

Achieve Together Limited

Hersham Gardens

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Good ●
Is the service safe?	Good ●
Is the service effective?	Good ●
Is the service caring?	Good ●
Is the service responsive?	Good ●
Is the service well-led?	Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Hersham Gardens is a supported living setting which provides support and personal care to up to seven people some of who have a learning disability or mental health support needs. Not everyone who used the service received personal care. CQC only inspects where people receive personal care. This is help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. Where they do, we also consider any wider social care provided. At the time of our inspection one person was receiving a regulated activity.

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

We expect health and social care providers to guarantee autistic people and people with a learning disability the choices, dignity, independence and good access to local communities that most people take for granted. Right support, right care, right culture is the statutory guidance which supports CQC to make assessments and judgements about services providing support to people with a learning disability and/or autistic people.

The service was able to demonstrate how they were meeting the underpinning principles of Right support, right care, right culture.

Right Support: The model of care and setting maximised people's choice, control and independence. Accommodation was in an ordinary house which was central to local amenities. There were good transport links to trains and buses were a short distance. People had a real choice regarding who they lived with and who supported them. Through positive communication people were supported to take control over all aspects of their lives including moving towards independence, employment opportunities, how they spent their time and their relationships.

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 communication styles were understood by staff and it was clear people felt listened to. This supported people in making decisions, taking positive risks and striving to develop independence.

People were supported to access healthcare services when required and staff advocated for people to ensure they received the care and treatment they needed. People had a choice of food and received support to gain independence with cooking and other household chores.

Right Care: People's care was personalised and promoted people's dignity, privacy and human rights. There was a strong emphasis on supporting people to set goals and all achievements were celebrated. People's individuality was respected and support was planned flexibly in order to ensure people could take the lead in making choices. Staff supported people in ensuring their voices were listened to and advocated on their behalf where required. There was a positive and vibrant atmosphere within Hersham Gardens and people and staff worked together to support each other.

People were fully in control of decisions about their support and plans for the future. People and staff had developed positive relationships and it was clear people felt listened to and respected. People were supported to plan how they wished to spend their time and to continue to try new things including voluntary work and working within their local neighbourhood.

Right culture: People were supported to lead confident, inclusive and empowered lives. Staff had a clear understanding they were invited into people's home to support them and respected the way they wished to do things and their privacy. The values of Hersham Gardens were fully embedded and concentrated around supporting people to both create and make the most of opportunities. Staff demonstrated a real pride in the roles and a drive to see people flourish and gain confidence.

The leadership put people at the centre of how the service developed. People were involved in the monitoring and reviewing of the service to ensure this met their needs and their rights were being upheld. People and staff worked proactively with other organisations to raise awareness of the rights of people with a learning disability.

People felt safe with the staff supporting them and knew how to raise a concern should they feel unsafe or be unhappy with their support. There were sufficient staff to support people's needs and people were involved in the recruitment, induction and supervision of staff. People were supported with their medicines safely by competent staff.

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 Outstanding (published 10 December 2018).

Why we inspected

We undertook this inspection to assess that the service is applying the principles of Right support, right care, right culture.

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.

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?

Good ●

The service was 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?

Good ●

The service was well-led

Details are in our well-Led findings below.

Hersham Gardens

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

The inspection was carried out by one inspector

Service and service type

This service provides care and support to people living in a 'supported living' setting, so that they can live as independently as possible. People's care and housing are provided under separate contractual agreements. CQC does not regulate premises used for supported living; this inspection looked at people's personal care and support.

Registered Manager

This service is required to have a registered manager. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

At the time of our inspection there was a registered manager in post.

Notice of inspection

We gave short notice of the inspection to request consent from people to visit their home.

Inspection activity started on 5 April 2022 and ended on 22 April 2022. We visited the location on 7 and 14 April 2022.

What we did before inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. This included

safeguarding information and statutory notifications. Statutory notifications are information about important events which the provider is required to send us by law.

The provider was not asked to complete a provider information return prior to this inspection. This is information we require providers to send us to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We took this into account when we inspected the service and made the judgements in this report.

