

Mr Frederick John Eaton

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Inspection report

Meadow Court
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Tel: 01823270845

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service effective?

Good ●

Is the service caring?

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

This inspection was unannounced and took place on 8 January 2016

Mr Frederick John Eaton is registered to provide personal care to people who live in their own homes. People who use the service have individual tenancy agreements for self-contained flats within a shared building. This type of service is often referred to as supported living accommodation. At the time of this inspection there were 14 people using the service.

The service specialises in providing care and support to people who have learning difficulties and mental health needs. People required minimal physical support with personal care but some required prompting and supervision with personal care tasks. The majority of people were receiving emotional and practical support to maintain and develop daily living skills and to access the community.

The service is run by Mr Frederick John Eaton as a sole provider. As a sole provider he is not required to employ a registered manager. Instead he has opted to manage the service himself. 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 service was well led and there were systems in place to monitor quality and seek people's views. People said the registered provider was open and approachable and we saw this throughout the inspection visit.

People were very complimentary about the staff who supported them. People said staff were kind and they felt safe with them. One person told us "I feel safe here because I know there's always someone to talk to if I get nervous about things. Staff are nice to you." People said they had been able to build relationships with staff and other people who used the service.

Staff received training and support to make sure they had the skills and knowledge to effectively support people. One person said "Staff are all pretty good and they know what they are doing."

The service was flexible to accommodate people's wishes and preferences. People told us they got the support they needed to learn and develop independent living skills and safely access community facilities.

Staff offered advice and support to people about healthy lifestyle and food choices. They also assisted people to make and attend appointments with healthcare professionals.

People continued to make choices and were fully involved in planning and reviewing their care and support. Where risks were identified staff worked with people to minimise risk to enable them to take part in activities with minimum risk to themselves or others.

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 felt safe and comfortable with the staff who supported them.

Risk assessments were undertaken with people to minimise risks to them and others.

All new staff were checked to make sure they were safe to work with vulnerable people.

Staff knew how to make sure people received their medicines safely.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

People were supported by staff who had the skills and knowledge to meet their needs.

People were supported to have a healthy diet and meals could be provided to people who chose not to cook.

People were able to give consent for their care and support and staff knew how to support people who did not have the capacity to give their consent.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

People were supported by staff who were kind and caring.

People's privacy was respected by staff.

People were involved in decisions about the care and support they received.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

The service was flexible to meet people's individual needs and preferences.

People knew how to make a complaint and said they would be comfortable to do so.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well led.

People found the registered provider to be open and approachable.

There were ways for people to share their views about the running of the service.

Mr Frederick John Eaton

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 8 January 2016 and was unannounced. It was carried out by an adult social care inspector.

Before the inspection, the provider completed a 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 looked at the information in the PIR and also looked at other information we held about the service before the inspection visit.

During the inspection we spoke with seven people who used the service and two members of staff. The registered provider was available throughout the day. Before the inspection we received feedback from two health and social care professionals.

We looked at a selection of records which related to individual care and the running of the home. These included three care and support plans, three staff personal files and records relating to the quality monitoring within the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People told us they felt safe with the staff who supported them. One person told us "I feel safe here because I know there's always someone to talk to if I get nervous about things. Staff are nice to you." Another person said "It has improved a lot since I have been here. At one time I felt a bit bullied by other people. I talked with [registered provider's name] and it was sorted. Now I feel 100% safe."

There were staff in the building 24 hours a day to provide general support to people. Each person was allocated support hours according to their specific needs. People had contracts which set out their weekly hours and staff were aware of people's assessed needs and provided individual support accordingly. People told us there were always staff available to them when they needed it. A member of staff said "We always have enough staff."

One person told us although they thought they got the support they needed they would like more time with staff. They said "Staff don't check on you to make sure you are alright." However in the time we spent in this person's flat one member of staff knocked on their door to ask if there was anything they wanted and another member of staff bought them a meal. Their daily records showed good interaction with staff.

People were able to contact staff in an emergency situation. Each person who used the service was provided with an emergency phone which enabled them to contact staff, the provider or the emergency services if they required immediate support.

Risks of abuse to people were minimised because the provider had a robust recruitment procedure. Before commencing work all new staff were thoroughly checked to make sure they were suitable to work for the service. These checks included seeking references from previous employers and carrying out disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks. The DBS checks people's criminal record history and their suitability to work with vulnerable people. Staff files contained all the required information to evidence the recruitment policy was followed.

Staff received training in how to recognise and report abuse when they commenced work at the service. Staff had a clear understanding of what may constitute abuse and how to report it. All were confident that any concerns reported would be fully investigated and action would be taken to make sure people were safe.

