

Access for Living

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Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service effective?

Good ●

Is the service caring?

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

This inspection took place on 5 October 2016 and was announced. When we last visited the service on 25 September 2014, we found the service was meeting all the regulations we looked at.

Access for Living provides care and support to people with learning disabilities, mental ill health, physical and sensory impairment in their own homes and supported living schemes in the London Borough of Lewisham. At the time of our inspection, 39 people were accommodated in supported living schemes and 27 people were being supported in their own home.

The service had 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.

People were safe. Medicines were managed safely. Risk assessments identified the risks to people and how these could be prevented. Staff were available to meet people's needs.

People were involved in decisions about their care and how their needs would be met. Managers and staff had received training on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Services should only deprive someone of their liberty when it is in the best interests of the person and there is no other way to look after them, and it should be done in a safe and correct way.

Staff had access to ongoing training. They were knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities. They had the skills and knowledge to meet people's support needs.

People were supported to eat and drink. Staff supported people to attend healthcare appointments and liaised with their GP and other healthcare professionals as required to meet people's needs.

People received individualised support that met their needs. Staff knew how to respond to people's needs in a way that promoted their individual preferences and choices regarding their care.

People were treated with dignity and respect. Staff understood people's preferences, likes and dislikes regarding their care and support needs. Care was planned and delivered in a way that enhanced people's safety and welfare according to their needs and preferences.

People, relatives and staff said the manager was approachable and supportive. Systems were in place to monitor the quality of the service. People felt confident to express any concerns and that these would be addressed.

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. People were safe and free from harm. There were processes in place to ensure people were protected from abuse and staff were aware of safeguarding adults procedures.

Assessments were undertaken to mitigate risks to people who used the service and staff. Written plans were in place to manage these risks.

Medicines were managed safely.

There were appropriate staffing levels to meet the needs of people who used the service.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective. Staff were supported through induction, supervision, appraisal and training.

Staff understood the principles of the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and supported people to make decisions appropriately.

People were supported with food and drink appropriately.

The service worked with health and social care professionals to ensure people's needs were met.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring. People were involved in their care and were complimentary about the care they received. They told us that staff were kind, caring and respected their privacy and dignity.

People told us they were involved in making decisions about their care and support needs.

People's privacy and dignity were maintained.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive. People's care was assessed prior to

care being delivered by the service.

Care plans detailed the support people required and how to meet their needs.

People and their relatives knew how to raise concerns and complaints and these were investigated and responded to in line with the provider's complaints policy.

Is the service well-led?

The service was well-led. Staff told us they were supported by management of the service. The culture of the service was open and transparent.

The registered manager regularly checked the quality of the service provided and ensured people were happy with the service they received.

Audits and checks were undertaken and improvements were made as a result.

Good ●

Access for Living

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.

This inspection took place on 5 October 2016. This was an announced inspection and the provider was given 48 hours notice. The inspection was carried out by a single inspector.

Prior to the inspection we reviewed the information we held about the service. This included information sent to us by the provider, about the staff and the people who used the service. 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. We spoke with the local Healthwatch about any information they may have that was relevant to the inspection.

We spoke with four people who used the service, two service and development managers, a service manager, seven support workers and the registered manager.

We also looked at a sample of five care records of people who used the service, nine medicine administration records, eight staff records and records related to the management of the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

There were arrangements in place to protect people from the risk of abuse. People who used the service and relatives told us that they felt safe and could raise any concerns they had with staff. One person said, "I am safe." Information regarding who to contact if people or their relatives had concerns about the way they were treated by the service was available in the information pack that people and relatives had about the service.

Staff understood the service's policy regarding how they should respond to safeguarding concerns. They understood how to recognise potential abuse and who to report their concerns to both in the service and to external authorities such as the local safeguarding team and the Care Quality Commission. A relative said, "The staff ask if I have any concerns."

Staff had received training in safeguarding adults. No safeguarding concerns had been raised in the last year.

People told us they were involved in discussing risks and making choices about how to be safe. People's care records included a risk screening tool, which identified the individual risks in relation to people's health and risks which may occur whilst they were in different situation such as when they were using kitchen equipment.

The service had then developed plans to reduce the risks of harm and reviewed these regularly with the involvement of the person to ensure they were still effective.

Staff we spoke with had a good understanding of how to manage risks positively for each person they supported. They told us they followed risk management plans and had the opportunity to discuss risk management during team meetings. Care records demonstrated staff had followed the individual risk management guidelines which were in place.

