

# Mountlands Trust Limited

## Lime Tree House

### Inspection report

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Date of inspection visit:  
16 August 2023  
23 August 2023

Date of publication:  
29 December 2023

### Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Outstanding 

Is the service safe?

Good 

Is the service effective?

Good 

Is the service caring?

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

Good 

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

### About the service

Lime Tree House is a residential care home providing personal care to up to 6 people. Lime Tree House provides both short and long-term residential accommodation for people (who prefer to be referred to as patients) who follow the Christian Science faith. People are supported by Christian Science Nurses (CSNs), who are non-medical nurses trained in spiritual healing through Christian Science practices. At the time of the inspection the service supported 4 people.

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

People's faith and individual wishes were at the heart of the service. The ethos of the home was founded on the values of Christian Science, and this was evident throughout the inspection. One patient said, "The staff live their Christian Science values, and these align with my own beliefs." Without exception, people and relatives were full of praise about Lime Tree House; the staff team, registered manager, and atmosphere at the home.

The home was exceptionally well led by a registered manager who was valued and respected by all the staff, people living at the home, relatives, and the wider Christian Science community. The home had become the only training provider for CSNs in the UK and had regular links with other Christian Science homes throughout the world.

There was an open and transparent culture at the home, with the involvement of people and staff in agreeing the care and support people wanted. A robust quality assurance system was in place to drive standards. People were supported to ensure their care and faith needs were met when they moved on from the home, either returning to their own home or to another care home.

Morale at the home was extremely high, with staff being proud and motivated to work at Lime Tree House. Staff demonstrated extremely compassionate, kind, and caring approaches, consistently encouraging people's independence. People were treated with the utmost dignity and respect.

Lime Tree House provided a safe service for the people. Effective systems were in place to minimise risks, with the home being fully adapted to meet people's needs. There was a high number of staff on duty. Staff were safely recruited and received the training for their roles. All CSNs had completed additional training to become mentors for trainee CSNs being trained at Lime Tree House.

People's nutritional needs were met, with any dietary requirements being catered for on an individual basis. People's health needs were met within the ethos of the Christian Science faith.

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. People's wishes to be supported in line with their faith were fully discussed and recorded.

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 7 October 2017).

#### Why we inspected

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

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.

#### 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 effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

Details are in our effective findings below.

### Is the service caring?

Outstanding ☆

The service was exceptionally caring.

Details are in our caring findings below.

### Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

Details are in our responsive findings below.

### Is the service well-led?

Outstanding ☆

The service was exceptionally well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

# Lime Tree House

## 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 carried out by 1 inspector.

#### Service and service type

Lime Tree House 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. Lime Tree House 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

We gave the service a short notice of the inspection. This was because it is a small service and we needed to be sure the provider or registered manager would be in the office to support the inspection.

### What we did before inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority. 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 2 people who used the service and 3 relatives (by telephone) about their experience of the care provided. We also telephoned 2 people who had recently had a respite stay at Lime Tree House. We spoke with 6 members of staff including the registered manager, deputy CSN manager, nominated individual and CSNs. We made observations of people's support throughout the inspection.

The nominated individual is responsible for supervising the management of the service on behalf of the provider.

We reviewed a range of records. This included 2 people's care records, and 2 staff files in relation to recruitment and staff supervision. A variety of records relating to the management of the service were reviewed.

# 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.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management; Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Risks were effectively managed, and people told us they felt safe living at Lime Tree House. Risk assessments, and guidance for staff to manage the known risks, were in place and regularly reviewed. A patient said, "I feel very safe, there's someone on duty 24/7."
- The management, board members and CSNs completed training in safeguarding and protecting vulnerable adults from abuse. Staff felt comfortable to raise any concerns they had and said any concerns would be investigated by the management team.
- Regular health and safety checks were completed. Equipment was regularly checked and serviced in line with legal guidelines.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- All staff knew how to record and report any incident that did occur. There were very few accidents or incidents at Lime Tree House.
- The CSNs said they would discuss any incidents as a team to try to prevent them happening again. One said, "We all discuss what happened and come up with the best way forward for the patient" and another told us, "We'd update the risk assessment to try to make sure it didn't happen again; what caused it and then make adjustments."

