

Barchester Healthcare Homes Limited

Laurel Bank

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Laurel Bank is a care home providing nursing and personal care for up to 67 people. At the time of our inspection there were 61 people using the service.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

The registered manager and staff worked closely and transparently with partner agencies to ensure people were protected from harm or abuse. They reviewed their processes to check they continuously maintained people's safety, including risks linked to, for instance, choking and malnutrition. The registered manager ensured staffing levels were sufficient to support people in a timely way. One person stated, "I feel safe here because there is always a staff member close by."

Staff files contained sufficient evidence to demonstrate appropriate staff were recruited, inducted and trained to support vulnerable people safely. Staff followed the person's medication care plan, risk assessment and preferences, such as when they chose to self-administer. One person said, "I was glad they agreed [for me to self-administer]. I know they're taking a risk, but they trust me and it means I can keep my independence."

The registered manager had created clear lines of communication for staff to understand their responsibilities in retaining people's safety and wellbeing. They sought feedback from staff, external professionals, people and their relatives about care delivery and service development. A visiting professional told us, "I'm here all the time and, without exception, I see how caring the staff are. I can confidently say they love the residents in the way they interact with them."

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk

Rating at last inspection

The last rating for the service under the previous provider was good, published on 07 March 2020.

Why we inspected

The inspection was prompted in part due to concerns received about nutritional risk management and staff training. A decision was made for us to inspect and examine those risks.

The provider has taken effective action to mitigate the risks. We found no evidence during this inspection that people were at risk of harm from this concern. Please see the safe and well-led sections of this full report.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our re-inspection programme. If we receive any concerning information we may inspect sooner.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

<p>Is the service safe?</p> <p>The service was safe.</p> <p>Details are in our safe findings below.</p>	<p>Good ●</p>
<p>Is the service well-led?</p> <p>The service was well-led.</p> <p>Details are in our well-led findings below.</p>	<p>Good ●</p>

Laurel Bank

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

Inspection team

This inspection was carried out by 1 inspector.

Service and service type

Laurel Bank is a 'care home'. People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing or personal care as a single package under one contractual agreement. CQC regulates both the premises and the care provided, and both were looked at during this inspection.

This provider is required to have a registered manager to oversee the delivery of regulated activities at this location. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Registered managers and providers are legally responsible for how the service is run, for the quality and safety of the care provided and compliance with regulations. At the time of our inspection there was a registered manager in post.

Notice of inspection

This inspection was unannounced.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we held about the service. We sought feedback from the local authority commissioning team. The provider was not asked to complete a Provider Information Return (PIR) prior to this inspection. A PIR is information providers send us to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke about Laurel Bank with 6 people, a relative, a visiting professional, 7 staff and 2 members of the management team. We walked around the building to carry out a visual check. We did this to ensure Laurel Bank was clean, hygienic and a safe place for people to live. We looked at records related to the management of the service. We checked care and medication records, staffing and recruitment files and quality and leadership oversight systems.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm.

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. The rating for this key question has remained good. This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management; Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The registered manager reviewed their processes to check they continuously maintained people's welfare and safety. This included risks linked to nutritional intake, such as choking and malnutrition. Staff had choking and dysphagia training during their induction and on an ongoing basis to strengthen their skills. They worked transparently with partner agencies to implement new documentation and review of person-centred risk assessment to ensure people remained safe.
- People told us they felt safe living at Laurel Bank. One person said, "Some of the residents can be a bit unsteady, but there's always staff in the dining room and lounges, so I never have to worry about that. It's all about safety here." Another person added, "I do feel safe here, especially when I'm walking around the home because I know the staff are keeping an eye on me."
- The provider had a variety of other continuous learning processes to manage, monitor and action identified concerns to retain people's wellbeing. For example, medication auditing included a section to check recording and reporting of errors, action taken and staff reflective practice in clinical meetings.

Using medicines safely

- The registered manager had effective procedures to ensure the safe administration of people's medicines. For instance, medicated fluid and food thickening agents were prescribed individually and securely stored. Staff confirmed they had regular training and "we are regularly observed and assessed to check we are competent." This was underpinned with daily, weekly and monthly auditing to review processes continued to maintain people's safety.
- People verified they received their medicines on time and as prescribed. One person stated, "To be honest I was glad they agreed to do it for me because it would be safer. They haven't let me down since." Staff followed the person's medication care plan, risk assessment and preferences, such as when they chose to self-administer. One person explained in staff agreeing this and checking they were safe, they were able to maintain their independence.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- The registered manager and staff worked closely and transparently with partner agencies, including the safeguarding authority, to ensure people were protected from harm or abuse. Staff had a clear understanding of their responsibility, which was strengthened by a range of related training and refresher courses. One employee explained, "I wouldn't hesitate, the residents are like my family and I couldn't live with myself if anything happened to them and I didn't report it."

Staffing and recruitment

- The registered manager ensured staffing levels were sufficient to support people in a timely way. There

was consistent use of staff familiar with people's needs and good deployment of senior staff to monitor and manage care delivery. People told us there were enough staff to assist them. One person said, "Yes, there's always a staff member around, so when I press the call bell I never have to wait long." A staff member added, "The best thing about working here is having the time to sit and talk with the residents."

- Staff files contained sufficient evidence to demonstrate appropriate staff were recruited to support vulnerable people safely. The registered manager acquired a full employment history, as well as criminal record and reference checks during the recruitment of new staff. This was followed by a robust induction and training programme to underpin their knowledge and skill set.

Preventing and controlling infection

- The registered manager had stringent measures to protect people from the spread of infection. Posters displayed throughout Laurel Bank provided information about effective hand hygiene and there was a good supply of the full range of PPE. Staff were well trained and understood their responsibility for maintaining good standards in infection control. A staff member explained, "The last 3 years have taught us how even more important our job is to protect residents from infection."

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-Led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture.

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. The rating for this key question has remained good. This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong; Continuous learning and improving care

- The registered manager had created clear lines of communication for staff to understand their responsibilities in retaining people's safety and wellbeing. They had effective oversight of care delivery through a range of regular audits and transparent engagement with the local authority. For example, they implemented a new process to better monitor nutritional risks that could place people at harm.
- Staff confirmed they received training on induction and at regular intervals to underpin their skills in retaining people's welfare. People said they were supported by staff who were experienced and skilled in their roles. One person commented, "There's no doubt in my mind that the staff are well trained. It gives me confidence in them and makes me feel safe."

Working in partnership with others

- The registered manager and staff team adopted a multi-disciplinary approach in care delivery by working closely with partner agencies. They understood how critical this was to effective care planning and treatment outcomes. A visiting professional told us, "It's an exemplary home and I would highly recommend them just by how responsive they are. The clinical practitioners will prepare me well in advance and I am very satisfied staff are keen to see residents stay well."

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people; Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics

- The registered manager consulted with staff, external professionals, people and their relatives about the ongoing development of Laurel Bank. They achieved this through regular meetings and satisfaction surveys. There was an ethos of empowering everyone to improve the service and care delivery. One staff member asserted, "[The management team] actively seek our advice and ideas. It really makes me feel a part of the team and my input matters."
- The registered manager was keen to celebrate people's difference, whilst protecting their human rights and ensuring they were treated with respect. For example, staff were designated champions for people with a protected characteristic. People confirmed the staff team had a very caring approach. One person said, "This place has really exceeded my expectations. The staff are exceptionally caring."