There were sufficient staff. People who used the service and relatives told us that the availability of staff was tailored to meet their individual needs. One person said, "The staff are very reliable and flexible." We were told that carers usually arrived on time. Relatives and people said that they were told when staff were delayed and would be arriving late. The registered manager explained that as part of people's assessment before they used the service it was agreed with them how much staff support they needed each day. Initial assessments and care plans identified when and for how long staff would visit people. Care plans also specified the care needs that staff would support people with.

Safe recruitment procedures were in place that ensured staff were suitable to work with vulnerable adults as staff had undergone the required pre-employment checks before starting to work at the service. We looked at the files staff who had recently been recruited to work with people who used the service. These files contained disclosure and barring checks, two references and confirmation of their identity.

People who used the service had support from staff in relation to their medicines. People told us they

received their medicines safely. Staff said when it was identified that people required support to receive their medicines they followed the provider's medicines administration procedures.

Records and discussions with staff showed that they had been trained in the administration of medicines. Arrangements were in place for recording the administration of medicines. These records were clear and fully completed.

The records showed people were getting their medicines when they needed them. There were no gaps on the medicines administration records (MAR) and reasons were recorded for not giving people their medicines. Staff told us how medicines were obtained and we saw that supplies were normally available to enable people to have their medicines when they needed them.

Staff said charts were completed by them to confirm people had received their medicines as prescribed. People's MAR charts were checked as part of regular monitoring visits carried out by the management team to people's homes to ensure they received their medicines as prescribed.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People who used the service received effective care as staff had the necessary knowledge and skills to meet their needs. People and relatives told us that staff understood and knew how to meet their needs. One person said, "Staff are trained to cope with the work" Staff said that the training they received enabled them to meet people's needs effectively.

One person told us, "Staff getting training." The training matrix showed that all staff had completed the necessary mandatory training (for example, infection-control, food hygiene and first aid). Refresher training had also been planned so that staff maintained their skills and knowledge in these areas. All staff had also completed the Health and Social Care Diploma.

Records showed all new staff received induction training before they were allowed to work on their own. The induction included a number of days of classroom which covered key policies, staff code of conduct and shadowing for as long as is needed where new staff worked with an experienced member of staff to learn the practical aspects of the job. Staff also completed the care certificate as part of their induction which is a set of standards that social care and health workers adhere to in their daily working life. Staff were given a copy of the organisation's staff handbook when they started so they could refer to it when required. This meant that staff were provided with the training and support they required to do their jobs effectively.

Staff told us they felt supported. Staff were supported through regular supervisions from their team supervisors every three months to discuss any issues they faced at work and concerns about the people they looked after. We saw copies of supervision notes and they covered discussions about the well-being of people using the service, performance issues, training and time keeping. Staff were also appraised yearly by their supervisors.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making particular decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that as far as possible people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA.

People and relatives told us staff asked them what they wanted and waited for permission from them before they supported them. Staff told us they always explained what they were doing and sought consent from the person before they carried out any task. They told us that where necessary they liaised with people's relatives if they had concerns about the person's ability to make a decision or choice.

Staff said they found various strategies to work with people around their decisions and choices. For example, if a person did not want to have their personal care when it was due, they would leave it and ask them again in a different way later. Staff understood the communication needs of people and demonstrated

skills to communicate with them. For example, they said they would use simple words and body language.

Staff understood how a 'best interests' decision should be made if people were unable, even with support to make a decision. They explained that the family, GP and social worker would be involved in a joint review meeting. Staff had completed a formal training on the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA). MCA assessments were carried out.

People told us when staff supported them with meals they were able to choose what they ate. The care plan for one person said they wanted staff that were able to cook meals from their cultural background and the registered manager told us this was arranged. People's nutritional needs were assessed and when they had particular preferences regarding their diet these were recorded in their care plan.

Where necessary we saw that people had been referred to the dietitian or speech and language therapist if they were having difficulties swallowing. People's weight was being recorded in their care plans. Where people needed support with their nutritional needs their fluid and food intake was being monitored.

People told us the service supported them with their healthcare needs. People told us that they had been able to see their general practitioner when they wanted. When they asked staff to contact their GP this was done promptly.

Care records demonstrated that the service had worked jointly with health professionals to meet people's needs. The registered manager told us the service worked closely with other care providers. The service also contacted the local authority and other professionals to assist people to get mobility equipment.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People and their relatives said that staff were caring and supported them to express their views about how their needs should be met. One person said, "The staff are kind and respectful." Staff spoken with knew the preferences and personal histories of people who used the service. This included whether or not they wanted same gender care. The duty manager explained this was a question asked when people started using the agency.

People and their relatives told us they had been involved in the care planning process and had been visited in their homes prior to receiving care. People were provided with copies of their care plans and information regarding the provider's policies on choice, confidentiality and complaints management.

