

Living Ambitions Limited

Living Ambitions Limited - Staffordshire

Inspection report

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Date of inspection visit:
04 November 2019
05 November 2019

Date of publication:
15 January 2020

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

Living Ambitions Limited - Staffordshire are registered to provide personal care and support to people either living in the community in their own homes or to people who lived in shared accommodation under tenancy agreements, self-contained bungalows or apartments within the community. At the time of the inspection the service was supporting personal care to people across 14 sites and was supporting 88 people aged 18 and over.

The service has been developed and designed in line with the principles and values that underpin Registering the Right Support and other best practice guidance. This ensures that people who use the service can live as full a life as possible and achieve the best possible outcomes. The principles reflect the need for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to live meaningful lives that include control, choice, and independence. People using the service receive planned and co-ordinated person-centred support that is appropriate and inclusive for them.

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

We have made a recommendation about End of Life care planning.

People were empowered to lead their care and had the maximum choice and control over the way in which they were supported. People's care was personalised which met their needs, and their preferences were consistently considered.

People were supported to live independently, for some this was the first time in their lives. They were given opportunities to visit services to familiarise with the surroundings before committing to a permanent move.

People's care plans reflected their needs and preferences and were reviewed when things changed. People's diversity was recognised and promoted by the staff and systems were in place to meet people's communication needs. There was a strong emphasis on supporting people to take part in activities, including groups within the local community.

People told us they liked living at the locations and felt supported by the staff teams. People were able to make new friendships with others who received support from Living Ambitions Limited Staffordshire and with other people in the community where they went to socialise.

Staff knew people well and promoted their dignity and independence at all times. There was a kind and caring, inclusive atmosphere. Staff had good relationships with people and encouraged people to be independent and to live fulfilled lives.

The registered manager and the management team lead by example. People, staff and relatives felt their views were important in shaping the future for the service and they felt listened to. The service was proactive

and continually worked on ways to improve, this involved being open to feedback from people and relatives.

People had their health and wellbeing including their nutritional needs met and were supported and encouraged to live healthier lives. Medicines were managed safely, and people received their prescribed medication when needed. The service worked in partnership with other organisations and professionals to ensure people's care was holistic.

The outcomes for people using the service reflected the principles and values of Registering the Right Support by promoting choice and control, independence and inclusion. People's support focused on them having as many opportunities as possible for them to gain new skills and become more independent.

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.

The provider used management systems to identify and effectively manage risks to the quality of the service and drive continuous improvement. People knew how to raise any concerns or complaints and felt confident they would be acted on. There were systems in place to capture people's views on how the service could be improved and these were acted on.

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 this service was Good (published 23 May 2017).

Why we inspected

This was a planned inspection based on the previous rating.

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.

Living Ambitions Limited - Staffordshire

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 team consisted of one inspector.

Service and service type

This service is a supported living scheme. It provides personal care to people living in houses, bungalows and flats. This service operated over 14 locations throughout Staffordshire. People had varying levels of needs, which included, people with learning disabilities, mental health, people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments and young and older people. 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.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. 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.

Notice of inspection

We gave the service 48 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because we needed to be sure that the provider or registered manager would be in the office to support the inspection.

Inspection activity started on 04 November 2019 and ended on 06 November 2019. We visited the office location on 06 November 2019.

What we did before the inspection

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 requested and received feedback from other stakeholders. These included the local authority safeguarding team and commissioning team and health professionals. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke with three people who used the service and three relatives about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with four members of staff including the, registered manager, a team leader and care workers.

We reviewed a range of records. This included two people's care records and multiple medication records. We looked at one staff file 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 the last inspection this key question was rated as 'Good'. At this inspection this key question has the same. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People were protected from the risk of abuse. One person said, "Yes I feel safe, staff support me." A relative told us, "[Person's name] is more than safe, it is a brilliant place."
- Effective safeguarding systems were in place to ensure people were protected from the risk of abuse.
- Staff had received appropriate training and were knowledgeable in recognising different types of abuse and how to raise concerns. One staff member said, "I would ring the on-call manager if out of hours, who would then report to the second line manager who could raise safeguarding and take action if needed."
- Safeguarding referrals were made to the local safeguarding authorities, as required, to help keep people safe.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- People's risks were assessed, monitored and reviewed.
- People's risks and needs assessments were personalised and guided staff how to best support people in the least restrictive way and strategies were in place to minimise risks.
- Staff explored people's risks in collaboration with people which enabled them to positively risk take. For example, discussions took place with regards to using public transport safely.

