

Community Homes of Intensive Care and Education Limited

Stroud Lodge

Inspection report




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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Outstanding 
Is the service safe?	Good 
Is the service effective?	Good 
Is the service caring?	Outstanding 
Is the service responsive?	Outstanding 
Is the service well-led?	Outstanding 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

This inspection took place on 23 and 24 August 2017 and was unannounced. Stroud Lodge provides accommodation and personal care to up to nine people who had a learning disability or a mental health disorder. At the time of our inspection the service was fully occupied. Stroud Lodge is based in Gloucester and is a short distance from a range of amenities. People were assisted by social care workers who assisted them with their day to day needs and a range of activities.

This was the first inspection under the current provider registration which started in October 2016. Previously the service was inspected under a previous provider name in March 2016 and was rated as "Outstanding". While the provider name had changed the service and its staff had remained the same.

There was a registered manager in post. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission (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 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

People were happy, safe and benefitted from an active and full life. People's confidence and ability to be as independent as possible was developed at Stroud Lodge. People were supported to take positive risks and to be in control of their care. People knew what their medicines were for and social care workers ensured people had their medicines administered safely. There were enough staff so that people could undertake the activities they wished and be supported in meeting their individual needs.

People were involved in writing and reviewing their care plans, which were tailored to their individual needs. People were at the centre of their care. Their social care workers knew people extremely well and knew how to support them with their goals and independence. People's achievements were documented and celebrated. The registered manager and staff were constantly looking for opportunities to offer to people that would help them grow, gain confidence and live a fulfilled life. People were able to participate in the quality assurance processes of their home and could undertake a variety of different training offered by the provider.

People and those important to them were closely involved in developing the service. People were enabled and encouraged to maintain and develop relationships in and outside of the home and to develop links with the community.

Social care workers were very well supported and had the benefit of a training programme which enabled them to ensure they could provide people with the best possible care and support. Social care workers understood and worked to the values of the registered manager and the provider and put people at the heart of everything they did. Staff were supported to develop professionally through dedicated management training programmes.

The service had a strong leadership presence with a registered manager who had a clear vision about the direction of the service. They were committed and passionate about the people they supported and were constantly looking for ways to improve. The home and the registered manager had significant support and guidance from the provider. Thorough and frequent quality assurance processes and audits ensured that all care and support was delivered in the safest and most effective way possible.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

Good 

The service was safe. People felt safe living at Stroud Lodge. Social care workers had a clear understanding of their responsibilities to identify and report concerns or allegations of abuse.

Risks to people's care had been identified and there was clear guidance for social care workers on how to manage these risks. People's medicines were managed well.

People told us social care workers spent time with them. Social care workers told us they had enough time to assist people and enable them to enjoy a range of activities. The registered manager ensured staff were of good character before they supported people.

Is the service effective?

Good 

The service was effective. People were supported by social care workers who had the skills they needed to meet people's needs. Social care workers had access to effective professional development. They had started to receive consistent one to one meetings with their line managers and felt supported.

People were supported to make choices and social care workers had knowledge in relation to the Mental Capacity Act 2005. People were supported with their dietary and healthcare needs and preferences. Social care workers followed the guidance of healthcare professionals.

Is the service caring?

Outstanding 

The service was extremely caring. Social care workers knew people really well and used this knowledge to care for them and support them in achieving their individual goals.

People were at the centre of their care and they were consistently involved in planning and reviewing their own care.

Staff were considerate of people's feeling at all times and always treated people with the greatest respect and dignity.

Is the service responsive?

The service was very responsive. People received highly personalised support by staff that knew them well. People were encouraged and supported to reach their goals.

People's confidence and independence had improved since living at Stroud Lodge. People had access to a wide range of personalised and group activities and had a say in all aspects of the running and development of the home.

People were able to maintain relationships with those who mattered to them no matter how challenging the circumstances were. People had access to a wide range of personalised and group activities.

