

Step Ahead Care Services Ltd

Step Ahead Care Services

Inspection report

14 Leonard Road
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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Inspected but not rated
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Is the service safe?	Inspected but not rated
Is the service well-led?	Inspected but not rated

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Step Ahead Care Services provides support to adults who have a learning disability. At the time of this inspection there were two people using the service.

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

Relatives told us people were safe at the service and staff understood what action to take if they suspected somebody was being harmed or abused.

Staff knew how to report accidents and incidents and relatives told us staff and management communicated well and kept them updated about their relative's welfare.

The provider ensured there was infection control guidance in place. Staff confirmed they were provided with enough personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves. We saw that the provider had, in accordance with government advice, put hand sanitisers near the front door for both staff and people using the service.

People had risk assessments to keep them safe from the risks they may face. These were updated as needed and used to inform reviews of people's care.

Relatives and staff spoke positively about the management of the service. They also told us the management were approachable.

Following this inspection we were provided with a quality and safety management audit. The provider assured us they will send these to the CQC on a monthly basis, and we will continue to monitor them.

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 inadequate (published 25 October 2019).

Why we inspected

We undertook this targeted inspection to follow up on specific concerns raised by a whistle-blower about the reporting of accidents and incidents, risk management, safeguarding, staffing and recruitment.

CQC have introduced targeted inspections to follow up on Warning Notices or to check specific concerns. They do not look at an entire key question, only the part of the key question we are specifically concerned about. Targeted inspections do not change the rating from the previous inspection. This is because they do not assess all areas of a key question.

We found no evidence during this inspection that people were at risk of harm from these concerns.

Please see the safe and well-led sections of this full report.

You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Step Ahead Care Services on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our reinspection 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?

At our last inspection we rated this key question inadequate. We have not reviewed the rating at this inspection. This is because we only looked at the parts of this key question we had specific concerns about.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Inspected but not rated

Is the service well-led?

At our last inspection we rated this key question inadequate. We have not reviewed the rating at this inspection. This is because we only looked at the parts of this key question we had specific concerns about.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Inspected but not rated

Step Ahead Care Services

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

This was a targeted inspection to follow up on specific concerns which we had received about the service. The inspection was prompted due to concerns received about reporting of accidents and incidents, risk management, safeguarding, staffing and recruitment.

Inspection team

Two inspectors visited the service and were supported by another inspector to analyse the evidence.

Service and service type

Step Ahead care Services is a supported living service and 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.

At the time of this inspection 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. We received a notification after the inspection that the current registered manager was resigning, and the deputy manager would be applying to be registered.

Notice of inspection

This inspection was announced. We gave the service 17 hours' notice. This was because we needed to carry out a risk assessment in relation to the coronavirus pandemic to ensure the safety of the inspectors, people using the service and staff.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed the information we had received about the service. This included details of its registration, previous inspection reports and any notifications of significant incidents the provider had sent us. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who worked with the service. We also spoke with the nominated individual and the deputy manager as part of our ongoing regulatory monitoring. The nominated individual is responsible for supervising the management of the service on behalf of the provider.

We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We met with one person who used the service. We spoke with the deputy manager and the nominated individual. We reviewed a range of records, including two staff files in relation to recruitment, incident and accident records and policies and procedures.

After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found. The deputy manager sent us documentation we requested including rotas, two people's care records and risk assessments. We spoke with two relatives and two staff members.

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 inadequate. We have not changed the rating of this key question, as we only looked at the part of the key question, we have specific concerns about.

The purpose of this inspection was to check on specific concerns we had in relation to reporting of accidents and incidents, risk management, safeguarding, staffing and recruitment. As we were in the pandemic, we also looked at infection control.

We will assess all of the key question at the next comprehensive inspection of the service.

Staffing and recruitment

- We saw, and records confirmed that two support staff were on duty throughout the day. The names on the rota matched those of the staff working on the day of the inspection. The rota showed that one support staff worked during the night. The nominated individual had told us that, due to the COVID pandemic, staff no longer worked between other homes run by the provider. Relatives told us this staffing structure was satisfactory. A member of staff told us, "We have enough staff."
- Staff files contained appropriate recruitment documentation including references, criminal record checks and information about the experience and skills of the individual.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Relatives did not express any concerns of potential abuse at the service. They told us their relatives would tell them if they were worried about how they were being treated. One relative told us, "They treat him well." Another relative commented, "They look after him well. [My relative] would tell me and I would speak up."
- Staff were able to explain the procedures they needed to follow if they suspected people in their care were being abused. This included reporting their concerns under 'Whistle-blowing' procedures. A member of staff told us, "If I have any concerns I can speak to our manager, if they do nothing, I can contact the local council and CQC."

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Staff understood the potential risks to people's safety and welfare and knew what action they needed to take to mitigate these risks. They told us they knew the people they supported very well and regularly reviewed people's care plan and risk assessments. A relative we spoke with confirmed that risk and safety monitoring had been discussed at a recent review with the person's social worker.
- We saw that people's risk assessments were comprehensive, detailed the action required to mitigate risk and were being reviewed.
- The deputy manager told us there had been no recent accidents at the service, but the required documentation was available, and staff knew what procedures to follow.
- Relatives told us they were updated regularly by the staff about any accidents or incidents.
- Some people had behavioural issues, and these had been responded to and recorded appropriately.

Preventing and controlling infection

- Staff reported they had received infection control training which included actions required due to the current COVID 19 pandemic. We saw that staff were wearing the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and there were additional hand sanitisers within the building including by the front door.
- We saw that the house was clean, and relatives confirmed this. One relative commented, "It's always clean."

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 inadequate. We have not changed the rating of this key question, as we only looked at the part of the key question, we have specific concerns about.

The purpose of this inspection was to check on specific concerns we had in relation to management oversight of record keeping.

We will assess all of the key question at the next comprehensive inspection of the service.

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

- Both staff and relatives we spoke with told us they thought the service was well run and they liked the registered manager and management. One staff member told us, "Everything is proper. The manager is quite nice, he is friendly with us. Whenever I tell my problems they solve them."
- Following our last inspection we required the provider to send us monthly action plan updates, to enable us to monitor the steps they were taking to address the issues we found. These updates had not been forthcoming on a regular basis however, post this inspection we did receive an audit which indicated the provider was monitoring the assessment of risks, staffing records as well as the general management of the service. The nominated individual assured us that they would continue to send these monthly audits to the CQC as we had previously required under Regulation 17(3) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.