Staffing and recruitment

- The registered manager had a system in place to ensure people continued to receive a service when staffing levels had changed.
- People receiving support from Living Ambitions Limited Staffordshire were given the opportunity to become recruitment champions. Those who were recruitment champions were involved in the recruitment of staff. Their involvement included devising a list of questions, being a member of the interview panel and asking their own questions. They then had the opportunity to give their feedback about prospective employees.
- Staff recruitment procedures ensured staff were subject to appropriate pre-employment checks to ensure they were suitable to work in a care setting. This included criminal record checks and references from previous employers.

Using medicines safely

- People told us they received their medication when they needed them and on time. Relatives we spoke with had no concerns regarding their relatives' medication.
- Clear guidelines, procedures and protocols were in place to ensure that people received their medicines as prescribed.

- Staff had received training in the safe administration of medicines and their competency was observed.

Preventing and controlling infection

- Systems in place ensured the risk of infection was prevented. Staff were knowledgeable in how to prevent the risk of infection and followed the correct procedures.
- Staff understood the importance of using personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and aprons. One staff member said, "We always wear gloves and dispose of the gloves afterwards, we always wash our hands and use sanitiser."
- The homes we visited during our inspection were clean, tidy and free from malodour.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Lessons had been learnt when things had gone wrong. During the inspection we discussed a specific incident which had occurred at one of the services in relation to professional boundaries. The incident was fully investigated, and lessons were shared with the staff teams.
- Staff told us when things had gone wrong lessons had been learnt which were shared with them during team meetings and or supervision meetings. One staff member said, "For example, accidents and incidents are shared with us, so if something went wrong we would talk about it and discuss what could have gone better."

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 the last inspection this key question was rated as 'Good'. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- People were supported by staff who had been trained and had skills to meet their needs. One staff member said, "I had an induction course, it covered everything." Another staff member said, "I had a two-week induction including shadow shifts and observations. It was very in-depth training and I was asked if I felt confident before I worked unsupervised."
- Living Ambitions Limited Staffordshire involved people in the induction of new staff. For example, people were given the opportunity to inform new staff how it was important for staff to support them to be independent and to achieve their desired outcomes.
- People were given the opportunity to be involved in staff training. For example, one person was able to share their opinions with staff regarding how they should deal with conflict during the Pro-Ac Skip training which supported staff in how to de-escalate conflict.
- Another person wanted to support staff in learning Makaton, this is a means of communicating with people who are unable to communicate efficiently by speaking. Staff were invited to attend this bespoke training.
- Relatives told us they felt staff were effective in their roles. A relative told us, "From what I have seen yes, they seem quite proficient in what they are doing" and "I believe staff are sufficiently trained as far as I know."

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

- People's needs were assessed, recorded, planned and reviewed to ensure they received support that met their changing needs.
- People were involved in planning for their goals and outcomes were recorded.
- People had health assessments in place to support their wellbeing and referrals were made where appropriate.
- During our inspection we observed staff giving people choices and actively encourage people to make decisions for themselves.

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

- We saw that people's dietary needs were detailed in their support plans and staff were able to tell us what people's needs were.
- Advice was sought from health professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) to ensure people were supported effectively to reduce risks, such as choking.

- People were encouraged to support with meal preparation to encourage independence. One person said, "We make our own sandwiches, staff make the hot meals. There is a food menu every week and staff ask us what we would like, the food is delicious."

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

- People had access to other health professionals to support them with their needs as and when required. Such as, GP's, dentists, opticians, speech and language therapists and district nurses.
- One person told us, "I get to see the doctors and dentists, staff take me to my appointments." Relatives confirmed that their relatives were supported by other health professionals. One relative told us, "Yes, if they go and if it is something or nothing they [staff] always ring me up and tell me."
- People had health action plans in place which detailed health appointments and meetings were recorded.

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, and whether any conditions on authorisations to deprive a person of their liberty had the appropriate legal authority and were being met.

- Consent to care and treatment was sought in line with relevant legislation and guidance. Best interest meetings took place with other professionals and were recorded.
- During our inspection we observed staff asked for people's consent before carrying out any care.
- People made their own choices whenever possible.
- Staff had a clear understanding of the principles in relation to MCA.

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 the last inspection this key question was rated as 'Good'. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. 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

- Staff treated people in a kind and caring way. One person said, "I love it here, I don't ever want to leave. The staff are kind and know me well and they have the time to listen to me." A relative told us, "Staff know [relative] well, it is home from home."
- During the inspection we observed staff positively interacted with people and were calm in their approach.
- Staff demonstrated how important it was to treat people well. One staff member said, "We listen to peoples wishes, respect the people we support and deliver a good service."
- People were supported to celebrate occasions which were important to them, a relative told us how they had attended their relative's birthday party.
- Living Ambitions Limited Staffordshire held an annual event 'Dignity Day' which brought people and staff together. People were asked to design posters to advertise this event, with a prize going to the person whose poster was chosen. This inclusive event involved participants to discuss what dignity meant to them and were given the opportunity to attend in fancy dress.
- Consideration was given to people's diverse needs, which included their protected characteristics, such as, religion, gender and sexual orientation.
- Equality and diversity was an integral part of staff induction and on-going training. The registered manager told us how staff have their knowledge tested, through supervision, competences checks' and observed practice. The registered manager went on to say, "Everyone is different, and we respect this, for example, we will support people to follow the religion of their choice, we promote their rights such as voting. We support people to attend social events such as gay pride should they choose to. If people are unable to communicate we would speak to family members or advocates to support them."

