

## Scope

# Beaumont College and Scope Inclusion North West

## Inspection report

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## Ratings

### Overall rating for this service

Outstanding 

Is the service safe?

Outstanding 

Is the service effective?

Outstanding 

Is the service caring?

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

## Overall summary

This was an unannounced inspection on the 30 September 2014.

Beaumont College and Scope Inclusion North West offers both residential and day programmes to students at the College. The students are aged between 18 and 25 with a broad range of physical and learning disabilities.

The service was last inspected in January 2014, they met the requirements of the regulations we looked at during that inspection.

There was a registered manager in place. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service and has the legal responsibility for meeting the requirements of the law; as does the provider.

All staff members we spoke with were positive about their work with the students and how care and support was provided to the people who lived at the college. They all said they were well supported by the management team.

# Summary of findings

Comments from staff included, “Fantastic manager you can approach him at any time of the day or night if you have an issue.” Also, “Cannot fault the support and care given by everyone.”

Each person who lived at the college had an allocated member of staff known as a keyworker. This enabled the students and their families to have a named person who worked with them closely to ensure care and support was provided as determined by the person and their families. One student said, “It’s really helpful to have good staff around.” Care records of people told us if their needs changed their care plans would be reassessed and updated to ensure they received the support they needed. People who lived at the college told us they were involved in decisions about their care and were supported by staff to make choices as part of their daily life.

We found that staff were well supported to carry out their role and had regular formal supervision meetings with their line manager. These sessions included a personal development plan (PDP) meeting. This enabled staff to discuss any training or additional support they may need to continue their personal development and improve the service.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is required by law to monitor the operation of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. We discussed the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 and the associated Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), with the registered manager. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) is legislation designed to protect people who are unable to make decisions for themselves and to ensure that any decisions are made in people’s best interests. (DoLS) are part of this legislation and ensures where someone may be deprived of their liberty, the least restrictive option is taken.

The registered manager demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the legislation as laid down by the Mental Capacity Act and the associated Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. We found they were up to date with current guidance and how it relates to their service.

We discussed with staff and the management team how the service was being staffed and looked at staff training. All staff we spoke with said there was enough staff around to provide support and spend as much time as needed

with people on a one to one basis. One staff member said, “We are fortunate to have access to a range of staff with different skills. We are able to spend time with students on a one to one basis.” All staff told us access to training was very good and the management team constantly arranged training to support staff in their roles.

We observed in every classroom that we went into, a ratio of at least one staff member to two students with complex needs and in some cases it was individual support. The staff ratios are based on the assessed student need, additional staff can be called on where needed

Suitable arrangements were in place to protect people from the risk of abuse. People told us they felt safe. The service had safeguards in place for people who may be unable to make decisions about their care and support. The provider had developed a booklet, ‘Safeguarding Complaints Information’ This document was in picture format and explained the processes to follow should students wish to raise a concern. One student said, “It certainly explains what to do if I wanted to report any abuse.”

During the inspection visit we saw examples of where the registered manager and staff had tried innovative methods to offer practical solutions to meet people’s needs. Students told us they were consistently involved in making decisions about all areas of their support. Comments included, “All the staff are really good at keeping us up to date with what’s happening at the college. Also, “A great place to be.”

Documentation we looked at and discussions with the management team found there to be systems and processes in place to monitor the quality of the service being provided. The registered manager and provider consistently assessed, audited and monitored the quality of care and support provided to the students. Independent achievement awards had been awarded to the service for the outstanding performance of the service.

Quality assurance systems involved all people who had a contribution in developing the service. For example student surveys were conducted annually. These were analysed by the registered manager and any negative

# Summary of findings

comments that required attention would be acted upon. All surveys that we saw contained wholly positive comments. One comment included, "A truly excellent place so glad I came here."

# Summary of findings

## The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

### Is the service safe?

The service was safe.

The college had comprehensive procedures in place supported by input from students who lived at the college to protect people from the risk of abuse.

The registered manager and staff demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the legislation as laid down by the Mental Capacity Act and the associated Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. We found staff were up to date with current guidance.

There were sufficient numbers of staff available to meet people's needs and provide one to one support for students when required.

Outstanding



### Is the service effective?

The service was effective.

