

Alderwood L.L.A. Limited

Alderwood LLA Ltd

Addington Road

Inspection report

264 Addington Road
Irthlingborough
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN9 5UT

Tel: 01604811838

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Outstanding 

Is the service safe?

Good 

Is the service effective?

Good 

Is the service caring?

Good 

Is the service responsive?

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

Alderwood LLA Addington Road is a small residential care home for four people with learning disabilities and autism. People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing or personal care as single package under one contractual agreement. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulates both the premises and the care provided, and both were looked at during this inspection.

The service is based in a residential area and is designed in line with the values that underpin the Registering the Right Support and other best practice guidance. These values include choice, promotion of independence and inclusion. People with learning disabilities and autism using the service can live as ordinary a life as any citizen.

This inspection took place on 31 August 2018 and was the first inspection of the service since they registered with the CQC in July 2017. At the time of our inspection, the provider confirmed they were providing care to four people.

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.

The ethos at Alderwood LLA Addington Road was based on providing a family type setting for all adults, whilst supporting their needs through structured education and living. Without exception all the relatives spoken with were extremely pleased with the individualised care and support their family members received at the service.

Without exception all people using the service received personalised care that was extremely responsive to their individual needs. The ethos of the service ensured that all people and their relatives were fully involved in their care. Staff had an excellent understanding of all the people using the service. They worked as a close team and were driven in providing person centred support to enable people to achieve as much independence as possible.

The registered manager and the managing director were very involved in the care of people using the service. The Alderwood organisation was a bronze member of the British Institute for Learning Disabilities (BILD). The provider was committed to championing human rights to enable people with learning disabilities and complex needs to be empowered to live the life they choose. The provider had also participated in the (STOMP) initiative, which is aimed at stopping the over medication of people with a learning disability, autism or both.

All staff had the opportunity to develop at their own pace. Alderwood valued the commitment of its staff team and recognised the qualities and skills of staff to provide career progression within the organisation.

The staff team met each person's complex communication needs through using extensive communication tools. They used visual aids to help people on the autism spectrum better understand communication, interpersonal skills and processes. These assisted people to express their feelings and re-enforce positive behaviours and de-escalate negative behaviours.

The staff were extremely dedicated to helping people to achieve their potential. Every opportunity was sought to enhance people's life experience. The Alderwood organisation had a personalised and innovative approach to supporting people through activities, education and work. The service had established strong links with resource centres for people with a learning disability and relatives were passionate about the quality of the care that was provided to their family members, the progress for their family members, and the unique nature of the service.

People's support plans were extremely person centred and fully reflected their individuality, people were supported to set goals and targets that were achievable. An equality, diversity and human rights approach to supporting people's privacy and dignity and treating them as individuals was embedded in the staff practice.

Systems were in place to ensure that no discrimination took place, and that people's cultural and life choices were promoted and protected. The support plans gave information on how people wanted their care and support to be delivered, and included information on their hopes and aspirations, their social, cultural and spiritual beliefs and physical and emotional needs.

Everyone without exception praised the caring approach of staff at every level. People received kind and compassionate care and had maximum control over their lives. Staff were very passionate and enthusiastic about ensuring the care they provided was personalised and individualised.

People received care from staff that had the knowledge and skills to provide their care and support. Staff induction training and mentoring was comprehensive and on-going training was provided to ensure staff followed current good practice guidance. Staff had regular team meetings and individual one to one supervision meetings with their line managers. The meetings provided staff with opportunities to discuss any issues or concerns, their personal development and any further support required. The staff recruitment procedures ensured that appropriate pre-employment checks were carried out to ensure only suitable staff worked at the service. Correct staffing levels were in place.

People were supported to live health lifestyles and have access to the services of other health and social care professionals. the care and welfare of people using the service, and progress and strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle choices, eating a healthy diet, getting fresh air and exercise. Staff followed a consistent approach, and people felt valued, resulting in an increased sense of well-being, and reduced incidents of anxiety and challenging behaviour.