Staffing and recruitment

- There were enough staff on duty to meet people's care and support needs. There were always 2 CSNs on each shift. One patient said, "The staff come quickly if I use the buzzer."
- Staff were safely recruited, with all pre-employment checks completed before a new member of staff started work.

Preventing and controlling infection

- The home was clean throughout. Cleaning schedules were used to ensure all areas were regularly cleaned. PPE was available for staff to use.
- We were assured the provider was making sure infection outbreaks could be effectively prevented or managed. A contingency plan was in place in the case of an outbreak, for example of the COVID-19 virus.
- A recent local authority infection control audit showed a high level of compliance. Any issues identified had been actioned. The provider's infection prevention and control policy was up to date .

Visiting in care homes

- Visitors were welcomed to the home and were able to have meals with people if they wished to do so. Staff would also arrange transport if people wanted to go out with their relatives. One patient said, "Staff make all visitors welcome. They found a taxi that could take my wheelchair, so we went to (a local National Trust property)."

#### Using medicines safely

- Lime Tree House follows Christian Science practice and there were no medicines used at the service. All people living at Lime Tree House followed the Christian Science faith and had agreed their non-medical support. A relative said, "[Name] grew up within Christian Science and is getting exactly the care and support she wants."



# Is the service effective?

## Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people's care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence.

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.

Ensuring consent to care and treatment in line with law and guidance

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 MCA. In care homes, and some hospitals, this is usually through MCA application procedures called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA.

- At the time of our inspection everyone living at Lime Tree House had the capacity to agree to their care. The registered manager knew when a DoLS would be needed and the process to apply for one.
- People's wishes for being supported in accordance with their Christian Science faith were clearly discussed and documented when people moved to the home. Advanced decisions for the care and support people wanted if they were unable to consent to their support, for example at the end of their life, were in place.
- Where applicable, copies of any certified Power of Attorney (PoA) documents were obtained. A PoA has the legal authority to make decisions on people's behalf if they no longer have the capacity to make a decision themselves. We saw people's Lasting Power of Attorneys were involved in discussing and agreeing the care and support plans.

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law

- People's support needs were assessed prior to them staying at Lime Tree House. This was by telephone initially due to people who wanted to stay at the home being located throughout the country.
- If required, the registered manager would visit the person to discuss their support needs in person and ensure the service could meet these needs. The registered manager also said they may ask a CSN who was local to the person, to visit the person to discuss their support needs if they could not go themselves.
- Staff told us they read and discussed a new person's initial support plan before they stayed at Lime Tree House, so they knew the support they needed.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Staff received the training and support to enable them to carry out their role, completing a range of courses online and face to face.
- Staff completed an induction where they completed all required training courses and shadowed experienced members of staff to get to know people and their support and wellbeing needs. A member of staff said, "I had a designated mentor working with me to make sure I knew people's needs."
- Staff told us they felt well supported by their colleagues and the management team. Regular supervisions and staff meetings were held. Staff said they were able to raise any ideas or issues at these meetings and they would be listened to and discussed.

Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support; Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care

- People were supported to access health professionals in line with their faith. This included dentists, chiropodists, and podiatrists.
- All people staying at the home had their own personal Christian Science practitioner (separate from Lime Tree House), who supported them with spiritual healing in line with their beliefs. All the CSNs were also trained in spiritual healing.
- If people requested medical support, this would be arranged by the home. We saw an example from a few years ago whereby 1 person had gone to hospital following a fall to have an X ray.

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet

- People were supported to have a balanced diet and said the food was good. There was a choice of meals, and the chef would make meals to meet their dietary requirements, for example vegetarian options.
- Staff were trained to identify any choking risks and if people needed a modified diet or thickened drinks to reduce this risk.