We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We communicated with four people who used the service and gained feedback from one relative and one regular visitor about their experience of the care provided. People who used the service whose verbal communication was more limited used different ways of communicating including photographs, objects and body language.

We spoke with five members of staff including the registered manager and deputy manager. We received feedback from one healthcare professional involved in the service.

We reviewed a range of records. This included one person's care records and medication records. We looked at three staff files in relation to recruitment and staff supervision. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures 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.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People told us they felt safe living at Hersham Gardens and we observed a relaxed atmosphere between people and staff. People and those who matter to them had safeguarding information in a form they could use. When discussing keeping safe people were able to show us a pictorial chart which highlighted how to report any concerns.
- Staff understood people well and knew how to protect them from abuse. Staff were able to describe signs which would alert them to potential concerns, reporting systems and whistle-blowing procedures. One staff member told us, "I wouldn't be frightened to report anything. You're coming into their home to help them be independent and safe. There is absolutely no room for abuse in care."
- Records showed that where concerns had arisen these were shared with the local authority safeguarding team and other professionals. This helped ensure people were safe and received the support they required.

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

- Relatives told us they felt staff were aware of risks to their loved one's safety. One relative told us, "I feel they are fully briefed on his positive behaviour support plan and know how best to support (relative) and avoid triggers for behaviours and how best to manage and de-escalate behaviours."
- People lived safely because the service assessed, monitored and managed safety well. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of how to support people in managing risks whilst ensuring their opportunities were not restricted. One staff member told us, "We talk to people about risks but in a way that we can work out how to overcome them together."
- Staff understood risks to people's safety and recognised signs and triggers when people were becoming anxious. One person found transition from doing one thing to another difficult. They had been supported to develop ways to minimise this by spending time listening to music. Staff and others understood this and ensured they had the space they required.
- Positive behaviour support plans were highly personalised whilst giving staff quick reference to information. Triggers to people's level of anxiety were clear and known to staff along with guidance on the action they should take to support the person. Staff knowledge and understanding of people, their communication styles and how to respond led to the number of incidents being reduced and people feeling able to approach staff for support.
- Communication aids were used to support people in minimising risks. Staff described how these were used to support one person who could put themselves at risk in social situations. The staff member told us, "We use visual cards to give reminders which helps (name) manage risks in the community and gives staff confidence when we're out."
- Accidents and incidents were recorded, reviewed and acted upon. Records showed incident reviews considered any actions required to minimise the risks of reoccurrence. All accidents and incidents were

reviewed to identify any themes. In addition, reports were forwarded to the providers health and safety and regional teams to ensure all relevant actions had been considered.

Staffing and recruitment

- Relatives told us they felt there were enough staff to meet people's needs. One relative said, "As far as I am aware there doesn't seem to be an issue with staffing. They wait to employ the right staff rather than just filling a vacancy which I fully support."
- Staff told us they felt there were sufficient staff deployed which ensured people received their support when they and how they wanted. One staff member told us, "Everyone has routines of things they do but we can be flexible and plan together (people and staff). Nothing stops them doing what they want to do." We saw staff was able to immediately adapt when one person changed their mind and asked to go to the shop.
- A staff retention plan was in place to minimise the number of staff moving to other roles by ensuring they felt valued and motivated. The low turnover of staff helped to maintain consistency and the relationships people and staff had with each other.
- Staff were recruited safely. Recruitment checks were completed on prospective staff including obtaining references, checking identity and the right to work in the UK, and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. DBS checks provide information including details about convictions and cautions held on the Police National Computer. The information helps employers make safer recruitment decisions.

Using medicines safely

- People received their medicines safely. Each person had a personal medicines cabinet in their room. Records showed medicines were stored safely and people were supported in line with prescription guidelines.
- Detailed guidance regarding how people wanted to be supported with their medicines was in place. Staff were able to describe the support they provided to people in line with this guidance. Regular medication reviews were completed to ensure people were only prescribed medicines they required.
- Staff received training in safe medicines management. In addition, competency assessments were completed and reviewed to ensure staff were aware of their responsibilities in this area.

