

Achieve Together Limited

Starbrook

Inspection report

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07 January 2022

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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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Summary of findings

Overall summary

Starbrook is a care home providing personal care to six people with learning disabilities and autism. People are supported in one adapted building.

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

The service had experienced staff shortages at the end of 2021 due to staff vacancies and absence as a result of COVID-19. This had resulted in people having reduced opportunities to take part in activities outside the home. During this time people were supported to take part in more activities in the home and its grounds. The management team had recruited additional temporary staff and had a rolling recruitment programme to fill staff posts permanently.

Relatives told us they had been concerned about the staffing situation at the home and had raised their concerns with the management of the service. Relatives said they did not think people had been unsafe and the recent recruitment of staff had resulted in people being supported to do more activities out of the home.

Staff told us it had been a difficult time due to the shortages, but the situation had recently improved. Staff said they were now able to support people to take part in their usual activities out of the home.

We found the following examples of good practice.

The service had introduced measures to prevent visitors from catching and spreading infections. Visitors were screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and were provided with personal protective equipment (PPE).

Staff had received training on infection prevention and control measures and how to use PPE safely. PPE was available to staff throughout the service and staff were seen using it effectively.

Additional cleaning measures had been introduced in the home. All areas of the home were clean, and records demonstrated the additional cleaning had been completed.

COVID-19 testing was being carried out for people using the service and staff in line with the latest guidance.

The provider had effective systems in place to check staff and professional visitors were vaccinated against COVID-19.

The provider had updated their infection prevention and control policy to reflect the COVID-19 pandemic and additional measures that had been introduced.

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

Starbrook

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 staffing at this service. This was a targeted inspection looking at the infection prevention and control measures the provider has in place. We also asked the provider about any staffing pressures the service was experiencing and whether this was having an impact on the service.

This inspection took place on 7 January 2022 and was announced. We gave the provider 24 hours' notice of the inspection. Following the site visit we spoke to three staff and two relatives by telephone.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Staffing

- The provider told us they had measures in place to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 related staff pressures.
- The service had experienced staff shortages at the end of 2021 due to staff vacancies and absence as a result of COVID-19. This had resulted in people having reduced opportunities to take part in activities outside the home. During this time people were supported to take part in more activities in the home and its grounds.
- The provider had contracted temporary staff from out of the area to fill the vacancies. These staff were being accommodated by the provider and employed as full-time members of the staff team. They received the same training, support and supervision as permanent staff.
- Records demonstrated the service was providing the number of staffing hours they were contracted to by the time of the inspection. This meant people were able to take part in their planned activities out of the home.
- Relatives told us they had been concerned about the staffing situation at the home and had raised their concerns with the management of the service. Relatives said they did not think people had been unsafe and the recent recruitment of staff had resulted in people being supported to do more activities out of the home.
- Staff told us it had been a difficult time due to the shortages, but the situation had recently improved. Staff said they were now able to support people to take part in their usual activities out of the home.
- The regional manager told us recruitment was on-going, with a rolling programme. Incentives had been provided, including an increase in pay, enhanced rates for overtime and developing wellbeing initiatives for staff.

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.
- 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.

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.