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

The service was very well led. People were at the centre of the service and involved in making choices and suggesting changes to the home.

People, healthcare professionals and care social care workers were incredibly positive about the management of the service.

The registered manager and provider had effective systems to ensure the quality of the service. Where possible people were involved in auditing the quality of the service.

Outstanding 

Stroud Lodge

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 was 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 inspection took place on 23 and 24 August 2017 and was unannounced. The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

We reviewed the Provider Information Return (PIR) which had been completed by the registered manager on the day of our inspection as it had only just been requested by CQC. 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 reviewed the information we held about the service as well as the notifications about important events which the service is required to send us by law. We also spoke with and received feedback from five healthcare professionals.

We spoke with four people who were living at Stroud Lodge and we spoke with two people's relatives. We also spoke with staff members which included five social care workers, the deputy manager, the registered manager and a representative of the provider. We reviewed four people's care files. We also reviewed staff training and recruitment records and records relating to the general management of the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People told us they felt safe living at Stroud Lodge. Comments included; "safe, yes"; "I'm happy, safe here" and "This is my house." Two other people when asked if they felt safe responded positively. Relatives told us they felt Stroud Lodge was a safe place and that they had peace of mind. Comments included: "No worries at all, (relative) is safe, it's her home" and "Not had a problem. Definitely have peace of mind."

People and their relatives were provided with information on how to raise a safeguarding concern. There were easy read documents with pictures for people to follow on how to raise a concern or if they felt unsafe. Relatives were also provided information regarding safeguarding procedures. One relative told us, "They've given us contact details for other organisations (safeguarding)."

People were protected from the risk of abuse. Social care workers had knowledge of types of abuse, signs of possible abuse which included neglect, and understood their responsibility to report any concerns promptly. Social care workers told us they would document concerns and report them to a team leader or the manager. One social care worker said, "I would report it to (registered manager)." Another social care worker added that, if they were unhappy with the manager's or provider's response they would speak to the local authority safeguarding team or CQC. They said, "We have a card (with whistle blowing information) with a number on it. I wouldn't think twice about reporting any abuse." If staff felt someone was at immediate risk of harm or abuse, they told us they would take immediate action to ensure people were kept safe, including calling the emergency services if required.

People's care plans contained risk assessments which were personalised to their individual support and development needs. Where a risk had been identified, a clear and comprehensive assessment had been documented. For example, one person was supported to make positive risks around their personal desires and taking trips to the local pub. These assessments provided clear guidance on how the person and their social care workers could manage this risk. Assessments also recognised people's ability to take risks and make unwise decisions. For example, one person's assessment stated staff could advise them and give them guidance to make an informed decision on how much alcohol they drank, although the person had been assessed as having the mental capacity to make decisions about their alcohol intake and was therefore able to make an unwise decision.

People were supported to manage their anxieties and frustrations. For example, some people could exhibit behaviours that challenged staff when they became frustrated or anxious. Social care workers understood the triggers of people's frustrations and how to assist people when they became agitated and knew how to protect the person and others from any harm. For example, one person could become anxious in noisy and chaotic environments. Social care workers and the person were aware of this and due to refurbishments within the home, which had reduced the communal space they had taken effective action to ensure the person was kept comfortable. One social care worker told us, "We take (person) out of the situation and spend time talking with them." Social care workers and the registered manager had worked hard to identify the triggers of people's anxieties, and how they worked with people to improve their wellbeing.

People could be assured the home's environment was safe and secure. At the time of our inspection the home was undergoing some essential maintenance work in the home's communal lounge. The registered manager had risk assessed the work and ensured equipment and tools used for the refurbishment were stored safely. Due to the reduced communal space within the home, more people were using the home's dining room to engage with others and watch television. The registered manager had arranged for people to go on day trips and out for meals as the social care workers had identified that the temporary decrease in communal space meant there was an increased risk of people becoming anxious. On one day of our inspection, everyone was out independently or being supported and assisted on day trips.

