

Eastern County Care Limited

Little Waking House

Inspection report

367-369 Little Waking Road
Little Waking
Southend on Sea
Essex
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Website:

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Ratings

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

Overall summary

Little Waking House provides care and accommodation for up to 12 people who have learning disabilities and/or mental health needs. This inspection took place on 13 and 14 November 2014 and was unannounced and carried out by one inspector.

The registered manager had been in post since the service was first registered. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered

providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

People felt safe, secure and happy living in Little Waking House. They felt safe both in the house and when they were out in the local community with staff. We saw that there was good interaction between people living in the home and members of staff. People were treated respectfully and were spoken to in a calm, kind

Summary of findings

and caring way. Staff had a good knowledge about safeguarding adults procedures. They had received safeguarding training which had been regularly updated and they clearly explained the actions they would take to protect people if they suspected abuse.

We saw that good recruitment practice had taken place and that staff had not been able to start work until all of the appropriate pre-employment checks had been carried out. The duty rotas showed that there had been sufficient numbers of skilled and qualified staff on duty throughout the day and night. They showed that additional staff had worked when needed for extra activities.

Regular supervision and staff training had taken place and staff were supported to do their work.

Medication practice was good. Staff who administered medication had received training and the manager had carried out regular checks to test their competency.

The Care Quality Commission monitors the operation of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and are required to report on what we find. The MCA sets out what must be done to make sure the human rights of people who may lack mental capacity to make decisions are protected. The DoLS are a code of practice to supplement the main MCA code of practice. People's rights were protected because the service worked in line with legislation.

There was a good supply of fresh food including fruit and vegetables. People told us that they were supported to 'eat healthily.'

People had access to local advocacy services. An advocate is someone who can both listen to a person and

speak on their behalf if needed. People would request an advocate when they were unable to fully express their thoughts and feelings and had no family or friends to speak on their behalf.

Staff had a good knowledge about people's needs and preferences. The service was responsive to people's needs and supported them to go on many activities in and around the local community. Relatives and health professionals told us that the service had an excellent understanding of people's social and cultural diversity. They said that the service promoted a good quality of life and went the extra mile to provide 'exceptional person centred care.'

Thorough assessments of people's needs had been carried out before people moved into the service. The care plans that we looked at were person centred, detailed and informative. They included risk assessments and management plans for all areas of identified risk. People had consented to their care plans and had signed some of the documents to confirm this.

People knew how to complain. There was a clear complaints procedure in place and the records showed that any complaints had been dealt with appropriately.

We found that the service was well-led and that it provided people with good quality care. The quality assurance system was effective. Regular checks on the systems and processes in use had been carried out and improvements made where necessary. People were listened to and staff told us that they were encouraged to talk about their ideas at staff meetings. Staff members told us that they felt that people were at the heart of the service and they said that they were happy in their work. Staff, relatives and health professionals all told us that they were confident in the management of Little Waking House.

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

This service was safe.

People were protected from the risk of harm. There was sufficient suitable, skilled and qualified staff to meet people's needs.

Medication management was good.

Good



Is the service effective?

This service was effective.

People were cared for by staff who were well trained and supported.

Staff had a good knowledge of the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

People experienced positive outcomes regarding their health.

Good



Is the service caring?

This service was caring.

People were treated respectfully and the staff were kind and caring in their approach.

People had been fully involved in planning their care and had access to advocacy services when needed.

Good



Is the service responsive?

This service was responsive.

The care plans were detailed and informative and they provided staff with enough information to meet people's diverse needs.

There was a good complaints procedure and complaints had been dealt with appropriately.

Good



Is the service well-led?

This service was well-led.

The quality assurance system was effective and improvements had been made where necessary.

People had confidence in the management of the service.

Good



Little Wakering House

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection checked whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

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We reviewed the Provider Information Return (PIR) before our inspection visit. This is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what they do

well and what improvements they plan to make. We also reviewed any notifications that the provider sent to us in the past 12 months. Providers are required under Regulation 18 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 to notify us about certain events that occur in the service such as deaths or serious injuries of people who use the service and changes affecting a registered person.

During our inspection we spoke with nine people who used the service, three health and social care professionals, the deputy manager and six members of care staff. We reviewed four people's care records and four staff recruitment files. We also looked at a sample of the service's policies, audits, staff rotas, complaint records and training records. All of the people who we spoke with were able to express their views about their care.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People told us that they felt safe, secure and happy living in Little Waking House. All of the people we spoke with said that they had no concerns over their personal safety, both when they were inside the service and when they were out in the local community with staff. One person said, “The staff take care of me and help me to keep safe.” Another person said, “Yes, I do feel safe here. I have a nice room where I feel safe and comfortable.”

The provider told us in their provider information return (PIR) that the local authority safeguarding policies and procedures were followed. Our records showed that the provider had promptly submitted appropriate notifications. Staff spoken with demonstrated a good knowledge of how to recognise abuse and of the service’s safeguarding adults’ procedures. The training records showed that all staff had received training and annual updates in safeguarding adults.

