

Robert Michael Peacock and Elizabeth Peacock Generals Meadow

Inspection report

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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 was an unannounced inspection carried out on 9 November 2016.

Generals Meadow can provide accommodation and personal care for 19 older people. There were 17 people living in the service at the time of our inspection.

The service was run by Mr and Mrs Peacock. They made up a partnership and together they were the registered provider. One of the partners was also the 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. In this report when we speak both about the partners and the registered manager we refer to them as being, 'the registered persons'

Staff knew how to respond to any concerns that might arise so that people were kept safe from abuse. People had been helped to avoid the risk of accidents and medicines were safely managed. There were enough staff on duty and background checks had been completed before new staff were appointed.

Although new staff had not fully received all of the training recommended by a nationally recognised model, established staff had received refresher training. Staff had the knowledge and skills they needed to care for people in the right way. People had been assisted to eat and drink enough and had been supported to receive all of the healthcare assistance they needed.

The registered persons had ensured that people's rights were respected by helping them to make decisions for themselves. The Care Quality Commission is required by law to monitor how registered persons apply the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and to report on what we find. These safeguards protect people when they are not able to make decisions for themselves and it is necessary to deprive them of their liberty in order to keep them safe. In relation to this, the registered persons had taken the necessary steps to ensure that people only received lawful care that respected their rights.

People were treated with kindness and compassion. Staff recognised people's right to privacy, promoted their dignity and respected confidential information.

People had been consulted about the care they wanted to receive and they had been given all of the assistance they needed. This included people who lived with dementia and who could become distressed. People had been helped to pursue their hobbies and interests and there was a system for quickly and fairly resolving complaints.

Although some quality checks were not fully recorded other evidence showed that the registered persons

had regularly checked to make sure that people were reliably receiving all of the care they needed. The service was run in an open and inclusive way, good team work was promoted and staff were supported to speak out if they had any concerns. People had benefited from staff acting upon good practice guidance.

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.

Staff knew how to keep people safe from the risk of abuse including financial mistreatment.

People had been helped to avoid the risk of accidents and medicines were managed safely.

There were enough staff on duty and background checks had been completed before new staff were employed.

Is the service effective?

Good 

The service was effective.

Although new staff had not received all of the recommended training, established staff had been given refresher training. Staff knew how to care for people in the right way.

People had been assisted to eat and drink enough and they enjoyed their meals.

People had been assisted to receive all the healthcare attention they needed.

People were helped to make decisions for themselves. When this was not possible legal safeguards were followed to ensure that decisions were made in people's best interests so that their legal rights were respected.

Is the service caring?

Good 

The service was caring.

Staff were caring, kind and compassionate.

People's right to privacy was respected and staff promoted people's dignity.

Confidential information was kept private.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

People had been consulted about the care they wanted to receive.

Staff had provided people with all the care they needed including people who could become distressed.

People were helped to pursue their hobbies and interests.

There was a system to quickly and fairly resolve complaints.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well led.

Although some quality checks were not fully recorded the registered persons had regularly checked to make sure that people were reliably receiving all of the care they needed.

People and their relatives had been asked for their opinions of the service so that their views could be taken into account.

There was good team work and staff had been encouraged to speak out if they had any concerns.

People had benefited from staff acting upon good practice guidance.

Generals Meadow

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 registered persons were 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.

Before the inspection, the registered persons completed a Provider Information Return (PIR). This is a form that asks them to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We also examined other information we held about the service. This included notifications of incidents that the registered persons had sent us since the last inspection. These are events that happened in the service that the registered persons are required to tell us about.

We visited the service on 9 November 2016. The inspection was unannounced and the inspection team consisted of a single inspector.

During the inspection we spoke with five people who lived in the service. We also spoke with a senior care worker and four care workers. In addition, we spoke with both of the registered persons and with their office manager. We observed care that was provided in communal areas and looked at the care records for four of the people who lived in the service. We also looked at records that related to how the service was managed including staffing, training and quality assurance.

After the inspection visit we spoke by telephone with three relatives. We did this so that they could tell us their views about how well the service was meeting people's needs and wishes.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People said that they felt safe living in the service. One of them said, "I'm very settled here and quite see it as home now. The staff and the owners are just delightful." Another person remarked, "One of the reasons I came here was so that I could have staff around because I like to know that they're there." We witnessed a number of occasions when people went out of their way to be close to staff including a person walking beside a member of staff and chatting to them as they went into different lounges to check that people were comfortable. All of the relatives we spoke with said they were confident that their family members were safe in the service. One of them said, "I'm very pleased indeed with the service. I never have to worry about my family member after I leave because I know that they are treated with real kindness."

