

Harrow Council

Harrow Council - Harrow Shared Lives

Inspection report

PO Box 7
Adults & Housing Services
Civic Centre
Harrow
Middlesex
HA1 2UH
Tel: 020 8736 6070
Website: www.harrow.gov.uk

Date of inspection visit: 26 & 27 February 2015
Date of publication: 16/04/2015

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	

Overall summary

We carried out this inspection on 26 and 27 February 2015. This inspection was announced. This meant that we gave the service short notice so that management and staff were available to assist with our inspection. During our last inspection on 4 December 2013 we found the provider to be compliant with all assessed regulations.

The Shared Lives Scheme (SLS) recruits, trains and supports Shared Lives Carers (SLC's) who provide personal care and support for people within their own family homes in the community; enabling them to live as independently as possible. When we visited the SLS was supporting 27 people who lived in family homes and 37 approved SLC's. The scheme caters for people aged over

Summary of findings

18 who have a disability and for older adults with care needs. Shared Lives Workers (SLW) were employed by the scheme to assess, monitor and support SLC's. The scheme employed two social workers, one project co-ordinator and two registered managers.

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 told us the service was safe and relatives confirmed they felt their relatives were safe using the SLS. SLW's and carers showed an understanding of how they could keep people safe. People told us they were encouraged to raise concerns about their safety.

SLW's and carers understood how to recognise and respond to suspected abuse and understood their responsibility to report any concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of people.

SLW's and carers understood the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and put them into practice. People could make decisions about the care they received, and risk assessments were in place to support people to have a choice in how they were supported to meet their needs.

There were safe recruitment practices because appropriate pre-employment checks were completed by Harrow Council and shared lives workers prior to Shared Lives Carers being approved into the scheme.

People were supported by SLW's and carers who had the necessary skills and knowledge to meet their assessed needs.

SLW's and carers were supported in their role and had regular supervisions with their manager or shared lives worker.

People were involved in choosing the shared lives carer they wanted to live with and were involved in decisions about their nutrition and hydration needs. People were supported to receive healthcare services.

SLW's and carers involved and treated people with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect. People were listened to, felt they mattered and spoke positively of their experience with feeling involved in their care.

People's needs were regularly assessed by the SLW's and their records updated. People and their shared lives carers were involved in the assessment of their needs. Reviews took place regularly and people were involved in the reviews. Care plans were personalised and people had signed to indicate they had been involved in putting their plan of care together.

People had access to activities or employment opportunities that were important to them.

People knew how to make a complaint and complaints had been received and dealt with by shared lives officers and responded to in good time.

There was a clear management structure at the service. SLW's were supported by a registered manager and were aware of the roles of the management team.

People told us the service was well managed. People and SLC's confirmed they understood their right to share any concerns with the shared lives officers about the care and support provided.

Incidents were recorded and this information was used to monitor, investigate and take the appropriate action to reduce the risk of them happening again.

Feedback was sought from SLW's, SLC's and people through annual questionnaires and this feedback was used to make changes and improvements to the service.

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. People told us that they were happy and safe.

The provider had systems in place that ensured SLC's had suitable checks in place before becoming an approved carer.

Safeguarding procedures were in place and all staff knew about their responsibility to protect people from the risk of harm.

Medicines were managed safely and SLC's had received training in the safe administration of medicines.

Good



Is the service effective?

The service was effective. Staff had the knowledge and skills needed to support people effectively.

People who used the service were able to consent to any aspects of their care and SLC's sought additional support if people had problems in making independent decisions.

People were provided with a varied diet, which they were in control of with the support from their SLC's.

People received the support they needed to maintain good health and wellbeing.

Good



Is the service caring?

The service was caring. SLW's and SLC's involved and treated people with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.

People, their relatives and professionals were positive about the care and support received from SLW's and carers.

People were listened to, felt they mattered and spoke positively of their experience with feeling involved in their care.