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

- People told us they could make decisions about their care. We observed people were given the autonomy to make decisions and express their views.
- Relatives told us they felt involved in their relative's care and the communication received from staff was good. One relative said, "Communication is brilliant, it is top class, you wouldn't want better, they are like a family up there."
- People were actively involved in monthly residents' meetings where people living together had the opportunity to discuss areas such as, safety within the home, living together, our community, keeping our house clean and making decisions.
- People being supported by Living Ambitions Limited Staffordshire were brought together and had the

opportunity to attend Service User Forums. The forums gave people the chance to come together and make new friendships and share good news stories along with planning future events.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- People were actively encouraged to be independent. For example, during our inspection we saw people being encouraged to make their own lunch.
- Relatives told us how staff encourage their relatives to be independent. Comments included, "The staff have been trying to do a bit of cooking with [name of relative] they [staff] observe [relative], so they are safe" and "Staff promote [relatives name] independence, within their limitations anyway."
- Staff we spoke to were able to tell us how they respected people's privacy and dignity and could give us example of this practice, such as, ensuring doors were closed or ensuring people were appropriately covered during personal care.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

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

At the last inspection this key question was rated as 'Good'. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people's needs were met through good organisation and delivery.

End of life care and support

- At the time of inspection there was no one who was receiving end of life care.
- We saw there were inconsistencies regarding discussions being held with people and relatives in relation to people's end of life plans. We also received mixed reviews from the relatives we spoke to.
- We saw there were no advanced wishes recorded in respect of their care during their end of their life and had not been considered.
- We raised both points with the registered manager at the time of the inspection. They assured us this would be an area of work that would be addressed.

We recommend the provider seeks guidance to ensure people's advance wishes are recorded in relation to their end of life care.

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 were enabled to be valued members of their local community. There was a genuine emphasis on supporting people to pursue their interests and hobbies and to attend visit places of their choice, such as, visits to the theatre, cinema, restaurants and other tourist attractions.
- People could do activities of their choice in the home and we saw that one person loved to bake. This was a huge achievement for them which resulted in their confidence growing.
- People were able to continue with their learning and staff supported people with the transition process from school to college and people were given the freedom to make an informed choice.
- People were able to attend social activities within the local communities in which they were living, such as social clubs, youth clubs and churches. This supported people to feel part of the wider community and were able to build new friendships outside of the home.
- We saw that two people who had been attending a social club were offered to become volunteers. Staff supported them to arrive to their place of work on time and they spend time laying the tables and supporting the staff.
- People were able to be involved in charity events to raise money for their chosen charity. We saw one person expressed an interest in doing the colour run and how they had successfully accomplished their ambition.
- People were able to spend quality time alone with their visitors should they choose to.

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.

- Staff were supportive of people's communication needs and accommodated them in the best way that suited them individually.
- We observed staff were kind and caring and there was positive interaction with people. Staff spoke to people in a compassionate way and were extremely patient when they communicated with people. Staff gave people eye contact and spoke clearly to ensure people understood.
- People had access to easy read documents, examples included, a guide to your service, people's individual one-page profiles, and meeting agendas.
- Staff told us how they use an array of communication methods with people, which included, visual communication boards or picture cards and objects of reference.

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

- People's care was provided in an integrated person-centred approach; particularly for people with multiple and complex needs. People were empowered to lead their care and had the maximum choice and control over the way in which they were supported.
- For many people receiving support from Living Ambitions Limited Staffordshire, this was their first home whereby they were living independently. People were given the opportunity to spend time visiting their chosen home, getting to know other people living within them and the staff, this included the occasional overnight stay. This supported the transition of people who felt very anxious during this time.
- People's care plans were tailored to their individual needs and personal preferences and routines. They gave clear guidance to staff on how to best support people.
- People were encouraged to participate in care plan reviews, they were given a platform to discuss their outcomes and were able to set future goals.
- People and relatives stated the staff knew them well. One person said, "The staff know me well and they have the time to listen to me." A relative said, "The staff know [name of relative] well, they know all their habits and things."
- Staff understood the importance of ensuring people's preferences were understood. Comments from staff included, "I would also ask the person direct or ask advice of other staff members. I have supported a person before who was autistic, so a very strict routine was needed, and we had to be consistent" and "Everything you need to know about likes and dislikes are in the care plans."
- A professional who had worked alongside Living Ambitions Limited Staffordshire, told us, "My experience was a positive one as the staff are all person centred and ensure that person centred planning meetings are held regularly, to ensure and promote individuality and personalisation with positive outcomes."

