

# Independent Care Initiatives

# Strathallen

## Inspection report

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Date of inspection visit:  
19 July 2023  
24 July 2023

Date of publication:  
31 October 2023

## 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

We expect health and social care providers to guarantee people with a learning disability and autistic people respect, equality, dignity, choices and independence and good access to local communities that most people take for granted. 'Right support, right care, right culture' is the guidance CQC follows to make assessments and judgements about services supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people and providers must have regard to it.

Strathallen is a residential care home providing personal care support to up to 9 people living with a learning disability and/or autistic people. At the time of our inspection, 7 people were living at the service. The service accommodates people in one building across 3 floors. It is located in a residential area within close proximity to local amenities.

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

**Right Support:** The environment was clean, large, spacious and personalised. Ongoing maintenance kept the service to a good standard. The environment reflected the people who lived there with photographs, artwork, and personalised decorative accessories on display in bedrooms and communal areas. People had choice in all aspects of their lives and were supported to do all they wanted to do. Staff had a flexible approach and accommodated people's wishes. People had an active life which incorporated activities on offer in their local community. Where people had shared interests, they went out or on holiday together. People received their medicines as required and staff worked in-line with recommendations from health professionals. People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

**Right Care:** Staff promoted equality and diversity in their support for people. They understood people's cultural needs and provided culturally appropriate care. There were always enough staff on duty to provide safe care to people. The registered manager had a flexible approach to staffing levels to ensure activities, hobbies, individual interests and outings were catered for. Staff acted quickly when needed to keep people safe, whilst promoting positive risk taking to allow people to build their daily living skills. People were supported by a stable staff team who knew them really well.

**Right Culture:** People led inclusive and empowered lives because of the ethos, values, attitudes and behaviours of the management and staff. Management led by example and staff empowered people to do all that they wanted to do. People received compassionate and empowering care that was tailored to their individual needs. Staff spoke highly of people and went 'above and beyond' for them to live the best lives possible. The service was committed to a culture of improvement and regularly sought feedback from people, relatives, and professionals. The provider participated in pilots and focus groups to help drive forward improvements in provisions in the local area for people with a learning disability. The service

enabled people and those important to them to work with staff to develop the service. Staff valued and acted upon people's views.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

#### Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was good (published 24 December 2018)

#### Why we inspected

This inspection was prompted by a review of the information we held about this service and the time since the last inspection.

We looked at infection prevention and control measures under the Safe key question. We look at this in all care home inspections even if no concerns or risks have been identified. This is to provide assurance that the service can respond to COVID-19 and other infection outbreaks effectively.

We undertook this focused inspection to review the key questions of Safe and Well-led only. For those key questions not inspected, we used the ratings awarded at the last inspection to calculate the overall rating.

You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Strathallen on our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk).

#### Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service, which will help inform when we next inspect.

## 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.

Details are in our safe findings below.

### Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

# Strathallen

## 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 Health and Social Care Act 2008.

As part of this inspection we looked at the infection control and prevention measures in place. This was conducted so we can understand the preparedness of the service in preventing or managing an infection outbreak, and to identify good practice we can share with other services.

#### Inspection team

The inspection was conducted by 1 inspector.

#### Service and service type

Strathallen is a 'care home'. People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing and/or personal care as a single package under one contractual agreement dependent on their registration with us.

Strathallen is a care home without nursing care. CQC regulates both the premises and the care provided, and both were looked at during this inspection.

#### Registered Manager

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 had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR). This is information providers are required to send us annually with key information about their service, what they do well, and improvements they plan to make. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

### During the inspection

We spoke with 6 people who used the service. We spent some time observing and listening to staff interactions with people. We spoke with the registered manager, deputy manager and a senior carer.

We conducted a visual inspection of the building and looked at a wide variety of records. These included people's care and medicine records, monitoring documentation, staff files and audits used to monitor the service.

Following the inspection site visit we also contacted 2 relatives, 3 members of staff and 2 professionals to request feedback on the service provided.

# 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 were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Systems and processes were in place to safeguard people from the risk of abuse. Thorough records and audits were in place.
- Staff had received relevant training and were knowledgeable about when and how to raise any safeguarding concerns.
- People told us they felt safe living at Stathallen, and professionals praised the staff team for their approach to keeping people safe. Comments included, "Strathallen upholds the most vigorous standards and I find staff to be highly professional, thorough and knowledgeable."

