

Gloucestershire County Council

The Vicarage

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 

Overall summary

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 and to pilot a new inspection process being introduced by CQC which looks at the overall quality of the service.

A registered manager was in place as required by their conditions of registration. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality

Commission to manage the service and has the legal responsibility for meeting the requirements of the law; as does the provider. The registered manager was present during our inspection.

The Vicarage is a care home which provides short term respite breaks for up to five adults with learning and/or a physical disability. People and their family's needs were assessed by the local authority. Families were allocated 'an amount of respite days' to be used within a year to have regular breaks from their role as a carer. The respite breaks were booked direct with the home.

Summary of findings

This was an unannounced inspection. This service was last inspected on 21st June 2013 when it met all the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social care Act 2008.

People told us their care and support needs were met during their time at the home but we found that people's care records did not always reflect people's levels of independence and skills.

During our inspection two people were in the middle of their stay at the home and two new people arrived to begin their break. Staff welcomed and greeted the people arriving warmly and in a friendly manner. It was clear that the staff knew the people well. People looked happy and pleased to be staying at The Vicarage; people told us it was like being on holiday. All the relatives who we spoke with were overwhelmingly positive about The Vicarage. One relative said, "We have so much praise for this place".

Staff and the registered manager understood their role and responsibilities to protect vulnerable people. People's care needs and risks had been assessed. Staff were given guidance on how to best support people to when they were upset or at risk if harm.

The home was clean and safe. Plans were in place to improve the lay out of the building and access for people to an adapted bathroom on the ground floor.

New staff had received appropriate training before they supported people. Staff were knowledgeable about the people who stayed at the home but we found that their skill levels were not being effectively monitored to ensure their knowledge was up to date with current care practices. Recruitment employment and criminal checks had been carried out to ensure that suitable staff were employed. Staffing levels were at a suitable level that supported the needs of the people who used the service. On occasions the staffing levels had been increased when the dependency levels of people were higher than usual.

The management of the home was good and there was a positive relationship between staff and the registered manager. We found that the registered manager understood their responsibility in meeting the requirements of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and assessing people's capacity under the Mental capacity Act 2005.

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

The service was safe. Staff were knowledgeable about their role and responsibilities to protect people from harm and abuse. There were clear policies and procedures in place to give staff guidance on how to report any allegations of abuse. People were involved in the decisions about their care. Staff understood the importance in providing choice to people and acting in people's best interests if they did not have the capacity to make specific decisions for themselves.

The home was well maintained and clean and met the needs of people who used the service.

Staff had been effectively recruited and trained to carry out their role. Staffing levels were suitable and flexible to meet the needs of the people who stayed in the home.

Good



Is the service effective?

The service was effective. People needs were assessed and recorded before they started to use the service.

Staff were supported and trained to carry out their role however the system to monitor if staff skills were in date was not clear. People's dietary needs and preferences were met.

Staff contacted the person and their families before they were due to stay at The Vicarage for an update of their well-being.

The home had been adapted to meet the needs of people with complex disabilities. Plans to alter the access to a ground floor adapted bathroom had been approved which will provide people with a larger range of personal care facilities within the home.

Good



Is the service caring?

The service was caring. People who stayed at The Vicarage had a large range of complex and diverse needs. People were genuinely pleased to be arriving at The Vicarage. Staff greeted people with kindness and affection. Relatives were very positive about the service and were happy to leave their loved ones in the care of the staff at the home while they had a break. Staff understood the different needs of people and adapted their approach accordingly.

Activities and arrangements were in place so people felt as though they were on holiday when staying at The Vicarage. People were encouraged to express their choices and preferences about their daily activities. People's privacy, dignity and decisions were respected and valued by staff.

Good



Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive. People were involved in making the decision to have regular breaks at The Vicarage. People initially visited the home with their relatives before they decided to use the service. People were contacted before each stay so staff were fully aware of their personal well-being and needs.

People's care needs were met in a responsive way. Staff were able to respond to the diverse needs of people who used the service for short stay breaks. People were able to make decisions about their stay either individually or as part of a group.

Good



Summary of findings

Care plans recorded people's likes, dislikes and preferences. Staff were knowledgeable about people and had access to information that enabled them to provide care in line with people's wishes. People and their relative said, they would raise concerns and were confident that these would be acted upon.