Information on how to make a complaint was available in easy read formats. People and their families knew how to make a complaint if needed, and they were confident that their concerns would be listened to and acted upon as required.

The staff worked in line with the Mental Capacity Act code of practice. People's consent was gained before any care was provided. Families were involved in people's care when appropriate. People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible; the policies and systems in the service support this practice.

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.

People were protected from abuse and avoidable harm. Risks associated with people's complex needs were fully assessed and managed safely. Systems were in place to ensure people received their medicines safely.

People were involved in staff recruitment and the recruitment systems ensured people only received care from staff that were suitable to work at the service.

Accident and incidents were responded to appropriately and analysed to learn from and mitigate the risks of repeat incidents.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

People's needs were assessed, and the support plans identified the level of support people needed.

People received support from a staff team that had the necessary training, skills and knowledge. System were in place to provide staff with on-going training and support.

People made daily choices and decisions. Staff sought people's consent and understood people's rights. Capacity assessments were used to identify the level of support people needed to make decisions.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring

People received kind and compassionate care and had maximum control over their lives.

Staff were very passionate and enthusiastic about ensuring the care they provided was personalised and individualised.

Staff had an excellent understanding of people's needs and worked with them to ensure they were actively involved in all decisions about their care and support. Staff went the extra mile to ensure people were supported to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Is the service responsive?

The service was very responsive.

People received uniquely tailored support. Staff fully understood people's complex needs and innovative approaches were used to maximise people's potential to develop life skills.

People's care and support was based around their specific needs, goals and aspirations. People with complex needs and behaviours that may challenge, were supported and empowered to manage their behaviours and be part of their community.

People using the service and relatives were supported to raise any concerns or complaints to improve the service. There was a visible complaints system in place that ensured any concerns were dealt with in a timely manner.

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

The service was very well led.

The leadership, management and governance of the organisation assured the delivery of high quality, person-centred care. There was a culture of fairness, support and transparency. The staff understood the vision and values of the service and these made sure people were at the heart of the service.

Staff were highly motivated, they worked as a team and were dedicated to supporting people to maximise and achieve independence. Staff were proud to work for the organisation and felt valued. They felt they could make suggestions about improving the service and these would be listened to.

Outstanding 

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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.

This inspection took place on 31 August 2018 and was carried out by one inspector. The inspection was announced. We gave the service two hours' notice of the inspection because it is a small service caring for people with complex learning disabilities and autism. We needed to ensure people knew we would be visiting and that the registered manager and staff would be available.

Before the inspection, we reviewed information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR). This is information we require providers to send us at least once annually to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We also reviewed other information that we held about the service such as statutory notifications that had been sent to us by the provider. These detail events which happened at the service, which providers are required to tell us about.

We contacted commissioners and asked them for their views about the service. Commissioners are people who work to find appropriate care and support services for people.

We made general observations of people using the service being supported by staff. We spoke with three relatives of people using the service, three support workers, a senior support worker, the registered manager, and the area manager.

We reviewed the support plans and associated care records for the four people using the service to ensure they were reflective of their needs. We looked at the recruitment files of three staff, and other documents relating to staff training and support and the overall management of the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

The service supported people with complex needs that sometimes placed them and others at risk. One relative said, "I feel [Name of person] is in a home where staff are trained extremely well in identifying, responding to, and managing complex behaviours, Alderwood is definitely a safe place for them to be living in." Staff told us, and records showed they received in depth training on supporting people with complex learning disabilities. They had received safeguarding training and they were aware of the safeguarding procedures to follow if they suspected or witnessed any form of abuse.

We saw people's risk assessments and support plans were very personalised. They identified the specific risks and behaviours presented in different situations for each person. The staff demonstrated they were fully aware of what triggered certain risk behaviours and what they needed to do to respond and support each person in the least restrictive way to ensure the safety of the person and others.