Records showed that staff had completed training in how to keep people safe and staff said that they had been provided with relevant guidance. We found that staff knew how to recognise and report abuse so that they could take action if they were concerned that a person was at risk of harm. Staff were confident that people were treated with kindness and said they would immediately report any concerns to a senior person in the service. In addition, they knew how to contact external agencies such as the Care Quality Commission and said they would do so if their concerns remained unresolved.

We found that people had been protected from the risk of financial mistreatment. This was because some people who needed help to manage their personal money were provided with the assistance they needed. Records showed that there was a clear account that described each occasion when the registered persons had spent money on someone's behalf. This included paying for services such as seeing the hairdresser and chiropodist. In addition, we noted that there were receipts to support each purchase that had been made.

Staff had identified possible risks to each person's safety and had taken positive action to promote their wellbeing. An example of this involved people being helped to keep their skin healthy by regularly changing their position and by using soft cushions and mattresses that reduced pressure on key areas. Staff had also taken practical steps to reduce the risk of people having accidents. An example of this was one person agreeing to have rails fitted to the side of their bed so that they could be comfortable and not have to worry about rolling out of bed. Other examples of this were people being provided with equipment to help prevent them having falls including walking frames, raised toilet seats and bannister rails. Windows located above the ground floor were fitted with safety latches so that they did not open too wide and could be used safely. We also noted that staff knew how to enable each person to safely and quickly leave the building or move to a safe area in the event of an emergency.

Records of the accidents and near misses involving people who lived in the service showed that most of them had been minor and had not resulted in the need for people to receive medical attention. We saw that the registered manager had analysed each event so that practical steps could then be taken to help prevent them from happening again. An example of this involved people being referred to a specialist clinic after they had experienced a number of falls. This had enabled staff to receive expert advice about how best to assist the people concerned so that it was less likely that they would experience falls in the future. Another example was arrangements that had been made after a person had fallen in their room and bruised their

eye earlier on the day of our inspection visit. We noted that medical attention had promptly been obtained. In addition, we saw that staff were more frequently popping in to see the person in their bedroom to make sure that they were comfortable and had all of the assistance they needed.

We found that there were reliable arrangements for ordering, storing, administering and disposing of medicines. There was a sufficient supply of medicines and they were stored securely. Staff who administered medicines had received training and we saw them correctly following written guidance to make sure that people were given the right medicines at the right times. Records showed that during the week preceding our inspection each person had correctly received all of the medicines that had been prescribed for them. We noted that in the 12 months preceding our inspection there had been one incident when a member of staff had not properly recorded when they had administered medicines to a number of people. Other records showed that the people concerned had not experienced any direct harm as a result of the mistake. They also showed that the registered manager had quickly established how the mistake had occurred and had taken effective action to reduce the likelihood of it happening again. This had included providing the member of staff concerned with extra support and guidance.

People who lived in the service said that there were enough staff on duty to promptly meet their needs. One of them commented, "I'm looked after just right and the staff are very helpful." Another person remarked, "There are busy times of day and staff only have one pair hands like the rest of us. But, in general if you ask for assistance you pretty much get it there and then."

Documents confirmed that the registered persons had reviewed the care each person required and had calculated how many staff were needed. On the day of our inspection visit we noted that all of the planned shifts had been filled. In addition, records showed that all shifts had been filled during the seven days preceding our inspection. We concluded that there were enough staff on duty because we saw people promptly being given all of the care and individual attention they needed and wanted to receive.

Staff said and records confirmed that the registered persons had completed background checks on them before they had been appointed. These included checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service to show that they did not have relevant criminal convictions and had not been guilty of professional misconduct. We noted that in addition to this other checks had been completed including obtaining references from their previous employers. These measures helped to ensure that new staff could demonstrate their previous good conduct and were suitable people to be employed in the service.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People said that they were well supported in the service. They were confident that staff knew what they were doing, were reliable and had their best interests at heart. One of them said, "The staff here are quite settled and I've got to know most of them really well and they know how I like things done." We saw another person who had special communication needs pointing towards a passing member of staff to whom they waved and smiled. Relatives were also confident that staff had the knowledge and skills they needed. One of them said, "I see the care that staff give and I'm very confident that they know what they're doing. It's consistent too because my family member gets good care regardless of which staff happen to be on duty."