Is the service well-led?

The service was well led. The atmosphere was positive in The Vicarage. People and their relatives spoke highly of the staff and the registered manager. We were told that all the staff were approachable and responded to any concerns raised.

The registered manager set and monitored standards of care and had a clear vision and achievement's to improve the care and support provided at The Vicarage. Complaints were dealt with by the registered manager or senior team in an effective and timely way. The registered manager worked in partnership with the local authority and relatives to ensure people gained the most from their short break at The Vicarage.

Monitoring systems were in place to ensure that the service was operating effectively and safely. Internal and external audits were carried out. The registered manager was knowledgeable in supporting people to ensure they were protected and safeguarded from harm.

Good



The Vicarage

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

We carried out an unannounced scheduled inspection on 21 July 2014. This meant that the staff and provider did not know we would be attending. The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

We reviewed the Provider Information Record (PIR) before the inspection. The PIR was information given to us by the provider. This enabled us to ensure we were addressing potential areas of concern. We also examined other information that we held about the provider and previous inspection reports.

We looked around the home and talked with four people and one relative and five members of staff. We saw how staff interacted with people. After the inspection we spoke with three other relatives by telephone and with a health and social care professional. We looked at the care records of four people and we also looked at records which related to staffing and the running and management of the home. These included staff files, training records and quality and auditing records.

We looked at staff files including their recruitment procedures and the training and development of staff. We spoke with five staff members and also inspected the latest records of complaints and concerns, safeguarding incidents and accident and incident reports.

This report was written during the testing phase of our new approach to regulating adult social care services. After this testing phase, inspection of consent to care and treatment, restraint, and practice under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) was moved from the key question 'Is the service safe?' to 'Is the service effective? The ratings for this location were awarded in October 2014. They can be directly compared with any other service we have rated since then, including in relation to consent, restraint, and the MCA under the 'Effective' section. Our written findings in relation to these topics, however, can be read in the 'Is the service safe' sections of this report.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People told us they felt safe and happy at The Vicarage. We observed people arriving for their stay at the home. Everyone was content and happy to have a short break at the home. People and their relatives interacted in a warm manner with staff. One person who just arrived at the home said, “Yeah it’s all right here, I like it”. One relative told us “She would refuse to stay if she didn’t like it here. You can’t make her do anything she doesn’t want to”.

Before coming to stay at The Vicarage, people’s needs had been identified and assessed by a senior member of staff. Care plans provided staff with guidance about how to reduce the risk of injury to themselves and to people. For example, one person’s moving and handling plan required them to be hoisted by two care staff. The risk assessment provided staff with instructions on how to undertake this task safely to ensure people were protected.

Relatives told us that they felt staff were kind and supportive. One relative said, “I have never had any concerns leaving my relative here while we have a break”. The registered manager and staff were aware of their role and responsibilities to keep people safe and report any allegations of abuse. Staff were knowledgeable about recognising the signs of abuse. Staff had received training in safeguarding vulnerable people which helped them to understand the importance of protecting people. A safeguarding policy was available to give staff clear guidance on how to report any allegations of abuse. The registered manager confirmed that there had been no safeguarding investigations relating to the service in the past year. People were given an easy read version of this policy which was shared with them when they first stayed at the home. This helped people to understand the importance of safeguarding.

Due to the frequency of people arriving and leaving the home, an effective system was in place to ensure that people’s personal belongings and finances were safely managed. For example as people only stayed at the home for a short time it was important that people’s belonging and medicines were kept safe during their stay. With agreement with people and their relatives, people’s money, valuable and medicines were checked in/out and staff helped people carry out an inventory of all their clothes and other belonging which they brought to the home. People’s privacy and valuables were respected and

protected. Each person had the option to store small valuables in a safety box in their rooms. The registered manager told us that they had ordered small lockers for people’s rooms so they could safely store bigger items. People could lock their bedroom doors if they wished.