People told us that they were supported to take everyday risks such as going to the shop to buy their paper and chocolate bar and using public transport to travel into town for shopping. We saw that there were risk assessments in place for any identified areas of risk. They included detailed plans of how the risks were to be managed. Staff we spoke with described how they kept people safe and we observed safe practice throughout our inspection visit.

The service had good recruitment practices; they had carried out all of the relevant pre-employment checks

before staff started work. Staff spoken with confirmed that they were not able to start work until all of their checks had been received. This meant that people were protected by the service’s recruitment processes.

People told us that there were always enough staff and that extra staff would come in if they wanted to go out somewhere special. One person said, “There is always enough staff here to take me out.” There were sufficient staff working on both of the days that we visited. All of the staff who we spoke with said that staffing levels were good and that they could meet people’s needs and preferences. One staff member said, “All of us work well together and we are rarely short of staff.” The duty rotas over a four-week period showed that the service consistently employed enough skilled, experienced and suitable staff to meet the needs of the people living in the service.

Medicines management at the service was good. People said that the staff looked after their medication for them. They had been assessed for their ability to self-medicate and had been given information to help them to decide if they were able to do so. We saw good medication administration practice on the day of our inspection visit and found the medication to be correct after carrying out a random check. Staff had received training, regular updates to their training and spot checks on their competence to administer medication. The service had copies of relevant guidance about medication administration available for staff to refer to if necessary. People’s medicines were managed so that they received them safely.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People told us that they thought the staff were well trained. Staff told us that their training was good and that they felt well supported to do their work. One staff member said, “I may not have been here long but the induction was very detailed and I have had supervision and quite a bit of training already.” Another staff member said, “The training and support is marvellous.” Staff support records confirmed this. Staff also received further training specific to their job roles such as for dementia, epilepsy, autism awareness, mental health and restrictive physical intervention and crisis management. Staff practice demonstrated that they had a skilled approach based on their knowledge and experience.

People’s consent to their care and support had been sought. They told us that they had signed their care plans because they had agreed to them. We saw signed care plans and risk assessments in the care files that we looked at. The staff records showed that staff had received training in the Mental Capacity Act (2005) (MCA) and the Deprivation of Liberty safeguards (DoLS). The care files that we looked at contained fully completed mental capacity assessments for the relevant areas of care. They had been progressed to best interests decisions where required.

Although there were no DoLS authorisations in place at the time of our inspection visit, the deputy manager and the provider had a good knowledge about the Act and how to make a DoLS referral. Staff had received training in MCA and DoLS. There were mental capacity assessments in place where required.

People were supported to have sufficient to eat and drink. They told us that they enjoyed their food. One person said, “I like the food here and I get to choose what I want.” Another person said, “We are off out now and will be having a burger for lunch. The dinners are really nice.” People were involved in choosing their meals and information was provided to them in an accessible format. They were supported to maintain a healthy balanced diet.

People were supported to attend regular health checks and appointments such as to see speech therapists, psychiatrist and community nurses. People told us that they saw their doctor or nurse quickly when they wanted to. There were health action plans in place to support people to maintain their health. One person said, “The staff help me to look after my own health. They take me to the doctors when I need to go.” Another person said, “I do get a lot of health problems but I know the staff will help me to sort them out.”

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People told us that they were treated well. We observed staff practice throughout the inspection and saw that staff treated people with dignity and respect. Staff spoke quietly and calmly with one person who was a little upset because they had misunderstood what another person had said. The person was much calmer as a result of the staff member's intervention. One health and social care professional told us that the service was good at dealing with people's diverse and complex needs.

People told us that all of the staff were kind and caring. One person said, "All the staff are nice, they help me in the way that I want to be helped." Another person said, "The staff are kind to me all of the time and they take me out and on holiday, which I love." One health and social care professional told us, "My contact with Little Wakering House has always been extremely positive and they are very person centred in their approach. I have found the management team and the staff to be extremely supportive to people and their families. They have often gone the extra mile to support people, and their families have told me how much they appreciated it."

Staff showed a good understanding about people's diverse needs. The care plans viewed included information about

people's social, cultural and religious needs and preferences. We saw that staff interacted well with people. They took their time, listened carefully to what the person had to say and explained any requests appropriately.

People were actively involved in making decisions about their care and support. People were aware of and had used local advocacy services when needed. There was information about this displayed on a notice board in the hallway and it was clearly visible for all to see. People told us that they took part in regular meetings where they had the opportunity to discuss their views and opinions about their care and support.

People were encouraged to maintain their independence. One person told us about their daily trip to a local shop. They said, "Staff make sure that I get back home safely." Relatives we spoke with told us that the service was good. One relative said, "The staff are very caring, the home is kept clean and hygienic and they do a very good job, which cannot be easy." Another relative said, "I am very happy with the care and compassion that the staff show my relative. I cannot praise them too highly."