There were enough social care workers deployed to ensure people were safe and their well-being needs were met. People were supported to access the community daily. One person told us, "There is always someone around. I'm independent, I go out by myself." People enjoyed spending time with social care workers within the home and in the community. One person was supported to go into Gloucester to see the film set of a film. Relatives felt there were enough social care workers and were happy with the consistency of staff. One relative told us, "As everyone (staff) are consistent, it's helped (person) come a long way."

Social care workers felt there were enough staff deployed to meet people's day to day needs and enable them to access the local community. Comments included: "There is enough staff to make sure people are out and about to do activities, we work as a good team"; "Staffing is really good here. Can't complain it's always well staffed. It enables people to go out" and "It's good. Very diverse. Young and old staff. We blend well; there is always enough staff to help people to go out". The registered manager stated there was a high level of staffing within the service. They explained, "Most of the staff have been here for years. This is a service user led service."

Records relating to the recruitment of new social care workers showed relevant checks had been completed before staff worked unsupervised at the home. These included employment references and disclosure and barring checks (criminal record checks) to ensure staff were of good character. The registered manager had full control of this process, which enabled them to ensure that social care workers who came to work at Stroud Lodge had the skills, experience and the character required to meet people's needs.

People received their medicines as prescribed. Social care workers kept an accurate record of when they had assisted people with their prescribed medicines. For example, social care workers signed to say when they had administered people's prescribed medicines and kept a record of prescribed medicine stocks and when they had opened people's prescribed medicines. Social care workers ensured a clear and constant record the support they provided people with their medicines were maintained.

People's prescribed medicines were kept secure. The temperature of areas where people's prescribed medicines were stored were recorded and monitored to ensure people's medicines were kept as per manufacturer guidelines. Where people had medicines which were prescribed 'as required' there were clear protocols in place for social care workers to assist people. Social care workers and the registered manager informed us where people received 'as required' medicines to help with their anxieties; these were being reduced and used as a last resort.

People had been supported by social care workers to understand what their prescribed medicines were for. Three people told us how they were supported with their medicines. One person said, "I have Olanzapine, it keeps me calm." Social care workers and the registered manager helped people understand the reason for their medicines as well as identify where people prefer to have their medicines administered.

Where people required controlled drugs (medicines which required certain management and control

measures) to ensure their wellbeing these were administered in accordance with the proper and safe management of medicines.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People and their relatives were positive about the social care workers and felt they were skilled to meet their needs. Comments included: "I think they're amazing"; "They're (staff) all really good"; "The staff are well trained" and "They do more than they should be doing."

People's needs were met by social care workers who had access to the training they required. Social care workers told us about the training they received. Comments included: "Training is second to none, best company I've worked for"; "I think I do. We are constantly bombarded with training keeps our skill set up" and "Yes, we have what we need. We're recapping training, what we do about seizures. Gives us more knowledge and up to date." Social care workers were supported to undertake additional training as required, for example when people's needs changed or if social care workers had identified a need for additional training. One social care worker said, "Since I've been here I've learnt a hell of a lot. You can always request training and development."

Social care workers felt supported to develop professionally. Social care workers spoke positively about how the registered manager and providers promoted their personal and professional development. Comments included: "You can always ask for training, development and support"; "I want to develop. I discussed that with (registered manager) and they put me forward for a course. I am doing a management development course which starts in September. These are things that will help me learn and develop" and "I've done a level three diploma (health and social care), and I am working towards a level five. I am supported by Choice (the provider). (The registered manager) has given me the confidence to say yes and visualise what I need, every day we discuss the future and how I can gain as much experience as possible." The registered manager told us that new social care workers were being supported to complete the care certificate as part of their training. The care certificate training allowed the manager to monitor staff competences against expected standards of care.

