

Praxis Care Plasden Court

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 

Overall summary

We inspected Plasden Court on 10 December 2014. The inspection was unannounced, which meant they did not know we were coming on this day. The previous inspection had been in October 2013. We had found no breaches of regulations on that occasion.

Plasden Court opened in November 2006 and provides accommodation, support and care for people with enduring mental health needs. The people supported by the service are called tenants. There are 15 self-contained flats on three floors. There is a communal kitchen, dining area and lounge on the first floor. There were 14 tenants

when we inspected, and the vacant flat was being prepared for a new tenant. The intention is that tenants stay up to two years before moving on. Although some stay longer if for example there is not a suitable placement for them to move to.

At the date of this inspection Plasden Court had a manager who had worked there since 2010, initially as team leader and then as acting manager. She was not

Summary of findings

registered with the Care Quality Commission but was in the process of applying to be registered manager. The previous registered manager had left on 30 September 2014.

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.

We found that the service supported people well. Tenants felt safe and were encouraged to regain their confidence

and develop their independence. There were enough staff, who were well trained and were encouraged to maintain their skills. They were supported with regular supervision.

The staff and the manager were trained in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and understood its application to this service. Staff had built up positive and supportive relationships with tenants. Care plans were personalised and were effective tools to assist and improve the delivery of care.

The aim of the service was to empower tenants to regain control of their lives. The service was quick to respond to any changes in people's mental health status. An outside professional praised the service for how it monitored people's mental health and acted appropriately.

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 living there felt safe because the building was secure. Signage to fire exits was not as clear as it could be.

There were sufficient staff on duty, but some staff were working long hours until new staff were recruited.

Most people were responsible for their own medication; staff assisted as needed.

Good



Is the service effective?

The service was effective. Staff were suitably trained and received regular ongoing training.

Staff told us they felt well supported, and received supervision and appraisal.

Tenants were encouraged to cater for themselves and also to share in communal meals.

Staff had an understanding of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and its provisions were used appropriately.

Good



Is the service caring?

The service was caring. Staff knew the tenants well which meant they were able to monitor their health and react quickly to any changes.

There was a culture of caring for people's emotional needs.

Tenants could become involved in how the service was run. In some respects it could be made easier for them to express their views.

Good



Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive to people's needs. Care plans were personalised and people were involved in reviews of their care plans.

A variety of activities were laid on for those who wanted to take part.

People felt they had ample opportunities to complain, and complaints were acted on.

Good



Is the service well-led?

The service was well-led. The manager was not registered with the Care Quality Commission, but had applied for registration.

The service fostered a culture of empowerment and encouraging independence.

We saw evidence that issues affecting tenants were dealt with quickly and effectively. The service was commended by a professional for its monitoring of people with enduring mental health problems.

Good



Plasden Court

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.

The inspection on 10 December 2014 was unannounced. The inspection team was an inspector and an expert by experience. The expert by experience was a person who had personal experience of this type of care 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 examined the responses given and assessed other information we held about the service. We contacted the relevant contract officer at Manchester City Council.

On the day of the inspection we spoke with four people using the service, who were referred to as 'tenants'. We talked with three support workers, the administrator and a team leader. One of the support workers gave us a tour of the building, and we saw the vacant flat.

The manager was not present when we arrived but came in about midday. We discussed the management of the service and our findings with her.

We looked at two care files and other records and logs, including the complaints record, the untoward events log and a staff file. We requested some information be sent to us.

After the inspection we spoke with a care manager from Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust who monitored the mental health care provided to a number of tenants supported by Plasden Court.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Plasden Court was a secure block of flats. Access to the building was by a front door. Tenants had keys but visitors could only gain access by ringing a door bell. A security camera was linked to the front office so that people could be seen before they were admitted to the building. Tenants had an intercom in their flats so they could speak to any visitors who rang the door bell to their flat. But they could not open the front door remotely, and had to walk to the front door to let visitors in. There was a window hatch into the office in the corridor next to the front door. This enabled staff in the office to observe who was coming in and who was receiving visitors. This meant there was a degree of staff monitoring of visitors, which kept people more safe.