Staff told us that the registered manager spent a lot of time in the service and regularly observed and reviewed their work. This was done so that they could give feedback to staff about how well the assistance they provided was meeting people's needs and wishes. We also noted that most of the care workers had obtained a nationally recognised qualification in the provision of care in residential settings.

Staff told us and records confirmed that new staff had undertaken introductory training before working without direct supervision. However, we noted that this training did not fully meet the requirements of the Care Certificate. This is a nationally recognised model of training for new staff that is designed to equip them to care for people in the right way. We raised this matter with the registered manager who informed us that arrangements would be made to ensure that in future new staff received all of the training and support recommended by the Care Certificate.

Records showed that established staff had completed refresher training in key subjects such as how to safely assist people who experienced reduced mobility, first aid, infection control and fire safety. The registered manager said that this was necessary to confirm that staff were competent to safely care for people in the right way. In addition, we found that staff had the knowledge and skills they needed to consistently provide people with the care they needed. An example of this was staff knowing how to correctly assist people who needed support in order to promote their continence. Another example involved staff having the knowledge and skills they needed to help people keep their skin healthy. Staff were aware of how to identify if someone was developing sore skin and understood the importance of quickly seeking advice from an external healthcare professional if they were concerned about how well someone's treatment was progressing.

We noted that there were measures in place to ensure that people had enough nutrition and hydration. People had been offered the opportunity to have their body weight regularly checked. This had helped staff to reliably identify if someone's weight was changing in a way that needed to be brought to the attention of a healthcare professional. We saw that staff were tactfully checking how much some people were eating and drinking each day. This was done because they were considered to be at risk of not having enough hydration and nutrition. We also noted that staff had arranged for some people who were at risk of choking to be seen by a healthcare professional. As a result of this, staff had been advised how to specially prepare a person's meals so that they were easier to swallow.

People told us that they enjoyed their meals with one of them remarking, "The food is very good here and I don't have any complaints about the catering." Another person remarked, "Lunchtimes feel like fine dining with the tables laid out so nicely with a silver service, napkins neatly folded and full condiments. It makes you feel cared for and valued." Records showed that people were offered a choice of dish at each meal time and when we were present at lunch we noted that the meal time was a relaxed and pleasant occasion. People chatted with each other and with staff as they dined. In addition, we saw that some people who needed help to use cutlery were discreetly assisted by staff so that they too could enjoy their meal.

People said and records confirmed that they received all of the help they needed to see their doctor and other healthcare professionals. A person spoke about this and said, "The staff are completely on the ball and call the doctor straight away if I'm not well." Another person confirmed this saying, "I think that on some occasions the staff are too attentive and want to call the doctor for minor things when I would probably leave it a while." Relatives also commented on this matter with one of them saying, "I'm completely confident that the staff make sure that my family member sees the doctor or the nurse whenever they need to."

The 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 make particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.

We found that the registered persons and staff were following the MCA by supporting people to make decisions for themselves. They had consulted with people who lived in the service, explained information to them and sought their informed consent. An example of this occurred when we saw a member of staff explaining to a person why it was advisable for them to use a medicine at the correct time and on a regular basis so that it helped them to stay well. Later on the person concerned told us, "The staff are kind and sometimes they nicely help to remind me about things like taking tablets and using the call bell when I need help."

Records showed that the registered persons recognised the need to liaise with health and social care professionals and with relatives when a person lacked mental capacity and a decision about their care needed to be made. This arrangement helped to ensure that any decisions made were in a person's best interests. Remarking about this a relative said, "The manager has discussed things with me about my mother's medical care so that together we can make the right decision for her. My mother has dementia and so she needs to be helped to make decisions that are in her best interests and that's what we do."

People can only be deprived of their liberty in order to receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA. The application procedures for this in care homes and hospitals are called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). We found that the registered persons knew about the requirements of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards but had not needed to apply for any authorisations from the local authority. This was because people were not being deprived of their liberty.

