

Choice Support

Choice Support Aylesbury

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

Choice Support Aylesbury is registered to provide personal care to people with learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorder living in supported living accommodation and outreach. At the time of the inspection 24 people were using the service.

At the last inspection on 30 June 2015 the service was rated Good. At this inspection we found that the service remained Good.

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 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

People using the service continued to receive safe care. Robust staff recruitment procedures were followed. The staffing levels met people's needs. People were protected from the risk of harm and received their prescribed medicines safely.

People using the service continued to receive effective care. People received care from staff that had the appropriate knowledge and skills to meet their needs, and they were supported to maintain good health and nutrition. Staff were provided with a thorough induction and on-going training. They had attended a variety of training to ensure they were able to provide care that was based on current practice, when supporting people with behaviour that challenged the service. Staff received regular supervision and appraisal from their allocated supervisors.

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

People using the service continued to receive care that respected their individuality. People were treated with kindness, compassion, dignity and empowered to be involved in making decisions about their lives. The staff respected people's diversity, and knew the people who used the service well. People and relatives, where appropriate, were involved in the planning of their care and support. People had personalised plans of care in place to enable staff to provide consistent support in line with their preferences. People knew how to raise a concern or make a complaint and the provider had effective systems in place to manage complaints.

People benefitted from using a service that had a positive, person centred ethos and an open culture. People, their relatives and staff had confidence in the manager's ability to provide consistent high quality managerial oversight and leadership. Established quality monitoring systems were used to drive continuous improvement.

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 remains Good.	Good ●
Is the service effective? The service remains Good.	Good ●
Is the service caring? The service remains Good.	Good ●
Is the service responsive? The service remains Good.	Good ●
Is the service well-led? The service remains Good.	Good ●

Choice Support Aylesbury

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 checked 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 28 March 2017, and the 3 and 18 April 2017 and it was announced. We provided 48 hours' notice of the inspection to ensure management were available at the office to facilitate our inspection. The inspection was undertaken by one inspector.

We had asked the provider to complete a Provider Information Return (PIR), which 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. This was completed by the provider and returned on the 11 January 2017. We also looked at other information we held about the service from statutory notifications of events that the provider is required by law to submit to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Prior to the inspection we sent out questionnaires to people using the service, their representatives, staff and community professionals and analysed the responses received. During the inspection we visited five people living in supported living accommodation based in Aylesbury. The people using the service had complex learning disabilities that affected their ability to communicate verbally with us, the staff supported people to express their views about the service to us.

We spoke with the registered manager, one support manager, one team leader, four care staff, one agency carer and two relatives. We reviewed the support plans, risk assessments and other associated care records for three people using the service. We also looked at three staff recruitment files and records regarding the staff training and support, and records in relation to the management oversight of the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People were safe, when asked if they felt safe people responded with smiles and nods. Relatives told us they believed the staff kept their loved ones safe. One relative said, "I have never felt worried about [Name of persons] safety, when we go out, he is always happy to return home, he has good relationships with the staff." The staff completed regular safeguarding refresher training and were aware of the reporting and whistleblowing procedures.

The staff recruitment procedures made sure staff were suitable for their role. There was sufficient staff available to meet the needs of people using the service. We saw staff spent time socialising with people and the atmosphere was relaxed.

The risk management systems identified and respond to areas of individual risk, whilst promoting people's rights to independence and to take risks. People and their representatives had been involved in decisions about how specific risks were to be managed. Consideration had been given as to how people were to be supported to take positive risks to lead fulfilling lifestyles. For example, one person using the service had enjoyed a helicopter ride. We saw that the risk assessments within people's support plans were reviewed on a regular basis and updated as needs changed.

People's medicines were managed safely and administered at the prescribed times. The staff were knowledgeable about the way in which people preferred their medicines to be administered. Records confirmed that staff were provided with training on the safe handling and administration of medicines, their competencies to administer medicines was regularly assessed and regular update training was undertaken.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People received care and support from staff that were knowledgeable and had the skills to carry out their roles. One relative said, "The staff are very good at communicating with [Name of person] they seem very in tune with them and seem to know just what to do. You can't achieve this through training alone; it has to be 'in' the person in the first place." Another relative said, "I really do think the staff are fantastic at what they do, they always look so calm and relaxed, they take everything in their stride." We observed interactions during the inspection that demonstrated staff knew and understood the people they provided care for extremely well.

