

Spectrum (Devon and Cornwall Autistic Community Trust)

The Willows

Inspection report

Halvarras Park
Playing Park
Truro
Cornwall
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Date of inspection visit:
31 August 2016

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27 September 2016

Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Inspected but not rated
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Is the service safe?	Requires Improvement ●
Is the service effective?	Requires Improvement ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

We carried out a focused inspection at The Willows on 31 August 2016, the inspection was unannounced. The previous inspection was an unannounced comprehensive inspection carried out on 22 September 2015. At that time we were concerned that the environment was not being adequately maintained and we made a recommendation in respect of this. The provider assured us improvements to the building were imminent.

In August 2016 we received concerns in relation to the environment, the availability of fresh food and cleaning products. As a result we planned this focused inspection to look specifically at these areas. During the inspection we also had concerns regarding staffing levels. This report only covers our findings in relation to those topics. You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for The Willows on our website at www.cqc.org.uk

The Willows provides care and accommodation for up to three people who have autistic spectrum disorders. It is part of the Spectrum group who have several similar services in the county. At the time of the inspection two people were living at the service. There was a registered manager in post. 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. The registered manager was no longer working at the service although they had not applied to cancel their registration at the time of the inspection. The divisional manager with oversight of The Willows was managing the service until it closed which was planned to take place by the end of September 2016. Spectrum had informed us of this short term arrangement.

Both people had been assessed as needing one to one support for ten hours a day. Evidence in rotas and staff signing in sheets showed that, over the previous seventeen days, there had only been four occasions when staffing levels had been at this commissioned level for the full ten hours. On seven days there had only been one member of staff on duty for the whole day. This impacted on people as both required one to one support in the community and a drop in staff levels meant they were unable to go out.

Planned improvements to the building had not been carried out due to a change in circumstances. The service was due to close in the next few weeks and both people living there were to move to different Spectrum locations. No improvements to the environment or furnishings had been made since the last inspection in September 2015.

People had access to fresh food and were able to make choices about what they ate. There was a good stock of cleaning products in place.

We found breaches of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. You can see what action we have told the provider to take at the end of the full version of the report.

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 not safe. There were not sufficient numbers of staff to enable people to take part in activities outside of the service.

Requires Improvement ●

Is the service effective?

The service was not effective. Planned changes to the building had not taken place. The environment and furnishings were in need of updating.

There was a range of fresh food available for people to choose from.

Requires Improvement ●

The Willows

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 focused inspection took place on 31 August 2016 and was unannounced. This inspection was carried out to look into concerns we had received. The service was inspected against two of the five questions we ask about services: is the service safe and effective. The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

Before the inspection we reviewed previous inspection reports and other information we held about the home including any notifications. A notification is information about important events which the service is required to send us by law.

We met with one person who lived at the service and observed their interactions with staff. We spoke with the divisional manager, and a care worker. We looked round the premises and outside of the building.

We looked at staff rotas and other documents relating to staffing levels.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

We looked at staff rotas and staff signing in records for the previous seventeen days to check there had been sufficient staff to support people to go out on individual activities and engage in daily chores and routines. The records we checked were for the period between 14 August 2016 and 30 August 2016. According to the records, on seven occasions during this period there was only one member of staff working throughout the day. On six occasions there was only one member of staff on duty at some point during the day. The length of time when there was only one member of staff on duty on these days varied from between two hours and six hours. There were only four occasions during this time frame when the service had been fully staffed throughout the day.

The people living at The Willows had complex needs and it was important they were supported according to their commissioned hours in order to keep them safe and allow them to have access to meaningful activities. Both people required one to one support while out in the community. Staff acknowledged that people's activities outside of the service had been limited due to the low staffing levels. One member of staff said; "You can't take them out on your own. It's frustrating, for them and for staff." This was particularly significant in light of the issues with the surroundings described in the following section; 'Is the service effective?'

This was in breach of Regulation 18 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

People living at The Willows had limited verbal communication. We did spend some time talking with one person and observed the care and support being provided to them. We saw they were at ease with staff and comfortable in their surroundings. On the day of the inspection we saw people moved around the building without restriction. The managers' door was open throughout the inspection and people were comfortable approaching staff for conversation or support.

Notice boards in the office displayed details of the local authority safeguarding teams and the action to take when abuse was suspected. This information was freely available to staff and visitors to the service.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Before the inspection we had received concerns stating that the property was in a poor state. At our previous inspection we had found improvements to the environment were required and had made a recommendation in respect of this. At that time there were plans in place to convert the building into two flats. Due to a change in circumstances these alterations had not taken place and there were now plans for people to move to different Spectrum services by the end of September 2016. No improvements to the environment had been made since our last inspection. In September 2015 we noted in the inspection report that; "A desk in one person's room had a door missing. Seating in the lounge was worn and shabby. Window latches were broken and window frames and doors, both internal and external, were in need of repainting." At this inspection we found none of these faults had been rectified. In addition we saw the seating in the lounge had further deteriorated. For example one chair was ripped and the foam stuffing was protruding, seating covers were sticky and the carpet was badly stained and worn. The shared bathroom had black mould on the walls and smelt musty. The paint was peeling and chrome shower fittings were rusted. A handle was missing from the bathroom cupboard under the sink.

In September 2015 we noted in the inspection report that; "The driveway in front of the building was in a state of disrepair and unstable underfoot in places. There were steps leading to the front door and the rear of the property had steps to the garden area. The surface immediately outside the back door was uneven." At this inspection we found no improvements had been made to the outside of the property. Staff told us people were unable to access the back garden due to the poor conditions present. Apart from one old and worn garden chair there was no seating in the front garden. People's opportunities to leave the premises were restricted due to the unsuitability of the immediate outside environment and the low staff numbers. This was particularly significant as the weather over the previous month had been sunny and warm.

This was in breach of Regulation 15 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

We had received anonymous concerns stating there was no fresh food or cleaning products in the service and no money available to rectify this over a bank holiday period. On the day of the inspection visit we saw there was a good stock of cleaning products. There was fresh salad and vegetables and the cupboards were well stocked. A chest freezer contained meat, bread and milk. We discussed these concerns with the divisional manager who told us there had been a problem with supplies just before the bank holiday. As soon as they had been made aware of this they had addressed the issue and made arrangements for staff to be able to do grocery shopping on-line if there were not enough on duty to go out shopping. They told us that, although supplies had been low, people had adequate food at all times.

During the inspection visit one person was being supported to get breakfast. They had a selection of cereals to choose from and there was plenty of fresh milk. They also had toast and we observed them being supported to pick a spread to have with it from several options.

This section is primarily information for the provider

Action we have told the provider to take

The table below shows where regulations were not being met and we have asked the provider to send us a report that says what action they are going to take. We will check that this action is taken by the provider.

Regulated activity	Regulation
Accommodation for persons who require nursing or personal care	Regulation 15 HSCA RA Regulations 2014 Premises and equipment Premises were not suitable for the purpose for which they were being used and/or properly maintained. Regulation 15 (1)(d)
Regulated activity	Regulation
Accommodation for persons who require nursing or personal care	Regulation 18 HSCA RA Regulations 2014 Staffing Sufficient numbers of suitably qualified, competent, skilled and experienced persons were not available at all times to support people using the service. Regulation 18(1)