Care Management Group Limited

Cherry Tree

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	**Requires improvement**
Is the service safe?	**Requires improvement**
Is the service effective?	**Requires improvement**

Overall summary

Cherry Tree is a care home registered to provide care, support and accommodation for up to five people with learning disabilities who require specialist support to help them to manage their behaviours. Five people lived there at the time of our visit, however one person was undergoing an extended stay with their family.

The service did not have a registered manager at the time of our visit, however a new manager had recently started with the service and had applied for registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). A registered manager is a person who has registered with the CQC 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.

When we visited this service on 22 January 2015 we found that the provider was in breach of essential standards relating to supporting staff, and care and welfare of people who use services. Staff did not have the appropriate skills and knowledge to support people safely and meet their needs, and care and support was not always provided in a safe way. We took action against the provider by issuing warning notices under section 29 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 requiring them to comply with these regulations. They provided us with an action plan detailing the steps they would take to ensure people received safe care that met their needs.

We carried out an unannounced inspection on 18 August 2015 to check that these improvements had been made. We found that staff were now appropriately supported through regular supervision and training, including training in people's specific needs such as Makaton (a sign language system designed for people with learning disabilities).

Summary of findings

We found that people were now supported more safely by staff who were guided by personalised care and positive behaviour support plans. Incidents were appropriately monitored and staff provided people with one-to-one support.

This report only covers our findings in relation to these topics. You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Cherry Tree on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

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?

We found that action had been taken to improve the safety of the service.

Staff were guided by person-centred care and positive behaviour support plans when supporting people with specific needs. They were knowledgeable about people's behaviours and knew what to do to support people safely.

We found that staff managed risks safely, and there were enough staff on duty to support people on a one-to-one basis.

Requires improvement 

Is the service effective?

We found that action had been taken to improve the effectiveness of the service.

Staff were supported through monthly supervision meetings with their line manager, appropriate training and specialist assistance when required.

Requires improvement 

Cherry Tree

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 unannounced inspection took place on 18 August 2015 and was carried out by a single inspector.

This inspection was undertaken to check that improvements planned by the provider after our comprehensive inspection of 22 January 2015 had been made. We inspected the service against two of the five questions we ask about services: is the service safe, and is the service effective. This is because the service was not meeting the legal requirements in relation to these questions.

Before our inspection we reviewed the information we held about the service, including the action plan by the provider to address concerns.

During the inspection we spoke with six staff including two support workers, a lead support worker, the newly-appointed manager of the service, and the provider organisation's positive behaviour support practitioner and regional director.

We looked at the care and support records for all four people who lived in the service at the time of our visit, incident and accident records, behaviour monitoring records and staff training and supervision records.

Requires improvement

Is the service safe?

Our findings

When we visited Cherry Tree on 22 January 2015 we found that staff did not always support people safely. Some staff we spoke with during that visit were not aware of people's specific needs and strategies in place to support them safely. Some staff did not know how to appropriately records incidents of concern, and we observed some practices that left people unsafe. There was also not enough staff to provide one-to-one support to people, even when this was required to ensure all people who use the service were safe.

During this visit, on 18 August 2015, we found that staff were knowledgeable about people's needs and how to support them safely. Each person who used the service had a number of risk assessments in place in which risks associated with their support were identified, with guidelines for staff to help manage those risks. These were in the process of being reviewed when we visited. Each person also had a personalised, specific positive behaviour support (PBS) plan to identify challenging behaviours, and assist staff to support the person to change such behaviours. Each PBS plan also included a response plan for staff with clear guidelines on how to respond when incidents occurred, and pictures showing appropriate moves and positions to use when an incident required a physical response from staff in order to keep people safe.

Staff told us, and records showed, that incidents were appropriately recorded and staff knew what to do when supporting people who may exhibit, at times, challenging behaviours. These are behaviours that may pose a risk of harm to the person themselves, other people or property. Since our last inspection, the service's 'behaviour observation chart' had been updated and expanded to include more information about the behaviours and specific details of the incident. The revised form also included prompts for staff to help them to collect more useful information to analyse patterns and trends in the behaviours. Staff told us these forms were helpful and assisted them to change the support they provided to reduce the likelihood of such incidents occurring. For example, one support worker told us about the changes staff had made to the way medicines were administered after incidents were analysed and this was identified as a time when incidents were likely to occur.

During our visit we saw there were enough staff to keep people safe, and staff knew how to support people to calm down and de-escalate situations. Each person who lived at Cherry Tree had one-to-one support throughout the day.

Requires improvement

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Our inspection of 22 January 2015 found that staff were not always appropriately supported, through training and regular supervision of their work, to support people safely and effectively. Staff had not received training in people's specific needs and had not received supervision monthly as stated in the provider organisation's statement of purpose.

During this visit, on 18 August 2015, we found that staff training was underway and supervisions were now occurring regularly. Each of the staff we spoke with told us they had monthly supervision meetings with the manager or deputy manager, and records confirmed this. Staff told us their supervision meetings were very useful.

Training records showed that staff had been trained in a variety of relevant topics including communication, offering choices, positive behaviour support, person-centred active support and working safely. One staff member told us how they had been trained to coach other staff, and provided coaching to their colleagues in people's specific needs and how to respond to incidents of challenging behaviour. Some staff had also completed training in Makaton, a sign language system designed for people with learning disabilities, and told us they had trained their colleagues in basic Makaton signing which was used by some people who live at Cherry Tee.

Staff told us about recent changes to the induction programme for new staff working in the service, which they said improved how prepared new staff were for working with the specific needs of the people living there. The changes included more shadow shifts and specific, one-to-one coaching. A lead support worker told us, "We want to give as much knowledge, support and confidence at the beginning, otherwise you're caught short later on. This way people will be supported safely right from the beginning. You always have to be aware."

Staff told us they were well-supported by the managers of Cherry Tree and the provider organisation when they were involved in an incident. They told us they received appropriate debriefing and medical assistance when necessary, and time off work if that was required. One support worker told us, "I feel very safe here. We get a lot of support, you're never left on your own when bad things happen."

Staff also received support around managing and responding to challenging behaviours from the provider organisation's positive behaviour support practitioner. He told us about some changes that were planned to improve the way behaviours were assessed and responded to by staff, in order to better meet people's needs and to provide more tailored, individualised support. These changes, such as using a 'sensory integration checklist' to assist staff to identify the function of a particular behaviour for a person, were very positive and contributed to improved strategies to keep people safe.

The positive behaviour support practitioner also told us about a mentor network that was being introduced throughout the provider organisation. These mentors provided hands-on coaching and support for staff while they work with people to ensure consistency in people's support. This network had not yet been in place long enough for us to evaluate its effectiveness, however we will review this at our next inspection.