Records showed that some people had made legal arrangements for a relative or other representative to make decisions on their behalf if they were no longer able to do so for themselves. We noted that these arrangements were clearly documented and were correctly understood by the registered manager and senior staff. This helped to ensure that suitable steps could be taken to liaise with relatives and representatives who had the legal right to be consulted about the care and assistance provided for a person living in the service.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People were very positive about the quality of care that they received. One of them said, "I get looked after very well here and the staff do absolutely all they can for us." Relatives told us that they were confident that their family members were treated with genuine kindness. One of them said, "I find all of the staff to be fine. I've never seen any unkindness at all." Another relative remarked, "I don't think of Generals Meadow as a care home – it's mum's home. In a way it's my home too because whenever I call I'm made to feel welcome and part of things. I think that Generals Meadow is a special place."

During our inspection we saw that people were treated with respect and in a caring and kind way. Staff were not rushed and made a point of speaking with people as they assisted them. We observed a lot of positive conversations that supported people's wellbeing. An example of this occurred when we heard a member of staff chatting with a person about their experience of living and working in the area. The person concerned was pleased to reflect upon how changes had occurred over the years including shops that had opened and closed down.

We observed an occasion when a member of staff who was helping someone to rearrange the contents of one of their clothes drawers was called away. This was because they were needed to assist a colleague who was providing care for someone else who needed help to change position. We noted that before they left the person, the member of staff politely explained why they were leaving the room and assured them that they would return as soon as possible. A short while later we saw the member of staff go back to the person's bedroom where they resumed helping them put some garments neatly back into the drawer. They then sat with the person chatting about colour coordinating clothes so that they matched. Later on we spoke with the person concerned and they said, "The staff are nice aren't they like that, they're always willing to help."

We saw that staff were compassionate and supported people to retain parts of their lives that were important to them before they moved in. An example of this involved a member of staff speaking with a person about one of their relatives who they did not see regularly because they lived in another part of the country. The member of staff encouraged the person to enjoy recalling when they were younger and regularly saw the relative concerned as part of everyday life.

We noted that there were arrangements in place to support someone if they could not easily express their wishes and did not have family or friends to assist them to make decisions about their care. These measures included the service having links to local lay advocacy groups who were independent of the service and who could support people to express their opinions and wishes.

Staff recognised the importance of not intruding into people's private space. People had their own bedrooms that were laid out as bed sitting areas. This meant that they could relax and enjoy their own company if they did not want to use the communal lounges. We saw that staff had supported people to personalise their rooms with their own pictures, photographs and items of furniture. We also noted that communal toilets and bathrooms had locks on the doors and so could be secured when in use. We saw staff knocking and waiting for permission before going into bedrooms, toilets and bathrooms. In addition, when

they provided people with close personal care they made sure that doors were shut so that people were assisted in private.

We noted that people could speak with relatives and meet with health and social care professionals in the privacy of their bedroom if they wished to do so. A relative commented on this saying, "I normally see my family member in their bedroom because it's more private and that's not a problem for staff at all."

We saw that paper records which contained private information were stored securely. In addition, electronic records were held securely in the service's computer system. This system was password protected and so could only be accessed by authorised staff. We found that staff understood the importance of respecting confidential information and only disclosed it to people such as health and social care professionals on a need-to-know basis.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Records showed and people said that staff had consulted with them about the care they wanted to receive and they had recorded the results in an individual care plan. People said that staff provided them with a wide range of assistance including washing, dressing and using the bathroom. Records confirmed that each person was receiving the assistance they needed as described in their care plan. Examples of this included people being helped to reposition themselves when in bed so that they were comfortable. Another example was the way in which staff had supported people to use aides that promoted their continence. In addition, people said that staff regularly checked on them during the night to make sure they were comfortable and safe in bed. A person spoke about this and remarked, "I find it very reassuring to know that the staff check on me at night because it means that I'm not on my own."

We noted that staff were able to effectively support people who could become distressed. We saw that when a person became distressed, staff followed the guidance described in the person's care plan and reassured them. They noticed that a person was becoming upset because they were not sure when their tea time meal would be served. The member of staff quietly described to the person that their next meal would be served later in the day after they had enjoyed the mid-afternoon cup of tea and biscuits. Later on we saw the person enjoying relaxing in the lounge and chatting with another member of staff. The member of staff had known how to identify that the person required support and had provided the right assistance.

