

Avenues South East

Avenues South East - 74 Wilson Avenue

Inspection report

74 Wilson Avenue
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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service effective?

Requires Improvement ●

Is the service caring?

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

We inspected this home on 08 March 2016. This was an unannounced inspection.

74 Wilson Road is a purpose built home, providing care and support for four people with severe learning disabilities and physical disabilities. At the time we visited there were five people living at the home. The home is part of a group of homes managed by the Avenues Trust. The people who lived at 74 Wilson Road had diverse and complex needs such as learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, autism and limited verbal communication abilities.

There was a registered manager at the home. 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 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

Staff had the knowledge and skills to meet people's needs, and attended regular training courses. However, staff training plan showed that staff did not have all the essential training they needed to ensure they understood how to provide effective care, and support for people. There was a gap in the training schedule which showed that staff had not completed buccal midazolam training needed for the safe and effective administration of the emergency medicine. We have made a recommendation about this.

People were protected against the risk of abuse. We observed that people felt safe in the home. Staff recognised the signs of abuse or neglect and what to look out for. Both the registered manager and staff understood their role and responsibilities to report any concerns and were confident in doing so.

The home had risk assessments in place to identify and reduce risks that may be involved when meeting people's needs such as inability to verbally communicate, which could lead to behaviour that challenges and details of how the risks could be reduced. This enabled the staff to take immediate action to minimise or prevent harm to people.

There were sufficient numbers of staff to meet people's needs. Staff were supported by their manager and felt able to raise any concerns they had or suggestions to improve the service to people.

Staff were recruited using procedures designed to protect people from unsuitable staff. Staff were trained to meet people's needs and they discussed their performance during one to one meetings and annual appraisal so they were supported to carry out their roles.

The systems for the management of medicines were followed by staff and we found that people received their medicines safely. People had good access to health and social care professionals when required.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) monitors the operation of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

which applies to care homes. The registered manager understood the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty safeguards and the home complied with these requirements.

Staff encouraged people to undertake activities and supported them to become more independent. Staff spent time engaging people in conversations, and spoke to them politely and respectfully.

People's care plans contained information about their personal preferences and focussed on individual needs. People and those closest to them were involved in regular reviews to ensure the support provided continued to meet their needs.

People were involved in assessment and care planning processes. Their support needs, likes and lifestyle preferences had been carefully considered and were reflected within the care and support plans available.

People were always motivated, encouraged and supported to be actively engaged in activities inside and outside of the home. People went out to their local community for activities and travel on holidays.

Staff meetings took place on a regular basis. Minutes were taken and any actions required were recorded and acted on. People's feedback was sought and used to improve the care.

People knew how to make a complaint and complaints were managed in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

The registered manager and provider regularly assessed and monitored the quality of care to ensure standards were met and maintained. The registered manager understood the requirements of their registration with the Commission.

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.

The provider had taken necessary steps to protect people from abuse. Risks to people's safety and welfare were assessed and managed effectively.

The provider operated safe recruitment procedures and there were enough staff to meet people's needs.

People received their medicines as prescribed and regular checks were undertaken to ensure safe medicines administration.

Is the service effective?

Requires Improvement 

The service was not always effective.

Staff had the knowledge and skills to meet people's needs, and these were updated through attendance at training courses. However, there was a gap in the training schedule which showed that staff had not completed an essential training needed for the effective administration of an emergency medicine.

Staff received supervision and annual appraisal from their manager to ensure they had the support to meet people's needs.

Staff understood the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the associated Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, which they put into practice.

People had choices of food at each meal time which met their likes, needs and expectations. People were supported to maintain their health.

Is the service caring?

Good 

The service was caring.

There were caring relationships between people and the staff who provided their care and support.

People's privacy was respected and staff gave people space when they wanted some time on their own.

People were involved in decisions about their care. People actively made decisions about their care.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

People were supported in line with their needs. People's needs were assessed and care plans were produced identifying how support needed to be provided.

People were involved in a wide range of everyday activities and led very independent lives.

The provider had a complaints procedure and people told us they felt able to complain if they needed to.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well led.

The home had an open and approachable management team. Staff were supported to work in a transparent and supportive culture.

Staff told us they found their registered manager to be very supportive and felt able to have open and transparent discussions with them.

There were effective systems in place to monitor and improve the quality of the service provided.