People received care from social care workers who were supported and had access to frequent one to one meetings and an annual appraisal with their line manager or the registered manager (one to one meetings allowed social care workers to discuss their personal development needs, such as training and support as well as any concerns). Social care workers spoke highly about the support they received and how one to one meetings supported their development. Comments included: "We used supervisions and appraisals to talk about areas we can improve on and what's going well. We also set objectives" and "I have one to ones and I can always approach (registered manager) for one."

Social care workers we spoke with had undertaken training on the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making particular decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that as far as possible people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible. Social care workers showed a good understanding of this legislation and were able to explain specific points about it. Comments included: "We can never assume someone doesn't have capacity. If they

don't have capacity then we carry out best interest decisions. People have the right to make unwise decisions, we can give advice and information, however it's their decision to make" and "We always assume people have capacity. If they are proven to not have capacity. We take proportionate steps; make least restrictive decisions for people with professionals." One social care worker discussed how they gave advice to one person in relation to their dietary needs. They said, "We give them advice, all the information they need. They can then choose what they want, they know the impact."

People were supported to make choices and their choices were respected. People were provided with choices daily and never felt forced to do something they did not want to do. For example the registered manager took time with people to discuss where they wanted to go for dinner. One person had originally wanted to go to a local pub, however when they were informed of the options available for them they changed their mind. The registered manager provided the information in a way which enabled the person to make an informed decision.

Some of the people living at Stroud Lodge understood the reasons they were living and supported at the service; these people had the capacity to consent to the care and support they received from social care workers. A clear record of each person's consent to care was clearly recorded in their care plans. People's individual capacity to make specific decisions were clearly recorded throughout their care assessments which gave social care workers clear guidance and information on the decisions people had made.

People who lack the mental capacity to consent to arrangements for necessary care or treatment can only be deprived of their liberty when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA. The procedures for this in care homes and hospitals are called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). DoLS authorisations were in place for two people living at Stroud Lodge. The registered manager kept a clear record of who was being deprived of their liberty and when these deprivations needed to be reapplied for. Social care workers had good knowledge of DoLS and understood the reasons why DoLS had been applied.

People were supported to make their own lunch time meals to develop their individual skills. One person was supported to make their own cooked lunch. They enjoyed the food they had prepared and also happily offered and made the inspector a cup of tea. Another person made their own lunch and was supported to plan their meals. They said, "I choose what I want, I make my own sandwiches."

People's dietary needs and requirements were met. Where people were assessed as being at risk of choking, guidance had been sought from Speech and Language Therapists (SALT). One person needed to be supervised when eating their meals. Social care workers were aware of the support they required and had clear guidance on how to assist this person with their meals. They told us that the person was at risk of choking and needed reassurance and prompting to protect them from the risk of eating too much food at once.

People were supported to maintain good health through access to a range of health professionals this included physiotherapists and SALT. People were supported to attend all their medical appointments, including GP appointments. This enabled social care workers to assist the person to understand the guidance they were receiving. Social care workers kept a clear record of each appointment and any further actions required. For example, appointment outcome records were recorded for dentist and chiropody appointments. One person had previously been living with diabetes and they had a clear record of their appointments and the support they required. People from Stroud Lodge had recently engaged with the local GP surgery in a patient participation group. The registered manager told us it would help promote people to have "more of a voice in the community." They had decided on this as some people had had some

previous negative experiences.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

The service has a strong, visible person centred culture and is exceptional at helping people to express their views so they understand things from their points of view. Staff and management are fully committed to this approach and find innovative ways to make it a reality for each person using the service. They use creative ways to make sure that people have accessible, tailored and inclusive methods of communication. For example, one person was registered blind and the service had created a video care plan for the person. We saw a part of this video. The person was supported to complete the video in an environment of their choosing. The person talked with a social care worker about their needs. The registered manager was planning to edit the video. The person was happy with this video and gave their consent for the inspection team to see it as part of the inspection. This way of involving people in the planning and reviewing of their care was something the registered manager was planning to develop to increase people's involvement. They told us, "We have installed a philosophy of person centred care being delivered to everyone that uses the services within the home and this has been implemented at care planning stage where service users are encouraged should they wish to undertake helping to write their respective care plans with the support of the management team, this promotes full service user involvement advocating choice dignity and respect is incorporated into a bespoke package of care." The registered manager was looking into acquiring electronic tablets to support people to evidence their lives and achievements.