One of the managing directors was a principle crisis intervention and prevention instructor and used their expertise to integrate training called 'PROACT-SCIP' within all Alderwood services. The positive intervention technique used a visual communication system approach. This was evidenced in the extensive training courses the managing director had implemented within Alderwood.

The registered manager and staff understood their responsibilities to record and investigate any accidents and incidents that may occur. The staff closely monitored people's anxiety levels and recorded the behaviours people presented. This helped staff to better understand and learn what the person was communicating through their behaviours. Regular strategy meetings took place, during which incidents or behaviours of concern were reviewed. As a result, changes in people's support were implemented. This gave staff opportunities to reflect and learn from incidents to mitigate the risk of repeat incidents.

The staff recruitment processes protected people from unsuitable staff working at the service. People using the service were involved in the staff interview process, both formally and informally. This was achieved through a 'meet and greet' of potential candidates, and involvement with the interview panel assessing candidates against a list of the qualities people looked for in new staff. This gave people and staff the opportunity to observe how potential new staff initially engaged with people. Records within the staff recruitment files confirmed the necessary employment checks had been completed before staff commenced working for the service. For example, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and references had been obtained to ensure staff were suitable to work with people using the service.

People said they felt well supported by the number of staff available. A relative said, "There are sufficient staff, there is always somebody around if you need to talk to them or if you phone they will phone you straight back." Staff told us they felt there was sufficient staff available to meet people's needs. During our inspection we saw the service was well staffed, and people were receiving the support they were assessed as needing. Agency staff were used at times, they knew the people using the staff and were familiar with the organisational policies and procedures.

People received support with their medicines. Their care plans had information on the level of support needed to take their medicines safely. Staff received medicines training and records showed that competency assessments were completed to ensure staff followed the medicines policy and procedures. Regular audits took place on the medicines systems to check that staff consistently followed the administration and storage procedures. The provider took part in the (STOMP) initiative which was aimed at stopping the over medication of patients. We saw that people's medicines were regularly reviewed to ensure they were only prescribed the necessary medicines to treat their conditions.

People were protected from illness due to the risk of cross infection. We observed all areas within the home were clean and tidy and staff used disposable aprons and gloves when providing personal care and handling food. Records showed that routine infection control audits were carried out and infection control training was provided for all staff, which followed current good practice and legislation.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

All people using the service had previously lived in other Alderwood services and knew each other prior to moving to Alderwood LLA Addington Road. People using the service and their relatives confirmed they were involved in the pre- assessment process prior to taking up the service and with their on-going care reviews. Systems were in place to ensure that no discrimination took place, and that people's cultural and life choices were promoted and protected. The support plans gave information on how people wanted their care and support to be delivered, and included information on their hopes and aspirations, their social, cultural and spiritual beliefs and physical and emotional needs.

People received care from staff that had the right skills to provide their care and support. One relative said, "The staff are brilliant, they know [Name of person] really well, they are very in tune with them and quickly recognise when they are getting anxious. They know just what to do to help them to cope and relax." Staff told us, and records showed that alongside routine health and safety training they also received training that was specific to the needs of the people using the service. This included, autism awareness, epilepsy and crisis intervention and prevention.

The staff consistently told us they had received training appropriate to their roles and gave relevant examples. They said they felt supported to develop their skills and confirmed they were up to date with mandatory training. The staff training was relevant to their role and equipped them with the skills they needed to care for the people using the service. For example, staff had received specialist training in supporting people with autism and behaviours that may challenge. One staff member told us, "The training is very good, there is a great emphasis on understanding the complex needs of the people living here, and ensuring all staff have a consistent approach."

All staff went through a comprehensive induction programme and they were assigned to work alongside experienced members of staff to act as mentors throughout the induction. At the end of their six-month probationary period it was the organisational policy to enrol staff onto a relevant learning disability diploma programme. The training records evidenced that staff received training based around current legislation and best practice guidance. Staff told us, and records showed they had regular team meetings and individual one to one supervision meetings with their line managers. They said the meetings provided them with opportunities to discuss any issues or concerns, their personal development and any further support required.