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 meeting shielding and social distancing rules.
- 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 accessing testing for people using the service and staff.
- 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.
- The provider had ensured people were able to receive visitors in line with government guidance. People were also supported to maintain contact with their loved ones on the telephone and via video calls.

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.

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

- There was a personalised approach to people moving into the service. People's transition to living at Hersham Gardens was initially based on an assessment of their needs to ensure they could be met. Once this had been established, systems were in place to ensure both people looking to move in and existing tenants were involved in making decisions regarding if the service would work for all involved.
- Support plans set out people's current needs, promoted independence, and demonstrated evidence of planning to meet people's goals and aspirations. The guidance was personalised and clearly based on people's choices and observations of their responses to situations.
- Staff were aware of current best practice guidance and supported people in line with these principles. Staff showed commitment to supporting people to make their own choices, develop independence and meet their goals in line with Right support, right care, right culture guidance.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- People were supported by skilled staff. One relative told us, "They are competent and love working with (relative). They provide good care."
- Staff told us the training and induction they received underpinned the positive, person-centred culture of the service. One staff member said, "The training was really informative and gave you the understanding of people. The induction was set so I got to know people and they were involved. It was very much in line with how we work together and what we are all trying to achieve in helping people meet their goals."
- In addition to mandatory training staff completed training specific to the service and the individuals they supported. We observed staff worked in skilled way which respected people's choices. Staff supported people in a way which enabled them to take control whilst being there to offer support when needed.
- Staff competence and skills were continually monitored. Observational supervisions were used regularly to review staff interactions and how support was provided. Feedback from people living at Hersham Gardens was key to staff supervision.

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

- People were fully involved in choosing meals. People were able to show us how they made choices using pictures and menu plans. Information on healthy foods was available and discussed although people's choices were respected.
- Staff supported people with preparing meals, snacks and drinks. They were aware of people's dietary needs, preferences and understood the level of support people required.

Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support

- People were supported to access healthcare services. One relative told us, "[Name] has regular check-ups with doctor, neurologist and dentist." One health professional told us, "[Registered manager] was a really fierce advocate for the needs of one of our clients. She really never gave up when it came to getting the client's needs met when we were met with lots of health inequalities from various other health services."
- People were supported to access a range of health and social care services in line with their needs. Health action plans had been developed which reviewed people's needs in all areas including oral health care, any specific health conditions, dietary needs and medication.
- Health action plans contained details of health professionals involved in people's care. Records of appointments were maintained and any further actions required were followed up on promptly. Staff had received training to support people in areas including epilepsy and oral healthcare.
- People were supported to access annual health checks with the GP. This ensured people's health was regularly fully reviewed in order to identify any emerging concerns.

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 Act requires that, as far as possible, people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to 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. When people receive care and treatment in their own homes an application must be made to the Court of Protection for them to authorise people to be deprived of their liberty.

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

- Systems were in place to ensure the principles of the MCA were met. Detailed capacity assessments had been completed as required. These took into account people's responses to situations and communication styles.
- Best interest decisions considered people's wishes and involved other professionals and relatives as appropriate. Detailed consideration had been given to ensuring least restrictive options and choices were implemented.
- Staff were aware of their responsibilities to support people's choices and were aware of their responsibilities under the MCA. One staff member told us, "We always presume capacity but if there was any doubt the decision was assessed and a best interest done. We are all about people making their own decisions and helping them grow."

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. At this inspection the rating has changed to Good. This meant people were supported and treated with dignity and respect; and involved as partners in their care.

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

- People received kind and compassionate care. There was an open and vibrant atmosphere with people and staff interacting as equals, sharing jokes, memories and plans with each other. One relative told us, "They (staff) are extremely supportive." They went on to explain how staff had supported their loved one and their family during difficult times. This included providing staff with bespoke training to aid their understanding of specific needs.
- People were relaxed in the company of staff who knew them well. Conversations we observed demonstrated staff knew people extremely well. They spoke of things that were important to people, their family, friends and goals they were working towards. One regular visitor told us, "[Person] gets fabulous care and treatment but also I feel [person] trusts the staff and is truly at ease with them." One health care professional told us, "[Registered manager] knew [person] very well and was very person centred and compassionate towards them during all interactions."
- Staff were calm, focussed and attentive to people's emotions. People were supported to use different techniques to develop an understanding of their emotions such as completing pictorial emotions diaries and emotions cards. This enabled staff to respond appropriately when people needed any additional support or were feeling anxious.