Another person had been supported to greatly develop their independence, which had a significant impact on their life and wellbeing. They were being supported to access the community independently and take more control of their bank account, which was in line with their wishes. They had developed their understanding around money and the value of everyday items. The person had been accessing the local community on a graded exposure programme (a programme which increases the time the person spends in the community, the activities they do and the distance they travel with varying levels of support); and now had their own bank book and could independently go to the local town centre. The person discussed this with us, "I go to the (local shop), when I'm ready I'll go into Gloucester."

People's ongoing relationships with their family and people important to them were supported and prioritised by the staff and registered manager. People frequently went out for overnight stays with family. One person's relative told us how social care workers had supported their relative to go to stay with another relative. They told us, "The staff went the extra mile and offered to take him to (relative)." The registered manager said that if for some reason the family could not visit the home then they would pick them up or drop them home as needed, no matter where they lived in the country. They would also visit people's family in their homes to undertake reviews so that they could be involved. Another relative told us how they had worked with social care workers at Stroud Lodge to increase the independence of their relative and reduce the dependency on them as part of an advanced plan due to their age and to reduce any possible distress. They said, "All staff are on-board. We've cut phone calls down from daily to fortnightly. The registered manager has been so supportive. I could turn up (at Stroud Lodge) anytime; it's how it should be."

A monthly newsletter was sent out to families informing them of what was happening in the home and how their relative was doing. Each newsletter was individualised for each person living at Stroud Lodge. People

had given their consent for this and were involved in devising the content. The newsletters contained information about what activities they were currently enjoying and recognised any achievements they had made or goals they had reached. For example in one person's newsletter informed their family about their involvement in a football tournament and the personal achievements they had made regarding their dietary needs. One relative said "The newsletters are amazing, they are full of details." A healthcare professional told us, "I have found that the staff make sure communication is good with the families involved with the Oxfordshire people and they are always welcome to all the events that the home put on." Another healthcare professional said, "I receive a monthly report about my service user which I value as up to date information."

People valued their relationships with the social care workers and felt really cared for and that they mattered. People and their relatives spoke extremely positively about the outstanding care they received and the social care workers supporting them. Comments included: "I'm really happy here, it's good"; "It's my house, they're (staff) my friends, I wouldn't want to leave"; "Absolutely fantastic. It's their home. I can't sing their praises highly enough" and "They go above and beyond. They do more than is funded. (Person) has an amazing life."

Healthcare professionals spoke positively about the caring nature of the service. Comments included: "I have always had a warm welcome from both people that live at the home and the staff. I have found the home to be 'Person Centred' to promote independence and encouragement in all areas of people's lives" and "In my observation I believe the service offers a good balance of promoting independence taking into account any risk factors of the individual person. They treat people with respect, and value their contribution to the services. They meet people's needs in a person centred way and promote independence."

There was a pleasant and lively atmosphere within the home on the first day of our inspection with lots of laughter and amusement. People were incredibly comfortable with social care workers. Social care workers had time to spend with people throughout the day. We observed social care workers assisting people to go out and access the community as well as assisting them with activities which were important to them. On the second day of our inspection the home was quieter as the majority of people were being supported to access the local community, or had been taken to go shopping or had gone to the seaside.