We saw that people's dietary needs were assessed and any food allergies and intolerances were recorded within their support plans. Pictorial menu plans were used to support people to make meal choices. The staff promoted people to be independent and worked with people to support them to shop for their own groceries, to prepare and cook their own meals.

People were supported to live healthy lifestyles and have access to the services of other health and social care professionals. Relatives told us they were regularly informed about their family members health and wellbeing. One relative said, "The staff always inform us if they have any concerns." Another relative said, "I

don't have any worries at all, I am always informed of any changes in [Name of person's] health."

The service worked in collaboration with funding authorities and the advice from the health and social care professionals, was documented in people's care files and followed by staff. Records of team meetings evidenced that discussions took place regarding the care and welfare of people using the service, and progress and strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle choices, eating a healthy diet, getting fresh air and exercise. This ensured that staff followed a consistent approach, and people felt valued, resulting in an increased sense of well-being, and reduced incidents of anxiety and challenging behaviour.

The environment was very homely, people had their own flats that were personalised to reflect their individuality and personal tastes. We saw that private and communal spaces were also available for people and their visitors to use.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making 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 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." The registered manager and staff had a good understanding of people's rights regarding choice, and capacity assessments were carried out with people. All efforts were made to make sure people with communication difficulties were supported to make informed decisions and choice regarding their daily care and support. This was made possible by using a variety of methods using personalised pictorial guides for different scenarios, and the communication methods used by people were fully documented within their support plans. Records showed that people with DoLS authorisations received care and support that was in line with the conditions made.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Without exception, people and their relatives praised the staff for their kind and professional approach. One relative said, "[Name of person], the staff are lovely, very kind they always involve me in any decisions, they keep me updated on [Name of person's] progress. I feel extremely fortunate that [Name of person] lives at Alderwood the staff are very caring and kind."

The staff knew about each of the people living at the service extremely well and talked about people's specific interest such as, yoga, caring for animals, cooking, gardening, music, trains and other special interests. Having this knowledge helped the staff to relate to people's interests and open-up conversations with people. One person said, "The staff know me very well, they know what helps me to de-stress, I go to the farm, cleaning out the horses, (they affectionately called this activity 'poo picking') the person said the physical work involved helped them to de-stress and cope with their fears and anxieties. They also spoke of their love of cooking and sharing the meals they prepared with other people using the service, they called their friends. Another person said, "The staff are very supportive to me, they are like friends, they know me, the things I like and the things that cause me to get anxious."

Without exception the feedback we received from relatives indicated they were all extremely happy with the care their family members received. One relative said, "I am absolutely delighted with the progress [Name of person] has made, [Name of staff] has been instrumental in helping them to improve. [Name of person's] wellbeing is so much better." Another relative said, "I know [Name of person] is in the best possible place." A third relative said, "We are extremely lucky to have such a brilliant organisation and caring set of people."

During the inspection we observed all staff demonstrated a pride in their work and they were committed to providing a home where people felt comfortable and supported to express their feelings in a safe environment. One member of staff said, "I really do love working here, it is so rewarding to see people progressing, coping with different situations, building their confidence and independence. We have good relationships with people and their families and we all work together."

The staff knew and understood the situations that had the potential to cause people stress and anxiety, and they supported people in the structured way the person preferred to reduce the effects. We observed interactions and saw that people were given the time they needed to express themselves in a safe way.

The privacy and dignity of each person was fully respected by all staff. Each person had a detailed support plan that documented their 'circle of support' in all aspects of their care and life choices. Staff followed clear guidelines on how to support people who may display behaviours that challenged them and others whilst in public or certain social situations. The focus was always on maintaining people's dignity alongside sensitively managing the safety of the person and others.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Without exception all people using the received personalised care that was extremely responsive to their individual needs. The ethos of the service ensured that all people and their relatives were fully involved in their care. Staff had an excellent understanding of all people using the service. They worked as a close team and were driven in providing person centred support to enable people to achieve as much independence as possible. One relative said, "We totally appreciate the support, encouragement and hard work of all the staff team. Through their dedication they have made positive steps in helping [Name of person] to develop their life skills and this will help them greatly throughout their adult life." Another relative said, "[Name of person] is looking so well, the staff help [Name of person] to keep their flat organised clean and tidy, we know these life skills don't come naturally to [Name of person], but they are doing very well, we can't believe it." The registered manager said they had recently introduced a flat of the month scheme and people received a restaurant meal or shopping voucher as a motivator to take greater pride in keeping their flats clean and tidy.