Tenants had keys to their individual flats. Two people told us that this made them feel safe and they knew their belongings would be safe while they were out. One person said: "This is the best place I have been in for ten years." Each flat had an alarm so people could summon staff if they needed. One person told us how he had a panic attack one night and pressed his alarm: "they came to my aid very quickly and it made me feel really safe and secure here."

Tenants were supposed to sign in and out of the building. During the day we noticed that few tenants did so. The intention was to enable staff to know where people were, and how many people were in the building in the event of a fire.

In relation to fire safety, we saw there was a fire blanket in the communal kitchen (in a previous inspection we had noticed that there wasn't one). Staff told us that there were fire drills twice a year, and that information about fire procedures was given to every tenant. In each care file was a personal evacuation plan. However, we considered that the signage for fire exits was confusing or inadequate in places. On the first floor there were signs pointing in opposite directions close to each other. And on the second floor there was simply an arrow pointing upwards above one doorway without the words "fire exit". If people were in a confused state the signs might prove difficult to follow. We mentioned these concerns to the manager, who stated she would review the signage.

The staff complement at Plasden Court was the manager, two team leaders, three permanent support workers and

three 'relief' workers. In addition agency staff worked regularly. The manager had told us in the PIR that two members of staff had recently left. She told us at the inspection that the provider was still trying to recruit replacement staff.

We saw from the staff rota that there were at least two staff working at all times during the day. There were also two staff each night, who slept in staff quarters. On the day of our inspection two support workers were on the morning shift, joined by an agency worker at 10am. The two team leaders were on shift together in the afternoon. We enquired and were told that this was not the regular pattern, and often the team leaders worked separate shifts. That meant that a team leader would be more likely to be present in the event of an incident of any kind.

Partly due to the absence of two staff from the service, staff were working long shifts and in one case up to 60 hours a week. For example the two support workers who were working when we arrived had started their shift at 2pm the previous day, carried on with the night shift, and were now doing another shift until 4pm. One of them told us that they usually were not disturbed at night, which meant they were fresh for the next day's shift. But there were occasions when they were woken, for example by the smoke alarm. The policy was that both staff would attend any incident or if an alarm rang at night. They added, and the manager confirmed, that if they had a busy night the manager would ask for agency staff to relieve them in the morning.

We discussed this staffing situation with the manager. She acknowledged that it was not ideal that some staff were working very long hours during a week, but stressed that this was at the staff's own request. None of the staff however had signed an exemption to the Working Time Directive. The manager explained that things would be easier once the two new members of staff were recruited.

There was a system in place to ensure that only staff who were suitable would be employed. All the staff we spoke with confirmed they had gone through a formal recruitment process that included an interview and pre-employment checks of references, and a criminal records check. Agency staff were also vetted in advance of them working at the service. Their CV and training record were requested from the agency. They worked under supervision of a team leader. The manager told us that staff

Is the service safe?

disciplinary procedures were invoked where necessary, and showed us an example where they had been effective. These procedures helped ensure that people using the service were protected.

We looked at the 'Untoward Events' Log, which included a record of incidents and accidents. We saw that these were recorded and lessons learned from them. The manager told us that she was regularly reviewing risks and revising policies to ensure that risks were managed safely.

The staff we spoke with had a good understanding of safeguarding vulnerable adults and knew how to report any suspicion of abuse. They described the various types of abuse that could occur in this setting. One said that if a tenant disclosed anything of concern to them they would report it either to a team leader or to the manager. It would be their responsibility to decide whether to make a referral to the local authority and to the CQC. The staff member recalled an incident involving someone from outside the service, when they had been concerned about the safety of

one of the tenants, and had reported their concern, resulting in action being taken against the perpetrator. This was an example of the staff being aware of safeguarding concerns and taking appropriate action.

