what I wanted in there, like pictures and furniture." Relatives of supported people said, "The staff have picked up a lot of pieces from where [Person's name] was living before. They make sure they treat people as individuals; this happens with each person they're supporting. I'd say they definitely meet the needs of [Person's name]" and "There is a person-centred focus on each person; They focus on the individual. They give 100%. [Person's name] is a lot happier now that there are routines in place. They are looking after [Person's name] very well."

Records showed a multi-disciplinary approach was always taken and that people's needs were comprehensively assessed before they moved into Heaton Vale. Prior to and throughout transitioning between services, we saw records that showed people were particularly well supported at this time. People's individual journey to Heaton Vale consisted of regular meetings involving the person, people who were important to them and other professionals involved in their care and support. A wide range of comprehensive assessments had been completed including a capacity assessment, observational assessment, interim risk assessment and risk management plan were put in place prior to the person moving to the service.

An intensive support team is available to support crisis management situations and assessments in a non-hospital community environment. Safe, intensive Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is one of the core interventions in place to successfully support people who display or are at risk of displaying behaviour which challenges services. Working with individuals, their families and other care providers Heaton Vale facilitate a planned, proactive and co-ordinated support model once they have successfully supported people through the crisis stage.

People's support plans were comprehensive and had been developed in collaboration with the person. We looked at three peoples individual aspiration pathways which focused on ways in which their aspirations could be met. The aspiration pathways were a simple yet extremely effective way of supporting an individual to achieve a goal such as to book a limousine for a person's birthday. From the records we looked at we saw people had set individual goals linked to going on holiday and shopping independently. Each pathway was highly detailed and incorporated a number of specific steps which included the development of new skills, timescales and responsibilities. The service maintained detailed evidence files to demonstrate how individuals were progressing along their individual pathway and to recognise when key milestones had been reached. For example one of the goals for a person being supported was to independently travel by bus to the Trafford Centre (shopping mall) in Manchester.

The aspiration pathway allowed the supported person to move to the next planned step only when they had rehearsed and were comfortable with the previous step. A goal setting and tracking form was in place and

completed at each step. In addition to this the supported person had developed a comprehensive and clear self-assessment 'independent travel assessment' checklist. This check list recorded the person's personal safety, pedestrian skills and behaviour.

Supported people had a wide range of individual assessments tailored to meet their autism and/or learning disability needs. This included comprehensive assessments and support plans centred on behaviour support, communication, and sensory issues. Support planning documentation was comprehensive and easy to navigate. This assisted the reader to have a clear understanding of peoples individual baseline support needs.

Each person at Heaton Vale had access to regular reviews of their support. These include a mandatory 6-week review after moving in to the service and subsequent annual reviews. Supported people, their relatives, friends, care managers, and support staff where appropriate routinely participated in the review. This meant that people were given as much opportunity as possible to feel consulted and empowered, listened to and valued. For example, a person worked with their support worker to produce and present 'My first year at Heaton Vale' using cue cards to support them to confidently deliver a presentation at their annual review.

Based on staff feedback and in an ongoing effort to improve the review document and process, the provider developed a more detailed, analytical and evidence based document which was more person-centred and outcome focused. This showed that the provider strived to continually review their approach, methods and processes in supporting people to achieve their full potential and meet their individual needs.

To demonstrate the provider's flexibility and responsiveness to people's individual needs, preferences, equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR) the provider and wider staff team at Heaton Vale were determined to support people to maintain a community presence. They acknowledged and recognised that people living with a learning disability might experience challenges and discrimination when seeking employment or accessing mainstream community resources. To address this imbalance, the provider established its own Community Interest Company (CIC) with a clear mandate: Employment for parity, visibility and purpose. The '9in10 group' are a CIC with a goal to achieve parity for supported people living at Heaton Vale and currently two people are members. In 2016 the 9in10 participated in the Manchester Day Parade and were due to participate once again in 2017. However the provider withdrew from the event due to risk concerns. Instead, the provider decided to create their own Wonderlandfest event. This gave the 9in10 members the opportunity to wear their costumes and perform as planned in the Manchester Day Parade and engage with events outside of the service. This also gave Heaton Vale the opportunity to invite and involve the wider community and become actively involved in building further community links. The event theme was 'Alice in Wonderland' and the Heaton Vale team created their own stall. Wonderlandfest was held on 8 July and was a great success, raising over £800 for the service. The money raised will be used as payment to hire a theatre so that the 9in10 group can perform their Xmas show in a great venue.