Staff had access to ongoing training to meet the individual needs of people who required support. They also had access to complete national qualifications that were designed specifically to enhance their skills in the care sector.

People's health needs were closely monitored. Changes in healthcare needs had been clearly identified and acted upon.

People were provided with a choice of healthy food and drink which helped to ensure that their nutritional needs were met. People who required help at mealtimes were supported by sufficient staff in a sensitive manner.

Outstanding



### Is the service caring?

The service was caring.

We observed staff showed patience and gave encouragement when supporting people. Staff were respectful and caring when helping people with complex needs.

People who lived at the college told us they had an excellent relationship with the staff and management team. Our observations confirmed there was a strong, visible, open and inclusive culture at the service.

Staff were fully committed to support people to live an independent life as much as possible both at the college and in the community.

Outstanding



### Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive.

People who lived at the college and their relatives told us they had been involved in making decisions about what was important to them as an individual. People's care needs were kept under review and staff responded quickly when people's needs changed.

We saw people were encouraged to maintain relationships with their

Outstanding



# Summary of findings

friends and relatives. People were supported by staff to take part in activities that were of their choice both at the college and in the community. .

The use of computers and IT systems were an integral part of the students learning when living at the college to promote independence and provide alternative communication methods.

Appropriate risk assessments were in place to protect people when they were out in the community.

## Is the service well-led?

The service was well led.

Staff and people who lived at the college told us all levels of the management team were approachable and always willing to help out. They felt confident they would be listened to if they had any issues and action would be taken if required.

The registered manager actively sought and acted upon the views of others. There was a strong commitment to continually improve the service involving students and stakeholders.

The college had achieved awards of excellence in the residential service they provided, in terms of management and development of the residential unit.

**Outstanding**



# Beaumont College and Scope Inclusion North West

## 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, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

The inspection team consisted of a lead inspector, a second inspector, two specialist professional advisors and an expert by experience. The expert by experience is someone who had used health and social care services for people with learning and physical disabilities. The specialist advisors had expert knowledge of young people with a learning or physical disability.

The inspection remit was to inspect the regulated activities they were registered for. 'Accommodation and nursing care in the further education sector and Personal care'.

This was an unannounced inspection undertaken on the 30 September 2014. The visit was carried during the day time period when most people were in education classes.

Before the inspection the provider completed a Provider Information Return (PIR). This is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. Before our inspection, we reviewed the information included in the PIR along with information we held about

the college. This included notifications, any complaints or safeguarding issues. A notification is information about important events which the service is required to send us by law.

On the day of our visit we spoke with the registered manager, senior management, Professional health care people employed at the service, care and housekeeping staff. We also spoke with visiting relatives and people/students who lived at the college. We had responses from external agencies including social services and the contracts and commissioning team. The comments from these agencies were all positive about the care and support provided by the service. The commissioning team had no issues or concerns that required their involvement or investigation.

We looked at a range of records about people's care and how the service was managed. This included care plans, staff training records, staff rotas and documents in respect of the services quality assurance systems.

This report was written during the testing phase of our new approach to regulating adult social care services. After this testing phase, inspection of consent to care and treatment, restraint, and practice under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) was moved from the key question 'Is the service safe?' to 'Is the service effective?'

The ratings for this location were awarded in October 2014. They can be directly compared with any other service we have rated since then, including in relation to consent, restraint, and the MCA under the 'Effective' section. Our written findings in relation to these topics, however, can be read in the 'Is the service safe' sections of this report.



# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

People at the college who were able to communicate with told us they felt safe living there. Due to people's complex health needs we were not able to communicate with everyone verbally. Therefore we spent time observing people. We observed very good interactions with staff and a lot of one to one support. One student we spoke with said, "This place is fantastic, there is a lot of staff around it makes you feel safe and secure."

Senior staff promoted a culture that anything is possible within the framework of assessing risk, without being risk averse. One student we spoke with said, "The staff and all managers are so helpful yet are mindful I want to be as independent as I can both in and out of the college." Another said, "The staff encourage me to do things that challenge me. I feel I can because they are always there to support me when I want to do something different."