People's dignity was respected and they had privacy when they wanted.

Good



Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive. People's needs were regularly assessed by shared lives workers and care plans updated. People and shared lives carers were involved in the assessment and review of their needs.

People had access to activities or employment opportunities that were important to them.

People and their relatives told us they felt confident to express concerns and if they had any issues they knew who to complain to.

Good



Is the service well-led?

The service was well-led. There were clear management structures in place.

Good



Summary of findings

SLW's and SLC's were aware of the roles of the management team and people told us the scheme was well managed.

Incidents were recorded and this information was used to monitor, investigate and take the appropriate action to reduce the risk of them happening again.

The SLS sought feedback from the SLC's and people through annual questionnaires and regular meetings, this feedback was used make changes and improvements to the service.

Harrow Council - Harrow Shared Lives

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 26 & 27 February 2015 and was announced. The provider was given 48 hours' notice because the location provides a shared lives service. We needed to be sure someone was available.

One inspector carried out this inspection.

Before our inspection, we reviewed all the information we held about the scheme and the provider.

We spoke with four people who used the service and one relative. We also spoke with one registered manager, one project co-ordinator and three Shared Lives Carers.

We reviewed a range of care records and support plans for four people who used the service and records about how the service was managed.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People who used the service told us that they were safe with their SLC's. Comments made by people who used the service included "I am very safe here, my carer looks after me very well, I would not change anything." Another person made similar comments "My carer is always available when I need her, I feel very safe with her." The relative spoken with told us "We are very happy with the placement, my relative is so much happier and the carer makes sure my relative is safe."

All the SLC's we spoke with told us that they had the information they needed to make sure that risks to people were well managed. They told us that they had received the training they needed. They talked through some examples of managing risks and told us that there were support mechanisms in place from the scheme to support them with any difficult or emergency situations.

One carer told us, "Yes, it is safe; [Harrow Shared Lives] have never let me down. They contact us almost daily to discuss anything with us. People we support become part of our family, we go to family functions together and they know my children and grandchildren." Care records showed that people and their relatives, shared lives workers, carers and other professionals were involved in determining the risks associated with people's care and support needs. This meant that shared lives carers had the skills, knowledge and support they needed which ensured people would be supported safely.

We saw records confirming that there was a process of approval in place to ensure that shared lives carers were suitable for their role. This included health and safety checks of the property to ensure it was safe and suitable for a Shared Lives placement. Each carer was required to go

through a vetting process that included security checks on their suitability to work with people and the specific training required prior to being approved. The approval process included a pre-application meeting, application, obtaining relevant documents such as proof of identification, criminal records checks, right to work in the United Kingdom. Once this process was successful the potential shared lives carer had to attend induction training, which was then followed by the approval of an independent approval panel. Following the approval all new shared lives carers had to complete a six month probationary period prior to a permanent contract being offered.

All the staff we spoke with including SLW's, SLC's and the registered manager were knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and their responsibility to safeguard people. Staff were able to tell us how they would respond to allegations or concerns of abuse should any occur. The registered manager was required to inform us of any incidents of abuse that occur in the service this includes omissions of care or action that could harm people. Our records showed that we had received six incidents about people who used this service since our last inspection.

We viewed the schemes medicines procedure, which was of good standard. The majority of people were able to self-administer their medicines. One person we spoke with told us that while she took her tablets independently the SLC's was present to ensure the medicine was taken appropriately. Where people required support with their medicines, SLC's told us that they completed a medicines administration record and stored medicines safely in a lockable cupboard. We saw in SLC's training records that medicines administration training was provided, which was confirmed by all SLC's we had spoken with.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People who used the service told us “My carer is very good, we get on very well with each other and she knows what to do if there is anything wrong.” Another person told us “We sit down and talk about what I like to eat and go shopping on Saturday.” Another person told us “I used to eat microwave meals, but I started cooking now together with my carer.” SLC’s told us “If anything is wrong we go to the doctor’s surgery, it’s only across the road from our house.”