Organisations that provide publicly-funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) which says services should identify record, flag, share and meet information and communication support needs of people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss. We found the service was exceptional at helping people to express their views, so they could effectively communicate their preferences, wishes and choices. We saw that visual timetables supported people with basic understanding of how to respond to certain situations to avoid anxiety and stress. Many of the people using the service required routine and structure in their day to day lives. Staff were particularly sensitive to ensuring they arrived at the right times and that people knew what they were doing on the day. To make sure this happened the staff took innovative steps to meet people's information and communication needs.

We saw the staff met each person's complex communication needs through using extensive communication support plans and tools. For example, pictorial communication books were used as visual aids to help people on the autism spectrum better understand communication, interpersonal skills and processes. The communication books assisted people to express their feelings and re-enforce positive behaviours and de-escalate negative behaviours. For example, giving instructions on deep breathing techniques to relieve anxiety, what was acceptable and unacceptable in social situations, and how we respect others. We saw that individualised communication sheets were used when people attended pre-arranged or emergency medical appointments, they detailed the specific communication needs of the person and explained to the person why they needed to see the specific healthcare professionals.

Relatives told us that staff were extremely dedicated and had a genuine wish to help people achieve their potential. One relative said, "All the staff are absolutely terrific, [Name of person] gets on with them really well, the staff are really good at keeping [Name of person] motivated, this helps them to manage their fears and anxiety.

Staff that were new to the service did not begin providing care for people until they had fully familiarised themselves with the specific support needs of all the people using the service. One member of staff that had

recently taken up post told us they had been given time to fully familiarise themselves with people's support plans. The member of staff said, "The support plans are very detailed and informative, but it's not just about reading how people need to be cared for, all the staff have been really helpful too. They say to me don't be afraid to ask questions, they know everybody living here so well, which has been really helpful." Records showed that all aspects of people's support plans were routinely reviewed and updated with people and their relatives and as and when their needs had changed.

Every opportunity was sought to enhance people's life experience. The Alderwood organisation had a personalised and innovative approach to supporting people through activities, education and work. They used an Adult Development Programme (ADP), which was aimed at helping to desensitise people to cope with situations that caused them anxiety. For example, one person wanted to go to a beauty salon and the staff arranged for them to receive a beauty treatment and learn a daily face care routine. This was achieved through careful planning, which included in depth risk assessments, and appropriate resources being put in place. The staff worked alongside the person to be introduced to the beauty salon, and over time, the person built up trusting relationships with the salon staff and was able to complete a face care routine following visual guidance and the activity was a success.

The ADP also enabled people to participate and achieve tasks, from simple day to day things like preparing food, to longer term goals such as volunteering and employment opportunities. We saw that people were successfully learning new skills and completing major achievements. For example, one person had taken up Yoga exercise as a way of helping them to relieve their anxiety and to relax. The person became so interested in Yoga they wrote a Yoga instruction book and had also completed a 12 week course with a qualified Yoga instructor. The person's confidence had grown so much they now have introduced other people and staff throughout the organisation to practice Yoga and carry out sessions for staff and people on a regular basis.

This person's confidence had grown so much they wanted to be involved in teaching new staff on how to use positive behaviour intervention techniques to de-escalate behaviours. The registered manager said the person received payment for delivering the training and through developing their new skills had made a huge difference to boosting the person's self-esteem and confidence. The person said they felt a sense of pride in their achievements in helping others around them. We also saw they had provided positive behaviour intervention techniques for healthcare professionals outside of the organisation. A local dentist commented how the training they received from the person had helped them greatly to understand how to respond and communicate with people with learning disabilities and autism, so people had a positive experience of visiting the dentist.