An important initiative owned by the provider was the continued development of Yew Tree Activity Hub. This community based resource offered a comprehensive programme of activities that were suited to people who enjoyed more physical work or preferred creative activities such as dance workshops, music creation, costume making, allotments and gardening. The activity hub also benefited from its own kennels and stables. People were supported to attend the hub and were able to work with animals large and small, and participate in activities from dog walking to horse grooming. Horse riding also took place three times a week. A person told us they enjoyed attending the hub and said, "I brush and ride the horse, feed and walk it. I really enjoy it." Additional activities such as hiking, distance walking/ running or attending the gym were identified as being beneficial for specific individuals where they aspired to lose weight or redirect their

energy to reduce the risk of them displaying behaviour that challenged.

Heaton Vale had a positive and transparent approach to complaints. Any complaints received were managed in line with the provider's complaints policy. An easy-to-read document was used to good effect and people's concerns were captured effectively with clear explanations given as to how the matter would be resolved. A relative of a supported person said, "if I have any concerns, everything is open and transparent; I never have any complaints and I can talk to the staff at any time about anything that I might be concerned about." The registered manager saw complaints and concerns as an opportunity to drive improvement.

When Heaton Vale first opened complaints about noise disturbance were raised by local residents. The registered manager responded to each complaint by phone and/or email and provided local residents with the opportunity to visit the service. The registered manager produced a leaflet which was given to each complainant and they were encouraged to share the leaflet with other residents in the community who also had concerns, but who were unwilling to meet with the registered manager.

We saw records to show that all complaints and outcomes were recorded and resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. The registered manager completed a complaints tracker form. A comprehensive record of all complaints, from the initial problem and the eventual solution were captured and recorded.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People we spoke with told us they considered the leadership at Heaton Vale to be outstanding. "I have nothing bad to say, Heaton Vale is 100% well managed. My relative is very safe there and the staff look after [Person's name] very well indeed.", "The management and staff give 100% all the time. Their focus is absolutely person-centred and for the safety of the residents" and "Heaton Vale is a fantastic home and fantastic place. It's an exceptional service, they have taken the lead and others should follow" were some of the comments made by the relatives of supported people. Comments from social care professionals were extremely positive and they expressed their overall satisfaction for the "Outstanding services provided at Heaton Vale."

A registered manager was in place 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. The registered manager was present during each day of the inspection.

The registered manager was well supported by a principle service manager, central support team manager and the wider management team.

The provider was committed to promoting Positive Behavioural support (PBS) as the service model. This approach has become established as the preferred approach when working with people with learning disabilities or autism who exhibit behaviours described as challenging. This was now reflected in a significant body of authoritative guidance, including the British Psychological Society's Guidelines (2004); Joint Guidelines of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the British Psychological Society and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (2007) and the Mansell Report (2007). PBS permeates everything that is done at Heaton Vale and in January 2017 the provider introduced a brand-new job role of 'Practice Lead Support Worker' to support this. The aim was for the practice lead support worker to assume extra responsibilities in order to implement the values and theory in line with PBS and provide a strong link between the CST and the Heaton Vale staff team. This helped to maintain the high quality care and support provided to the supported people.

Staff retention was an important focus for the service. When we examined staff retention figures for Heaton Vale, records showed a very low staff turnover since the service became registered with CQC in January 2016. Support workers we spoke with said about the staffing at Heaton Vale, "We work extremely well as a team, we support each other and try to ensure people are supported by staff who know them well. People's care and support is provided safely by established and experienced support workers" and "If somebody is off at short notice we try to cover the rota ourselves rather than use people who don't know the supported people and the details of their complex support plans." The registered manager and wider staff team were dedicated to providing an outstanding service to the people they supported. All the staff were focused on service improvement and strived for continuous improvement through a coordinated team effort, working collaboratively, planning changes and making decisions together and alongside external agencies.

Throughout the inspection it was apparent that the registered manager and staff team were very enthusiastic and committed to giving a first class high quality service to individuals. The service culture was progressive, open and dynamic. They used every opportunity to consistently review and evaluate how to enhance and progress the service to benefit people being supported. They demonstrated a cohesive approach with clear direction, always looking for additional input from appropriate specialists, keeping in mind the end goal to refine and continually improve the service and experiences provided to people.

The registered manager and provider's vision and direction for the service and the staff team was to maintain the delivery of outstanding personal care supported by robust documentation. This vision ensured the staff team did not lose sight of the aims for the service and supported people. This helped to help make sure the support experienced by people living at Heaton Vale was positive. A clear business contingency plan was in place which identified potential risks and threats to service provision and the provider's actions should they occur in order to ensure continuity of service for people.

The provider, registered manager and wider management team maintained excellent oversight and accountability of the service through the completion of an annual self-audit. In addition to this, people's support plans, health action plans, RAMP's were checked daily, analysed and actioned to determine any risk patterns or trends that emerged and mitigate identified risks as soon as possible. The audits and checks also identified areas for development and a shared commitment with employees to set clear objectives. This meant that the provider had fully utilised the systems in place to identify where quality and/or safety was being compromised and could respond appropriately.