All SLC’s had undertaken a rigorous induction process and training, which included health and safety, safeguarding adults and first aid training. Training records looked at confirmed that safeguarding and first aid training was completed by shared lives carers. In addition carers completed at least three training activities a year; this was flexible and included class room based training and research. This meant that SLC’s received the training they needed to carry out their role. Formal supervisions and appraisals were not common practice in the Shared Lives sector. However, annual placement reviews ensured that the SLC was monitored and the home environment was assessed regularly. SLC’s told us that they were also visited regularly by one of the social workers and the registered manager to discuss any issues. All SLC’s told us that they were satisfied with the support they received from the scheme.

The registered manager told us that all people who used the service were able to make independent decisions. All people accessed the community independently or with the use of community transport. If people had decisions to make, the registered manager told us that these were made together with the person’s relative or an advocate if the person chooses to do so. The registered manager demonstrated a good understanding of recent changes in Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). Shared live carers told us that they would usually not make any decisions on people’s behalf and would always consult SLW’s, people’s relatives and the registered manager if the matter arises.

People told us that they were able to choose what they wanted to eat. For example one person told us “Yesterday I had a friend over for dinner and I spoke to my carer and told her that I want scampi and chips and my friend wants fish and chips.” SLC’s told us that people were always consulted of what they wanted to eat and could choose and take what is available in the home. Meal times were used as social gatherings and people who used the service usually ate together with the rest of the family unless the person decided to eat on their own. People who used the service confirmed this. People told us that they were involved in household activities such as shopping for food, clearing and setting the table and help to prepare meals. SLC’s recently had received training in nutrition as part of the shared lives carers meeting in January 2015.

SLW’s and SLC’s we spoke with told us that they supported people to make informed decisions about their lives. We were told that if a person was unable to make an informed decision about an aspect of their life then discussions would take place with the person’s family, representative and relevant professional to agree a way forward in the person’s best interest. One relative told us “While it was our relative’s decision to move into shared live, the scheme has kept us updated throughout and asked us if we thought it would be the right thing to do.”

People’s health was assessed during the initial assessment of prospective people who used the service. On-going health assessments were carried out during annual care reviews, which were carried out by one of the social workers employed by the scheme and were attended by the SLC, the person and their relative or any significant other. Where people were under the care of health care professionals such as psychiatrists or psychologists their input was sought during the annual care reviews. SLC’s told us that if they notice the person to become unwell they would contact the persons GP and liaise with the scheme for advice.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

All the people who we spoke with said that they liked their carers very much and were happy with where they were living. One person told us, "It's lovely to live with [the carer] here; this is the best place for me".

We spoke with SLC's and asked how they maintained people's privacy. One SLC told us that people had their own key to their room and if they required support with their personal care they would ensure that curtains were drawn and doors were closed. We asked the registered manager how she ensured that people were provided with dignified care. The registered manager told us "We meet with people regularly off site and talk with them about their placement, if there would be any problems they would tell us. We also speak regularly to their relatives to find out if there are any issues about the placement."

Care records we sampled showed that people's preferred method of communication was discussed and recorded in their care records. This was so they got the support they needed to communicate their needs and choices.

SLC's told us that when they were matched with a person the scheme had given a great deal of consideration to the individual needs of the person and the suitability of the placement. One SLC told us, "The scheme takes great care that people fit; the person currently with me had a look at two possible placements and was able to choose my home." This was confirmed by the person during one of the interviews we conducted as part of this inspection.

People said they were listened to and felt they mattered. People told us that were involved in the day to day family life of the people they were living with. One person told us, "I can go out on my own, or we go out as a family, we regularly go together to church on Sundays." SLC's told us that they were committed to the role that they had agreed to undertake. Some SLC's had carried out the role for a number of years. A SLC told us, "It's fantastic, I love it. They are a part of my family". The scheme arranged regular carer meetings and meetings for people who used the service. People told us they had meetings with shared lives officers. One person said, "I go and have a coffee (with SLW's), we talk and then they bring it to the meeting." Another person said, "I am involved and if I have any worries I will speak to the shared lives workers."