A detailed 'medication assessment tool' was used to assess people's capability and suitability to manage their own medicines. Most of the tenants were responsible for their own medication. Medicines were delivered by the chemist to their individual flats. Staff would assist people to check the medication was correct, if help was needed. Each flat had a lockable cabinet which meant that medicines were stored securely. The majority of the tenants administered their own medication. Staff told us that five people were supervised, in other words staff observed them taking their medication and recorded it on Medication Administration Records. We were informed earlier in the year about an incident in the community which had resulted from one person not taking their prescribed medication. The service responded appropriately by ensuring that this person was supervised when taking their medication from then onwards. We considered this was an appropriate response to the incident.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

The provider told us in the PIR that the two new staff they were seeking to recruit would receive a tailored programme of training provided by both Praxis Care and by Manchester City Council. They would be mentored for their first six months. All the existing staff had worked at Plasden Court for at least two years so did not have recent experience of the induction training.

We asked staff about the ongoing training they received. They told us they received ongoing training which was relevant and helped them support people. One person told us: "I have regular training that enables me to do my job and meet people's needs."

Two members of staff told us they were trained in safeguarding and the training matrix (a record of all staff training) confirmed that all staff had received training in safeguarding vulnerable adults since December 2013. The training matrix stated that the training should be renewed every year. One person told us they had received safeguarding refresher training two weeks before our inspection.

We asked staff about how well they felt supported to do their job. One person said: "We are supportive of each other. It is a good working environment." Another person said: "We're a close knit unit. I love my work. I wish I could have done it years ago." One member of staff told us they had received very compassionate support through a difficult period.

Staff told us they received monthly supervision meetings. The support workers had supervision from the team leaders, and the team leaders from the manager. These meetings would discuss performance issues and any training or development needs. The manager in turn was supported by an assistant director and the management of Praxis Care. These regular meetings were important because the issues raised in supporting the tenants in Plasden Court could sometimes be difficult.

Staff also received an annual appraisal which was an opportunity for them to reflect on achievements during the previous year and discuss goals for the following year.

Each flat had its own kitchen equipped with oven, hob, fridge and storage cupboards. Tenants were expected to do their own shopping and cater for themselves. Their ability

to do this was assessed and recorded. One person told us: "I need a little help with cooking at the moment as it's been a long time since I shopped and cooked for myself". They added that a member of staff "comes and helps me cook when they are on duty."

On the first floor there was a communal kitchen and large dining table. We could not find any cooking utensils, crockery or cutlery when we were shown round, but the manager later explained that these items were for the time being kept in the staff office and brought out when there was a meal. One tenant told us they attended the communal meals and enjoyed them. There was a meal club once a week and Sunday lunch was usually shared.

In these ways tenants were encouraged both to regain their independence by catering for themselves in their own flats, and also to mix with each other and practise social skills.

During our inspection a member of staff accompanied one tenant to an appointment at his GP. They explained that usually they encouraged tenants to attend such appointments on their own, but staff were always available to go with them if they preferred. Records of all medical appointments were kept on care files.

Staff we spoke with had a good understanding of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, and told us they had received training in this and the associated Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) although technically DoLS were not relevant to this service. They explained to us the reasons why a mental capacity assessment might be necessary. If it was, the assessment would be carried out by the tenant's care coordinator and not by a staff member of Plasden Court. The staff clearly understood that such an assessment related to a particular decision. They stated that for most of the tenants their mental health issues did not inhibit their capacity to make decisions on aspects of their lives.

Staff sought tenants' consent to every aspect of their care and support. Each tenant had a licence agreement, which they had signed, on their care file. The medication assessment tool had a space for the tenant's signature to indicate that it had been discussed with them. And we saw that tenants had signed to give informed consent to an information sharing agreement to allow medical information to be shared with professionals. Staff told us,

Is the service effective?

and we saw from our observations, that they always had plenty of time to explain things to tenants, so that they could make up their minds calmly and were never put under pressure to agree.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

We observed that staff had built up friendly relationships with tenants in Plasden Court. In conversation staff showed that they knew the people they were caring for on an individual basis. The manager knew every tenant personally and spoke about them with care and compassion. One person described their own care as "excellent". They all said that it met their needs. Where appropriate people's relatives and friends were welcome to be involved in planning and reviewing care, if they wished.

