

Prime Life Limited

Fir Close

## Inspection report

2 Westgate  
Louth  
Lincolnshire  
LN11 9YH

Tel: 01507603882  
Website: [www.prime-life.co.uk](http://www.prime-life.co.uk)

Date of inspection visit:  
07 April 2021

Date of publication:  
22 April 2021

### Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service caring?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

### About the service

Fir Close is a care home providing accommodation and personal care for people with dementia, learning disability, mental health needs or physical disabilities. The care is provided in two separate buildings. The service can support up to 40 people. There were 28 people living at the service at the time of the inspection.

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

People living at the service were safe. The risks to their safety were assessed and measures put in place to reduce them. They were supported by a caring group of staff who received appropriate training for their roles and had been safely recruited. There was enough staff to meet people's needs.

People's medicines were well managed, and people were protected from the risks of infection as staff followed safe infection prevention and control practices when they supported people.

People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

People received care in a person-centred way from a staff group who knew their needs well. Staff worked to support people with their independence and treated them with respect.

There were processes in place to maintain the quality of the service through quality monitoring processes. The registered manager was visible and managed the service in an open and transparent way. Staff felt supported by her, and relatives felt able to raise any issues or concerns with her.

We expect health and social care providers to guarantee autistic people and people with a learning disability the choices, dignity, independence and good access to local communities that most people take for granted. Right Support, right care, right culture is the statutory guidance which supports CQC to make assessments and judgements about services providing support to people with a learning disability and/or autistic people.

This service was able to demonstrate how they were meeting the underpinning principles of Right support, right care, right culture. People received personalised care. They were involved in planning their care to ensure the structure of their daily lives was as far as possible supported by their own choices.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

The last rating for this service was Good (published 25 April 2019)

### Why we inspected

We received concerns in relation to the management of people's care needs, staff training and staff attitude. As a result, we undertook a focused inspection to review the key questions of safe, caring and well-led only. We reviewed the information we held about the service. No areas of concern were identified in the other key questions. We therefore did not inspect them. Ratings from previous comprehensive inspections for those

key questions were used in calculating the overall rating at this inspection.

We found no evidence during this inspection that people were at risk of harm from this concern. Please see the safe, caring and well led sections of this full report.

You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Fir Close on our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk).

#### Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our re-inspection programme. If we receive any concerning information we may inspect sooner.

## 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.

Details are in our safe findings below.

### Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

Details are in our caring findings below.

### Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

Details are in our well-Led findings below.

# Fir Close

## Detailed findings

### Background to this inspection

#### The inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

As part of this inspection we looked at the infection control and prevention measures in place. This was conducted so we can understand the preparedness of the service in preventing or managing an infection outbreak, and to identify good practice we can share with other services.

#### Inspection team

The inspection was carried out by one inspector

#### Service and service type

Fir Close is a 'care home'. People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing or personal care as a single package under one contractual agreement. CQC regulates both the premises and the care provided, and both were looked at during this inspection.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. 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.

This inspection was unannounced.

#### 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 who work with the service. The provider was not asked to complete a provider information return prior to this inspection. This is information we require providers to send us to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We took this into account when we inspected the service and made the judgements in this report.

#### During the inspection

We spoke with one person who used the service and four relatives about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with eleven members of staff including a regional manager, registered manager, senior care workers, care workers, housekeeper and kitchen staff.

We reviewed a range of records. This included two people's care records and multiple medication records. We looked at four staff files in relation to recruitment and staff supervision. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures were reviewed.

#### After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found. We looked at training data and quality assurance records.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question remained the same. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse; Learning lessons when things go wrong.

- People were protected from the risks of abuse as staff were aware of the types of abuse people could be exposed to. Staff were clear in their responses about how they would address any concerns. All staff we spoke with told us they would be able to report any issues to the registered manager and were confident she would take appropriate action. They had received regular training about keeping people safe and knew how to report issues to the local authority safeguarding team.
- Relatives we spoke with were confident in the staff who cared for their family members. They told us through the COVID-19 lockdown staff had communicated with them very well and informed them of any issues around their family member's wellbeing.
- The registered manager had clear processes in place to learn from events at the service. Staff told us events were discussed at supervisions and staff meetings.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- People living at the service were supported to manage the risks to their safety. Staff knew people well and followed the guidance in their care plans and risk assessments to provide safe care.
- Staff talked about supporting people to remain as independent as possible and gave examples of how they achieved this. For example, one person had some visual problems but preferred to manage as much of their care as they could. Staff talked about how they ensured the person was able to safely move around their room and how it was situated opposite the linen cupboard as the person preferred to make their own bed.
- The environmental risks to people's safety were managed. The registered manager undertook a walk round the service each day and highlighted areas of concern. They also walked around with the maintenance person to ensure outstanding maintenance work was completed. People had personal emergency evacuation profiles (PEEP's) in place highlighting the level of support they required, and staff were aware of their roles should people need evacuating from the service.

Staffing and recruitment

- Staff told us there were enough staff on each shift to allow them to meet people's needs. They felt supported by the senior care staff and the registered manager. Newer members of staff told us they had received a supported induction when they started work at the service. One staff member who was new to care told us they had been very well supported not only by the registered manager but by their colleagues. They felt their training had prepared them for their role.
- Throughout our visit we saw staff interacting well with people, the atmosphere at the service was calm and people were not waiting for care.
- Safe recruitment processes were in place to ensure people were supported by fit and proper staff. Staff

files showed the registered manager had used the disclosure and barring service (DBS) to make checks to ensure potential staff had no criminal convictions which could affect people's safety.