The registered manager sent information to us that explained how all students were comprehensively risk assessed and that these assessments were reviewed regularly. We confirmed this by looking at individual student care records. The registered manager and senior staff promoted a culture that encouraged students to attempt any task within a risk framework. The 'managed risk' approach allowed students to make mistakes and learn from them and take greater levels of responsibility for their own lives. For example students were encouraged to go out in the community independently with staff support when required. Staff told us sometimes for students with complex health needs that were difficult and staff had to help out. This could be with transport, or accompanying a person to an event. One student said, "We are encouraged to live the life we want to, and the staff encourage and support us to that."

Each living area of the college had a designated staff and management team. Each of these managers worked with the staff team to develop a "code of conduct" on how their team would ensure they provided a service that was safe. This meant students were able to identify individual staff for advice and guidance should they have concerns about personal safety issues. One staff member told us, "We are developing this document with support from the students who started from September." A student we spoke with said, "This shows we have our say and input to create a safe environment."

We looked at how the service was being staffed. We did this to make sure there was enough staff on duty at all times, to support people who lived at the college. We observed this was being managed well and people felt safe with the amount of staff around to support them. Comments from students about staffing levels included, "The amount of staff to support me is fantastic. There is always someone around to talk with or help to go around the college if I wish to. The amount of staff around make it a safe place to be."

We looked at how care staff were deployed in the classroom to support and care for students during their education. We observed in every classroom that we went into, a ratio of at least one staff member to two students who had complex needs and in some cases individual support was provided. A staff member said, "Staff support in classrooms for students is a priority." The staff ratios are based on the assessed student need, additional staff can be called on where needed. A student we spoke with said, "The amount of staff support around class time and throughout the day is excellent." We also observed sufficient staff to support students when outside education college hours. We observed one to one support for people outside the classroom. For example staff were able to support people with hobbies in the lounges and in the community because of the ratios of staff available. One staff member said, "The ratios of staff to care for students is excellent."

We spent time observing staff practices in the residential areas and in the classrooms. Staff carried out their roles in a calm, relaxed manner. Staff spent time with students on a one to one basis. They also had time to take people out into the local community. For example one student wanted to visit the local shops and a staff member was available straight away to assist the young person. One student said, "If I need to go out for anything the staff are available to support me."

Staff told us that before students were given online access, they completed training on safe internet usage. This meant students were protected against misuse of the internet and made more aware of computer system frauds and dangers and how it might affect them.

The risks of abuse to people were minimised because there were clear policies and procedures in place to protect



## Is the service safe?

people. The registered manager told us that all staff undertook training in how to safeguard adults during their induction period and there was regular refresher training for all staff.

Displayed on walls around the college were notices informing staff of forthcoming training in safeguarding adults. We also saw posters on notice boards giving details of who to contact if they had any concerns. Staff we spoke with said they had received training in how to recognise and report abuse. All were clear about how to report any concerns. Staff spoken with were confident that any allegations made would be fully investigated to ensure people were protected. One staff member we spoke with said, "We have had training around safeguarding people. It is always updated annually."

An innovative way of students understanding the safeguarding processes had been introduced by the 'student union'. This was in the form of a booklet explaining how to proceed if they felt an incident had occurred and wanted to raise a concern. The management team had supported the students to engage in the safeguarding processes. The booklet was also in picture format for people with specific communication needs. One student we spoke with said, "The booklet was developed by us and is in simple terms for people to follow if they wanted to report a safeguarding or complaint issue."

We checked recruitment procedures at the college. All the staff we spoke with told us that they could not commence work until all checks had been completed. These included Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check this highlights when a person had been charged with a criminal offence, what that offence was. It also provides information about

any issues or concerns that the provider should be aware of. One member of staff said, "The recruitment procedure was first class. They made sure everything was in place before I started at the college." The three staff files we checked confirmed employment documentation and checks were obtained prior to any staff member being employed.

Staff told us the service had an excellent programme for new employees. One staff member said, "The induction period was excellent we had to ensure we were competent in a number of areas during our probation period. The support and instructions were very good." Once staff commenced employment they were given a six month 'probation period'. During this time they should be competent against three practice checks. They included medication, moving and handling and eating and drinking. We were told this checklist list could be amended to suit individual staff. A staff member said, "It gave me confidence to carry out my role."