After the inspection we spoke with a care manager from Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust who was very complimentary about the quality of care at Plasden Court. They stated that the service monitored people's mental health needs very well, and because the staff knew people so well and were aware of their mental state, they were quick to identify any changes and manage them.

One person said: "The staff are very good to me here and my family are really happy with the support and my progress since I have been here." They added: "The staff are helping me to handle money and to budget. I struggle when I'm in the supermarket and find it difficult to be around lots of people, and the staff are encouraging me to try going on my own."

We saw that tenants came from a variety of cultural and social backgrounds. The people we spoke with could not recall any example of discrimination from staff at Plasden Court. Many of them had been involved with the criminal justice system and had spent years in institutions, but they told us the staff treated them with respect. One person said: "Sometimes I'm afraid I will mess up and lose my freedom, but the staff reassure me and give me confidence to think positive and to move forward. They help me believe in myself. I have been away for a lifetime."

We considered that this comment demonstrated a good culture of caring for people's emotional needs and seeking to rebuild their confidence. One person told us: "For the first time in years I have some independence and it feels so good."

Confidentiality was taken very seriously. A laminated A4 notice was on the wall and table in the staff room, and in the manager's office stating: "Every member of staff has a duty to maintain confidentiality." We discussed with the manager the fact that confidentiality is not an absolute duty, because if a tenant disclosed an event or a problem that related to a possible risk to their own or another's safety, then the member of staff should not promise to keep it secret but should discuss it with the manager or appropriate outside professional.

We saw that there were many interactions with tenants during the course of a day. Tenants would come to the window hatch outside the front office and pause to speak with the administrator or other staff inside the office. They could also use the Intercom system to phone members of staff. Each tenant had a keyworker which allowed for closer interaction.

In terms of involving tenants in developing the service, there was a comments/suggestions box on the wall in the communal kitchen. It was, however, neither conspicuous nor accessible, and we were told that comments were rarely received. We suggested that the box could be placed somewhere easier to use. The manager stated that tenants raised issues directly with staff, and any significant issues were recorded as compliments and complaints. Tenants' meetings were held monthly which provided another means of two-way communication.

One notice in the corridor referred to a service user survey which was "starting soon".. The manager told us that results of previous surveys had been sent to the provider's office in Belfast. There was also a noticeboard in the main corridor with a number of leaflets about rights and about community events. The leaflets however were behind glass which made it impossible for people to take them for their own use.

We saw evidence that tenants were offered an advocate when attending meetings with health professionals. On one person's file it was recorded that they had been offered an advocate but preferred to be accompanied by their keyworker. One person who had been involved in a court procedure told us: "They have attended every meeting with me, advised and supported me every step of the way."

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

We looked at two care files. There was detailed information about each person's background and mental health history, which would enable each member of staff or visiting professional to gain a good understanding of the person's needs. The care plan was person-centred in that it addressed each person's individual support needs. One person told us: "Staff have a care plan to help me move on."

We asked people if they were included in the creation and review of their care plans. One person told us: "I was fully involved and encouraged to express my views in formulating the care plan and I'm able to change it if I wish."

Each care plan was regularly reviewed by the manager, whose comments were recorded on a monitoring form. There was space on the form to record how those comments were addressed. On the files we looked at the manager's comments had been responded to and action noted. This showed that the review process was effective.

Care was also reviewed by external care coordinators and managers. Notes were recorded of these meetings. A care manager from Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust told us that staff and tenants were always well prepared, and staff were proactive in keeping them informed especially about any changes in the mental health of tenants. They stated that the service monitored people's mental health needs very well, and because the staff knew people so well and were aware of their mental state, they were quick to identify any changes and manage them.

Each person had a 'needs and risk assessment' which was reviewed or rewritten periodically. All changes in behaviour were noted in case they indicated a change in the risk assessment.

