

Lambs Support Services Limited

Bank Hall Farm

Inspection report

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Date of inspection visit: 26th November 2015
Date of publication: 30/12/2015

Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good



Is the service safe?

Good



Overall summary

We carried out an unannounced comprehensive inspection of this service in August 2014 and the service was rated as good.

After that inspection we received concerns in relation to how people were being supported and cared for at the service. Other concerns had been brought to our attention with regard to health and safety at the service. As a result we carried out an unannounced focused inspection on 26th November 2015. This report only covers our findings in relation to this topic. You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for 'Bank Hall Farm' on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

Bank Hall Farm can support up to seven adults with learning disabilities and autism. The service is located in a rural part of Winsford set back off a main road within its own grounds. All of the bedrooms are single and the service offers communal living space. Staff are on duty twenty-four hours a day.

The service has a registered manager. 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.

Relatives told us that staff were patient, kind, and supported people well. Comments included "The staff are lovely" and "The staff are very friendly."

Support plans were person centred and gave good information about the person's individual needs. They were well written and included a range of risk assessments which were tailored to each person's needs. Most assessments had been reviewed over the last six months, however some had been reviewed significantly longer. This was brought to the attention of the manager and they agreed to address this.

Summary of findings

People and relatives said they were safe in the support of the staff. Staff were aware of safeguarding policies and procedures and had undertaken safeguarding awareness training.

There were good staff recruitment processes in place which meant that people were protected from staff that

were unsuitable to work with people who may be deemed vulnerable. Staff had undertaken an induction process and had access to supervision sessions, staff meetings and training relevant to their job role.

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.

Relatives confirmed that people were safe and well cared for. Staffing levels showed that people were supported when they needed it. Relatives said staff were kind and caring towards the people who lived at Bank Hall Farm.

Good recruitment practices and processes were in place. Policies and procedures were in place to make sure that unsafe practice was identified quickly so that people were protected

Staff had received up to date training in safeguarding adults and policies and procedures were in place.

Good



Bank Hall Farm

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, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

We undertook a focused inspection of Bank Hall Farm on 26th November 2015 and this was unannounced. This inspection was completed to look at the issues raised by the local authority safeguarding team and other information we had received regarding health and safety at the service.

The inspection team consisted of one adult social care inspector.

We had received information from the local authority safeguarding team. This information included concerns that people were not being cared for appropriately and that they were not being treated with dignity and respect. Other concerns had been brought to our attention with regard to health and safety at the home.

We spoke with two staff members and the registered manager. We reviewed a range of records that included the care plan of one person who used the service and information relating to the health and safety of the service, staffing rotas, minutes of meetings and other associated documentation. We spoke with two relatives following the visit.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Relatives told us that their relatives were safe at the service. Comments included “[name] is safe here” and “It is a safe place to be.” Relatives also said that following improvements the security at the home was much better and they were pleased with the improvements made.

Staff said people were safe at the service and were well cared for. Other comments included “The quality of life for people is good and we help give purpose to people’s lives” and “We support people well and we are in tune with their needs.”

Following concerns that the senior staff member left the service with a person, leaving the service without senior support, we reviewed the staff rotas for the current week. These showed that there were usually eight staff on duty during the day. Staff explained that all people were on one to one support within the service and when out and about in the community there were two staff to each person. The registered manager said that staff usually covered each other at holiday times and during sickness and that they didn’t use any agency staff but had bank staff who they could call on for support. Staff told us they covered shifts for each other or bank staff were used. The registered manager confirmed that if they the staff were not able to cover a shift then activities outside the service would not be undertaken and this could have an impact on people who used the service. The registered manager said that a meeting had been held with the senior staff to ensure that this didn’t occur again. However the minutes of this meeting could not be located. A copy was sent following the inspection visit, however they were not dated and were a brief record of the meeting. A memo was issued following the inspection to all senior staff to remind them of their responsibility not to leave the service without a person in charge. A copy of this was forwarded to CQC following the inspection.

