

Liaise (London) Limited

Birchwood House

Inspection report

97 Browning Road
Newham
London
E12 6RB

Tel: 02084719689
Website: www.sequencecaregroup.co.uk

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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
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Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Birchwood House is a residential care home providing personal care for up to seven people with autism or a learning disability. At the time of inspection there were four people using the service. The service was provided to people in one building across two floors.

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

We received information from a coroner raising concerns about fire safety at this provider's services. We inspected the service to check the fire safety arrangements. People were protected from the risks associated with a fire outbreak. There were enough staff on duty to manage in the event of an emergency. Staff had received training in fire safety and were knowledgeable about what to do if there was a fire. Fire detection systems and fire safety equipment were well maintained and regularly checked. People had personal emergency evacuation plans detailing their support needs in the event of an emergency.

People were protected from the risks associated with the spread of infection. Checks were carried out when visitors first entered the service. Staff wore personal protective equipment such as masks as required and encouraged visitors to wash their hands and wear masks.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk

Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was good (published 7 August 2020).

Why we inspected

We undertook this targeted inspection to check on fire safety at the service. The inspection was prompted in response to concerns received from a coroner following a death as the result of a fire in one of the provider's other services. A decision was made for us to inspect and examine those risks.

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.

We looked at infection prevention and control measures under the safe key question. We look at this in all care home inspections even if no concerns or risks have been identified. This is to provide assurance that the service can respond to COVID-19 and other infection outbreaks effectively.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service, which will help inform when we next inspect.

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 good. We have not reviewed the rating as we have not looked at all of the key question at this inspection.

Inspected but not rated

Birchwood House

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

This was a targeted inspection to check whether the provider had met the requirements for the specific concern we had about fire safety. We will assess all of the key question at the next comprehensive inspection of the service.

Inspection team

The inspection team consisted of two inspectors.

Service and Service Type

Birchwood House is a 'care home'. People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing and/or personal care as a single package under one contractual agreement dependent on their registration with us. Birchwood House is a care home without nursing care. CQC regulates both the premises and the care provided, and both were looked at during this inspection.

Registered Manager

This service is required to have a registered manager. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. 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.

Notice of Inspection

We gave the service 18 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because the service is small, and people are often out. We wanted to be sure the manager and staff would be in the office to support the inspection.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority. The provider was not asked to complete a Provider Information (PIR) prior to this inspection. A PIR is information providers send us to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke with three members of staff including the registered manager and two care staff. We reviewed a range of fire safety documents including the fire policy, fire risk assessment and fire alarm testing. We carried out observations to check the fire signage and the fire assembly point. We also checked the training staff received around fire safety. After the inspection, we continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found and we spoke with one staff member over the telephone.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm. At our last inspection we rated this key question good. We have not changed the rating of this key question, as we have only looked at the part of the key question, we had specific concerns about.

The purpose of this inspection was to explore the specific concerns we had about fire safety. We also looked at infection prevention and control. We will assess all of the key question at the next comprehensive inspection of the service.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- People were protected from the risks of being harmed in the event of a fire.
- Staff were knowledgeable about what actions to take in the event of a fire. One staff member said, "We would try to get them out and shout at the same time; help those who cannot walk to the assembly point but take care of yourself at the same time."
- Staff and records confirmed staff received fire safety training and face to face fire warden training during induction and then annually. One staff member said, "[The provider] tries to train all the staff so anyone leading the shift is a fire marshal."
- There were enough staff on duty to be able to support people in the event of an emergency. The provider was aware if more people began to use the service, an increase in staffing would be required.
- The building had clear evacuation routes adequately signposted to the fire assembly point. Records showed fire drills took place every three months.
- The service had three named staff members including the registered manager who carried out regular fire safety checks. The fire safety checks included checking daily that escape routes were clear.
- Records showed fire detection systems and fire signage were checked weekly, emergency lighting was checked monthly and the fire doors were checked quarterly.
- An external agency carried out annual checks of the fire alarms with the most recent check carried out on 2 June 2022. This resulted in a new smoke detector being installed in the ground floor lounge on the 8 August 2022.
- The provider had introduced planned preventative maintenance checks. We checked these and saw when an issue was identified, prompt action was taken. For example, when the kitchen door did not close on activation of the fire alarm, the registered manager reported it, and this was quickly fixed.
- Relevant building safety checks had been carried out as required. For example, portable appliance testing had been done on 1 February 2022 and a gas safety check was carried out on 10 June 2022.
- The service had a grab bag containing relevant information relating to people's needs which could be taken in the event of an emergency. The bag included torches, a high visibility vest and each person's personal emergency evacuation plan in an accessible format.
- The provider had a fire policy and fire risk assessment which gave clear guidance to staff about how to reduce the risk of a fire and what actions to take in the event of a fire.

Preventing and controlling infection

- We were assured that the provider was preventing visitors from catching and spreading infections.
- We were assured that the provider was supporting people living at the service to minimise the spread of infection.
- We were assured that the provider was using PPE effectively and safely.
- We were assured that the provider was responding effectively to risks and signs of infection.
- We were assured that the provider was promoting safety through the layout and hygiene practices of the premises.