People were encouraged to make significant decisions about their home which reflected the services person centred approach. People were proud of their home and were keen to show us their garden and their bedrooms. One person showed us their garden and their bedroom and told us how they had been supported to change their bedroom in line with their choices, enabling them to have a space theme in their bedroom and a sea theme in their bathroom. The person discussed further changes they wished to make to their bedroom with the registered manager. People were encouraged to be involved in decorating their bedrooms, with one person told us how they were involved in painting their room alongside staff.

Another person had recently refurbished their room which included demolishing and removing an old wardrobe. They were supported by social care workers to use a hammer to demolish the wardrobe and then choose colours and decorated their bedroom. The registered manager and social care workers told us how this change had had a positive impact on the person. One social care worker told us, "They are proud of their room, they keep it clean. (Person) took pride in that they made the changes." The person was happy with the changes that had been made and felt it had made their room more pleasing.

People had been supported to make significant improvements in their health and well being. People's independence, self-development and achievements were clearly recorded. For example, one person had a

keeping healthy with diabetes plan. This was an easy read document designed with the person to support them with their diabetes. This plan documented their achievements, which included finding and cooking a recipe for a low fat vegetable pizza and enjoying a range of activities, such as a football tournament and going for walks. The plan also covered key areas such as the person's prescribed medicines, foot care and healthy eating and documented the consequences of not keeping healthy, as well as the support they received. Prior to our inspection, this person had been told that they were no longer diabetic. This achievement had been celebrated by the registered manager, social care workers and the person. The person was keen to discuss this with us during our inspection. The registered manager went with the person to slimming classes and was clearly proud of the person's achievements.

People's personal achievements were recorded and celebrated. For example, each person had an achievements folder which contained pictures and descriptions of moments for people to be proud of. For one person, their achievements had been documented including joining a drama group, being part of a Christmas play, helping with the home's maintenance and cooking and going on holiday. These achievements were significant for this person and were celebrated as well as being awarded a prize at the "Choice got Talent" (A provider wide talent contest for people). One social care worker told us, "He needs enthusiasm; if he thinks you're having fun, he opens up." Another social care worker said, "We're all about independent living, don't want to deskill people. With (person) we provide lots of encouragement, a lot of praise goes a long way. He likes his space and we should not implant our feelings on him." The person told us they were happy living at Stroud Lodge and proudly showed us a trophy they had won and their wish to enter the next talent contest hosted by the provider.

There was a strong homely feel in Stroud Lodge. People's daily achievements were acknowledged and celebrated by people and social care workers. On the first day of our inspection, one person with the support of a social care worker had made their own lunch and cleaned the kitchen. They proudly shared this fact with everyone in the dining room. Everyone applauded the person. It was clear to see the caring relationships that people and social care workers all shared with each other. People asked each other about how they were and

Staff demonstrated their knowledge of people through their interactions and always had the goals people wanted to achieve at the forefront of their mind. Each interaction between people and staff was seen as an opportunity for learning and achieving but undertaken in a caring way. For example a person was discussing buying a new football top of their favourite football team. Staff helped them understand the cost of the top and how they needed to budget for the top and the impact that may have on their finances. This was done in a respectful way so that the person was able to make a decision and had full knowledge on how their plan would work.

People were treated with the utmost dignity and respect. All social care workers we spoke with emphasised that this was the person's home and it was a privilege to work in their home. They took the time to talk with people about what they wanted to do and asked permission before supporting the person in anyway. At one point during our inspection we saw a person becoming anxious regarding a medical appointment. The registered manager handled it with sensitivity and respect. They took the person somewhere private so that they could speak with them without other people overhearing the person's concerns or seeing them become upset. Afterwards the person appeared a lot happier and calmer and they told us how the discussion with the registered manager had helped. They said, "The boss, (registered manager) is really good."

People had access to a directory of advocacy services. Advocates are people who provide a service to support people to get their views and wishes heard. The Stroud Lodge Directory let people know where they

could access advocacy support if needed.