The recruitment processes within the service were reviewed and we saw two staff recruitment files. Each person had three files one each for recruitment, supervision and training. The recruitment files contained application forms with details of the person’s previous experience, two references, identity checks and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. A DBS is undertaken to ensure that staff are suitable to work with people who may be deemed vulnerable. Other information included the

questions asked and answers received during interviews. This meant that people who used the service were protected by robust recruitment processes. We saw that information within the recruitment files was disorganised and this made it difficult to find information. This was brought to the attention of the registered manager who said they would address this. Following the inspection the area manager stated that a system for personnel file contents to be organised will be in place for all files in the near future.

Staff told us that the induction process was good at the service. They said “The first couple of days were spent learning about the service and reading policies and procedures. Following this they “shadowed” an experienced staff member for two weeks and undertook a range of relevant training. Records seen confirmed this.

Relatives said that the management team was good and that the service was well managed. One relative said “We are consulted when new people move in, which is good” and “The senior staff team is stable and that is a good thing here.” Staff told us they were well supported by the management team and that there was always a senior person on duty. Staff commented that the manager was supportive and approachable. Staff said “The manager is easy to speak to” and “She is very supportive to the team.” Staff told us that they had regular supervision and that this was useful. One staff member said “Supervision is usually every eight weeks and the manager does this on a regular basis.” We reviewed two staff members’ supervision files and saw that one person had not received formal supervision for over twelve months. Following the inspection the area manager stated that this person’s supervision would be brought up to date as a matter of priority. However some actions from the recent safeguarding meeting had not been actioned and these were discussed with the registered manager at this inspection. She stated she had not received a copy of the minutes of the meeting. She said that she would contact the safeguarding team for a copy of the minutes and action any issues that had been raised.

We spoke with staff about how they would keep people safe. They told us about the types of abuse that could occur and how they would report any concerns they had to the senior person on duty. One staff member said “I would report concerns to my line manager but if I wasn’t happy I would contact the safeguarding team or CQC.” Staff said

Is the service safe?

they had undertaken safeguarding awareness training and records confirmed this. We saw the registered provider had copies of the local authorities safeguarding policy and procedure. The registered manager had notified CQC of recent safeguarding referrals and we noted that appropriate documentation had been completed. This included a management report of a recent incident with recommendations of actions to be taken.

Relatives said that people were well supported by the staff team. The staff knew people well and were aware that when there were new staff or people then people could get upset or disturbed by this. One relative said that “Staff are very aware that when there are changes in the service this can have an adverse effect on people and it is well managed here.” People had very complex needs and staff explained how they supported each person and that people’s needs were very different. It was evident that they knew the people they supported very well. They showed their understanding of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty’s Safeguards (DoLS) and how this was applied using the “best interest” decisions. They explained that they had undertaken a range of training to support their knowledge and this included autism awareness, epilepsy, managing challenging behaviour, Proact SCIP (Proactive range of options to Avoid Crisis and use Therapy Strategies for Crisis Intervention and

Prevention) and the NHS positive behaviour support programme. Records confirmed this. This helped ensure that people received safe care from appropriately trained staff.

Risk assessments were completed for a range of activities. We reviewed one person’s care plan documentation and saw a wide range of assessments in place. These included safety in the home and community; home visits; injury to self and others; cycling and behaviour and anxiety. Most assessments had been reviewed over the last six months, however some had been reviewed significantly longer. This was brought to the attention of the manager and they agreed to address this.

Records showed that accident and incidents were recorded and a monthly log sheet completed. This enabled the registered manager to look for themes and trends within the service. The form showed the type of incident occurred and what further action was taken.

Following the visit the regional manager produced an action plan of the issues raised during the inspection and it was noted that they had taken the issues raised on board and stated that improvements would be made where necessary. For example the improvement to the recruitment files by reorganising the information and using a contents list; by ensuring that staff supervisions were brought up to date; and by ensuring that all staff were aware of the emergency plan for senior staff regarding not leaving the building without a senior person in charge