Adapting service, design, decoration to meet people's needs

- Lime Tree House was designed to a high standard. Each bedroom had a track hoist in the event people needed support with their moving and handling. Bedrooms had ensuite walk in wet rooms.
- Special adapted beds that assisted people to re-position in bed to maintain skin integrity were available.

# Is the service caring?

## Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.

At our last inspection we rated this key question outstanding. The rating for this key question has remained outstanding. This meant people were truly respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- All people and relatives said they were exceptionally well supported and looked after at Lime Tree House. Patients said, "The staff are so loving and helpful. I've had so many laughs with them; it's been a real treat", "I feel so fortunate being here, so grateful. I don't know what I would have done if hadn't come here" and, "I was in quite a state one morning, so the nurse stopped and read to me to calm me before they did anything else. The night staff will sit with me and chat or read to me if I want." A relative told us, "The staff give a lot of care and kindness. They do their job perfectly and there's a lovely warm feeling whenever I visit."
- The strongly embedded ethos of the service was to promote healing and wellbeing through non-medical interventions and spiritual healing. People's beliefs were, without exception, understood by the whole staff team, as all staff followed the same faith. One patient said, "They (the staff) live Christian Science and it aligns with my own beliefs. They remind you how to think about certain situations in a loving way" and another said, "I realise how fortunate I am being here. Once you've got understanding, then the healing is there."
- People and relatives consistently relayed that they felt the support in all aspects of their lives had enabled them make to positive progress, move forward and feel better. A relative said, "There's been no incidents (at Lime Tree House). At the previous home she had falls and felt unwell but there's none of that here. They are definitely meeting her faith needs. The changes (in health and wellbeing) can only be put down to the love and care at that home."
- All staff, without exception, were extremely positive about working at Lime Tree House and were highly motivated to uphold the values of the home, which we observed they did. One member of staff said, "The ethos here is that everyone feels valued and cherished for what they bring: staff, patients, and visitors. Everyone should feel valued and cared for."
- The management team proactively worked in partnership alongside the CSNs and completed regular observations of practice to ensure all staff had a kind and respectful approach with the people they supported.
- The service respected people's diversity and human rights. Key information about people's lives, identity and what was important to them was openly discussed with them and captured in their support plans. Staff had completed equality and diversity training. One person who had recently stayed at the home said, "I spoke to [registered manager] before I went (to Lime Tree) so they knew why I was there and the support I needed to get me back home" and another told us, "They always respected my wishes for what I wanted out of my stay." People were repeatedly and successfully supported to make a difference to their own lives in line with their diverse needs, and their desired goals.

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care

- People were actively involved in agreeing their care and support. One patient said, "They (the staff) know my beliefs and so I'm supported in accordance with these" and a relative told us, "Lime Tree fully meets [Name's] spiritual and care needs."
- Staff were extremely clear when asking people what they wanted when offering care and support. They worked in partnership with people so that the care they received was bespoke to them as an individual. One member of staff said, "I always ask people what they want to do next in respect of their care. I explain what I'm doing at each step" and another told us, "It's important to communicate with the patient what I'm going to do. We don't do something to them, we do something together, it's teamwork."
- People agreed the CSNs involved them in their care. One recent patient said, "They (the staff) always listened if I asked for something to make sure they had got it right. They supported me with respect and love." A relative said, "[Name] is so relieved that her wishes are being met."
- Detailed and person-centred care plans supported care delivery. They included information about people's life histories; people who were important to them, work life, hobbies, likes and dislikes. This enabled staff to engage meaningfully with people. A relative said, "I feel well informed, and the care meets [Name's] needs."