The service had established strong links with resource centres for people with a learning disability, such as local leisure facilities, health and wellbeing providers, and employers who offered work placements. This enabled people to gain a solid foundation for gaining new life skills and encouraged their on-going learning and development. One person told us they worked at some local stables, they said the physical work they did at the stables helped them to focus and be able to cope with their internal fears and anxiety. They told us they loved to cook and go out buying the ingredients to make meals; on the day of the inspection they said they had marinated chicken in preparation for making the evening meal. The staff and registered manager were extremely complimentary about the meals the person created saying they were of a 'Michelin Star quality.' The person's relative said, "[Name of person] was such a loner before, but now they interact with other people at the home, they love cooking for their peers and they seem much more relaxed. They go shopping for ingredients, cooking meals and helping at the stables keeps their mind focused. We have now found a home that is truly autistic specific, we feel it is very important that people with learning disabilities have some structure to follow." The relative said previously their family member had suffered with great anxiety and fears, but over time and close support from staff their family member was learning to

understand and cope with their fears. [Name of person] now has a weekly routine, they go out on evening walks. This seems small but is a great achievement for [Name of person]. We are extremely happy with the quality of the care, at Alderwood, it is always imaginative and very carefully planned." All the relatives we spoke with were passionate about the quality of the care that was provided to their family member, the progress of their family member, and the unique nature of the service.

All the people using the service were very much involved within the local community for example, volunteering at a local church, litter picking, working at an older people's residential home and taking part in local carnivals. One person took a keen interest in volunteering on a garden allotment project. They had great pride in growing a variety of fruit and vegetables to share with their peers. Another person volunteered at a local grocery store, and another at a local church serving teas, coffees and cakes.

People were also involved in a local farm project and they visited the farm regularly to help care for the horses, rabbits, guinea pigs and birds including an Owl. One person said they loved music and going to live concerts and they were looking forward to going to the Craig David and Rita Ora concert that was soon to take place. The provider had a holiday home on the east coast that people frequently used. These opportunities enabled each person using the service to experience personalised leisure, learning and social opportunities and be part of the wider community.

People's support plans were extremely person centred and fully reflected their individuality, people were supported to set goals and targets that were achievable. An equality, diversity and human rights approach to supporting people's privacy and dignity and treating them as individuals was embedded in the staff practice. The support plans gave detailed information on the level of support each person needed to work towards achieving their goals. We saw photos were taken of the activities people had taken part in and these were used to re-enforce with people the achievements they had made and to celebrate the steps they had taken towards independence.

We saw that information on how to make a complaint was available in easy read formats. People and their relatives said they knew how to make a complaint if needed, and their concerns would be listened to and acted upon as required. The relatives we spoke with said they had not had to make any complaints but would do so if needed. Regular resident meetings took place during which people were invited to share anything they were unhappy about. We saw the registered manager had acted promptly to address any areas of concern brought to their attention to the satisfaction of the person raising the concern.

Staff understood about confidentiality. They told us they would never discuss anything about a person with others, only staff, but in a private area so they would not be overheard. People's care records were stored away securely when not in use and people had been asked their consent for other health and social care professionals to access them.

The service worked with younger adults and end of life care was not an area high on the agenda for people using the service. However, the staff had sensitively approached people and their families to seek information on their end of life wishes. One person had decided they wanted to plan their funeral with their parent's involvement. Their parents said they wanted to make sure everything would happen as their family member would want. The staff explained it was important that people were supported to change their mind at any time, and as such the circles of support were amended accordingly. All people using the service had a circle of support incorporated into their support plans and we saw that people's wishes were discussed with the involvement of the individual and their family.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

The ethos at Alderwood LLA Addington Road was based on providing a family type setting for all adults, whilst supporting their needs through structured education and living. Without exception all the relatives spoken with were extremely pleased with the individualised care and support their family members received at the service. One relative said, "[Name of registered manager] is absolutely marvellous, she has a wonderful way of communicating with [Name of person]. She has worked for the organisation a long time, and knows the people living at the home extremely well, you can see they all fully trust her." Another relative said, "We couldn't wish for a better place for [Name of person] to live, everything about the home and the staff that work there is very special. [Name of person] truly feels at home and included in everything." A third relative said, "My first impressions of Alderwood was that I was very impressed, this has never faltered, the work the staff do is incredible."