Avenues South East - 74 Wilson Avenue

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.

This inspection took place on 08 March 2016 and was unannounced. The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

Before the inspection, we looked at previous inspection reports and notifications about important events that had taken place in the home, which the provider is required to tell us by law. We used all this information to decide which areas to focus on during our inspection.

People were not always able to verbally express their experiences of living in the home. We used the Short Observational Framework for Inspection (SOFI). SOFI is a way of observing care to help us understand the experience of people who could not talk with us. We observed staff interactions with people and observed care and support in communal areas.

People were unable to verbally tell us about their experiences. We spoke with two support workers and the registered manager. We also contacted health and social care professionals who provided health and social care services to people.

We observed people's care and support in communal areas throughout our visit, to help us to understand the experiences people had. We looked at the provider's records. These included two people's records, care plans, health care, risk assessments and daily care records. We looked at two staff files, a sample of audits, satisfaction surveys, staff rotas, and policies and procedures.

At our last inspection on 18 June 2014, we had no concerns and there were no breaches of regulation.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People were unable to verbally tell us about their experiences. However, we observed that people felt safe in the home and were at ease with staff.

Healthcare professionals we contacted told us that people are safe in the home and they had no concern.

Staff told us that they had received safeguarding training at induction and we saw from the training records that all staff had completed safeguarding training within the last two years. The staff we spoke with were aware of the different types of abuse, what would constitute poor practice and what actions needed to be taken to report any suspicions of abuse that may occur. A member of staff said, "This is to make sure people are safe from abuse. It is our job to keep people safe and any concerns; I would inform my line manager". Staff told us the registered manager would respond appropriately to any concerns. Staff knew who to report to outside of the organisation and gave the example of the local authority and CQC. Staff had access to the providers safeguarding policy as well as the local authority safeguarding policy, protocol and procedure. This policy is in place for all care providers within the Kent and Medway area, it provides guidance to staff and to managers about their responsibilities for reporting abuse. Staff told us that they felt confident in whistleblowing (telling someone) if they had any worries. The home had up to date safeguarding and whistleblowing policies in place that were reviewed regularly. These policies clearly detailed the information and action staff should take, which was in line with expectations.

People were protected from avoidable harm. Staff had a good understanding of people's individual behaviour patterns. Records provided staff with detailed information about people's needs. Through talking with staff, we found they knew people well, and could inform us of how to deal with difficult situations such as behaviours that challenges staff regarding service provision to people. As well as having a good understanding of people's difficult behaviours, staff had also identified other risks relating to people's care needs. People were supported in accordance with their risk management plans and behavioural management guidelines developed with the local authority Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) team. Staff demonstrated that they knew the support needs of the people at the home, and we observed support being delivered as planned.

Within people's support plans we found risk assessments to promote and protect people's safety in a positive way. These included; accessing the community, finances and daily routines. These had been developed with input from the individual, family and professionals where required, and explained what the risk was and what to do to protect the individual from harm. We saw they had been reviewed regularly and when circumstances had changed. Staff told us they were aware of people's risk assessments and guidelines in place to support people with identified needs that could put them at risk, such as epilepsy seizures. People had individual care plans that also contained risk assessments which identified risk to people's health, well-being and safety. Guidance was provided to staff on how to manage identified risks. This ensured staff had all the guidance they needed to help people to remain safe.

Records showed that incidents and accidents were monitored in order to ensure that preventative measures

were put in place if required. Accident records were kept and audited monthly by the registered manager to look for trends. This enabled the staff to take immediate action to minimise or prevent accidents. These audits were shown to us as part of their quality assurance system. Records showed these were clearly audited and any actions were followed up and support plans adjusted accordingly.

People told us there was adequate staffing to meet their needs. Through our observations and discussions with people and staff members, we found there were enough staff with the right experience and training to meet the needs of the people who used the service. The records we looked at such as the rotas and training files confirmed this. The registered manager and five members of staff were on duty on the day of our inspection. The home had a wake night staff overnight.

Safe recruitment procedures were followed. Recruitment files kept centrally at the head office. We requested these to be made available before the inspection ended. They contained all of the information required under Schedule 3 of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. Appropriate checks were undertaken and enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks had been completed. The DBS checks ensured that people barred from working with certain groups such as vulnerable adults would be identified. A minimum of two references were sought and staff did not start working alone before all relevant checks had been completed. Staff we spoke with and the staff files that we viewed confirmed this. This meant people could be confident that they were cared for by staff who were safe to work with them.