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

- People were fully involved in making decisions regarding their care. Support plans evidenced how people had been involved in making decisions. Staff's knowledge of what people enjoyed meant they were able to support them in seeking out opportunities which may be of interest to people. Examples included one person who enjoyed being outside and loved animals volunteering at an urban farm.
- People's support plans were person centred and reflected their personalities and communication styles. The registered manager told us, "People's support plans all look different because they come from them. They are a working document and can take a long time to review because we make sure people we support are involved."
- People's support was regularly reviewed. Along with their keyworker, people reviewed what they had achieved, things they had enjoyed, anything concerning them and goals for the coming months.
- There was a consistent drive to plan for the future and set goals. This was evidenced from care records, the achievements board and people's photographs. The registered manager told us, "Nothing grows in a comfort zone. No dream is too big. If you want something you work hard to get it and the people we support are no different."

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- There was a strong emphasis on promoting people's independence. One relative told us, "They empower him to be as independent as possible. They are focused on cooking at the moment."
- People had opportunities to try new things. Records showed that people were encouraged to take part in things and go to new places in line with their likes and interests. People showed us photographs of things they had tried.
- People's dignity and privacy were respected. Staff showed an understanding of when people wanted to be around others and when they wanted time alone. Staff were observed to ask permission to enter people's rooms and to gain agreement when offering support.

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 Outstanding. At this inspection the rating has changed to Good. This key question has been rated good. This meant people's needs were met through good organisation and delivery.

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

- There was a positive atmosphere of togetherness, teamwork and kindness between people and staff at Hersham Gardens. The staff approach and ethos of the service encouraged both people and staff to take an interest in what others were doing and to properly celebrate their achievements.
- People spoke about each other with affection and acknowledged each other's communication needs and other challenges in an inclusive and understanding way. People and staff reflected this had made a great difference in minimising the impact of restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. One staff member told us, "Everyone was just amazing and just got on with it. We had lots going on on-line and used the garden a lot. It was lovely to see everyone looking out for each other."
- People were actively involved in making a positive difference in their community. The service had worked in conjunction with the local employability scheme to establish Keeping Hersham Tidy. People had been involved in and promoted the litter picking scheme linked with this.
- People were supported to be part of Hersham in Bloom by contributing to planting and watering. In addition to many fundraising activities, this involvement had contributed to people feeling fully involved in their local neighbourhood, building friendships with neighbours and contact with community resources. The registered manager said of one person, "[Name] can't walk down the street now without people shouting their name and asking how they are and [name] loves stopping to acknowledge everyone."
- Staff supported people with different opportunities based on their knowledge of what they enjoyed. People showed us recent photographs of them going to the pub, the fair, dog walking, bowling, cinema, parties and visiting London attractions. People's records further confirmed they were able to make choices regarding how they spent their time socially and that staff worked flexibly to enable this.
- When at home people were supported with their own interests in addition to spending time with each other. People and staff told us there were frequent parties and celebrations and photographs showed just how much everyone enjoyed this.
- People were supported to maintain relationships with those who were important to them in a flexible and responsive way. People were supported to visit loved ones and to receive visitors when they wanted. This included family, friends and pets. One relative told us, "The team are very open and transparent, I am always made to feel very welcome." Where people were unable to see loved ones in person, they were supported to make frequent video calls rather than phone calls which made communication easier for them.

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

- People were in control of their own support, goals and lifestyle choices. By listening to people and

observing their responses to situations, staff were able to respond to people's wishes and anxieties. Staff ensured that people's choices were consistently listened to and worked with other professionals to advocate for people's rights. One regular visitor told us, "[Name] is happy and relaxed and their opinions and wishes are always taken into account when deciding on what activities they take part in."