There was a registered manager in post who had responsibility for the day to day running of the service. In addition to the registered manager, the service benefitted from having, team leaders and a consistent team of staff that had worked for the Alderwood organisation for several years. The staff were highly motivated to enhancing the quality of care people received. Relatives were contacted on a weekly basis to be given updates on their family members progress. All the relatives we spoke with were exceptionally praising of the care their family members received. They said they felt fully involved and informed about their family members progress, achievements and any changes regarding their health and welfare.

The registered manager the staff team and the managing director played an integral part in the care planning processes, to ensure people had opportunities to engage in meaningful activities to increase independence, grow in confidence, develop life skills and boost their overall wellbeing. One relative said, "[Registered manager] is brilliant, they are very inclusive and very person centred." A member of staff said, "We [staff] all go over and above, we are always willing to try new things, we never give up on a person."

It was evident that the registered manager, staff and the managing director knew all the people using the service extremely well and spent one to one time with people helping them to work through their pre-agreed coping strategies. For example, one person had a large collection of small electrical items, such as games consoles. But at times using the items caused the person heightened anxiety and frustration. As a coping tool the person had a pre-agreed strategy with staff to help alleviate their anxiety. This involved the person placing the electrical item into their 'special bag', knowing that after a few days they could choose another electrical item from the bag to use again. The registered manager and staff ensured the agreed strategy was consistently followed having a positive effect on the person being empowered to manage their stress and anxiety levels.

The provider had innovative and creative ways to enable people to be empowered and voice their opinions. We saw that regular resident meetings took place where people decided on the agenda for their meetings. We saw the provider swiftly acted on the feedback received from people using the service. For example, at a recent meeting one person with a love of steam trains said they would like to become a volunteer at a local train station that held steam train events. At the time of the inspection the registered manager was in the

process of making enquiries with the volunteer group to see if this could be made possible for the person. All people using the service said they would like to have their flats redecorated to a colour of their choice, and the registered manager had made plans for a decorator to carry out the decorating work in November. One person said they would like to go to the Craig David and Rita Ora concert that was soon due to take place in Northampton, the registered manager took swift action and had purchased last minute tickets and were also going with the person to the concert. The person said, "I can't believe [Name of registered manager] managed to get the tickets, I'm really looking forward to going to the concert."

The service had excellent links with resource centres and local leisure facilities. The aim of this was to provide people with a solid foundation for gaining new life skills and encourage on-going learning and development. The service was committed to promoting a person-centred ethos for the people it supported. They wanted to ensure that people could develop social, communication and life skills and to make their own life choices.

The service had a positive ethos and drive to provide high quality, person centred care to people with learning disabilities and autism. Staff at all levels had a strong belief they were providing the best possible care for people and were confident and empowered in their roles because of the strong leadership and management across the organisation. The service had developed many of its staff into senior roles and provided specialist training to staff so that expertise was at hand across many of the services. The provider had been given a silver 'Investors in people' award, to acknowledge the strong sense of development and opportunity within the staff team. One member of staff said they had worked for the organisation for several years, they said, "I always feel very proud telling people I work for Alderwood, it is a fantastic organisation to work for and has very a good reputation."