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- People and their relatives knew how to complain and felt able to. One person said, "I tell the boss [name of person]."
- The provider had a complaints procedure in place. We saw complaints were dealt with effectively and in a timely manner.
- At the time of the inspection the registered manager told us that they had received one complaint and informed us how the complaint was dealt with, showing that they had followed their procedures. The registered manager explained how they would investigate the complaint and the process they would go through. The registered manager went onto say, "I send a holding letter to acknowledge the complaint and ensure I give the complainant a full response by a certain date. I will also give the complainant the name of the investigating officer should they wish to speak to them."

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 the last inspection this key question was rated as 'Good'. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

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

- The registered manager told us how they, and staff worked collaboratively with the people who receive support from Living Ambitions Limited Staffordshire. This was done through a project called 'co-production', meaning there was a person-centred culture at the service and people's preferences were at the heart of the service.
- Co-production enabled people to have their say in the services, working together as equals, meaning there was no inequality of power and people were empowered to make decisions in how they wished the service to run.
- People were put in positions of importance, such as, co-production ambassadors and co-production champions. For example, people who were appointed as co-production ambassadors or champions were given opportunities to attend training alongside staff, support training of staff and were involved in the recruitment process of where they played a significant role within the recruitment team.
- There were regular meetings, service user forums and conferences where people and staff shared information and feedback information from others.
- Living Ambitions Limited Staffordshire consulted with people and relatives on an annual basis. This was done through satisfaction surveys. The results of the surveys were shared with relatives and what plans would be taking place to further improve the quality of the services.
- For example, we saw some people wanted to improve the environment in which they lived, and we saw they undertook a gardening project which included designing the layout and function of the garden and purchasing the materials needed to complete the work. Those involved in this project were very keen to grow their own produce. Not only did this improve the environment but it enhanced their organisational skills, improved physical ability and promoted good health and wellbeing. Those involved were very proud of their accomplishment.

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

- There was an open and transparent culture at the service. People received care which was person-centred, and people were put at the heart of their own care and were able to influence their desired goals.
- Staff demonstrated a sense of pride working for Living Ambitions Limited Staffordshire. One staff member said, "I like my job and the company, good training and fair managers, good promotion opportunities and managers visit the services a lot."

- The registered manager was proud of the staff team and the people who received support from the service. They said, "We listen, we respect, we deliver. We will be running a co-production forum around the values to gain an understanding what these mean to staff and people."
- The registered manager recognised the importance of celebrating staff successes. They told us how staff were given recognition for going above and beyond. Staff were recognised as employee of the month and were presented with a certificate and voucher during the managers meetings. The employee of the month was also advertised in the service flyer which went to all the services.
- The registered manager also told us how a celebratory ball will be held to acknowledge people for meeting their desired goals and outcomes.
- The registered manager was aware of their responsibilities in relation to the duty of candour. The registered manager was open in showing us the most recent complaint which had been received and how this had been dealt with to the complainant's satisfaction.

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

- There were systems in place to effectively monitor the service. This included audits which were updated monthly and shared with the quality compliance team.
- The service had action plans in place which were reviewed and updated.
- The registered manager ensured all accidents and incidents were logged and monitored and any trends identified were investigated.
- The service ran 'Driving up Quality' meetings on a regular basis to ensure all aspects of service delivery were addressed. The meetings gave those present including the co-production ambassador an opportunity to discuss what was working and not working within the services. During the meetings action plans were formulated to ensure key aspects continued to be addressed or embedded.
- A person who used the services had been appointed as the co-production ambassador, and part of their role was to conduct all safety checks within the homes.

Continuous learning and improving care

- The registered manager was very proactive in ensuring the quality of the service continually improved.
- Staff had competency checks to ensure they were supporting people effectively. The registered manager said, "Unannounced spot checks take place for staff and these highlight areas of improvement and action to be taken if needed."
- The service used the results from the resident's meetings, forums and satisfaction surveys to improve the services. This meant the overall quality of service provision continually improved and peoples experience of the service being delivered was positive.

Working in partnership with others

- The service worked well in partnership with other agencies, such as the local authority. We saw that people's support plans included positive working with health professionals to ensure people received consistent care, ensuring their health and wellbeing needs were being met.
- We received feedback from the local authority, they said, "I have always found the managers to be approachable and friendly."