People were protected from the risks associated with the management of medicines. People were given their medicines in private to ensure confidentiality and appropriate administration. The medicines were given at the appropriate times and people were fully aware of what they were taking as staff explained to them. We observed two trained staff members administering people's medicines during the home's breakfast medicine round. The staff member checked each person's medication administration record (MAR) prior to administering their medicines. Further, to ensure compliance with medicine administration, a second member of staff cross checked before administering to ensure that the right dosage was given. The MAR is an individual record of which medicines are prescribed for the person, when they must be given, what the dose is, and any special information. Medicines were given safely.

Medicines were kept safe and secure at all times. Each person had a medicine cabinet in the privacy of their rooms. They were disposed of in a timely and safe manner. A lockable cupboard was used to store medicines that were no longer required. Accurate records were kept of their disposal with a local pharmacist and signatures obtained when they were removed. We saw records of medicines disposed of and this included individual doses wasted, as they were refused by the person they were prescribed for. Fluid thickener, which was used to thicken drinks to help people who have difficulty swallowing, was kept locked away in the cupboard. This demonstrated that the provider ensured medicines were kept safe.

There was a system of regular audit checks of medication administration records and regular checks of stock. The senior support worker conducted a weekly audit of the medicine used. This indicated that the provider had an effective governance system in place to ensure medicines were managed and handled safely.

Each care plan folder contained an individual Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) reviewed in 2015. The fire safety procedures had been reviewed and the fire log folder showed that the fire risk assessment was reviewed in August 2015. Fire equipment was checked weekly and emergency lighting monthly. Fire drills took place regularly. The last drill took place in November 2015 and those present were recorded. Staff had completed a fire competency assessment.

There was a plan staff would use in the event of an emergency. This included an out of hour's policy and arrangements for people which was clearly displayed in care folders. This was for emergencies outside of normal hours, or at weekends or bank holidays. The staff we spoke with during the inspection confirmed that the training they had received provided them with the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with emergencies. We found that staff had the knowledge and skills to deal with all foreseeable emergencies.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People were unable to verbally describe their experiences. We observed that people had the freedom to move around the home and spend time alone in their rooms as well as in communal areas. People seemed relaxed. We observed staff members responding to people's specific needs in a timely and responsive manner.

Staff had received induction training, which provided them with essential information about their duties and job roles. The registered manager told us that any new staff would normally shadow experienced staff, and did not work on their own until assessed as competent to do so. We spoke with a new member of staff who confirmed this and told us that as part of their induction, they shadowed an experienced member of staff for a week.

Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities and had the skills, knowledge and experience to support people with learning disabilities. Some staff had completed vocational qualifications in health and social care. These are work based awards that are achieved through assessment and training. To achieve a vocational qualification, candidates must prove that they have the competence to carry out their job to the required standard. This allowed management to ensure that all staff were working to the expected standards, caring for people effectively, and for staff to understand their roles and deliver care effectively to people at the expected standard. Staff received refresher training in a variety of topics, which included health and safety, fire safety, safeguarding and food hygiene. One member of staff told us that they had attended training to help them meet people's needs. These included, infection control, food and nutrition and safeguarding. They said, "We had attended MCA/DoLS training and understood the importance of supporting people to make informed decisions".

However, staff training plan showed that staff did not have all the essential training they needed to ensure they understood how to provide effective care, and support for people. There was a gap in the training schedule which showed that staff had not completed buccal midazolam training needed for the safe and effective administration of the emergency medicine. Buccal midazolam is a first-line treatment in people with prolonged or repeated seizures. While staff had completed 'supporting people with epilepsy' training, only the registered manager had completed Buccal Midazolam administration training. The two people's care records we looked at confirmed that they were prescribed Buccal Midazolam. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) epilepsy guidelines clearly stated that 'Treatment should be administered by trained clinical personnel or, if specified by an individually agreed protocol drawn up with the specialist, by family members or carers with appropriate training'. We spoke to the registered manager about our finding. They told us that staff observed them as a learning process before being allowed to administer the medicine.

We recommend that the provider seeks and follows NICE guidance on administration of buccal midazolam for people in the home.