The management and staff had a strong person centred culture and were fully committed to helping people to express their views. People told us that they felt cared for and that they felt that they really mattered. We saw that staff provided good care and support to people who required varying levels of support based on their emotional care needs.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People told us that they were supported to live their lives in a way they chose. They said that the staff helped them to achieve the things that they wanted to do. One person said, "The staff are all very good. They know what to do and they help me every day so that I have a good life." Staff spoken with told us that one person had requested a holiday abroad and that together they were planning this for later in the year.

Relatives spoken with told us that the service was very responsive. One relative said, "They are very responsive to my relative's changing needs." Another relative said, "The service is absolutely marvellous, my relative's quality of life has improved so much. I am very happy with the service."

We saw that the environment catered for individuals' differing needs and preferences. Some people liked a lively seating area with plenty of music and other people liked a quieter area whilst they watched television. Some people liked to chat whilst others liked to sit quietly. We saw that staff responded well to each person's choices and needs.

There were detailed pre-admission assessments on all of the care files that we looked at. The care plans had been devised from the pre-admission assessments and were detailed and informative and written in a person centred way. They were written around each individual's needs and preferences. They had taken into account people's views about their interests, relationships and activities. We saw that they had been signed and dated by the person and their key worker. One staff member said, "I sit down with the person who I am key worker for and we discuss the care

plans and risk assessments fully. I answer any questions about them and make sure that I explain in a way that they are able to understand." We saw that the care plans had been continually reviewed and amended to reflect people's changing needs.

People told us that they took part in many activities that interested them. They said that they went on regular annual holidays and outings. One person said, "I go out a lot and I went on the Harry Potter tour. It was really great. I had such a good time." One relative told us, "My relative is always telling me how they go out and about to different places. They go to local training centres and have a very full social life." We saw many photographs of holidays and day trips displayed in the hallway. People showed us the photographs and recalled many happy memories about them.

The service had a good complaints procedure in place. People told us that they knew how to make a complaint if they were not happy. Relatives spoken with told us that they were very happy with the service. Staff we spoke with had a good knowledge of the complaints process. Where complaints had been made they had been appropriately recorded. A detailed investigation had taken place and the provider had written to the complainant with the outcome. The provider told us they used information from complaints to help improve the quality of the service that they provided. We saw that the service's complaints and compliments folder also contained compliments. Some of the recent compliments included, 'no home is like this one.' 'Staff make me laugh and I feel so relaxed.' 'Very clean and tidy.' 'Made my relative very happy.'

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People told us that they knew all of the management team and they said they were all very good. They told us that they liked them, and that they always made time to listen to them. One person said, “The manager is on leave at the moment but she still pops in to see us. I see the provider quite a lot and she always has time to talk to me.”

Relatives told us that the management team were good. They told us that the staff and management had an excellent understanding of people’s social and cultural diversity. They said that the staff promoted a good quality of life for people using the service. One relative described the management as great. They told us, “My relative has got on so well at Little Waking House. The staff and management have really helped them to improve their life. They make sure that I am kept involved and know what is going on.” Another relative said, “I am very happy with the service, all the managers are good, they are all very caring at Little Waking House and want what is best for my relative.”

Health and social care professionals told us that the service ‘went the extra mile’ and that they worked with the individual to provide exceptional person centred care and support.

There were clear whistle blowing, safeguarding and complaints policies and procedures. Staff we spoke with told us that they would not hesitate to use the procedures and that the management encouraged them to be open and honest about any issues or concerns. Staff told us that there was an open door policy and that they could seek help and advice from managers at any time. One health

and social care professional spoken with said, “Their approach is an open door policy which demonstrates a transparent approach in their dealing with professionals and families.”

People received an inclusive and empowering service. Regular meetings had taken place for people living in the home and for the staff. A range of issues had been discussed such as, care plans, cleanliness, key holders, laundry, key worker responsibilities and staff meetings. Each staff member had been given a copy of the staff meeting minutes to ensure that they were kept up to date.

Staff told us that the management had carried out regular checks on the medication, care plans and health and safety. We saw that regular audits had been carried out such as for, medication, recruitment, care plans, accidents and incidents, complaints and health and safety. This showed that management continually monitored the quality of the service provided.

There were clear lines of authority and staff knew who they needed to consult when they had issues. Staff members spoken with told us that they felt that people were at the heart of the service. They told us that they were happy in their work and confident in the management.

The service had recently carried out an annual quality assurance survey and was in the process of compiling a report of their findings. We saw some of the completed surveys and found that they were positive about the service people received. The survey questionnaires were in a pictorial easy read format which enabled people to understand them. All of the people who we spoke with were happy and positive about the quality of the service. It was described to us as, “Absolutely marvellous,” and “Great management,” and “Kind caring staff,” and “Well managed safe effective service,” and “Goes the extra mile to support people,” and “Excellent approach to people’s culture.”