#### Using medicines safely

- The processes in place for supporting people with their medicines were safe.
- Staff received training in safe handling of medicines and people received the appropriate level of support they required.
- People received their medicines as prescribed and in a way they chose.
- Medicines were stored safely and in line with manufacturer's instructions. There were regular checks on the environment such as room and fridge temperatures to ensure they were within the safe range for medicines to maintain their effectiveness.
- There were protocols in place for medicines that were taken on an 'as required' basis.

#### Preventing and controlling infection

- During our visit we saw improvements could be made to the laundry to better enhance infection prevention and control, through the layout, and staff practices. The registered manager was responsive and following our inspection sent us evidence to show they had made the necessary improvements.
- We were assured that the provider was preventing visitors from catching and spreading infections.
- We were assured that the provider was meeting shielding and social distancing rules.
- We were assured that the provider was admitting people safely to the service.
- We were assured that the provider was using PPE effectively and safely.
- We were assured that the provider was accessing testing for people using the service and staff.
- We were assured that the provider was making sure infection outbreaks can be effectively prevented or managed.
- We were assured that the provider's infection prevention and control policy was up to date.



# Is the service caring?

## Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people were supported and treated with dignity and respect; and involved as partners in their care.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- People were treated with respect and kindness. Throughout our visit we saw positive interactions between people and staff who clearly knew their needs.
- Relatives we spoke with told us staff were very caring. One relative said, "The staff are excellent, (I am) totally 100% happy." They went on to tell us about how staff had worked to improve their relative's quality of life. Staff had supported the person and relatives to learn Makaton and this had helped improve their communication skills. Due to an injury the person had not been mobile when they were admitted to the service and staff had worked with the person to help them become more mobile.
- The registered manager treated people and their relatives in an individualised way. A relative told us how the staff continued to work with them to allow them to visit their family member during the Covid-19 lockdown due to the continued serious deterioration of the person's health. They told us they followed the guidelines to ensure safety but having this time with their family member had been very much appreciated.
- Staff told us they enjoyed working at the service, they were happy with the attitude of their colleagues and felt this attitude came from the registered manager. Several staff likened their relationships with people and other colleagues as being part of a family all looking out for each other.

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care.

- People were supported to express their views about their care. Their wishes and choices were considered, and staff gave examples of how people took the lead in their day to day decisions. Such as choosing, when they wanted to go to bed or get up, the clothes they wore and when they wanted help with personal care. One person preferred to wear a housecoat each day, staff told us that was their choice and they respected that.
- Records showed both people and their relatives had been involved in care planning. The registered manager involved people, relatives and key workers to ensure the information in people's care plans reflected people's views and choices on their care.
- The registered manager told us some people were using the service of an advocate at the time of the inspection. Advocates are trained professionals who support, enable and empower people to speak up about issues that affect them. The registered manager felt it was important to support people with this service as some people did not have any close family to support them.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- People's privacy, dignity and independence was maintained by the staff who supported them.
- Throughout our visit we saw staff spoke with people in a respectful way, we saw staff maintaining people's

privacy and dignity when they provided care. People were able to spend time privately when they wished.

- Staff were very clear about how they worked to support people but encourage their independence. One member of staff gave an example of a person who struggled to pick a cup up but could hold it and preferred to do this. She told us she would offer the cup to the person to hold and sit with them while they drank.

# Is the service well-led?

## Our findings

Well-Led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people

- The registered manager and her staff worked with people and their relatives to provide an open, person centred approach to the care people received.
- Throughout our visit interactions between staff and people were clearly person orientated, and there were examples of how this had led to good outcomes for people. Such as, people engaging with activities or being supported with their meals. The comments from relatives about the care provided were all positive. People and their relatives were aware of who the registered manager was, and felt they were able to talk with them about any issues of concern.
- Staff told us the registered manager was approachable and open. they worked to encourage a positive culture at the service.

How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong

- Relatives told us the registered manager communicated any events or concerns with them in a prompt way. If there had been any incidents involving their family member the registered manager was open and clearly worked to support the person.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; Continuous learning and improving care.

- People's care needs were closely monitored and measures in place to support people's changing needs effectively. For example, a monthly analysis of falls and people's weight, had established trends or patterns, and clearly identified measures were in place for people to offer the best support.
- The quality monitoring system also included audits of the environment. When issues had been identified an action plan was in place and we saw the actions were completed in a timely way.
- The registered manager told us she had been working with her regional manager and another registered manager to further improve her quality monitoring. We saw evidence of this work during our inspection.
- The registered manager notified CQC of events in line with their registration responsibilities.
- It is a legal requirement that a provider's latest CQC inspection report is displayed at the service and via their website, where a rating has been awarded. This is so that people and those seeking information about the service can be informed of our judgments. We noted the rating from the previous inspection was displayed on the provider's website and at the service.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics

- Relatives told us the registered manager and her team had worked to keep them informed throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. They supported them to have as much contact with their family members as they could within the government guidelines. As soon as they were able the registered manager worked to make areas of the service safe for socially distanced visits.
- Staff told us the registered manager held regular staff meetings to keep them up to date. They told us they were able to raise things with the registered manager. One staff member gave an example of how they had raised about one person who wanted their main meal in the evening. They told us the registered manager listened and following the meeting arranged the changes.

Working in partnership with others

- There was evidence of the registered manager and her staff working with other health professionals to ensure good outcomes for people. This included people's GP, the falls team and the speech and language therapy team (SALT).