Staff were being supported through individual one to one supervision meetings and appraisals. This was to

provide opportunities for staff to discuss their performance, development and training needs, which the registered manager was monitoring. Supervision is a process, usually a meeting, by which an organisation provide guidance and support to staff. We were told that an annual appraisal was also carried out with all staff. We saw records to confirm that supervision and annual appraisals had taken place. A member of staff also confirmed training needs were discussed as part of supervision and she could ask for training that would be of benefit to her in her role.

There were procedures in place and guidance was clear in relation to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) that included steps that staff should take to comply with legal requirements. Guidance was included in the policy about how, when and by whom people's mental capacity should be assessed. Staff had attended Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) training. Staff evidenced that they had a good understanding of the MCA and DoLS. One staff member explained that every person has some capacity to make choices. They gave us examples of how they supported people who did not verbally communicate to make choices. Care staff were able to describe how capacity was tested and how a person's capacity impacted on decisions. They could all describe how and why capacity was assessed, the statutory principles underpinning the MCA and related this to people that we were subject to DoLS. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) monitors the operation of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) which applies to care homes. People who lived in the home were currently subject to a DoLS. There were good systems in place to monitor and check the DoLS approvals to ensure that conditions were reviewed and met. The registered manager understood when an application should be made and how to submit one and was aware of a Supreme Court Judgement which widened and clarified the definition of a deprivation of liberty.

People had access to nutritious food that met their needs. They had a choice of two different meals at dinner time and could make other choices if they wished. People were supported to make cold and hot drinks when they wanted them. We observed staff communicating with people as a way of involving them in what they did. The kitchen of the home was well stocked and included a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables. Food was prepared in a suitably hygienic environment and we saw that good practice was followed in relation to the safe preparation of food. Food was appropriately stored and staff were aware of good food hygiene practices. Weights were regularly monitored to identify any weight gain or loss that could have indicated a health concern.

People received medical assistance from healthcare professionals when they needed it. Staff recognised when people were not acting in their usual manner, which could evidence that they were in pain. Staff spent time with people to identify what the problem was and sought medical advice from the GP when required. People had a health action plan in place. This outlined specific health needs and how they should be managed. For example, one person was not well during our visit. Staff followed the persons care plan to ensure the person was comfortable. People received effective, timely and responsive medical treatment when their health needs changed.

Records confirmed that staff encouraged people to have regular health checks and where appropriate staff accompanied people to appointments. During our inspection, one person went out for their regular blood test supported by a member of staff. People were regularly seen by their treating team. All of the people living at the home had epilepsy and there were appropriate protocols in place concerning the administration of emergency medicines if a person had a prolonged seizure. These had been developed with an epilepsy nurse who had provided suitable expert guidance. Measures had been taken to reduce the risk of injury such as regular one to one support. Staff had also received specific training about how to manage seizures and how to support people with epilepsy. This meant that people's health needs in relation to their epilepsy were being monitored and managed.

Health appointments were documented in people's care plans and there was evidence that the home worked closely with health and social care professionals to maintain and improve people's health and well-being. Healthcare professionals said, "They identify issues as they arise and seek appropriate specialist input, while involving families in all stages of what can be distressing developments. They have developed their skills to accommodate the changing needs of their residents and acquired high level skills in the management of percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tubes, for example". PEG is a surgical procedure for placing a feeding tube. The aim of PEG is to feed those who cannot swallow. All staff had been trained by the local SALT team on how to feed people through the PEG.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

We observed that staff were kind, considerate and aware of people's individual communication needs. There was a calm and friendly atmosphere. People's bedrooms were decorated to their own tastes.

Healthcare professionals said, "I think they provide the best care in Medway for people with profound needs and learning disabilities".

We observed that staff respected people's privacy. All bedrooms doors were closed. For example, When we arrived, we observed that staff were supporting people with personal care in the privacy of their rooms with doors shut. Staff knocked on doors before they entered. Staff treated people with dignity and respect. Staff were attentive, showed compassion and interacted well with people. The environment was well-designed and supported people's privacy and dignity. People were able to personalise their bedrooms. Staff we spoke with during the inspection demonstrated a good understanding of the meaning of dignity and how this encompassed all of the care for a person. We found the staff team was committed to delivering a service that had compassion and respect for people.

Staff respected confidentiality. People's information was treated confidentially. People's individual care records were stored securely in lockable filing cabinets in the office, but were available to people and staff. We saw evidence that people were asked before information was shared with people.