- People received personalised support that focused on their quality of life. All staff were fully aware of people's goals and ensured these were regularly monitored and adapted. This had led to people taking part in a wide variety of things which interested them and developing confidence and independence.
- Staff ensured people received holistic support by working proactively with other agencies. One person had built a positive social network when attending a day service part-time. However, they were becoming anxious with some aspects of their time there. Staff worked with the person and the day service to reduce their anxiety and enable them to continue to enjoy their time there.
- People were encouraged and supported to experience employment opportunities, giving people a sense of purpose and achievement. One person had been supported to complete voluntary work locally. Due to the success of this placement they had recently applied to take on this role on a more permanent basis. People were supported through the application and interview processes which helped ensure people were fully aware of the expectations of them and the support they would receive.
- Priority was given to celebrating people's success to enable people's confidence to develop and recognise their pride in achieving their goals. People showed us the 'WOW' board which recognised their achievements through stories and photographs. The board was regularly updated to ensure it was current and meaningful to people. People showed us the board with pride and reflected on their successes. The registered manager told us, "We celebrate everything together. We are constantly talking about people's achievements and make sure we all come together to recognise them."
- People's choice of staff in relation to certain activities was respected. Staff told us one person preferred to be supported by specific staff when going to different places. Staff respected this choice wherever possible. Where the persons preferred staff member was not going to be available this was planned in advance to provide reassurance to the person.
- People's independence around their home was consistently supported and encouraged. We observed people took the lead with daily living tasks such as preparing meals, drinks and cleaning. Staff provided people with encouragement, support and prompts as and when required. One staff member told us, "We're in their home and following their choices. We're here to help when they need us and encourage independence. That's what I love about this job."
- People were supported with bereavements and through periods of grieving in a sensitive way. One person was supported to plant a tree in the garden in memory of a loved one. The person took comfort in spending time in the garden when they were upset. Staff were fully aware of what this meant to the person and supported them with care and understanding.

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 onwards all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). The standard was introduced to make sure people are given information in a way they can understand. The standard applies to all people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss and in some circumstances to their carers.

- People's information and communication needs were met. People's individual communication styles were fully understood by staff and support planned around this. This understanding and approach meant people were fully empowered to make their own decisions and choices. We observed one person who had limited verbal communication was supported in a calm and attentive way which gave them space to make choices. The persons communication was supported by a huge array of photographs and personalised

communication aids. The approach of staff had led to the person gaining confidence in their communication and expanding their verbal communication.

- Communication systems and styles were adapted to minimise people's anxieties and were personalised. This meant people felt truly listened to, resulting in them growing in confidence and opening up new experiences. Staff understood one person could become anxious if they did not know what was happening or if they had to wait. Staff used an activity board, now and next, emotion cards and social stories to support the person in knowing what was happening and to reassure them they were being listened to. The person's positive behaviour support plan clearly stated how staff should communicate with the person when they were anxious and following incidents in order to provide reassurance and to help the person move forward. The registered manager told us the person feeling listened to had led to positive outcomes for them, "[Name] wouldn't have made a decision on their own before. They had a strict structure of things they did but now we couldn't tell them what to do if we wanted to. They make their own decisions now and will try new things, their communication is so much better."
- The service ensured all information was produced in a format which was accessible and meaningful to the people they supported. This included ensuring support plans, health action plans and monthly reviews contained up to date photographs of people which illustrated the things people enjoyed and the support they required. The value of this was seen for one person who spent time looking through their care plan to show us what they enjoyed, the people who were important to them and goals for the future.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- No formal complaints had been received at the service. The registered manager explained that communication with people and their relatives was open and transparent which meant solutions to any concerns could be found quickly. This approach was evident through our observations of the support people received.
- People were given the opportunity to raise any concerns with staff during regular house meetings or monthly reviews. Records demonstrated an open approach to gaining people's views regarding anything they were unhappy with. A pictorial complaints form was on display which people showed us they were aware of. The registered manager told us the complaints process was discussed with people, "We never display things without making sure people understand what it is about so it means something to them."
- The provider's complaints policy set out details of how complaints could be made, how they would be investigated and timescales for a response.