The college had policies in place in relation to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). The MCA and DoLS provide legal safeguards for people who may be unable to make decisions about their care. We spoke with the registered manager and staff members to check their understanding of MCA and DoLS. Staff had a good awareness of the code of practice and confirmed they had received training in these areas. A staff member said, "As a college our role in DoLS is different, however we are up to date with guidance and are aware of who to refer students to should the need arise."





# Is the service effective?

## Our findings

The service worked in innovative ways with the health services that students used, to improve service delivery and actively improve outcomes for individuals. For example a programme had been developed by staff employed at the college, occupational and physiotherapy staff, where students could have a one to one discussion about any aspect of their healthcare. This could involve a student who may want to know about what did being on the Autistic Spectrum mean. Also if they were querying the need for Physiotherapy. Staff told us the aim was that by providing the student with a clearer understanding of their disability, it could remove some of the fear and confusion. A staff member said, "It will promote independence for the student enabling them to make informed decisions about their care in the future." A student we spoke with said, "It is a good idea and helps me to understand more."

There was an induction programme and on-going training available to make sure all staff had the skills and knowledge to effectively meet people's needs. We spoke with new staff who said they were completing an induction programme and had opportunities to shadow more experienced staff. This meant that students were supported by staff that had up to date knowledge about how to provide effective care to people.

The college employed speech and Language, physio and occupational therapists to support the students. Students told us that therapists worked alongside the care staff from all over the college with them. This meant that students had available specialists to support them and provide the care they required. One student said, "The expertise available to help me shows how caring the college is to make my stay enjoyable and productive."

Staff members we spoke with confirmed they had access to a structured training and development programme. Mandatory training included, fire safety, safeguarding adults and first aid. One

staff member told us, "Training is excellent. The college is so forward thinking with the training. They provided training and instruction for individual staff that were supporting a student with a particular disability. They would resource the best training for staff to support them and understand the condition the person has so they can provide the best support and care possible." The college

employed in-house specialist trainers for the students. For example training provided by the speech therapist supported the use of alternative ways of communication. They provided training that was targeted at certain staff according to the needs of the students they were supporting. This was supplemented by student specific training and clear written plans were in place. The therapist also went into student settings such as residential lounges and the classrooms and demonstrated to staff, strategies to adopt. This ensured students were provided with knowledgeable staff, that would support and understand communication difficulties of some students. One staff member said, "The in-house trainers and speech therapists are so good and involve the students throughout the training."

Healthcare needs were monitored and discussed with the people using the service as part of the support planning development. This demonstrated that the college worked closely with other health and social care professionals such as doctors and social workers. This meant the staff took people's health seriously and responded to their individual needs. One student we spoke with said, "Any health appointments are always discussed with me and my family. The college are very good at keeping my appointments."

We examined a sample of completed assessments during the inspection and found they covered all aspects of people's needs. This included, education, personal support, and aspirations and goals to be achieved. The registered manager explained that careful consideration was given to the needs of the existing students so that there was minimum disruption when new students came to live at the college. The assessment system was innovative in the way existing students were included in new students that came to live at the service. For example the pre placement assessment of students process started twelve months prior to people coming to the college. Based on the students individual needs and preferences, this process involved existing students supporting new people on a one to one basis. There was access to overnight stays and a tour of the college. One student said, "I was nervous at first but the involvement of the staff and other students was fantastic it made me feel better."

The students we spoke with all said the choice, quality and availability of food was very good. One comment from a student was, "Absolutely great, lots of choice and plenty of



## Is the service effective?

home cooked meals.” Students told us they received varied, nutritious meals with healthy options available all the time. A student said, “We are fortunate to have excellent chefs here at the college.”

There was a choice of hot meals provided at lunchtime on the day of our inspection. We observed meals were well presented. We saw people were provided with the choice of where they wished to eat their meal. Some chose to eat in the dining room others in the lounge or their own room. The people we spoke with after lunch all said they had enjoyed their meal.

We observed lunch being served in a relaxed and unhurried manner. The ‘1 restaurant’ where meals were served was self-service and students were encouraged to be independent at meal times and to help themselves. We also observed that staff were available supporting people who required assistance and that this was carried out in a dignified sensitive way.

