

Sanctuary Care Limited

Athlone House Nursing Home

Inspection report

Athlone House
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09 February 2022

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Inspected but not rated

Is the service safe?

Inspected but not rated

Summary of findings

Overall summary

Athlone House Nursing Home is a residential care home providing nursing and personal care for up to 23 adults with continuing and palliative care needs. At the time of the inspection 19 people were living at the service.

Athlone House Nursing Home accommodates people in one building across two floors, with each person having their own bedroom and en-suite bathroom. There were also communal living and dining rooms, a main kitchen and external access to a garden so visitors did not need to enter the home.

We found the following examples of good practice.

There were clear procedures in place to ensure visitors could enter the home safely, with a requirement to complete a screening questionnaire and to provide a negative lateral flow device (LFD) COVID-19 test before entering the home. There was a designated testing area where visitors could enter via a separate entrance. The provider had also recruited a dedicated member of staff to help facilitate the testing process.

Relatives were given information about visiting and were kept updated about any changes in visiting procedures in the home. Relatives were given information about becoming an essential care giver in line with current guidance. This ensured every person in the home would be able to have a visitor even if the home was advised to restrict visits in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak.

The home was very clean, hygienic and free from odour. There were clear guidelines for domestic staff to follow to ensure cleaning schedules and best practice was followed. This included detailed guidelines for enhanced cleaning schedules to be implemented in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak.

Staff were confident about the actions they had to take if there were new positive cases of COVID-19 in the home. Staff had discussed their recent outbreak and used it as a learning experience. There were clear guidelines in place with outbreak management plans for staff to follow. One staff member said, "If we get a positive case, we are fully aware of what we need to do to keep everybody safe and we always discuss this."

The provider carried out regular stock checks to ensure there were sufficient supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) across the home. Staff had ongoing IPC training and we observed staff following best practice during the inspection. There were also helpful posters displayed throughout the home reminding staff about the correct way to wear their PPE and to challenge their colleagues if they observed any poor practice.

The service was taking part in regular COVID-19 testing for people and staff in line with current guidance. The provider was aware of recently updated testing guidance and had discussed this with staff to ensure they were all aware of the new testing regime.

The management team carried out regular IPC audits, which included spot checks and observations across the home to help ensure staff understood their responsibilities and were following best practice. A senior nurse said, "All staff complete training and we check they are aware as it is one of my duties as the nurse to ensure everybody knows how to wear their PPE."

Staff told us they felt supported in their role and had been kept regularly updated with any changes throughout the pandemic. Staff had access to an employment assistance programme and 24 hour helplines if needed, with wellbeing discussed during staff supervision. The registered manager said, "I discuss this in monthly staff meetings and my door is always open, staff do not need to wait for a supervision if they want to speak with me."

The registered manager told us they had continued to be well supported by the provider, the local authority and a range of health and social care professionals. They received weekly updates from the provider with any updates or significant changes in guidelines which helped to discuss across the staff team. We saw monthly team meetings also covered a COVID-19 update, which included important updates related to testing, visiting guidelines and updates in guidance.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

Further information is in the detailed findings below.

Inspected but not rated

Athlone House Nursing Home

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 was planned to check whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

As part of CQC's response to care homes with outbreaks of COVID-19, we are conducting reviews to ensure that the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) practice is safe and that services are compliant with IPC measures. This was a targeted inspection looking at the IPC practices the provider has in place. We also asked the provider about any staffing pressures the service was experiencing and whether this was having an impact on the service.

This inspection took place on 9 February 2022 and was announced. We gave the service less than 24 hours' notice of the inspection.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Staffing

- The provider told us they had measures in place to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 related staff pressures.

How well are people protected by the prevention and control of 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.
- We saw the provider was facilitating visits for people living in the home in accordance with the current guidance.

From 11 November 2021 registered persons must make sure all care home workers and other professionals visiting the service are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they have an exemption or there is an emergency.

- The Government has announced its intention to change the legal requirement for vaccination in care homes, but the service was meeting the current requirement to ensure non-exempt staff and visiting professionals were vaccinated against COVID-19.