We spoke with staff about the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) is the legislation which provides a legal framework for acting and making decisions on behalf of adults who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) is part of the Act. They aim to make sure that people in care homes, are looked after in a way that does not inappropriately restrict or deprive them of their freedom. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of capacity and consent, and acting in people’s best interests. Best interest decisions had been recorded in people’s care plans and staff were able to tell us how they helped people make choices about their day. The home held the provider’s policy which gave clear guidance to the staff on how to assess and act on behalf of people who lack capacity. The registered manager told us that no application to register a person under the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards had been made and no one in the home was deprived of their liberty. The registered manager and staff understood how to keep people safe using the least restrictive method.

People were supported by suitable numbers of trained and skilled staff. Staffing levels were arranged once the registered manager knew which people had booked their respite stay. The number of staff on duty reflected the care and support needs of the service users staying at any one time. We asked two relatives if they felt there were enough staff to meet people’s needs. One relative said, “Most definitely, there is always enough staff on”. One staff member said, “If the staffing level is not right I would call a manager and ask for an extra staff member”. In the event of staff absences the registered manager would contact staff or staff from another home owned by the provider to assist with staffing levels. An on call system was in place to deal with any concerns over night or at the weekend.

Safe recruitment systems were in place and people had been involved in the interviewing process of new staff to ensure that suitable staff were employed to look after

Is the service safe?

people who used the service. The registered manager worked with the head office to ensure that people's previous employment history was verified and that employment and criminal checks were carried out.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

To help people decide if they wanted to use this service they were invited to the home for a 'tea visit' and they could do this more than once if required and have a sleep over. People were involved in their care planning before they arrived at the service. They were asked about their preferences and likes and dislikes to ensure they enjoyed their stay at The Vicarage. This ensured that there was continuity of their care and support when staying at the home.

Time and support were given to people and their families who had transferred from using the children services. This helped people to adjust to their new surroundings and get to know staff who would support them while they were having a short break.

People's likes and dislikes in food and drinks, their special diets and allergies were recorded. People were consulted about the food and drinks that they would like during their stay at the home. Food was cooked to meet everyone's tastes and choices. One relative told us the staff always ensured their family member had a soft textured diet when they stayed at the home. People were encouraged to eat a healthy balanced diet but most people saw their stay at The Vicarage as a holiday and therefore often chose to have a more relaxed "holiday" diet. People had the choice of where they wanted to eat and the times of their meals.

The building had been adapted to meet the needs of the people who used the service. A wheelchair accessible lift was in place to access the upstairs bedrooms and bathrooms. Two bedrooms and adjoining bathrooms had a ceiling track hoist. People could choose to use the adaptive bath or a low level shower depending on their preference. The registered manager told us about the plans to redesign the access into the bathroom. These alterations had been approved and were designed to meet the more complex needs of people using the service.

People who used the service had different health and social care needs. People told us their care and support needs were met at the home and this was recorded in their care plans. Staff said people's care plans and risk assessments gave them clear instructions on how to meet people's health needs. For example care plans provided staff with information about people's dietary needs and the support they required with moving and handling. If people became unwell during their stay at The Vicarage, they were supported to make an appointment at the local doctors. Some people at times could have behaviours that might put themselves or other people or staff at risk. Staff worked with people and their families to find out what might trigger these behaviours. A plan was developed for each person to help prevent this happening. This provided staff with guidance about how to support and protect the person in the least restrictive way.

Staff were knowledgeable in their role and had received training to meet people's diverse needs. Staff told us that although they had received excellent training, they were unsure if they needed any refresher courses to ensure their skills were up to date. The person in charge of training told us they were aware of the staff's training needs. We saw evidence that some further training was planned and booked.

Staff were regularly supervised in line with the homes procedures. Records of individual staff meetings showed that staff were encouraged to develop professionally and discuss concerns. Staff told us they felt supported and they would always approach the registered manager and other staff if they had concerns. One staff member told us "This is the nicest place I have ever worked. The staff team is very very supportive, so is the management".

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People spoke about the kindness of the staff who cared for them. We observed staff being kind and speaking to people in a warm and friendly way. Staff knew people well and welcomed them back to the home for their respite stay. People were pleased to see staff and reacquaint their friendship. People who arrived at the home during our inspection looked relaxed and soon settled in at The Vicarage. Staff offered people refreshments and asked them how they had been since they last visited the home. We asked relatives about the care which their family member received. All the comments we received were positive and included: "I can't fault them"; "Staff are extremely friendly, we couldn't ask for a better place"; "They are brilliant".