When a person moved on from Plasden Court they were asked to complete an exit survey which gave a view of

that person's experience. The survey asked whether staff had treated them with care and respect, whether staff had listened to them carefully, explained things to them and involved them in making decisions. On one survey we saw these questions had all been ticked "always." The survey showed that the service wanted to learn from people's experiences and improve the delivery of care.

Some of the people living at Plasden Court tended to remain in their flats. Staff told us that they tried to engage people in social activity but that wasn't always possible. They respected people's right to independence. The communal area had a dining space and a comfortable lounge area with a TV. We understood this area was used more in the evenings. One person told us; "Two to three times a week we have a communal meal and film nights. They are good fun."

Other people had more active lifestyles and were often out in the community, attending a gym, a walking group or social clubs. There was an art group held in the communal room. Keyworkers operated a weekly 121 (i.e. one staff member with one tenant), to take individual tenants out, for example to a local lifestyle centre. We saw that tenants were involved in planning these outings and that they were a highlight of their week. One member of staff had recently assisted a tenant to purchase a parrot. Another tenant said: "My keyworker knows I love to watch football but I'm afraid to go alone and they take me." At other times people were able to arrange their own activities.

People told us they felt comfortable raising concerns and complaints. They said that the tenants' meetings held every month were a good opportunity to raise any issues. We saw minutes of these meetings. People told us that staff listened and were quick to act and respond to any concerns raised. We saw from the complaints file there had been two complaints raised in 2014, and these had been dealt with.

One person told us: "I complained about my toilet leaking and the plumber was summoned immediately. Nothing is too much trouble for the staff."

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

We spoke with the manager, who was in the process of applying to become registered manager. She had been acting as manager for two to three years, alongside the previous registered manager who left in September 2014. She explained that she had been responsible for managing staff, while the registered manager had been at the service two or three days a week and had retained oversight. Since September 2014 she had been responsible for all aspects of management. This included assessment of new tenants as to their suitability to live in Plasden Court, and recruitment of staff. She also reviewed care files regularly and audited the quality of the service provided.

On the day of our inspection the manager was not present in the morning and arrived about lunchtime. The reason was she had been working at another service across town run by the same provider. She told us she did this about two mornings a week; she had also been attending a university course on Fridays.

Plasden Court was a relatively small service, with a maximum of 15 people using the service. However, by their nature their needs were complex and also staff needed consistent support. The manager told us that her commitment to the other service would be reduced when it recruited new staff. We were satisfied that the manager's main involvement was with Plasden Court.

The manager made it clear to us that empowering tenants to regain control of their lives, as far as they were able, was an integral part of the service. The main idea was to promote a open culture, in which people could learn or relearn to act responsibly. The only rules and regulations were those in the tenancy agreement, which all tenants had to sign. People were responsible for the state of their own flat. The manager stated that for most people the comparative freedom of their lives in Plasden Court was

quite a contrast to the places they lived in previously. Staff were ready to help them with adaptation. The manager stated it was not an "us and them" culture, but staff came alongside people to help them move forward.

One person told us: "Staff are very supportive but not pushy, they advise but not in a disempowering way. I came here from a low secure unit where I felt I had no say or control over my life and it's so different here, I love it."

We saw that records were kept of safeguarding concerns. Some of the forms used had space under the heading 'Outcome for service improvement'. However, these sections had not been completed which meant perhaps that opportunities for learning had been missed. We raised this with the manager who showed us a new form which was now in use, requiring lessons to be identified.

We saw that on one occasion a tenant had made a complaint about a staff member, a supervision was held with the member of staff on the same day, and a performance and development plan was devised. This demonstrated an effective and swift response by the manager to an issue of concern to a tenant, and also positive support for staff.

The manager said she made a point of introducing new tenants to the neighbours. Plasden Court is in a residential area and there had at times been anxiety expressed about the people using the service. Over time this had been allayed by the establishment of links. Regular coffee mornings were held where people were invited into Plasden Court to meet the people living there.

After the inspection we spoke with a care manager from Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust who was very complimentary about the quality of care at Plasden Court. They visited fortnightly, and found the service well organised.