

HC-One Limited

Alexander Care Centre

Inspection report

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13 February 2016

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Requires Improvement ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

Alexander Care Centre provides care and accommodation for up to 78 older people, some of whom have dementia. At the time of our inspection there were 75 people living at the home. The accommodation was split into three units. Two of the units provided nursing care. The building was accessible throughout to people with restricted mobility.

The service was last inspected in August 2014 when all regulations were met and we gave it an overall rating of good. In early February 2016 we received concerns about staffing levels at weekends. We undertook a focused inspection at a weekend to look into these concerns. This report covers our findings in relation to this topic. You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Alexander Care Centre on our website at www.cqc.org.uk

The service does not have 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.'

People were not always cared for by sufficient numbers of staff with the appropriate skills to meet their needs and to keep them safe. On one occasion two staff had to work for 24 hours to cover gaps in the rota. On another day there was only one nurse available to provide nursing care for 40 people.

You can see what action we told the provider to take at the back of the full version of the report

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 not always safe. The home did not always have enough staff with the correct skills available to provide care and meet the needs of the people who lived there. People were cared for on one night by staff who had worked too many hours to provide safe care.

Requires Improvement ●

Alexander Care Centre

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.

We inspected the service against one of the five questions we ask about services: is the service safe.

The inspection was undertaken by one inspector. Prior to the inspection, we reviewed the information we held about the service including records of notifications sent to us. We spoke with six people who lived at the home and with three relatives. We also spoke with six staff members, including two nurses, three care staff and the activity co-ordinator. We looked at one person's care records.

After the inspection we spoke with the acting deputy manager and he sent us information about staffing levels in January and February 2016.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

One person told us they felt staffing levels were too low and said, "They [staff] are always in a rush." The person told us they needed a lot of help with care tasks and went on to say, "I don't always get my teeth cleaned because I can't do it for myself, and they [staff] haven't got time." The person said "I feel sorry for them [staff], sometimes they work so hard." They also told us that despite them ringing the call bell for assistance on one occasion they "waited 45 minutes to go to the toilet."

We asked two relatives about their opinion of the staffing levels at the home. One relative told us they felt there were enough staff and said "staff answer the door quickly" and felt if they were too busy they would not be able to do so. They also said they visited "at various times and they saw plenty of staff", so had no reason to believe that staffing levels were low. Another relative told us, "Sometimes we come in early on a Saturday and they [staff] are very, very hard pushed." They said this meant the staff were very busy.

On the day we visited there were two nurses and a senior care staff in charge of the three units. They were assisted by five care assistants on each unit in the morning and four on each unit in the afternoon. Senior staff acknowledged that this staffing was in excess of the usual situation. This was because three of the care staff were new in post and were undergoing their inductions to the home, and worked alongside other staff and could not perform some tasks alone. We found the staffing levels were adequate for the numbers and needs of the people living in the home on that day. Staff confirmed they found the staffing that day was appropriate for the needs of the people. One member of staff described the staffing as "perfect" and another said it was "sufficient".

The home did not always have enough staff with the correct skills available to provide care and meet the needs of the people who lived there. We found information that there were fewer staff on duty on some weekends. Usually at weekends in each unit a nurse or senior care staff worked alongside four care staff. On Sunday 31 January 2016 only one nurse was on duty to care for the 40 people with nursing needs. We were concerned that one person had an accident on that day and had to attend hospital as a result. The acting deputy manager told us that despite the lower staffing levels, people were provided with the close supervision their risk assessments stated they required.

A person told us that staff had worked for a very long period two days before our visit because the home was short staffed. We found information that confirmed what they told us in the staffing details supplied after the inspection. This showed that two staff had worked a shift between 8 am and 8 pm on one unit then continued to work a waking night shift between 8 pm and 8 am on another unit. This meant these two members of staff worked for 24 hours. The acting deputy manager told us this was not planned and had happened because a staffing agency had been unable to meet requests for the waking night shift. They went on to tell us, the staff were permitted to have breaks during the night but nevertheless it was not safe for staff to work for 24 hours and be responsible for people.

These issues were breaches of regulation 18 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014

This section is primarily information for the provider

Action we have told the provider to take

The table below shows where regulations were not being met and we have asked the provider to send us a report that says what action they are going to take. We did not take formal enforcement action at this stage. We will check that this action is taken by the provider.

Regulated activity	Regulation
Accommodation for persons who require nursing or personal care	Regulation 18 HSCA RA Regulations 2014 Staffing
Treatment of disease, disorder or injury	The provider did not ensure that sufficient numbers of suitably qualified staff were deployed to make sure that they can meet people's care and treatment needs.