During our inspection we observed that staff joined people at the dining room table to eat their lunch. People were relaxed and sat and chatted with members of staff. We observed that staff knew individual people well. One person had chosen to have their meal in their room during our inspection. This was because they preferred to eat alone in their quiet room. Staff knew people's preferences in foods so were able to plan and prepare some meals in advance of people's stay. People were encouraged to make choices about meals and activities throughout their time at The Vicarage. Staff were aware of people who were arriving and were planning activities they might like. Staff tried to plan each person's stay so that they met with other people and 'had a holiday' with old friends. One relative said, "It's brilliant at The Vicarage, they do everything they can for him and make his stay good. We have so much praise for them".

People were helped to make choices about what to do during their stay as staff gave them information about meals and activities. We saw staff giving two people possible choices about activities for the afternoon. There was a strong sense that staff wanted to ensure that people had a good time while staying at The Vicarage. One staff member said, "We want to make sure that everyone has an

enjoyable experience here". One person said, "It's my holiday here, I like it, I go shopping ". Another member of staff said, "The atmosphere between staff and service users is really positive. Nobody is afraid of trying new ideas". For example we were told that people wanted to go to the fair and they had been assisted to try out new rides. One person liked to have time consider the options before making a decision. This was indicated in their care plan. Staff were very flexible to people's needs and fully committed to ensure that people's stay was enjoyable.

We received other positive comments from both people and their relatives. Examples of these comments were: "I enjoy it here with the staff, it's my holiday"; "When we drop her off, she goes in smiling and laughing and comes home smiling and laughing". Relationships between people who stayed at The Vicarage were positive; people were friends and enjoyed being with each other. We saw that the staff role in supporting and developing people's friendship was effective and caring.

We spent time with people in the lounge and the dining room and observed how staff and people interacted. We saw that staff treated people with dignity and respect. We asked staff to give us examples of how they respected people's dignity. One staff member said, "I would never stay in a toilet with someone unless they wanted me to. I would support them on to the toilet, make sure they are OK and then leave them in private". Another staff member said "We get to know everybody individually and make sure they are supported in the way they want, everyone is different".

We saw that the registered manager and staff valued people and wanted to make a difference by improving standards of dignity at The Vicarage. People were asked about their views throughout their stay, this included asking them about their meals or activities which they had been part of. People were listened to and their views were respected. One member of staff chatted to a person even though they were unable to communicate back verbally. This person laughed and moved positively responding to the staff chatting to him.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People and their relatives were involved in the assessment and planning of their stay at The Vicarage. Relatives told us that people's needs were met. One relative said, "It is like home from home". People's care records were up to date and in line with the care and support which people required. Whilst people's care records gave a lot of personal information about the person they did not always reflect people's abilities and levels of independence. Staff, however were able to tell us about how they supported people to retain their skills of independence. For example one staff member was able to describe a person's abilities and the activities that they could achieve independently. Therefore improvement is required in the assessment and recording of people's skills and independence levels. This would give staff the correct guidance to ensure that people retained their levels of independence during their short stay at The Vicarage.

The care records provided staff with information about people's backgrounds and their likes and dislikes. It also gave guidance on what triggers may cause someone to become upset and how this person could be helped to become more relaxed. Staff told us that it was important to get to know people quickly as they only spent a short time at the home. There were records of telephone calls to people and their relatives before they visited the home. One relative said, "We are always contacted before he is due to stay at The Vicarage. This gives us an opportunity to tell them about how she has been since her last stay". Another relative said, "There is very good dialogue between us and The Vicarage". The aim of the phone calls was to understand if a person's physical, mental or social needs had changed since their last stay.

People told us they enjoyed staying at The Vicarage. We were told of activities that had recently occurred. One person told us they had been to the local fun fair. Another person said, "I like shopping when I come here". When people arrived at the home, each person was asked about the activities they would like to do during their stay. Activities were not set by the home. The decision about activities was made on a day to day basis with each person.