People told us that they were satisfied with the opportunities they were given to enjoy social activities. One of them said, "There's usually something going on most days and time doesn't seem to drag. I don't join in all of the activities but I like to watch them." Records showed that people had been supported to take part in a range of social activities including things such as arts and crafts, quizzes and gentle exercises. In addition, there were entertainers who called to the service to play music and engage people in singing along to their favourite tunes.

We noted that there were arrangements to support people to express their individuality. We were told that a religious service was held regularly to support people who wished to meet their spiritual needs in this way. We also found that suitable arrangements had been made to respect each person's wishes when they came to the end of their life. This had included establishing how relatives wanted to be supported to acknowledge and celebrate their family member's life. We also noted that registered manager was aware of how to support people who had English as their second language including being able to make use of translator services.

People and their relatives said that they would be confident speaking to the registered persons if they had any complaints about the service. A person commented about this saying, "The owners are around all the time and they're very easy to talk to and just genuine people. If I raised a problem with them I know it would get sorted." A relative also remarked on this saying, "I've not had to complain about anything but it's a very well organised service and I'm confident that any concerns I had would quickly be put right."

We saw that each person who lived in the service had received a document that explained how they could

make a complaint. In addition, the registered persons had a procedure that was intended to ensure that complaints could be resolved quickly and fairly. Records showed that the registered persons had not received any complaints in the 12 months preceding our inspection.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People and their relatives told us that the service was well managed. Speaking about this a person remarked, "The owners run a tight ship here for sure and everything has got to be just right. Lots of little things done right though add up into this being a very good place to live." Relatives were also definite about this matter with one of them saying, "I do think that Generals Meadow is extremely well run and it gives me confidence that my family member will always get the care and attention they need."

Although some quality checks were not fully recorded we saw that the registered persons had regularly checked to make sure that people were reliably receiving all of the care they needed. These checks included the registered persons making sure that care was being consistently provided in the right way, medicines were safely managed and staff had the knowledge and skills they needed.

We noted that checks were also being made of the accommodation and included making sure that the fire safety equipment, hoists and the passenger lift were well maintained. Other checks included making sure that hot water was suitably temperature controlled and radiators were guarded to reduce the risk of scalds and burns and food was stored and handled in the right way.

People who lived in the service said that they were asked for their views about their home as part of everyday life. In addition, we noted that people had been invited to complete an annual quality questionnaire to give feedback about their experience of living in the service. We saw that the registered persons had promptly acted upon people's suggestions. An example of this involved staff clearly telling people at lunchtime about the social activities they could enjoy later on in the afternoon. This was in response to some people having said that they did not always know about the social events being held in the service on any particular day. Speaking about their involvement in the running of the service a person said, "I have a good chat with the staff and they're really kind and just want to help and make things right." Another person said, "There's just a relaxed atmosphere and if we want something the owners will do their level best to get it for us."

People and their relatives said that they knew who the registered persons were and that they were helpful. During our inspection visit we saw the registered persons talking with people who lived in the service and with staff. The registered manager had a thorough knowledge of the care each person was receiving and they also knew about points of detail such as which members of staff were on duty on any particular day. This level of knowledge helped them to effectively run the service so that people received all of the care they needed and wanted.

We found that staff were provided with the leadership they needed to develop good team working practices that helped to ensure that people consistently received the right care. There was a senior care worker in charge of each shift and during out of office hours the registered persons or another manager was on call if staff needed advice. Staff said and our observations confirmed that there were handover meetings at the beginning and end of each shift when developments in each person's care were noted and reviewed. In addition, there were regular staff meetings at which staff could discuss their roles and suggest

improvements to further develop effective team working. These measures all helped to ensure that staff were well led and had the knowledge and systems they needed to care for people in a responsive and effective way.

There was an open and relaxed approach to running the service. Staff said that they were well supported by the registered persons and they were confident they could speak to them if they had any concerns about another staff member. Staff said that positive leadership in the service reassured them that they would be listened to and that action would be taken if they raised any concerns about poor practice.

The registered persons had provided the leadership necessary to enable people who lived in the service to benefit from staff acting upon good practice guidance. An example of this involved the registered manager and the office manager having attended a workshop that was designed to promote positive outcomes for people who live with dementia. We saw that this had resulted in staff receiving additional guidance about how best to care for the people concerned. This was reflected in the way that staff promoted the dignity and individuality of people who lived with dementia.