All staff spoken with confirmed the training they received was good. One member of staff said, "It is an expectation that all staff keep up to date with training." All staff received a full induction and additional training to meet the specific needs of people using the service. The staff told us they felt well supported, one member of staff said, "The registered manager has an open door, we can approach her at any time." Another said, "I feel blessed to work for a company like Choice Support." We saw that staff received regular supervisions and annual appraisals to discuss their work and development needs.

The staff were aware of their responsibilities in relation to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) Some people required supportive boundaries to be in place to enable them to reside alongside other people with complex learning disabilities. All staff had received training on positive behaviour support and staff interventions were in the best interests' of the person.

People were supported to eat a healthy diet and were provided with guidance on how to do this. The staff took into account people's different levels of capabilities. They supported people to choose what foods they wanted, using easy read formats where appropriate, to plan weekly menu's to assist with shopping for groceries. Detailed guidance was available within the support plans for people with food allergies, other dietary needs or swallowing difficulties. The staff were very knowledgeable of the different levels of support people needed to eat and drink and accommodated their needs. They worked closely with healthcare professionals and guidance and advice from the healthcare professionals was incorporated in people's support plans.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

The service had a strong person-centred culture. People had developed positive relationships with staff and were treated with kindness and compassion. One relative said, "The staff are so kind, they are truly angels." The staff were able to tell us in detail about the nature of each person using the service and the activities they enjoyed. They were able to describe how they supported people when they may be upset or anxious. One relative said, "The staff know [Name of person] likes to keep to his regular routine, they know how upset he gets if his daily routine isn't followed."

People and their representatives were involved in planning their care and support. The care and support was provided for individuals by a core staff team and this fostered trusting relationships between people using the service, their relatives and staff. Regular review meetings took place to reflect on the care provided and the support plans were updated in response to changing needs.

The staff were highly motivated and inspired to offer care that was kind and compassionate. One member of staff said, "I find the work very rewarding, we work well as a team to give people the best care in order for them to lead fulfilling lives."

Information was available on how to access advocacy services should they need to. We saw that advocate services were used by some people using the service and they had been fully involved in supporting decision making.

The staff were very aware of treating people with dignity and respect at all times. They also understood the importance of maintaining confidentiality. This was reflected in the discussions we had with staff and the observations made during the inspection.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People's needs were fully assessed before taking up the service. The assessments were used to develop detailed support plans. The staff were fully informed on the level of care and support people needed. They were able to describe in detail the day to day care they provided for individuals. Agency staff assigned to work with people were given time to read through the individual support plans and were mentored by experienced staff. So that they and people using the service had time to get to know one another.

The service followed the principles of the 'Reach' standards. These are standards that people with learning disabilities expect from supported living services. They ensure people have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens. They are to choose where to live, who to live with, who to provide your support, to choose friends and relationships, to be part of the community and to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle.

The service that had a positive, person centred ethos and an open culture. Relatives told us the staff supported their loved ones to follow their interests and be part of the community. Some people had their own transport and staff facilitated people to attend clubs, discos, grocery and retail shopping, visits to restaurants and to see friends and family.

People and their relatives knew how to make a complaint if they needed and were confident that their concerns would be listened to. One person's relative told us, "I've no concerns but any problems I know I can speak to the manager." The provider had a complaints system in place to record concerns and the action that had been taken as a result.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

A registered manager was in place at the service. They lead by example, promoting the vision and values of the service and made sure people were at the heart of the service. The relatives and staff were very positive about the care provided at the service. Relatives said they would recommend the service to others, one relative said, "Without hesitation, I can't believe how lucky we have been."

The registered manager regularly visited people in their homes and met with staff. The comments we received were very complimentary of the support they received from the registered manager. The staff all confirmed they felt very well supported by the registered manager. One support manager said, "Choice Support rocks! It is a fantastic company to work for; the staff are special they are extremely dedicated."

Promoting independence, health promotion and safe risk taking were fundamental aspects of the ethos of care and support at all levels. The positive feedback, we received indicated that the staff felt proud to work for the service to ensure people were able to lead enriched and fulfilled lives.

They were motivated to work to high standards and build upon their skills and knowledge through on-going training. They were clear about their roles and responsibilities.

The staff were encouraged to be a part of the service and contribute to its development. We saw that staff were asked for their feedback through team meetings and surveys and this was acted on.

The oversight and governance of the service was to a high standard. Monthly audits of the service were carried out by the registered manager, their support managers and the corporate quality team. In addition members from the board of trustees visited the service to seek feedback from people using the service and staff.