Staff told us the types of activities people did were determined by people themselves due to their wide range of needs and interests. Staff told us that some people were involved in the day to day running of the home when they stayed at The Vicarage and helped with cooking and shopping. Other people just enjoyed being looked after and having a break from their routine at home.

Staff responded to people's needs and adapted their approach to support each person. For example one person declined the offer to go for a walk during our inspection but then at the last minute wanted to go. The staff member responded quickly and appropriately and adapted their route to meet the needs and requests of the person.

Relatives told us they had not had a reason to complain but would know how to do this if necessary. One relative said, "I have never had to complain but I would have no hesitation in speaking to the manager or staff here". Another relative said, "We have no concerns about The Vicarage, none what so ever". The registered manager told us they had received no formal complaints and that any day to day concerns were dealt with immediately. The registered manager was familiar with the provider's complaints policy. There was an easy read complaints leaflet displayed on the notice board for people to refer to.

The home held "service user meetings". Minutes of the meetings told us that people had been given the opportunity to express their views. For example people had discussed the meals and activities of the home. The registered manager was looking into providing information with pictures to help people understand leaflets, service user guide, minutes of meetings and their care records.

People who used the service had been sent an easy read survey about the service last year. We were told that the format and frequency of gaining peoples' views about the service was being reviewed. For example the registered manager was considering either a themed survey such as meal survey or a quick simple survey to be completed at the end of every stay at The Vicarage. The registered manager was also reviewing pictures to be used in the next easy read survey to help to gain people's views.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Relatives told us they felt the home was well-led. One relative said, “I have no problems, I am always listened to and I can always speak to all the staff and the manager”. Staff said, they were confident in the skills and vision of the registered manager and senior staff. We were told that the registered manager’s door was always open. Staff said, “Managers are available all the time to staff as well as service users”.

The registered manager and staff had a clear understanding of the philosophy and goals for the service. Their aim was to ensure all people enjoyed their stay at The Vicarage and relatives had regular breaks. Staff clearly understood their roles and responsibilities ensuring the service met the desired outcomes for people. This was demonstrated through positive comments from people and the results of recent surveys. Staff worked together to ensure that everyone’s physical and social needs and wishes were met. The Provider Information Return (PIR) states that staff have a clear understanding that people’s rights are respected irrespective of their degree of disability or dependence. These values were observed during our inspection. For example one member of staff spent several minutes with a person with limited communication ensuring they were involved in the decision of about people wanted to watch on the lounge television.

There was a clear management structure in place and people and staff were treated equally. We saw staff working as a team and communicating relevant information to each other. This ensured that staff were kept up to date with the needs of new people arriving at the home. The registered manager and senior staff were involved in the day to day running of the home and they knew the people who stayed in the home well. Relatives were complimentary about the running of the home and told us it was well organised. Staff told us they were supported by the registered manager and senior team and they enjoyed their work. One staff member said, “We can always call on the manager and senior staff

for help”. The registered manager told us she felt supported by the organisation and she had strong links with other homes within the organisation which ran a similar service in other areas of the county.

The registered manager had effective systems in place to audit the service that was being provided. Audits covered a range of health and safety related matters, including food hygiene checks and infection control. Monthly medicines audits were carried out and staff abilities and competency skills to manage medicines were also checked. The registered manager kept up to date with any national medical warnings regarding medicines and other medical equipment. Accidents and incidents were recorded appropriately. These records had been analysed and had identified no reoccurring trends or patterns. Staff were knowledgeable in their role, however we found that the monitoring of staff training had not been fully completed to reflect staff’s current training gaps, accomplishments and planned courses. The registered manager told us they were working on a better system to capture the training needs of staff.

Staff had access to the provider’s policies. In addition the registered manager had produced a set of homes procedures which included the provider’s policy but also reflected the homes working practices and environment. This gave staff a clear guidance of the policies and procedures of the home. The registered manager had a clear understanding of her legal responsibility to report any notifications and concerns to the relevant authorities. A notification tells us about important events that affect people’s welfare, health and safety.

The premises and gardens were well maintained to ensure that people were staying in a safe environment. Records showed us that equipment provided by the home was regularly serviced, maintained and cleaned. The registered manager told us about her involvement in the designing of the new alterations to allow better access to the ground floor bathroom.