We spoke with the staff members responsible for the preparation of meals on the day of our visit. They confirmed they had information about special diets and

personal preferences. They were trained in preparation of different kinds of food preparation such as diabetic meals and religious foods. A staff member said, “We are aware of how to prepare different foods for people and ensure meals look appetising, and nutritious. “ The college provided vending machines for students with snacks and drinks available. We observed many students using this service. One student said, “It’s very good it gives us a choice and we can eat or drink when we want to”

The college provided innovative ways for students to learn cookery and be independent around the kitchen. For example, In a cookery session, the students were making jacket potatoes with a filling of their choice. As the students were unable to understand the written choice of filling, taste tests on the different fillings were provided. The students then proceeded to make the jacket potato with the filling they enjoyed. ‘I pads’ (these are hand held computers which can provide visual images, or electronic tablets) were being used so that students had sound and visual prompts to follow the recipes. A staff member said, “If a student enjoys cooking these sessions are fantastic.” Students we spoke with all enjoyed the classes.



# Is the service caring?

## Our findings

Students told us they had formed good relationships with staff. Comments from students included, “They are all so caring and helpful.” Also, “Always willing to help they really do care.” Another person said, “The staff are all excellent to me, always caring and helpful.”

As part of a management team initiative, ‘communication passports’ were carried by some of the people using the service. These papers detailed the students preferred method of communication, their likes and dislikes, possible behaviour trigger factors and suggested methods of de-escalating a situation. One staff member said, “It really helps the staff to understand students better who have communication difficulties. It helps us provide a more caring environment in that we understand everyone.”

Students were supported to express their views and wishes about all aspects of life at the college. We spoke with students involved in the ‘student union’ developed by the students to have a say in how they were treated and how the college operated. One student said, “We have a voice through the student union. The management and staff care about our views and this is a way of expressing them.”

The college had policies in place in relation to promote dignity and independence. We spoke with staff to gain an insight of how they understand students should be treated with respect. Staff gave examples of how to treat people with dignity. One staff member said, “You have to show willingness to listen and understand each student and treat each person as an individual.” A student we spoke with said, “All the staff are so caring and always treat me with respect and not as a child.”

We were shown around the college by the registered manager. We observed during the day staff knocked on people’s doors and would not enter until a student answered them. Students we spoke with all said staff were caring and respectful and would wait to be called in when entering their bedroom.

Each student had a key-worker. This was a designated member of staff assigned to a student so they could provide individual care and support for that particular

student. The registered manager ensured keyworkers were assigned to students based on knowledge and attributes that would benefit the student. For example we found attention was given to the matching of student-key-worker to ensure the best fit of experience, knowledge and personality. This practice provided a high degree of consistency and support for the student. “A student we spoke with said, “It is a very good system if I have a problem I can go straight to my keyworker, it helps me identify a person to talk with.”

We observed caring and supportive discussions between students and staff. For example one student expressed his wishes through signs that he wanted to go out to play with a football. The staff member was able to communicate with the student and both went into the grounds of the college once the member of staff had found a football.

The registered manager told us students had access to advocacy services. Also the student union group were there to offer support to people if they required this. Information about how the advocacy service operated and contact details were available to all students. The information was provided to students in the college information documentation.

Staff informed us that they involved the individual where there were any changes to students care planning or reviews in care taking place. We were consistently told that staff put students first and keep families and people informed of any changes to plans of support. A visiting relative we spoke with said, “The college is excellent at keeping us informed of any changes that need to be made and always invite us to any meetings we need to attend.”

Staff we spoke with had an in depth knowledge of the students despite new people attending the college annually. From our discussions with staff about individual students, they knew all about past histories, their preferences and hobbies. One staff member said, “It certainly helps having the one to one time with students. This is so we get to know people better. The management have enough of us around so we can get to know people better. It is an excellent place to work and support people I feel we are valued.”



# Is the service responsive?

## Our findings

We looked at the pre placement assessment process. This started 12 months prior to the student attending college. The process involved an individualised transition from their home environment to residential student accommodation, with access to overnight stays and a tour of premises where potential students were shown the facilities on offer.

Care plans were developed with the student as the focus of attention. They were person centred which meant much of the information was provided by the student themselves. For example personal, social and health information were documented in care plans. This meant staff had a good knowledge of individual personalities and what support they need to ensure they get the best out of the college facilities. One staff member said, "The plans are student driven they are the source of the care planning." A student we spoke with said, "I was asked by staff what my wishes and goals were when we went through everything. Nothing was agreed without me and family consent." We looked at three care plans and confirmed they were centred on the individual student and included the person's aspirations and preferred routines. Clear guidelines were evident for staff to follow on how to care and support students as they wanted.