Staff told us they gave people privacy whilst they undertook aspects of personal care, asking people how they would like things done and making enquiries on their well-being to ensure people were comfortable.

People were supported to maintain their personal, cultural and religious needs. Care plans recorded people's requirements in relation to communication needs and preferred spoken language. People told us they were matched with staff from similar background to enable their needs to be met appropriately. People's communications needs were recorded and staff had guidelines on how to communicate with people appropriately.

Staff understood people's needs with regards to their disabilities, race, sexual orientation and gender and supported them in a caring way. Care records showed that staff supported people to practice their religion and helped to attend community groups that reflected their cultural backgrounds.

People and relatives told us that they understood and had been involved in making decisions about their care and support. All the care plans we looked at had been signed by either the person or their relatives to ensure that they agreed with the care and support people received.

People told us they had the same carers for each visit. This meant that people were able to develop relationships with the staff that cared for them and received continuity of care.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People and relatives told us they were involved in planning and reviewing of their needs. One relative said, "Staff spent time finding out what help my relative needed before they provided any support." Care plans were detailed and gave staff information about people's care needs and their preferences regarding how they wanted to be supported. Care plans were in place to address people's identified needs. Care plans had been reviewed monthly or more frequently such as when a person's condition had changed, to keep them up to date. Staff explained how they met people's needs in line with their care plans.

Care plans included a detailed account of all aspects of people's care, including personal and medical history, likes and dislikes, recent care and treatment and the involvement of family members.

People told us they knew the content of their care plan and were involved in planning their support. Care plans detailed people's care visit times, the duration of the visits and the tasks to be undertaken. Care records showed that people's care visit times had been increased when required to reflect their needs. Staff understood the importance of recording changes in people's needs.

The provider responded to people's changing circumstances. Relatives told us they were able to change their support visit times and stop and restart the care package as they wished. Each person had a care plan that was tailored to meet their individual needs. Care plans reflected how people were supported to receive care and treatment in accordance with their needs and preferences.

Care records contained a pre-assessment document, which showed people's needs had been assessed before they decided to use the agency. People confirmed that someone from the agency had visited them to carry out an assessment of their needs. These assessments had ensured that the agency only supported people whose care needs could be met. One person said, "The staff are reliable, the care is good and I could not imagine having anyone else." "They are very supportive, always there."

People's needs were being regularly reviewed by the agency with the person receiving the service and their relatives. Where these needs had changed, usually because someone had become more dependent, the agency had made changes to the person's care plan. We saw a number of examples of this including an increase in care hours when someone's care needs increased. People told us that they could call the agency if they needed an extra hour or two of care and that this was provided when required.

People and their relatives knew how to make a complaint about the service. People and their relatives had been given a copy of complaints policy so that they knew what to do if they wanted to make a complaint about the service. One relative told us, "Staff are always do to things the right way." The complaint records showed that when issues had been raised these had been investigated and feedback given to the people concerned. Complaints were used as part of ongoing learning by the service, so that improvements could be made to the care and support people received.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

We observed that there was an open and positive culture in the service. Staff, people and relatives told us that the service had a management team that was approachable and took action to address any concerns that they raised. One person told us, "When you call the office the staff will respond help you." Staff were approachable and engaged positively with people and relatives.

Staff were positive about the management and told us they appreciated the clear guidance and support they received. Staff told us the registered manager was open to any suggestions they made and they had benefited from clearer communication from the registered manager about how they should prioritise their work.

Supervision records showed that staff training and development needs had been identified. Staff told us that the supervision they received enabled them to understand and improve the way they met people's care needs.

People and their relatives were consulted about decisions on how the service should be developed. A survey had been carried out in the last year and responses were generally positive regarding how the service listened to people's views and involved them in decisions about their care. People were also involved in decisions about the service was developed. They were able to share their views of the service and that action had been taken to address any issues they had raised.

Staff knew where and how to report accidents and incidents. Accidents and incidents had been reviewed by the registered manager and action taken to make sure that any risks identified were addressed. Two of these accidents showed that, where necessary, people had been referred to their GP or the district nurse for further treatment and review. Accidents and incidents were monitored so that the risks to people's safety were appropriately managed. All accident and Incident forms are reviewed, commented on and signed off by the Chief Executive.

Regular auditing and monitoring of the quality of care was taking place. This included spot-checks on the care provided by staff to people in their homes and in supported living. These checks were recorded and any issues were addressed with staff in their supervision. Quarterly audits were carried out across various aspects of the service, these included the administration of medicines, care planning and training and development. Where these audits identified areas for improvements records showed that an action plan had been put in place and any issues had been addressed.