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- Each person was supported to be as independent as possible, with staff providing support when needed. One patient said, "Staff are appreciative when they know you are trying to be as helpful as you can be. They thank you and acknowledge that you are helping" and another told us, "I'm encouraged to do things for myself. There's a lovely sense of empowerment, the staff gave me a sense that I could do it." A member of staff told us, "It's important patients don't feel staff are taking over, it's disempowering the patient. They need to do as much for themselves as they can do. We are always expecting healing."
- A relative explained how their relative's quality of life had been improved since living at Lime Tree House. They said, "Lime Tree House has made a huge difference in all aspects [Name's] life. It's helped her enormously; when she moved in she was pretty much bed bound, couldn't go to the toilet by herself, couldn't stand, couldn't pull herself up, and she was confused and disorientated. When she moved in she said she just felt loved. Over time, staff prompted and encouraged her, and she can now pull herself up on the Sara Stedy, can speak with people and also talk on the phone as well."
- When people completed their stay at the home the registered manager proactively supported them to return home or move to another long stay care home. Where required, they would support people to explain and discuss their wishes and beliefs with the new provider so these needs could continue to be met and the transition for the person was seamless. They would also liaise with the visiting Christian Science service to arrange for a trained CSN to visit and support people in their own homes, arrange transport home from Lime Tree House and support people to move their belongings if needed.
- We spoke with 2 people who had recently stayed at Lime Tree House before being cared for so successfully that they could move back home and regain true independence once more. One said, "They were very helpful, and I really felt back to what I should be afterwards. I had a fall at home and needed some time to recharge." And another told us, "Part of expectancy was for me to be independent. If you need support then that is there while you need it."
- One patient said, "My aim is to move back home so staff prompt me to do things for myself." A member of staff said, "Some people may come here when they are unwell and take time to get better and go home. We reduce the support we give as they get stronger."
- People were extremely complimentary about how the staff respected their privacy and dignity whilst providing support. One patient said, "They (the staff) very definitely respect me and maintain my privacy."

# Is the service responsive?

## Our findings

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people's needs.

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. The rating for this key question has remained good. This meant people's needs were met through good organisation and delivery.

Planning personalised care to ensure people have choice and control and to meet their needs and preferences

- Care plans identified people's individual support needs and were regularly reviewed and updated. A detailed description of people's routines for the day and preferences for their support was included.
- Care plans were very detailed about people's wishes and advanced decisions about their own care.
- CSNs said they read people's care plans prior to them moving into Lime Tree House. As they got to know the person more, they were able to add information to an additional care planning sheet. All staff signed to say they had read this new information at the start of every shift. This was then incorporated into the full care plan at the next review. One staff member said, "Care plans are constantly evolving. We have continuation sheets to record any change in patient's needs. We use these during the handovers to inform all staff about any changes."

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard. The Accessible Information Standard tells organisations what they have to do to help ensure people with a disability or sensory loss, and in some circumstances, their carers, get information in a way they can understand it. It also says that people should get the support they need in relation to communication.

- People's communication needs were identified and recorded.
- Electronic tablets were available for people to use to keep in touch with their loved ones, or access on line journals or programmes.

Supporting people to develop and maintain relationships to avoid social isolation; support to follow interests and to take part in activities that are socially and culturally relevant to them

- People's spiritual and social needs were being met. A range of Christian Science books and literature were available for people to read. People were also able to join online church services, Christian Science seminars and access online journals.
- Where people wished to do so, they were supported to go out, whether independently or with staff support. One recent patient said, "I was going out for walks most days to the local park. The staff were glad that this was evidence of my progress; they celebrate progress in whatever form."

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- The registered manager was pro-active in responding to any issues brought to their attention. This meant there had not been any formal complaints since our last inspection as any issues were resolved quickly.

- The service had a complaints policy in place.

#### End of life care and support

- People were cared for at the end of their lives in accordance with their wishes and in line with Christian Science teachings.