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People told us that the scheme has a very thorough assessment and matching process. One person told us, “I was shown to different places and had the opportunity to visit my current home for lunch, one overnight stay and one week trial; before I decided my carer and I get on well.” Shared lives carers told us that “People are assessed by one of the social workers and every year there is a review to see if things have improved or generally how things are going.” Another shared lives carer told us “I can always call the office to talk about anything about the people we live with.”

People’s needs were regularly assessed and reviewed by SLW’s and they and their carers were involved in the assessment of their needs. People told us reviews took place regularly and they were involved in these. One person said, “Shared Lives do come and do reviews. They are helpful and they come regularly. So I think they are good.”

SLC’s confirmed people’s needs were regularly discussed and care plans were updated in response to any changes in the person’s needs. One relative said, “We are invited to a review next week to discuss how the placement is going.”

There were assessments of needs that had been completed and updated for all four care plans we viewed. Care plans were personalised and people had signed to indicate they had been involved in putting their plan of care together.

People told us they had access to activities or employment that were important to them. One person said, “I am very independent. I go and meet my friends and go regularly to local cafés for lunch and meet people.” Another person said, “I have my own space and go to the day centre, church and luncheon clubs.”

SLW’s and SLC’s confirmed most people attended day centres during the week and were supported to visit friends, family and take part in activities when they chose to do so. We observed this during a visit to one of the day centres accessed by people who used the service which we visited to meet people who used the service as part of this inspection.

People who used the service and their relatives told us they had never made a complaint about the service. They told us they felt confident to express concerns and if they had any issues they knew who to complain to. One person said, “I don’t have a complaint, but if I did I would go to the social worker.” The scheme had a complaints procedure which was given to people who used the service and shared lives carer. The complaints procedure was available in different formats and languages. The scheme had received their last complaint in November 2012, which had been raised by a person who used the service. The complaint had been investigated and there was a chronological audit trail of actions taken by the scheme. We saw that the complaint had been resolved and follow up visits to the shared lives carers home had been undertaken to assess if improvements had been made.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People who used the service told us the service was well managed. People told us the name of the scheme manager and their allocated scheme worker during discussions. SLC's told us "The manager is very good I can always call her if I need some help and when she is not around someone else will help or the manager will call back, very good support."

There was good leadership and a clear management structure at the service. SLW's were aware of the roles of the management team. They confirmed the registered manager was available whenever they needed to discuss concerns with them and they had a close working relationship with their manager who was described as "very accessible."

SLW's and SLC's we spoke with told us they felt supported and enjoyed their work. One SLW said, "I really enjoy my job because we are giving people choice and better outcomes."

Records showed SLW's and SLC's received regular supervision and appraisals. People and SLW's confirmed they understood their right to share any concerns about the care and support provided. They said they were aware of the provider's whistleblowing policy and they would use it to report any concerns.

SLW's also told us the registered manager was very involved in their case loads and if there was an issue or concern this would be acted on immediately. One SLW told us I am proud of what we are doing and we must be doing a great job, we have trebled the number of people we support over the past 18 months."

Records showed incidents that happened within the service were recorded. The registered manager and SLW's used this information to monitor and investigate incidents and take the appropriate action to reduce the risk of them happening again.

SLW's and SLC's were then told about any changes that had been implemented in response to these incidents.

Notifications had been received by the Care Quality Commission for concerns raised and dealt with.

The SLW's and SLS sought regular feedback from the SLC's and people through annual questionnaire and regular carers meetings and the feedback was used to make changes to the service. An example of this was the introduction of sharing knowledge of people to ensure all SLW's had awareness of every person's needs and support.