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 Outstanding. At this inspection the rating has changed to Good. This key question has been rated 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; Continuous learning and improving care

- There was a consistent drive throughout the staff team to promote people's independence, empowerment and inclusion. Staff had a shared understanding of the values and principles of a supported living service and worked hard to ensure people had the skills to flourish, gain confidence to live the life they wanted. The systems in place across the service ensured these values were embedded. One regular visitor told us, "I think [name] is very lucky to live at Hersham Gardens and thrives because of the wonderful attention they receive." One relative told us, "There is a very good culture, it is relaxed and fun, but professional, it is perfect for (loved one)." One staff member told us, "I think the home is managed well because we get such good leadership from the people we support."
- Staff had a clear understanding that Hersham Gardens was people's home. Staff spoke in a respectful way regarding how they approached their role in order to ensure people's rights were fully respected. Comments included, "It's their home and we're privileged to be invited in." And, "I don't see this as a service, its individuals coming together to live in their home. People we support take the initiative for everything we do here. People who live here allow staff into their home and welcome them into their home and we respect that." It was evident from our observations that these principles were translated into practice. We saw staff consistently seeking people's agreement and offering choices. People approached staff in an assertive and calm manner which reflected they understood staff's role in their home.
- People were empowered to take the lead during the inspection and when others visited their home. People greeted all visitors and completed health and safety checks in line with COVID-19 precautions. People were fully aware of our inspection and the reason we were visiting. They had taken time to plan the information they wished to share with us. Staff encouraged people to take ownership of the inspection, asking for support from staff when needed. This further embedded the principles of people being in control of their support and their home.
- The culture and personalised approach had led to positive outcomes for people. People had grown in confidence which enabled them to take control of their choices, broaden their experiences, develop positive relationships, experience employment opportunities and take an active role in their local community.
- People were encouraged to raise awareness and understanding of their achievements. People were supported to compile a quarterly newsletter highlighting their involvement in different campaigns and personal goals which they wanted to share more widely to raise awareness. Copies were forwarded to the local MP who responded by acknowledging the newsletter was a great idea to promote the importance of ensuring all areas of life were welcoming and inclusive to those with disabilities.
- Staff told us the values of the service and organisation were embedded into practice and regularly

reflected on. We observed this was the case throughout out inspection. One staff member told us, "I really liked the values of the of the company. The interview questions were based around them. They really fitted with me and I felt I could develop here."

- Staff stayed up to date on new initiatives and best practice guidance. Staff were aware of current guidance such a Right Support, Right Care, Right Culture, the REACH standards for review of supported living and the Quality of Life framework. Regular team meetings and focus days were planned by the registered manager where information and specific themes were shared for information. Staff told us they found these sessions valuable. One staff member told us, "It's good for us to keep learning and to test our values and the way we work."
- The registered manager was proactive in assessing the service to ensure continuous learning. One tool used was the 'Driving Improvement Self-Assessment'. This considered all areas of people's support and reviewed people's quality of life and the quality of support provided. This took a creative and approach in the questions asked to gauge if people were able to live as ordinary life as possible. Questions included how people living at Hersham Gardens lives and their opportunities compared with those of staff and how the support offered focusses on people being happy with a good quality of life. The document reflected on achievements of people but also looked to improvements such as communication and specific goals for people.
- The registered manager instilled an understanding of the supported living model. They told us, "Supported living is very different and we're not afraid to be different here. It's about having the support they need to live independently and make their own choices. That's why things here aren't generic because the people we support aren't generic."

