

Voyage 1 Limited

# Lower St Helens

## Inspection report

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22 February 2022

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## Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Inspected but not rated
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Is the service safe?	<b>Inspected but not rated</b>
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# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

### About the service

Lower St Helens is a residential care home providing personal care to up to four people. The service provides support to people who have learning disabilities or autism. At the time of our inspection there were four people using the service.

We found the following examples of good practice.

For the duration of the pandemic, no staff or people using the service had a positive COVID-19 test.

The provider had robust entry requirements for visitors to the service. All had to produce either a clear LFD or take one on arrival waiting outside until the results were visible. They had to complete health and contact questionnaires, have their temperature recorded and be fully vaccinated. There was also sanitising hand gel available for use at the entry.

The premises were very clean, there were thorough cleaning schedules completed. Frequently touched areas including door handles, bannisters, taps and toilet flushers were all sanitised three times each day which records evidenced.

People had been accepting of staff wearing face masks and had all been willing to wear them when accessing the community. There had been no issues around communication as a result of wearing face masks. People had been supported to understand why additional infection prevention and control measures such as wearing face masks and cleaning more than usual through use of easy read materials.

Though there had been no cases of COVID-19 in the service, contingency plans were in place to safeguard people should there be an outbreak. At the start of the pandemic, staff ensured there was sufficient social distance within the communal areas of the service, for example, the dining table was measured to ensure adequate distance between people and they were encouraged to use the same seat at the table to minimise cross infection.

A person attended day services twice per week and staff ensured they sanitised their hands and wore a mask when they went. On return, their clothing was laundered, masks disposed of and their bag sanitised to minimise the risk of contaminants.

In the event of an outbreak, staffing could be increased through use of both bank staff and agency staff. If needed, the provider would block book staff to ensure continuity. Staff had been trained in using personal protective equipment, PPE and infection prevention and control (IPC). There were also arrangements for staff to access the premises through the front door and sanitise and add a face masks and then go directly to the laundry where they could don and doff any other necessary PPE.

The provider had supported staff throughout the pandemic. There was a staff held phone line where they

could get advice or services such as counselling and the provider asked staff who were off sick to contact them at intervals in order to stay in touch and updated about their well-being.

To enhance people's well-being during the pandemic, the provider researched and used different therapies including aromatherapy and light therapy. For example, at breakfast time each day, light therapy lamps were used for 15 minutes. Usually used to prevent seasonal affective disorder, this was used to improve mood and wellness usually found from exposure to the sun. Aromatherapy was used to stimulate and relax people.

The provider had ensured ample PPE was available to services. There had been no shortfalls throughout the pandemic and sufficient stock was held should an outbreak happen.

We were assured that this service met good infection prevention and control guidelines.

# The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

## Is the service safe?

Inspected but not rated.

Further information is in the detailed findings below.

Inspected but not rated

# Lower St Helens

## **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.

As part of CQC's response to the COVID-19 pandemic we are looking at how services manage infection control and visiting arrangements. This was a targeted inspection looking at the infection prevention and control measures the provider had in place. We also asked the provider about any staffing pressures the service was experiencing and whether this was having an impact on the service.

This inspection took place on 22 February 2022 and was announced. We gave the service 18 hours' notice of the inspection.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

### Staffing

- The provider told us they had measures in place to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 related staff pressures. There had been no use of bank staff and the team covered absence between them ensuring shifts were covered and people were cared for.

### How well are people protected by the prevention and control of 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.

### Visiting in care homes

- The provider had ensured that visits to the service were in line with current government guidance. The service was small and there were not many visitors however, visitors were expected to be vaccinated, take LFD tests, complete health and contact questionnaires and have their temperatures taken. If people did not comply with these conditions they would not be admitted into the service.
- Alternative arrangements had been made to ensure contact was maintained with relatives and friends during the pandemic when visitors were not permitted. This included garden and window visits and use of phone and video calls.

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.

- 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.