Regular mandatory meetings between managers and staff were held to focus on trends in relation to their area of work such as, risks, safeguarding, accidents/ injuries and health and safety concerns. Meeting notes showed any patterns that emerged were reported, analysed and actions taken were recorded.

Management systems in place meant that the management team were able to operate an open-door policy and input from the team was actively encouraged and acted upon. The area team leader and team leaders met weekly to set tasks and priorities for the following week. Records we examined show that the registered manager continually addressed and actioned any identified issues to make sure there was no delay in maintaining or improving the health, safety and welfare of people being supported.

The registered manager also held the position of 'change management' trainer for apprentice managers. Therefore where strategic changes such as the restructuring of the service were planned, the registered manager was able to work closely with both the wider staff and management teams. This ensured planning and development initiatives were well coordinated, the service ran seamlessly and information shared throughout the service in a timely way.

The registered manager was keen to provide us with the necessary records to assist us with our inspection. Records and reports we examined were well constructed, organised, kept securely in locked rooms and could be accessed immediately by members of the staff team.

Records we examined showed team meetings, staff consultation and appraisal were held frequently to reaffirm staff roles, understand what is expected of them and to provide 360 degree feedback. This practice served to assist staff to understand their strengths and weaknesses support their personal development and continual improve the service and experiences of supported people.

Team meetings were held frequently. It was evident staff were empowered to speak openly and share/ contribute ideas in the way the service was run. Records showed that prior to the most recent team meeting,

all staff were asked to provide feedback on what they felt was working, what wasn't working and suggested improvements for the service. Meetings always concluded with a staff recognition award and positive comments section. Team members would anonymously write their nomination for staff member of the month with an accompanying 'positive comment'. The positive comments were read to the team and the staff member with the most nominations won a £30 gift voucher. One support worker told us they had recently won a voucher for successfully supporting a person's transition to Heaton Vale. "I was a bit shocked and didn't realise the work I was doing was so valued. It's a really good feeling when your work is recognised by your team and employer. It makes you want to do more and you realise you actually are doing a good job."

The mental and physical well-being of staff was considered a high priority. We spoke with a CST member who told us about the recently implemented stress management recognition training. All staff undertook the training in order for them to understand key triggers and contributory factors which may cause them to feel stressed and how to manage those triggers. Individual stress management kits have been developed and are presented to staff once a stress self-assessment has been completed. For example, four kits had been tailored around the themes of 'energise', 'worry less', 'pamper yourself' and 'get creative'. Kits contained written advice about managing work related stress and pamper items such as bath salts and scented candles. Staff also had access to a comprehensive employee assistance programme which included a confidential 24 hour self-referral advice line to help them access support.

The provider signed up to the Social Care Commitment (SCC) in 2015 and renewed its commitment in 2017. The Social Care Commitment is an agreement between employers and employees, where both sides sign up to seven clear commitments to develop skills and knowledge within their workforce. It focuses on the real issues people have in the workplace, such as how to achieve effective communication, uphold dignity and protect an individual's privacy. The commitment involves the providers promise to implement best practice in areas relating to workforce values, attitudes, behaviours, skills and competence. The provider had fully embraced the SCC and each employee is asked to make their commitment in their annual appraisal. These are also re-visited at job consultation meetings to ensure tasks are completed and acquired knowledge is shared with the wider team members to promote best practice.

To date the SCC has resulted in the provider developing new employee Continual Professional Development files; new processes for staff supervision and appraisal; a commitment to annual company development days, staff questionnaires and the current development of a staff charter and resource library. Support workers we spoke with were positive about being provided with continuing development opportunities. They recognised they could perform far beyond the initial training and development already being provided ensuring competence in their work. By investing in staff development and robust processes that take into account the provider core values and philosophy, the SCC ensures continuous improvement to ensure high quality, safe care and support is provided to supported people.

The provider had been in receipt of Investors in People (IIP) accreditation since 2011, this demonstrated the provider's continual commitment to better people management and ensuring that people are well supported, managed and well led. IIP is an external organisation that checks how services manage their staff against set standards. Their accreditation programme looks at the leadership, support and management of employees and identifies good practice or areas for improvement.

A Service Philosophy specific to Heaton Vale set out the service values and aims to ensure people with a learning disability have services designed to assist them to thrive within their community, living full and independent lives. A copy of the Heaton Vale ethos was displayed in the staff meeting room, discussed with all new starters during their induction and regularly referred to during staff meetings..

Comprehensive service policies and procedures had been reviewed and updated when legislation changed. They were available for staff to read during their induction and were used as an essential point of reference/guidance to provide clarity to the reader when dealing with accountability issues or activities that were of critical importance to the service such as, health and safety and regulatory requirements.

The registered manager made statutory notifications to CQC in a timely way and follow-up information was provided when appropriate.