Staff knew the people they were supporting well. Some members of staff had worked in the home for about eight years or longer. This provided for consistency. A healthcare professional said, 'The staff are generally quite knowledgeable about the residents. They had good insight into people's interests and preferences and supported them to pursue these'. The registered manager and staff that we spoke with showed genuine concern for people's wellbeing. It was evident from discussion that all staff knew people well, including their personal history, preferences, likes and dislikes and had used this knowledge to form very strong therapeutic relationships.

We found that staff worked in a variety of ways to ensure people received support they needed. For example, equality and diversity is covered in people's care plans and it details people's preferences and individuality for example, in one person's cultural assessment, it stated that they were 'roman catholic and sometimes goes to church every other week'. We checked the daily report which confirmed that they attended the church. This showed that staff supported people based on the person's choice and preference.

People were involved in regular review of their needs and decisions about their care and support. This was clearly demonstrated within people's care records and support planning documents that were signed by people. Support plans were personalised and showed people's preferences had been taken into account. People's preference regards gender care were recorded and adhered with. We reviewed daily records of support which demonstrated that staff provided support as recommended in people's support plans during the day. The registered manager told us that if people's needs required more support during the night, then this was provided as well.

The registered manager told us that advocacy information was available for people and their relatives if they needed to be supported with this type of service. Advocates are people who are independent of the home and who support people to make and communicate their wishes. Staff told us they were aware of how to access advocacy support for people. Advocacy information was on the notice board for people in the home.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

We observed that people were supported to do activities of their choosing. They were not rushed to carry out tasks.

People's care records were updated to reflect any changes in their needs. For example, people were discharged from regular visits by the Speech and Language Therapist. As a result, this change was reflected in their care plan to 'as at when necessary' referral. This meant that it is only when needed referrals would be made. Information from health and social care professionals about each person was also included in their care plans. There were records of contacts such as phone calls, reviews and planning meetings. A healthcare professional said, 'They identify issues as they arise and seek appropriate specialist input, while involving families in all stages of what can be distressing developments'.

There was evidence that people's needs were assessed prior to admission and continually throughout their stay at the home. The registered manager undertook thorough assessments of people's needs before accepting them and a structured introduction took place. Each person had an initial referral which included a full case history, as well as a pre-admission assessment. The assessment covered all medical, history, any challenging behaviour, and care needed to manage and safely support the person's needs. The assessment was used to determine whether or not the home could meet the person's needs, and if any specialised tools or professional's assistance would be required. This meant that people's needs were assessed in detail to ensure they could be safely supported at the home.

Each person's detailed assessment, which highlighted their needs could be seen to have led to a range of care plans being developed. We found from our discussions with staff that the plans met people's needs. We saw evidence that people and their relatives had been involved in making decisions about their care and support and developing their support plans. We reviewed support plans which contained detailed assessments that provided information on how staff should support each person. We noted that changes to the support plans were made whenever people had been seen or assessed by external health professionals. For example, changes to medication in order to manage one person's epilepsy better, which indicated that people received care which was appropriate and met their needs.

People had regular one to one sessions with their key worker to discuss their care and how the person feels about the home. A keyworker is someone who co-ordinates all aspects of a person's care at the home. These sessions were documented in the person's support plan and agreed by them. Therefore, people were given appropriate information about their support at the home, and were given an opportunity to discuss and make changes to their support plans. For example, in a keyworker meeting on 05 January 2016, one person's goals were reviewed and it was confirmed that the person achieved their stated goal of going swimming in December 2015 at the local leisure centre.

There was a weekly activities timetable displayed in people's care files and staff confirmed that activities were promoted regularly based on individual's wishes. The provider used a resource pack called 'The Inclusion Web' to measure activities outcomes for people. The Inclusion Web is an easy way to help people,

and the organisations who support them, to look at the people and places in their life and how things may be changing over time. This clearly showed activities people were interested in such as swimming, bowling, garden centres and cinema. Staff provided a flexible approach to activities to meet people's needs. We observed that people were encouraged to pursue their interests and participate in activities that were important to them. Daily records confirmed that activities were promoted regularly based on individual's wishes. People were supported to access leisure activities in the local community and to go on holidays.