The registered manager and the managing director were very involved with the staff team and frequently stepped in to act as care staff themselves. A well-developed staff mentoring system was in place so that staff were clear about their responsibilities from the start of their employment, and ongoing support was present for staff. A clear statement was given to staff within the mentoring pack which said, 'We see training as our key responsibility in your career development, regardless of age or ability. The registered manager said the Alderwood organisation valued the commitment of the staff team and recognised the qualities and skills of staff to provide career progression within the organisation. The provider ran a 'Staff of the Month' award system. Each month, staff members were chosen because of their individual qualities. This incentive gained staff an additional £100 in their wages if they were nominated. All the staff we spoke with confirmed they felt very valued. The registered manager said the experience and coaching they received from the provider was exceptional. From the observations made during the inspection it was evident the registered manager was confident in their role and acted as a good role model to all staff.

The provider strived for excellence and the service was an excellent role model for other services providing care and support for people with complex learning disabilities. The service had received a visit from an independent 'quality checker' and their supporter. (Quality checkers are people with learning disabilities that are trained with their supporters to check services caring for people with learning disabilities against a variety of standards to improve services). The feedback from the quality was extremely positive. Their comments included, 'We thought the home was a great place for people to live', 'people were supported well, learning new skills, building on independence and able to progress to supported living' and 'We really liked the home and we feel it is one of the best we have seen.' The checker had awarded the service with a silver certificate of achievement. The service also received several visits from other health and social care providers. The provider said they treated each day as a learning opportunity as each day presented new challenges and took pride in sharing their model of care with other care providers.

Promoting independence, health promotion and safe risk taking were fundamental aspects of the ethos of care and support at all levels. The provider had an excellent reputation with other professionals for providing high quality support for people based on current good practice. For the second time running, the managing director had been awarded the Marion Cornick Award for Innovative Practice. The Alderwood organisation was well recognised for using the philosophy of TEACCH (Treatment and Education for Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children) and had their own dedicated TEACCH resources team. Using the TEACCH philosophy the service helped all people using the service to lead as fulfilling a life as possible. All relatives said they had chosen the service for their family members due to the good reputation of using the TEACCH philosophy that met their family member's educational and communication needs. The organisation was a bronze member of the British Institute for Learning Disabilities (BILD).

The provider used a nationally recognised, low arousal, proactive approach in dealing with challenging behaviour, called PROACT-SCIPr-UK, which stands for Positive Range of Options to Avoid Crisis using Therapy and Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention. The managing director was a licenced PROACT-SCIPr-UK principle instructor and selected staff within the organisation were also trained as licenced instructors. The philosophy of PROACT-SCIPr-UK focussed on person centred planning, empowering and assisting people to maintain self-control. We saw this approach had successfully been used. For example, one person sometimes struggled with home visits. The staff worked closely with the person and their relatives to devise a coping tool to record their experience of the home visits. This approach enabled the person and their relatives to identify what had gone well and what had not gone so well to make the visits more successful.

The provider was committed to championing human rights and participated in the 'stopping the over medication of people' (STOMP) initiative. This was aimed at enabling people with learning disabilities and complex needs to be empowered to live the life they choose. To forge strong community links and break down possible barriers with people. The service received regular updates from autism related organisations, such as, the British Institute for People with Learning Disabilities (BILD). They also received regular Skills for Care and Care Quality Commission (CQC) newsletters. This information enabled staff to ensure they continually worked in line with current government legislation and policies. All this was undertaken with the aim of driving self-improvement and providing the best possible quality of care to enhance people's lives.

The registered manager and the staff team had a clear understanding of the key principles and focus of the service, based on the organisational values and priorities of person centred care. We found they were passionate about continuously providing an increased quality of life for people, with a strong focus on inclusion and positive risk taking.

Robust quality assurance and internal audit systems were in place and the policies, procedures and practice were regularly reviewed. The provider ensured that any changes in legislation were shared with the whole of the staff team. The service was forward thinking and responded well to any anticipated future needs for people. There was an ethos of continual development and staff were open to suggestions from people, relatives, staff and health professionals who were involved in the service. All resources were used effectively to ensure care could be delivered in a high-quality manner. Staff focus remained on how they could continue to improve, so people had the best quality of life possible.