# 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. At this inspection the rating has changed to outstanding. This meant service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the service culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

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

- The management and staff were all fully committed to providing care and support in line with the people's Christian Science values and beliefs. One staff member said, "We have an expectation of healing. It's a wonderful atmosphere to walk into, it really uplifts you."
- The dedication of the staff team was appreciated by everyone we spoke with and was a key part of why they wanted to spend time at Lime Tree House. A recent patient said, "The quality of thought that comes into the room from the Christian Science nurses makes the home outstanding. Their expectancy of healing is so uplifting and empowering; it says to me that I can find freedom and I don't need to manage the challenge I'm having on my own."
- All people, and their relatives, were very complimentary about the individual care and support provided. One relative said, "When [Name] moved to Lime Tree House they said they just felt loved. There's been a huge difference in all aspects of [Name's] life. She's surrounded by people who are likeminded."
- People were supported to achieve their goal of returning home when this was applicable. A recent patient said, "They (the staff) always respected my wishes for what I wanted out of my stay."

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

- People said their views and wishes were listened to and they received the support they wanted following their Christian Science beliefs. People were involved in discussing and agreeing their care and support plans. A recent patient said, "I was involved in my care plan all the way through. As my care needs changed, the care plan was amended."
- Relatives said communication with the home was positive. One relative said, "They (the staff) will let me know if there are any changes" and another told us, "I call 2 or 3 times a week. All the staff know [Name] and what she likes. They are all so caring."
- Feedback forms for visitors and when people had had a respite stay were used to gather feedback. Recent forms were all extremely positive about the care and support provided at the home and the registered manager. Recent comments we saw included, "[Registered manager] is the best and brings highest quality of care to the home", "Excellent in all areas. The management and staff deliver excellence; it's a joy to visit" and, "You've constantly given me compassion and kindness. [Registered manager name] is the best and ensures the highest quality of care."
- Staff said communication within the team was excellent. They were kept fully informed of people's changing needs and any other information about the home. The registered manager was visible and

approachable. A staff member said, "[Registered manager name] is the kingpin and is a fantastic communicator; they're very approachable and will listen to what you say" and another told us, "If I feel we could do something different we will discuss it as a team. If there's merit in it the [registered manager] will try it."

- Staff were encouraged to be involved in discussing and shaping the strategic direction of the service. The board of trustees were arranging a meeting with staff to discuss the latest strategic plan and gather their thoughts and feedback.

Continuous learning and improving care; Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements

- The management and staff team were passionate about their work. The nominated individual said, "Working here is a vocation for staff." All staff were extremely positive about working for Lime Tree House, with many staff, including the registered manager, having worked at Lime Tree House for many years. One member of staff said, "It's the most supportive, wonderful, and outright loving workplace I've ever worked in."
- An effective, robust quality assurance system was in place. Regular audits took place which included a review of people's care plans, risk assessments, dignity, catering, incidents and accidents. Out of hours spot checks were undertaken to ensure staff were always following the agreed support plans.
- A monthly trustee's board meeting oversaw the performance of the registered manager and the running of the home. The registered manager made a verbal report to each meeting. A standing agenda item was to discuss any safeguarding referrals, accidents, or incidents that had occurred since the last meeting.
- External risk assessments and audits were completed, for example fire risk assessments and local authority infection control. Where actions had been identified, these had been completed in a timely manner.

Working in partnership with others

- The service had extensive contacts with the wider Christian Science community. This included regular managers meetings for care homes across the world. An accreditation review visit by an external Christian Science review team in March 2023 had been very complimentary about the care, love and support provided by Lime tree House. The home had been given the maximum 3-year accreditation by the review team.
- Lime Tree House had become the only UK training centre for CSNs, in partnership with the Christian Science accredited training facility based in Switzerland. Trainees from around the world spent part of their training on placement at Lime Tree House under the guidance of a mentor. All CSNs at the home had completed additional training to become mentors. Trainees, and their mentors, were supernumerary to the usual 2 CSNs on each shift. Therefore, when trainees were completing their work-based training there would be 4 members of staff on shift, who were then able to provide additional support for people.

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

- The registered manager was aware of their responsibilities and understood the importance of transparency when investigating circumstances where something had gone wrong.