Staff and the management team had high expectations and high ambitions for, their students and supported them to achieve extraordinary things within their capabilities. One staff member said, "The amount of skilled staff support in areas such as speech therapy and access to up to date IT systems give the student every chance to achieve something whilst they are at the college." For example students living in a residential service and having access to these services would help to benefit individuals when returning to community living. This Students experienced exceptional outcomes in terms of their quality of life after leaving the college and sustained an outstanding level of independence. For example students told us they had developed skills from professional people supporting them whilst living at the college. One student said, "They have helped me be more confident and independent with the staff expertise and facilities provided at the college." One student told us they were not able to use a computer before attending the college. However the staff had taught them the skills to use one which had given them more confidence to be independent in everyday life.

We spoke with students and visitors/relatives who gave us examples of how staff responded to people's needs. For example a new piece of equipment called Eye Gaze was available for use both in and out of the classroom. This was an eye-operated communication and control system that empowered people with disabilities to communicate. By looking at control keys or cells displayed on a screen, a student could generate speech either by typing a message or selecting pre-programmed phrases. We were given an example of a new student who had only just started at the college. The student, because of their physical disability previously could not communicate, but now could write short sentences. This meant students were able to become more independent. One staff member said, "Students with profound disabilities who could not request simple things are now able with the use of this equipment to control parts of their own life. It can only be good to promote independence." A student we spoke with said, "The equipment available to support people at the college for all students with different disabilities is amazing."

All students at the College received an IT access assessment from their named Assistive Technologist within their first term at the College. The purpose of this assessment was to put in place the required hardware and software solution to enable students to access computing in the most appropriate way. This involved the provision of appropriate keyboard and mouse alternatives and could involve the use of on screen keyboards that were accessed via eye-gaze or head mouse technologies that allowed people with complex communication needs to take control of a mouse pointer using their eye or head movements. The assistive technology system is designed to allow students to access computers as easily and as independently as possible in order for them to use computers for the purposes of communication, education and enjoyment. This process of assistive technology assessment and risk assessment combined helped students to benefit from access to computing technology and services in order to maximise their independence, learning and enjoyment. Students had access to equipment and services outside classroom time whilst living at the college.

Where students were using a high tech voice output communication aid, this was assessed by a combination of the student's named speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and assistive technologist. Many of the communication aids used by students were based on mainstream tablets or personal computers (PC's) which



## Is the service responsive?

were adapted appropriately according to each student's needs and wishes. Such devices enabled students to 'have a voice', to participate fully in college and community activity. Beaumont College operated an AAC (Alternative Augmentative Communication) community of practice which saw professionals including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, assistive technologists and teachers meeting together in order to conduct individual case reviews and to look at new technology options. This ensured that all students were getting the best professional help and support for their communication needs.

A number of bedrooms were equipped with Environmental Control Systems (ECS). These systems consisted of door openers, window openers, blind / curtain controls, lighting controls and the provision for the control of media equipment such as TV's, DVD players and music systems. These systems allow students to control their environment from their preferred interface, this could be a communication aid or wheelchair mounted tablet PC. The College ran a research project with an external telephone provider between 2010 and 2014 called 'Connect to Control' that had enabled the college to stay at the leading edge of ECS in order to ensure that all students who could benefit from this technology were as independent as possible within their living areas.

The activities that took place were innovative, so learning was enhanced and staff were excellent at supporting

students meet their individual goals. For example one student told us they were supported to maintain links with other colleges and organisations within the local community. This was done by use of the internet, visits to colleges and local community groups. Students confirmed to us they often visited other colleges to see how programmes were delivered and to develop relationships with students from these colleges. Staff accompanied students who wished to leave the college to go to local shops or buildings. The route would have been risk assessed, however when they go into a shop, staff would normally wait outside, as this promoted independence. One staff member said, "We are always enabling students to be as independent as they can be whilst out in the local areas."