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Risks to people were thoroughly assessed and mitigation was put in place where possible.
- Positive risk taking was encouraged to enable people to build and enhanced their daily living skills. Thorough plans were put in place to manage this safely.
- All appropriate checks were completed to ensure equipment and the environment remained safe.

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 MCA 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.

People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the Mental Capacity Act (MCA). In care homes, and some hospitals, this is usually through MCA application procedures called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

- We found the service was working within the principles of the MCA and if needed, appropriate legal authorisations were in place to deprive a person of their liberty. Any conditions related to DoLS authorisations were being met.

Staffing and recruitment

- Thorough recruitment checks were completed to ensure safe recruitment processes were followed. Strathallen had a stable staff team who were committed to the people living at the service.
- Staff explained how they ensured people living at the service were involved in the recruitment of new staff. This included being part of the interview process and a meet and greet prior to any recruitment decisions being made.

- Staffing levels were continuously reviewed to ensure there was enough staff on duty to meet people's need. Additional staff were used to enable people to participate in social activities, such as attending clubs and going on holiday. One person proudly showed us photographs of their recent holiday and told us, "I loved it. [Staff members' name] came with me. We had a lot of fun."

#### Using medicines safely

- Medicines were stored, administered, and recorded safely. Thorough records and procedures were in place.
- Staff received extensive medicine training and a robust procedure was in place to ensure staff were competent in managing medicines.
- Staff explained how they worked closely with people, their relatives, and professionals to reduce the use of psychotropic medicines. At the time of this inspection, none of the people using the service required the use of psychotropic medicines.

#### Preventing and controlling infection

- We were assured that the provider was preventing visitors from catching and spreading infections.
- We were assured that the provider was supporting people living at the service to minimise the spread of infection.
- 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 responding effectively to risks and signs of infection.
- 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.
- We were assured there was no restrictions in place in relation to people visiting Strathallen. Records showed relatives, friends and professionals were free to visit the service at any time.

#### Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Systems and processes were in place to learn lessons when things went wrong.
- Accidents and incidents were reviewed, and action was taken when needed to further mitigate risks. Monthly audits were completed to help identify any patterns or trends.

# 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 the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people

- The provider and registered manager were committed to ensuring a positive culture within the service. Staff and people who used the service were encouraged to contribute their ideas to all aspects of the service. This helped achieve positive outcomes for people.
- Management was visible in the service. They worked directly with people living at the service and led by example. The registered manager described how they moved into the service during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure people were protected whilst being supported by people they were familiar with.
- Staff described an open and inclusive environment where they felt respected. One member of staff told us, "I have worked here for many years. I love how committed the provider is and that people are truly at the centre of everything."

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

- Staff gave honest information and suitable support, and applied duty of candour where appropriate.
- The provider had been open and honest when things went wrong.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements

- The registered manager had the skills, knowledge and experience to perform their role and had a clear understanding of people's needs, as well as effective oversight of the services.
- Governance processes were thorough and effective. They were used to monitor, assess and drive forward improvements to ensure the service consistently provided good quality care.
- Staff knew and understood the provider's vision and values and how to apply them in the work of their team. Staff were committed to reviewing people's care and support on an ongoing basis as people's needs and wishes changed.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics

- Staff encouraged people and their relatives to be involved in the development of the service. People, relatives and professionals were often asked to complete surveys and questionnaires to share their views. Action was taken to address any issues raised.
- Personalised quarterly newsletters were also provided to relatives to keep them updated with activities,

hobbies and progress people had made with their daily living skills.

- Although formal processes were in place to allow relatives to provide feedback, the staff team operated an open-door policy. This encouraged regular informal discussions between staff, people, and relatives.

Working in partnership with others; Continuous learning and improving care

- The provider worked closely with other professionals with the vision of improving provisions for all people with a learning disability within the local area. They had participated in a number of pilots and local forum which had led to improvements for this service user group.
- A professional told us, "I do not say this lightly, but the Strathallen team stand head and shoulders above any of the other care homes that we have dealings with. They are always pleasant to deal with, professional in their approach and genuinely passionate about the care and welfare of their residents."