The provider contacted other services that might be able to support them with meeting people's health needs. This included the local authority's community learning disabilities team. Details of Speech And Language Therapist (SALT) referral and guidance in place demonstrating the provider promoting people's health and well-being. Information from health and social care professionals about each person was also included in their care plans. There were records of contacts such as phone calls, reviews and planning meetings. The plans were updated and reviewed as required. Contact varied from every few weeks to months. This showed that each person had a professional's input into their care on a regular basis.

The provider sought people's and others views by using annual questionnaires to people living in the home, staff, health and social care professionals and relatives to gain feedback on the quality of the service. The registered manager told us that completed surveys were evaluated and the results were used to inform improvement plans for the development of the home. The registered manager told us that they were currently sending new survey/questionnaires out. The last questionnaire was sent out in 2014 and feedback was generally good.

The provider had a comprehensive complaints policy that included information about how to make a complaint and what people could expect to happen if they raised a concern. The complaints procedure was on display within the foyer of the home and this was also available in an easy read format to support the communication needs of people. The policy included information about other organisations that could be approached if someone wished to raise a concern outside of the home such as the local government ombudsman. We saw record of one complaint since our last visit. Concern was raised by neighbour about parking by staff in August 2015. This was acted upon and sorted out by registered manager to everyone's satisfaction.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People knew who the registered manager was, they felt confident and comfortable to approach her and we observed people pointing and making hand gestures towards the registered manager in a relaxed and comfortable manner.

Staff told us that they felt comfortable and confident in raising concerns with the registered manager. One member of staff said, "Management is good. I have learnt a lot from the registered manager since I have been here".

The management team encouraged a culture of openness and transparency. Their values included 'Pride in what we do; Respect (treating people properly); Integrity (doing the right thing) and Excellence'. Staff demonstrated these values by being complimentary about the management team. Staff told us that an honest culture existed and they were free to make suggestions, raise concerns, drive improvement and that the registered manager was supportive to them. Staff told us that the registered manager had an 'open door' policy which meant that staff could speak to them if they wished to do so. We observed this practice during our inspection.

Staff told us the morale was good and that they were kept informed about matters that affected the home. They told us that team meetings took place regularly and they were encouraged to share their views. They found that suggestions were warmly welcomed and used to assist them constantly review and improve the home. Staff meeting records confirmed that staff views were sought.

We spoke with staff about their roles and responsibilities. They were able to describe these well and were clear about their responsibilities to the people and to the management team. The staffing and management structure ensured that staff knew who they were accountable to.

We found that the registered manager understood the principles of good quality assurance and used these principles to critically review the home. The registered manager told us they were well supported by the provider representative who provided all the resources necessary to ensure the effective operation of the service. The provider visited the home every month to carry out a monthly audit. The new monthly audit was based on CQC fundamental standards. This created continued awareness of the required minimum standard in meeting people's needs.

The provider had effective systems in place for monitoring the home, which the registered manager fully implemented. They completed monthly audits of all aspects of the home, such as medicine, care plan, nutrition and learning and development for staff. They used these audits to review the home. Audits routinely identified areas they could be improved upon and the registered manager produced action plans, which clearly detailed what needed to be done and when action had been taken.

The provider, registered manager and staff worked well with other agencies and services to make sure people received their care in a joined up way. We found that the provider was a certificated gold member of

the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD). This organisation stands up for people with learning disabilities to be valued equally, participate fully in their communities and be treated with dignity and respect. The registered manager told us that being a member of BILD has enabled them to be up to date in their skills and knowledge of how to support, promote and improve people's quality of life through raising standards of care and support in the home.

The provider told us that they had accreditation schemes with Skills for Care's National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC), which is an online database which holds data on the adult social care workforce. The provider used this system to update information on staff training regularly. This helps authorities to plan resources for the local workforce and commissioning services. This also enabled the provider to refer to the data and employ trained, knowledgeable and skilled staff in order to meet people's needs. Staff had undergone annual training in topics such as first aid, health & safety, medication administration, supporting people with epilepsy and safeguarding amongst others.

Staff had access to a range of policies and procedures to enable them to carry out their roles safely. The policies and procedures had been updated by the management team and cross referenced to new regulations.

The registered manager was aware of when notifications had to be sent to CQC. These notifications would tell us about any important events that had happened in the home. Notifications had been sent in to tell us about incidents that required a notification. We used this information to monitor the service and to check how any events had been handled. This demonstrated the registered manager understood their legal obligations.