We found the complaints process and documentation on how to raise a complaint was available in different formats. This was to ensure students could understand the procedure to make a complaint. For example one student who had raised a concern was assisted by the speech therapists using "talking mats" to explain what they had experienced. The staff were able to deal with the issues and respond direct to the student. People told us complaints or concerns were taken seriously by the registered manager and responded to. However when we asked students if they had any complaints during the visit they all said no. Comments included, "Nothing to complain about here we are treated so well."





# Is the service well-led?

## Our findings

The service had a clear management structure in place with a registered manager who was experienced and very familiar with the way the college operated. The registered manager had a detailed knowledge of students needs and aspirations. He said, “We know each individual has their own aims and goals and we provide the expertise and support to help them achieve this.”

We found by our observations and talking with people there were excellent partnerships between the residential part of the college and the education provision. This helped staff have a shared view of the role and purpose of the college and the students to experience a consistent and structured programme. One student who we talked with said, “All the staff work together to provide us with excellent support both socially and through the education programme.” Staff we spoke with felt valued, listened to and respected. Comments from staff included, “We are a team and all work together with great support from the management.”

We spoke with some of the professional health staff. They told us they felt ‘valued, listened to and respected’. One person said, “We are so well supported and managed by the therapies manager.” One of the speech therapists said, “We get brilliant support from management. They really value our input.”

We visited and spoke with staff in the following departments; music therapy, dance, cookery, art, speech and language, occupation therapy and physiotherapy, nursing and information technology (I.T.). Each and every staff member was enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their students and level of support they received from the management team, when they were not in the classroom environment.

As part of the ongoing development of the college, there was a ‘leadership team’. This team worked to ensure the college was meeting its strategic aims and the requirements of the organisation, CQC, and other funding authorities. The registered manager had a ‘quality improvement plan’ (QUIP). Key development areas were highlighted and progress was charted at set intervals. The QUIP headings included, teaching and learning, pioneer technology support for students and health and safety.

QUIP review meetings were held by the management team on a monthly basis to review progress being made and to act upon any findings so that the quality of the service provision continuously improved.

The college had weekly management meetings. These were used to ensure the quality of service was being monitored. Senior managers were involved from the organisation. Areas discussed at the meetings included, safeguarding adults, students development and health and safety. Any actions from these meetings were discussed with staff so they were aware of how the management team responded to any issues. One staff member said, “It shows the management team continuously try and improve the service and monitor what we are doing.”

The registered manager told us students were invited to management and staff meetings to provide their input and discuss how to improve the running of the college. This ensured the service involved everybody who had a stake at the service to be involved in developing the service. Students confirmed to us the attendance at these meetings.

Audits were carried out regularly including, maintenance of the building, staff training, care plans, infection control and health and safety. We saw records of audits that had been undertaken. Following any audits an action plan was developed for those areas that required attention or the registered manager wanted to improve. For example it was felt managers should spend more time in the residential areas The reason being that management should be more visible when students were out of the classroom environment. Also the registered manager to work more with staff on ‘duty shifts’. This was to be implemented and felt it would benefit staff and students with the management team being more available.

We spoke with students who told us they had regular meetings to voice their opinions on how the college was run and what could improve from a student point of view. One student said, “Through our regular student union meetings we discuss any issues that may have come to our attention. We also gather ideas of where we feel the college could improve”. For example more access to snacks and drinks from outside caterers in the form of vending machines was requested. The college responded by having more choices of vending machine for snacks and drinks. All students we spoke with said the registered manager and senior staff were approachable and willing to listen and act



## Is the service well-led?

upon suggestions that would improve the college from a student point of view. A student said, "Any time, day or night the staff and manager are available to talk to you. They will take any suggestions on board to make things better. I cannot say enough about how good this college is."

Student surveys were conducted annually. These were analysed by the registered manager and any negative comments that required attention would be acted upon. All surveys that we saw contained wholly positive comments. For example comments included, "A truly excellent place so glad I came here."

The registered manager had a system in place to record and monitor accidents and incidents. The system helped to ensure any repeated trends in accidents and incidents could be highlighted and acted upon to reduce risk.

The college had obtained a number of achievement awards. For example they had been awarded a 'recognised for excellence' by the 'European Foundation For Quality Management'. This looked at every aspect of management of the service and how audits impacted on the staff.