Staff spoken with were very aware of the vulnerability of some people who used the service. There were risk assessments in place which enabled people to make their own choices but also enabled staff to minimise risks to people. For example one person often spent extended periods away from the service visiting a friend. It had been agreed with the person that staff made contact with them on a daily basis to ensure they were well and safe.

Staff had discussed with people how to stay safe when using the internet and social media. There were specific risk assessments for people who were particularly vulnerable in this area. One person told us "I did

my risk assessments with my keyworker so now I know how to stay safe."

Staff received training in the safe administration of medicines but only administered medicines to one person. There was a medication administration record for this person which was correctly completed when medicines had been administered. If it had not been administered by staff the reason was recorded. This meant there was a clear record showing when the person had taken their medicines to enable staff and other professionals to monitor the effectiveness of the medication. One person said staff reminded them to take their medicines. They said "They knock on my door and remind me it's time for my tablet."

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People received effective care and support from staff who had the skills and knowledge to meet their needs. People said they thought staff were able to meet their needs. One person told us "Staff know their job." Another person said "Staff are all pretty good and they know what they are doing."

People were supported by staff who had undergone an induction programme which gave them the basic skills to care for people safely. In addition to completing induction training new staff had opportunities to shadow more experienced staff. This enabled them to get to know people and how they liked to be cared for. One member of staff said "The induction was really good and I had time to get to know people."

After staff had completed their induction training they were able to undertake further training in health and safety issues and subjects relevant to the people who used the service. Many staff had, or were working towards, nationally recognised qualifications in care which ensured they were competent in their roles. Staff told us opportunities for training were good and gave them the skills and knowledge to carry out their job.

Staff felt well supported by the provider which gave them the confidence to carry out their roles effectively. One member of staff said "It's a great place to work. You are really well supported by the team and [registered provider's name.] You can go to them for advice at any time." Another member of staff said "The support here is brilliant. Good teamwork, appraisals regularly and team meetings."

The service assisted people to see health care professionals according to their individual needs. People told us staff assisted them to make and attend appointments. One person said "They take you to the doctors if you need to go. They're very good, they will come in with you if you want them to." One health and social care professional told us staff supported people to register with relevant health care professionals to make sure they received support even if they were new to the area.

Staff supported people where necessary with meal preparation and gave advice on healthy eating. Some people had achieved or were working towards certificates in food management and hygiene. This helped to ensure people were preparing meals in accordance with safe practices. The achievement of a certificate also increased people's self-esteem. One person proudly told us about their certificate and showed us where it was displayed on the wall. They said "The staff helped me, I learnt a lot and I got a certificate."

Some people chose to have their main meal each day cooked by staff. One member of staff said "If people have a cooked meal from us we know they have eaten at least one hot meal a day." One person told us "I have a lunch every day. It saves me cooking and it's usually pretty good."

One person had a risk assessment because they were underweight and the control measures were to make sure the person had a meal provided each day. They had also agreed for staff to weigh them on a monthly basis. Weight records for this person showed they had maintained a stable weight since they began to use the service.

People who used the service were able to make decisions about the care or treatment they received. People were always asked for their consent before staff assisted them with any tasks. One person told us "I ask for help when I need it. The staff never make you do anything."

Staff had received training on how to support people who did not have the mental capacity to make decisions for themselves. 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. One member of staff said "We explain things to people and offer advice but ultimately everyone is able to make their own choices about things. If anyone couldn't then we would have to talk with other professionals about what would be in their best interests." This showed staff knew about current legislation and how to support people with decision making.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People were complimentary about the staff who supported them. One person said "The staff are all lovely. They go the extra mile. Like taking you to places they know you will like." Another person told us "Staff are very kind. They listen to you and help you with things." One health and social care professional described the staff team as a proactive, caring and supportive.

People had built relationships with staff and with other people using the service. One person said "I've made lots of friends since I came to Meadow Court." Another person said "It's good to have people around. Sometimes we watch films together, I've definitely made friends here."

During the inspection visit we saw staff interacting with people in a friendly way. There was good humoured banter between people and staff and everyone looked very relaxed. One person said "It's a nice atmosphere."

Staff supported people to keep in touch with friends and family and often provided transport for people to visit family members. Over the Christmas period staff supported people to attend social events and arranged events for friends and family to attend. The provider kept people up to date with what was happening at the service through a monthly newsletter.

Many people told us how much they appreciated the fact that staff took time to listen to them and they did not feel judged. One person said "They listen if you're upset. They never talk down to you." Another person said "When I'm angry I just want someone to talk to. They are good like that and check I'm alright."

People had self-contained flats within a large building. People told us their flats were their own private space and staff did not enter without their permission. One person said "I like to be on my own in my flat. The staff respect that." Another person said "Staff are good about how you live. What you do in your flat is your business as long as it doesn't interfere with other people. We have to be good neighbours."

