

# Cygnet Care Services Limited

# Squirrels

## Inspection report

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## Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Inspected but not rated
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Is the service safe?	Inspected but not rated
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Is the service well-led?	Inspected but not rated
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# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

Squirrels is a residential care home. It provides personal care and accommodation for up to nine autistic people and/or people with a learning disability. There were nine people living at the service at the time of inspection. The home provides care for people in one building across two floors.

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

We were assured that infection control measures in place reduced the risks to people from COVID-19. This included systems around enhanced cleaning and use of personal protective equipment. Staff worked with people to promote social distancing and COVID-19 testing where possible, taking into account people's level of understanding and the impact changes had on their anxiety and wellbeing.

There was a positive culture at the service. Relatives told us they were happy with the care provided to their family members. They told us the management of the service were approachable and kept them informed about their family member's health and wellbeing.

Staff we spoke to were motivated and enthusiastic in their role. They were positive about the support they received from the registered manager.

There were systems in place to protect people from the risk of suffering abuse or avoidable harm.

The provider had supported people to minimise the use of some medicines, where possible. The levels of medicines administered were closely monitored by the provider in partnership with relatives and health professionals. This helped to ensure medicines were administered appropriately.

Incidents were investigated appropriately and reported to relevant professional bodies where needed. This helped to ensure people were receiving care that promoted a positive atmosphere which reduced the risk of incidents reoccurring.

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 guidance CQC follows to make assessments and judgements about services providing support to people with a learning disability and/or autistic people.

The service was able to demonstrate how they were meeting the underpinning principles of Right support, right care, right culture. Staff had worked to minimise the impact the pandemic had on people's health and wellbeing. They had worked with people to adjust their routines and activities, considering COVID-19 restrictions, taking into account their level of understanding and sensitivity to change.

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

### Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was good (12 February 2018).

### Why we inspected

We undertook this targeted inspection to follow up on specific risks we had identified related to the service. We decided to inspect and examine those risks. The risks included: systems and processes to safeguard people from abuse, use of 'when required' medicines, management culture at service and processes to respond and learn from incidents.

We looked at infection prevention and control measures under the safe key question. We look at this in all care home inspections even if no concerns or risks have been identified. This is to provide assurance that the service can respond to coronavirus and other infection outbreaks effectively.

## The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

### **Is the service safe?**

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. We have not reviewed the rating at this inspection. This is because we only looked at the parts of this key question we had specific concerns about.

Details are in our safe findings below.

**Inspected but not rated**

### **Is the service well-led?**

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. We have not reviewed the rating at this inspection. This is because we only looked at the parts of this key question we had specific concerns about.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

**Inspected but not rated**

# Squirrels

## Detailed findings

### Background to this inspection

#### The inspection

This was a targeted inspection on specific risks we had identified including: systems and processes to safeguard people from abuse, use of 'when required' medicines, management culture at the service and processes to respond and learn from incidents.

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

#### Inspection team

The inspection was completed by one inspector.

#### Service and service type

Squirrels is a 'care home'. People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing or personal care as a single package under one contractual agreement. The Care Quality Commission (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.

#### Notice of inspection

The inspection took place between 21 December 2020 and 8 January 2021. We carried out a site visit to the service on 21 December 2020. We gave the provider one-hour notice of our visit due to the anxieties people may experience when unexpected visitors entered their home.

#### What we did before the inspection

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.

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. This information helps support our inspections. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

#### During the inspection

We spoke with three members of staff including, the registered manager, the deputy regional operations director and care staff. We observed staff providing care and support in communal areas of the home. We reviewed a range of records. This included, relevant parts of three people's care plans, incident reports, audits, medicines administration records, daily records of care and statutory notifications. We looked at a variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures.

#### After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found. We spoke with four relatives by telephone about their experiences of the care provided. We spoke to eight staff members about their experiences of working at the home and culture of the service. We also spoke to one social worker.

# 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. We have not changed the rating of this key question, as we have only looked at the part of the key question we had specific concerns about.

### Preventing and controlling 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.
- 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 promoting safety through the layout and hygiene practices of the premises.
- 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.

### Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Relatives told us they felt Squirrels provided a safe environment for their family members. Comments included, "I think [Squirrels] do a really good job in looking after [my relative]", and, "We are really happy with the care."
- The provider had a safeguarding policy in place, which outlined staff's responsibilities in safeguarding people from abuse and avoidable harm. Staff had received training, which outlined appropriate action to take if they suspected a person was suffering abuse or harm. Staff understood their responsibilities in applying this training into their everyday practice.
- The provider had taken appropriate action to report concerns to local safeguarding teams when issues arose. This helped to keep people safe from the risk of suffering abuse or avoidable harm.
- The provider took a pro-active approach to supporting staff to raise concerns about people's safety and welfare. Information about the provider's whistleblowing policy was clearly displayed around the home. A whistleblowing policy details external agencies staff could contact should they have concerns about people's safety. The provider also had a telephone service available where staff could raise any concerns if they did not feel comfortable doing so to management in the home.

### Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Incident reports were recorded by staff and reviewed by the registered manager or senior staff. This helped to identify where actions could be taken to reduce the risk of reoccurrence.
- Relatives told us the provider was proactive in informing them when incidents took place. They told us they were happy with how the provider responded when these events occurred.
- The provider took action to inform health and medical professionals when people's needs changed in

response to incidents that occurred. This helped to ensure people had appropriate professional input to help meet their needs.

- The registered manager reported all incidents to the deputy regional operations director. This helped to ensure that all incidents that took place were responded to appropriately.

#### Using medicines safely

- Some people were prescribed 'when required' medicines for pain or anxiety. There were detailed plans in place to help reduce the need to administer these medicines. Strategies included using 'positive behavioural support (PBS)' approaches to minimise people's anxiety. PBS helps staff understand the reason for people's behaviour in order to better meet their needs.
- Staff understood the strategies to adopt in order to minimise the use of 'when required' medicines. People's care and medicines administration records reflected that these medicines were only used once other strategies had been exhausted.
- People's medicine prescriptions were reviewed by medical professionals on a regular basis or when people's needs changed. This helped to ensure they were prescribed appropriate levels of medicines.
- Relatives confirmed that their family members were supported to minimise the use of 'when required' medicines and that they were kept informed about the levels administered.



# 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. We have not changed the rating of this key question, as we have only looked at the part of the key question we have specific concerns about.

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

- Relatives were very positive about the management and staff at the service. They told us the registered manager was very open and transparent in their approach and kept them updated about their family member's care. Comments included, "The registered manager has been superb in informing us of what happens, be it good or bad", "They [the provider] do an excellent job. The standard of care is very good and the communication with us [family] is fantastic", and, "There have been a lot of changes [in staff] last year, but the registered manager has been upfront about the reasons why."
- Staff we spoke to told us there was a positive culture at the service and that they felt supported by the management. Comments included, "The whole management team have been really supportive, I feel like I can go to them if there is a problem."
- Staff told us the service had experienced a difficult time in recent months due to the pandemic and staff changes. However, they told us they were motivated and committed to their role. Comments included, "It's been a really difficult time, but we have worked together as a team to get through it."
- The deputy regional operations director had a good insight into the safety and quality of the service. This included regular visits and audits to monitor the safety and quality of care. This helped to ensure the provider maintained a good overview of the service.