

Royal Mencap Society Hales Lodge

Inspection report

Somerton Road
Winterton-on-Sea
Great Yarmouth
Norfolk
NR29 4AW

Tel: 01493393271
Website: www.mencap.org.uk

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Inspected but not rated
Is the service safe?	Inspected but not rated

Summary of findings

Overall summary

Hales Lodge is a care home that provides residential care to up to eight people living with a learning disability or on the autistic spectrum. At the time of this inspection there were seven people living in the home. The home is purpose built in extensive grounds.

We found the following examples of good practice.

- The relatives we spoke with told us visiting at the service had been in line with government guidance and included the completion of a negative Lateral Flow Device (LFD) and use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- The provider had regularly communicated with the people who used the service and their relatives regarding COVID-19. One relative said, "I am very involved in [relative's] care and staff tell me straight away if there are any changes."
- We observed staff following good infection prevention and control practices including appropriate use of PPE in line with government guidance.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

Further information is in the detailed findings below.

Inspected but not rated

Hales Lodge

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.

We received information of concern about COVID-19 related staffing pressures at this service. This was a targeted inspection looking at the infection prevention and control measures the provider has in place and whether staffing was having an impact on the service.

We found that, due to the registered manager and area manager having to cover care shifts, records were out of date or missing. Whilst people were being well cared for and prioritised, those that had dedicated one to one care commissioned by the local authority, were not fully receiving this due to staff shortages.

This inspection took place on 13 January 2022 and was unannounced. The inspection continued remotely until 20 January 2022 when feedback was given.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Staffing

- The service had vacant posts they were struggling to recruit into due to, amongst other factors, the rural location of the home and poor transport links.
- Staff were covering extra shifts and were committed to ensuring the level of service people received would not be negatively impacted.
- However, whilst people's needs had been met in most areas, some people were not receiving their commissioned one to one care due to staff shortages.
- The provider told us they had measures in place to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 related staff pressures and included increasing staff pay, use of agency staff and a rolling recruitment programme.

How well are people protected by the prevention and control of infection?

- 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.
- Whilst there had been no new admissions into the service throughout the pandemic, we were assured the provider understood the need to follow government guidance should this occur.
- We were somewhat assured that the provider was using PPE effectively and safely. We observed staff appropriately using PPE and there was plentiful supply. However, the service had not assessed the needs of those that may be distressed by staff wearing masks.
- We were somewhat assured that the provider was accessing testing for people using the service and staff. Whilst the provider had a testing regime in place as per government guidance, formal consent for testing had not been sought from the people who used the service and whilst these were being completed in their best interests, this was not recorded.
- We were somewhat assured that the provider was promoting safety through the layout and hygiene practices of the premises. The home was visibly clean however some fixtures, such as radiators and handrails, were damaged compromising effective cleaning. Furthermore, whilst there were cleaning schedules in place, a system for recording what cleaning had been completed was not in place.
- We were somewhat assured that the provider was making sure infection outbreaks can be effectively prevented or managed. Due to staff shortages, the management team were covering care shifts meaning governance had slipped. Whilst support was being provided to the registered manager, the staffing crisis had impacted heavily, and they were unable to fully fulfil their management role.
- We were somewhat assured that the provider's infection prevention and control policy was up to date. Whilst policies were up to date, no recent IPC audits had been completed with the last one being completed in February 2021. Some actions identified by this audit were still outstanding. Recent reviews of staff risk assessments had not taken place.
- We were assured the provider was facilitating visits for people living in the home in accordance with the current guidance.

From 11 November 2021 registered persons must make sure all care home workers and other professionals visiting the service are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they have an exemption or there is an

emergency.

- The service was meeting the requirement to ensure non-exempt staff and visiting professionals were vaccinated against COVID-19.

We have also signposted the provider to resources to develop their approach.