

Vivo Care Choices Limited

Vivo Care Choices Specialist Autism Service

Inspection report

22 Dover Drive
Ellesmere Port
CH65 9EP

Tel: 01513374666

Date of inspection visit:

15 June 2021

16 June 2021

22 June 2021

13 July 2021

14 July 2021

Date of publication:

24 September 2021

Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Vivo Care Choices Specialist Autism Service is a supported living service providing personal care to 21 people at the time of the inspection. The service can support up to 22 autistic people and people with a learning disability

People supported live in shared housing which are situated close to each other. These consist of nine dwellings; six of which are bungalows. A further address is located within a short distance of other dwellings.

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

Quality assurance systems were in place. Safeguarding investigations held earlier this year had identified actions to aid quality assurance. These were included on an action plan and was in progress. We have raised a recommendation about completing this plan to enhance quality of support for people. People and their relatives considered the service to be well-led and felt that all staff sought to extend opportunities for people in their daily lives. People felt involved and engaged in the support they received.

People and their relations felt they were safe when being supported. We have raised a recommendation about the whistle-blowing procedure. Staffing levels were maintained. Risk assessments reflected risks faced by people during their support and from their environment. Medication administration had been reinforced and peoples' well-being was promoted.

People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff did always support them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests. The policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

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.

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

The service had developed and responded to the need to support people within the Cheshire West area who sought to be more independent with their lives as tenants but receiving appropriate staff support each day. People lived in accommodation located in a cul-de-sac as well as support provided to people at an address in the neighbourhood. Staff support is very person-centred and matches people's individual needs and preferences. As an example, one person lives in their own accommodation and receives minimal support in line with their wishes but is able to live safely and independently. Staff perceptions of the location is of being

neighbours as opposed to being one larger accommodation. The presence of the main office on site does not impact on people's accommodation and is seen as a focus for support for people and staff alike.

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 4 September 2019).

Why we inspected

This was a planned inspection based on the previous rating.

You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Vivo Care Choices Specialist Autism Service on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

Good ●

The service was safe.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Vivo Care Choices Specialist Autism Service

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 nine 'supported living' settings, 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.

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.

This inspection was announced. We gave the service 24 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because the service is small and people are often out and we wanted to be sure there would be people at home to speak with us.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. 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.

During the inspection

We spoke with six people who used the service and two relatives about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with nine members of staff including the registered manager, assistant manager, senior support staff and support staff. We reviewed a range of records. This included four people's care records, medication records and risk assessments. We looked at four 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.

After the inspection

We spoke further with four relatives of people who used the service and three support staff. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic we limited the time we spent on site. Therefore, we requested records and documentation to be sent to us and reviewed these off site and continued dialogue with the registered manager by email.

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 remained the same. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Systems were in place to keep people safe.
- A number of safeguarding alerts and investigations had been raised in relation to the service during 2021. The registered manager had co-operated and provided information in respect of each of these.
- During the inspection, a concern had been raised using the whistleblowing procedure. The reporting of this was delayed and did not enable prompt action by the provider to keep the person safe.

We recommend the provider reinforce the need for the timely raising of concerns through whistle-blowing procedures to all staff to ensure that people who use the service are kept safe.

- People who could, indicated they felt safe with the support received. People who did not use words to communicate, appeared relaxed, comfortable and related well to staff.
- Relatives without exception told us they felt their relations were safe with the staff team especially during Covid-19 visiting restrictions.
- Staff were aware of types of abuse and were confident appropriate action would be taken.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The safeguarding investigations held this year had highlighted some areas for action and this was being responded to appropriately.
- A plan of action to address these was ongoing and monitoring was done in conjunction with local safeguarding team.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Specific risks to people had been identified and reviewed as required.
- Risk assessments relating to safe evacuation of people from their homes were in place. One had not been updated for over 12 months. We raised this with the registered manager who addressed this.
- Risks faced by people in their own homes and while accessing the local environment had also been taken into account.

Staffing and recruitment

- The service was experiencing high levels of staff absence, however, support to people was still maintained in line with people's needs.
- Staff rotas indicated enough staff were available to support people and when shortfalls occurred; staff teams worked together to ensure shifts were covered by staff who were familiar to people.

- Where people's needs had significantly changed; staffing levels had been increased to reflect changing needs.
- Newly recruited staff had undergone appropriate checks to ensure they were suitable to support vulnerable people.

Using medicines safely

- Staff received appropriate training to enable them to support people with prescribed medicines. Their competency was checked regularly to ensure this was safely done.
- Where medication errors had occurred, appropriate medical advice was sought and measures were in place to ensure future
- Care was taken to ensure people's dignity was upheld when potentially invasive administration by trained staff was required

Preventing and controlling infection

- The service had taken positive steps to keep people safe during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Relatives commented while they were upset as they were unable to visit their relations; they considered the staff team had done everything to keep them safe and maintain contact with them.
- Relatives also commented they were relieved staff had been able to support people to have two Covid-19 vaccinations; they told us "I am so glad and amazed they managed to get [name] to have a vaccine" and "[Name] does not usual like needles but I am relieved they have had two of them".
- Despite initial concerns from staff on how people were going to cope with restrictions; staff commented they had adapted people's routines with their agreement and this had worked really well.
- Covid-19 guidelines and information had been made available to staff who had formed protective "bubbles" while supporting people.

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 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.

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

- Safeguarding alerts raised since our last inspection had identified some events that potentially could have put people at risk. An action plan to address these was put into place by the registered manager and was ongoing.

We recommend that action planning with other agencies continues to ensure people continue to receive a well-led service

- A range of quality assurance processes were in place covering many aspects of the quality of support provided to people.
- The provider notified us of significant events.

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

- Support was very person-centred and based on individual need and preferences. The management and staff team looked for further opportunities to enhance people's life experiences.
- Relatives told us "The staff are great and know [name] so well" and "I am always involved in the progress of [name]. They told us that they were able to contact the registered manager and considered that they would listen and act on suggestions.
- Another relative commented "Thank god for this place. I don't have to worry anymore about [name] being unsafe".
- The needs and preferences of people had been affected by restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff had been resourceful during this time and ensured that people were safe and occupied.

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

- Staff provided person-centred support and this was guided by the wishes, needs and preferences of people.
- We observed staff engaging and involving people in their support continually.
- Staff received one to one supervision as an opportunity to make suggestions and be involved in people's support.

- Relatives told us "[staff] are very good. If I make a suggestion then they will listen to it and I can influence [name's] support and "I feel fully involved and they always keep me informed; we all work as a team for [name].

Working in partnership with others

- The registered provider had set up working relationships with other professionals and agencies.
- Relatives commented that the registered manager was approachable and sought to listen to any suggestions they made.
- The service had undergone an assessment by the national autistic society in November 2020. This indicated positive outcomes were achieved for people.