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics; Working in partnership with others

- People were involved in reviewing the quality of the support they received against best practice guidance. The REACH standards are nationally recognised standards underpin the principles of supported living. They support the review of people's support to explore what a good, ordinary life looks like for each person. People had been supported to review their support using the nine REACH principles, to identify any barriers to inclusion, to plan goals for the future and to identify any improvements in the support they received. This included plans for specific events, doing more of the things people enjoyed and reviewing opportunities for people to further develop their independence.
- Systems within the service were designed to ensure people were fully involved in the running of their home and decisions made.
- Recruitment and induction processes ensured people were fully involved and their views listened to. People planned questions they wanted to ask of prospective candidates. These centred around things which were personally important to them and the candidates understanding of supported living. The deputy manager told us, "We involve people we support and they make the final decision before we employ someone." Where recruitment checks for successful candidates took a long time, people were supported to have video calls with staff whilst they were waiting to start work. This helped people to get to know each other and ease anxieties. During induction new staff were appointed two buddies, a person living at Hersham Gardens and an experienced staff member. This helped to ensure staff understand people's expectations and what they wanted from staff.
- People living at Hersham Gardens chose to meet regularly as a group to discuss achievements, any concerns and plans for the future. An agenda had been agreed for house meetings and designed in a pictorial format. Staff were them able to review this with those who may find communication more difficult before the meeting so they had time to prepare. The registered manager told us people were supported to resolve any issues themselves with support, "We encourage people to have conversations if there are issues. They problem solve, we just give them the tools." Actions of any improvements needed or suggestions made

at house meetings were transferred to the 'You Said/We Did' folder which listed the support people had requested to plan for the following month or specific events.

- People had a real choice regarding who they lived with. When someone new was interested in moving to Hersham Gardens they were introduced and spent time with everyone. The registered manager and deputy manager told us the final decision was made by the person and others living at the service if and when the time was right. They told us, "It's essential people get on and feel comfortable with those living in their home so it's their choice. If they want to meet again we will arrange that or if they don't think it will work for them it doesn't happen."
- People and staff supported an array of charities and fundraising events which enhanced people's standing and contribution in their local community. These included completing sponsored walks and holding coffee mornings and cake sales to raise funds for autism awareness, a local hospice, food bank and vaccine centre. People took great pride in showing us how they had been involved from photos of the events.
- The provider sought feedback from other stakeholders as appropriate including relatives and professionals working alongside the service. All comments viewed were highly complementary regarding the support provided and communication from staff. One professional stated, "All staff are friendly and accommodating which has made my role in supporting people with their outcomes easier and the wrap around support enables them to achieve their goals."
- Staff told us they felt truly valued and supported both by the management team and the people living at Hersham Gardens. Comments included, "I feel like I have been really listened to in terms of how I want to develop. It was really lovely to receive Employee of the Month (award) as well." They told us this was particularly meaningful as the award is voted for by people living at Hersham Gardens. A second staff member said, "I am very proud to have [registered manager] as my mentor and manager. She has provided so much support."
- Staff were motivated by and proud of the service and the people they supported. Staff spoke in an animated way about how much they valued their roles and felt driven by people to continually strive for them to achieve their goals, developing independence, happiness, confidence and a good quality of life. One staff member told us, "I can't think of anywhere I would rather work. I love coming to work and I am so proud of what the people we support achieve and our part in that. It really is the best job ever."
- The service enabled people to be empowered and voice their opinions. People had been involved in a number of events linked with campaigns to raise awareness. These included the Campaign 4 Change (C4C), a self-advocacy group where members campaign and raise awareness of different issues and initiatives and the Stay Up Late campaign. A charity which promotes people being enabled to live full and active social lives of their choosing.
- The registered manager ensured they kept up to date with changes and best practice by attending local forums, registered managers networks and provider development meetings. Information gained was passed to staff during team meetings or through written updates.

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

- Regular audits and quality checks were completed to monitor the service people received. These covered areas including safety, support planning, communication and health care support. Where any shortfalls were identified these were transferred to an action plan and addressed promptly.
- The provider had a duty of candour policy in place which set out their responsibilities to be open and transparent. Although no incidents had met the duty of candour threshold the registered manager was aware of their responsibilities in this area.
- The registered manager was aware of their responsibilities in ensuring CQC were notified of significant events which had occurred within the service. Notifications were forwarded to CQC as required to ensure

risks within the service could be monitored.