

# Mrs Mary Hall & Ms Georgina Hall

# The Laurels

## Inspection report

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## Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

### About the service

The Laurels is a residential care home registered to provide care and support to up to 20 people. The building had been adapted and care was provided over two floors with stairs and a stair lift as access. There were 11 people living at the home at the time of inspection.

### People's experience of using this service and what we found

Improvements had been made to the governance systems within the home. The provider and registered manager told us they felt confident the management processes within the home were now robust. A range of audits and checks meant there was an opportunity to make continual improvements and learn lessons along the way.

People had risk assessments in place for all of their care and support. Specific COVID-19 risk assessments were in place. Visiting and COVID-19 testing guidance was being followed. Infection control procedures were in place and frequently monitored to ensure they were robust. People and their relatives felt The Laurels was a safe place to be, communication had been consistent throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and this was appreciated.

Staff told us people living in the home were their family and many had worked in the home for a long time. There were enough staff on duty to meet people's needs and people told us staff were there when needed. People were protected by staff who had training in safeguarding and raising concerns. Staff told us they were confident the provider and registered manager would take concerns seriously.

Medicines were managed safely. Staff, people and their relatives were complimentary about the management of the home. The provider and registered manager were seen as transparent in their approach to keeping people safe and the effective running of the home.

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

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

### Rating at last inspection and update

The last rating for this service was requires improvement (published 5 August 2021) and there was a breach of regulation. The provider completed an action plan after the last inspection to show what they would do and by when to improve. At this inspection we found improvements had been made and the provider was no longer in breach of regulations.

### Why we inspected

We received concerns in relation to visiting the home. As a result, we undertook a focused inspection to review the key questions of safe and well-led only. For those key questions not inspected, we used the ratings awarded at the last inspection to calculate the overall rating.

We looked at infection prevention and control measures under the safe key question. We look at this in all care home inspections even if no concerns or risks have been identified. This is to provide assurance that the service can respond to COVID-19 and other infection outbreaks effectively. This included checking the provider was meeting COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

The overall rating for the service has changed from requires improvement to good based on the findings of this inspection. We found no evidence during this inspection that people were at risk of harm from this concern. Please see the safe and well led sections of this full report.

You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for The Laurels on our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk).

#### Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service, which will help inform when we next inspect.

## 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.

Details are in our safe findings below.

### Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

# The Laurels

## Detailed findings

### Background to this inspection

#### The inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

As part of this inspection we looked at the infection control and prevention measures in place. This included checking the provider was meeting COVID-19 vaccination requirements. This was conducted so we can understand the preparedness of the service in preventing or managing an infection outbreak, and to identify good practice we can share with other services.

#### Inspection team

The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

#### Service and service type

The Laurels is a 'care home'. People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing and/or personal care as a single package under one contractual agreement dependent on their registration with us. The Laurels is a care home without nursing care. CQC regulates both the premises and the care provided, and both were looked at during this inspection.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

#### Notice of inspection

This inspection was unannounced.

#### What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. The provider was not asked to complete a Provider Information Return (PIR) prior to this inspection. A PIR is information providers send us

to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

#### During the inspection

We spoke with three people who used the service and three relatives about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with five members of staff including the provider, registered manager, deputy manager, domestic staff, care workers and one health and social care professional. We used the Short Observational Framework for Inspection (SOFI). SOFI is a way of observing care to help us understand the experience of people who could not talk with us.

We reviewed a range of records. This included three people's care records and medication records. We looked at three staff files in relation to recruitment and staff supervision. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures were reviewed.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm.

At our last inspection we rated this key question requires improvement. At this inspection the rating has changed to good. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

### Staffing and recruitment

At our last inspection we made a recommendation that the provider follows their procedure for the employment of all staff. The provider had made improvements.

- Improvements had been made and the home had a recruitment procedure in place. This included employment history, references, health checks and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks provide information including details about convictions and cautions held on the Police National Computer. The information helps employers make safer recruitment decisions.
- There were enough staff on duty. People and their relatives told us there was enough staff around the home to support them when needed.
- The provider told us they reviewed the rota's whilst looking at the needs of the people who lived at The Laurels. All of the staff working at the home had long service, one member of staff told us, "We are a family."

### Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Staff knew who to report concerns to both within the home and outside. Staff were confident their concerns would be listened to by the registered manager and the provider. Safeguarding training records were complete and there was an open channel of communication between the staff and management.
- People and their relatives told us The Laurels was a safe place to be. A relative said, "I feel my loved one [name] is safe, especially over the COVID period."
- There was a system in place for talking about and reviewing safeguarding concerns. Raising concerns was part of all daily handovers and staff meetings.
- The home had made referrals to the local authority safeguarding team as required.

### Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management; Learning lessons when things go wrong

- People had risk assessments in place for their care and support. Improvements had been made to the format of assessments to make them easier for staff to follow.
- The provider was in the process of transferring records to a paper based system. Staff told us they were easier to follow.
- General risk assessments were in place for the home, this included fire, electrical and gas safety.
- Accident and incidents were recorded, and monthly analysis meant that patterns could be identified, and actions put in place to prevent reoccurrence. An example was where a pattern in a person's falls was identified.

### Using medicines safely

- Medicines were managed safely. Processes were in place for the ordering, storage and administration of medicines.
- The home used an electronic system to manage medicines safely. The system had people's medicine administration records (MAR) in place and their prescribed medicines had a barcode on them. Staff scanned the barcodes and the system matched that with the MAR. This meant there was an additional safeguard in place to prevent error.
- Prescribed creams and liquid medicines had opening dates on them to ensure they were used in accordance with the prescriber's orders. Body maps showed exactly where creams needed to be applied.
- Staff who gave medicines had training and their competency assessed regularly.
- Medicines that required stricter controls by law were stored correctly in a separate cupboard. Where people were prescribed medicines they only needed to take occasionally, guidance was in place for staff to follow to ensure those medicines were administered in a consistent way

### Preventing and controlling infection

- We were assured that the provider was preventing visitors from catching and spreading infections.
- We were assured that the provider was meeting shielding and social distancing rules.
- We were assured that the provider was admitting people safely to the service.
- We were assured that the provider was using PPE effectively and safely.
- We were assured that the provider was accessing testing for people using the service and staff.
- We were assured that the provider was promoting safety through the layout and hygiene practices of the premises.
- We were assured that the provider was making sure infection outbreaks can be effectively prevented or managed.
- We were assured that the provider's infection prevention and control policy was up to date.
- The Laurels were following the current government guidance for visiting.

From 11 November 2021 registered persons must make sure all care home workers and other professionals visiting the service are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they have an exemption or there is an emergency. We checked to make sure the service was meeting this requirement.

The Government has announced its intention to change the legal requirement for vaccination in care homes, but the service was meeting the current requirement to ensure non-exempt staff and visiting professionals were vaccinated against COVID-19.



# Is the service well-led?

## Our findings

Well-led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture.

At our last inspection we rated this key question requires improvement. At this inspection the rating has changed to good. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; Continuous learning and improving care

At our last inspection the provider had failed to ensure their quality assurance systems were operating effectively. This was a breach of regulation 17 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

Enough improvement had been made at this inspection and the provider was no longer in breach of regulation 17.

- There were improvements to the home's governance procedures. Audits were in place to monitor the standard of care provided. Audits reviewed different aspects of care and actions were taken to make any improvements that had been identified.
- Systems were in place to support learning and reflection. The registered manager had completed monthly audits, such as medication, accidents, incidents and daily notes. Actions had been identified and the person responsible had completed them by the required date. The provider and registered manager had signed them off as an extra check.
- The registered manager and provider knew about their duty to send notifications to external agencies such as the local authority safeguarding team and CQC where required.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people

- Staff were happy working at The Laurels. Many had been working at the home for years. They told us it was important to them to help people live a good life.
- We received positive feedback about the management of the home. Comments included; "I've never had cause for concern", "They [registered manager and provider] are very transparent", "It's a breath of fresh air, nothing is being hidden."
- The provider told us it was their aim to provide an environment which felt like home for people and for the staff. People and their relatives commented on The Laurels feeling, "Like home."

How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong

- The registered manager and provider understood the requirements of the duty of candour, that is, their

duty to be honest, open and apologise for any accident or incident that had caused or placed a person at risk of harm. They told us the circumstances in which they would make notifications and referrals to external agencies and showed us records where they had done this.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics; Working in partnership with others

- The Laurels sought people's feedback through questionnaires. The results of those were positive. The registered manager told us they send these out to people and their relatives once a year.
- Due to the smaller size of the home meetings took place informally between staff and people. Relatives told us they were kept up to date and felt they could make suggestions. One relative said, "We have regular contact with the home, especially during the pandemic."
- Learning and development was important to the provider and the registered manager. They attended regular virtual provider meetings and had used online guidance and publications. The provider told us, "They had a good working relationship with the local service improvement team."
- The home had good working partnerships with external health and social care professionals. A health professional told us, "The home is extremely responsive and contacts us in a timely manner."