People were fully involved in planning their care and support. People told us they were involved in writing and reviewing their care plan and setting long and short term goals for themselves. One person said "I have a care plan which I did with [staff member's name.] You get to say what you want but you can change your mind about things." Another person told us "At my last review I had met all my targets so it's time to set some more. That's a good way to start the new year."

Personal information was kept securely but people knew they could ask to read things written about them at any time. After a discussion with us one person went to the office to check something in their care plan so they could answer a question we had asked them.

Staff were aware of issues of confidentiality and did not speak about people in front of other people. When they discussed people's care needs with us they did so in a respectful and affectionate way.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People received care that was responsive to their needs and personalised to their wishes and preferences. People were able to choose how they used their individual support hours. Some people were assisted to access community facilities whilst other people used their hours for emotional or practical support at home. Although daily records showed what support people received it did not detail the time spent with individuals which made it impossible to evidence that people were receiving their allocated support hours.

The service provided care to people who often had unstructured lifestyles and support hours were flexible to fit in with people's needs. There was a basic schedule of work for staff each day but they responded to people's individual requests. For example one person told us they needed to go shopping for food and had asked staff in the morning to take them that afternoon. This was arranged. A member of staff said "Everything is very individual and we have to be flexible with hours so people get the best use of them."

Each person had their needs assessed before they began to use the service. This was to make sure the service was appropriate to meet the person's needs and expectations. From the initial assessments care plans were devised to ensure staff had information about how people wanted their care needs to be met. One member of staff told us ""We see people's initial needs and risk assessments so we know about a person before we start to work with them."

Care plans were personalised to each individual and contained information to assist staff to provide care in a manner that respected their wishes. One person said "They know about the things I like and about me."

Staff assisted people to occupy their time and take an active part in household maintenance. One person told us about their love of gardening and how they grew vegetables for people who lived in the flats. Another person told us they regularly helped out with small jobs around the building. They said "I've learnt a lot and I feel I'm doing something useful."

Some people had jobs and one person was supported to attend college. The staff told us they were working with another person to find a suitable college course as they had expressed a wish to continue their learning. One member of staff said "Everything is very personalised and we try to help people with the things they want to do." One person told us staff had helped them to complete application forms for jobs.

Staff helped people to arrange social outings in accordance with their interests. One person told us they had gone on a pamper day with their key worker. Other people told us staff were arranging for a group of people to go bowling together.

People knew how to make a complaint. Everyone received a copy of the complaints procedure when they started to use the service. People said they would be able to make a complaint if they were unhappy about any aspect of their care or support. One person said "I would be able to complain. If I wasn't happy I would tell them. They'd sort it out." Another person said "You can always talk to a member of staff. They wouldn't think badly of you."

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

The service was managed by the registered provider who was a registered nurse and had many years of experience of managing social care services. The registered provider worked at the service on a daily basis and was well known to staff and people using the service. We were told by staff they were supportive but also delegated tasks to enable staff to learn and take responsibility. One health and social care professional told us "He is a very hands on manager and would not expect his staff to do anything he would not do himself." The service had been awarded the 'Investors in People' gold award in 2015. This is an internationally accredited award which recognises good leadership and management of staff.

Staff and people using the service told us they found the registered provider to be very open and approachable. One person said "You can always talk to [registered provider's name.]" A member of staff said "He is really committed to us and the people here." Throughout the day we saw staff and people went to talk with the registered provider and they spent time in communal areas of the building and visiting people in their flats.

The registered provider had a clear vision for the service which was that everybody had choice and control over their lives but they and the staff were available to offer support and guidance. They told us they aimed to offer very individualised care and support. This philosophy was re iterated by staff and people. Staff said they worked flexibly to make sure they were able to meet people's individual needs. People told us they received a service which catered for their personal wishes and needs. One person said "They have helped me to build my confidence. I'm never told I am doing things wrong but staff quietly advise me how I may be able to do things better. I've learnt a lot from all the staff."

There were quality assurance systems to monitor care and plan on-going improvements. There was an annual quality audit which looked at all areas of the service. Areas audited included care plans and risk assessments, safeguarding practices and procedures and client involvement and empowerment. Due to changes in the people using the service the provider had recently introduced easy read contracts for everyone. This ensured people were able to understand their contracts which enabled them to ask questions about the service they received.

The registered provider also monitored practice by on-going observation and talking to people and staff. Where issues of poor practice needed to be addressed we were able to see this was done through training and disciplinary action as appropriate.

There were ways for people to share their views and influence the running of the service. There were twice yearly surveys to gauge people's views and monthly tenants meetings. The last survey was completed in December 2015 and showed a high level of satisfaction with the service provided. One person said "We have meetings and they listen to you. If you want to say something without anyone knowing who you are you can fill in a form."