People's spiritual and cultural needs were respected by social care workers. For example, one person chose to go to weekly church services at a local church; they had also been supported on a fortnightly basis to be involved in the service. Social care workers told us how they supported this person when needed to meet their spiritual needs. One social care worker told us, "We respect people's beliefs. It's important to still support people, it doesn't affect me. Everyone has their own interest and beliefs. I will support them to enjoy it, even if I don't enjoy it."

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People and their relatives told us staff had outstanding skills, and had an excellent understanding of their needs, values and beliefs that may influence their decisions on how they want to receive care, treatment and support. People and their relatives spoke positively about the personalised care they received, and felt they were involved in decisions about their care and support. Comments included: "They do amazing things"; "They've (staff) have been really good and I feel the care goes beyond just (person)" and "Love it here, my choices are listened to." One healthcare professional told us, "People have activities and plans, holidays and all the extra's that someone could look forward too and make their lives that extra bit special."

People received care which was extremely flexible and responsive to their individual needs and preferences. Staff had an excellent understanding of the needs and aspirations of the people living at Stroud Lodge and had found creative ways to enhance their skills and independence. For example, the deputy manager told us that on admission to the home, they had been informed that one person did not have the mental capacity to handle their personal finances. The deputy manager told us that during a mental capacity assessment around finances they were able to prove the person had some awareness of the management of their finances. As a result, they were supporting this person to take back some independence with daily expenditure, such as handing over money when shopping.

People were at the centre of discussing and reviewing all aspects of their care. For example, registered manager and social care workers took time to go through people's care and risk assessments to ensure the person was at the centre of their care and their views were respected. The registered manager discussed one person's finance assessment during the inspection as an incorrect date had been recorded. Another person told us they had been involved in writing their plan and wanted us to review it. They asked: "Have you seen my plan yet, is it alright." Another person proudly discussed their plan and had signed their care plan to say they wrote it alongside their key worker.

People's skills, confidence and personal development was supported by training in subjects to ensure their safety and help them to be involved in the management of the home such areas as first aid, keeping safe and staff recruitment. This had a positive impact on the people living at Stroud Lodge as, training had given them confidence to sit in staff interviews and meet new people which before they would have been insecure about doing. First aid training had helped to build people's confidence and self-esteem. The registered manager told us about one person who loved to show people their new skills and knew how to assist someone into the recovery position and to contact emergency services. This training has also helped the service users when they have moved into supportive living services giving them confidence to keep themselves safe and those around them.

People had monthly key worker meetings where they could review current goals and set new ones. People were encouraged to lead on their own reviews and goal setting. A member of staff said "Our culture is all about the service users. Person centred care; everything is decided by the service users". The registered manager and social care workers were always looking for ways to better respond to people and improve the quality of their life. For example one person would not leave their room when the fire alarm sounded during

fire drills because of their anxiety. The staff decided to make this person the fire marshal and give them the role of taking the register to ensure everyone had left the building. This person now leaves the room when the fire alarm sounds with no problem and social care workers told us they enjoyed this responsibility. As well as being a marshal this person had helped produce an easy read fire safety guide policy. This document was available for people in the entrance of the home.

Another person, when they arrived at Stroud Lodge, had never been into the community or been on holiday. Through careful consideration of their specific needs and how best to respond to them the staff found that consistency of approach was the key and that the person thrived on praise and encouragement. This person now goes out with staff into the community and has had regular holidays. Social care workers told us of the joy that holidays bring to this person and how they use it as a "time to relax." One social care worker told us, "We've been a couple of places. He chose where to go." When asked about their holidays the person smiled and stated how happy they were to go on holiday. One social care worker told us this was something they now asked for.

Social care workers and the registered manager had successfully supported one person to reach their goal of living in their own tenancy in 2017. The home worked tirelessly to support the person with securing benefits, working on budgets and identifying risks in a variety of settings before they moved. The person worked with management in order to achieve their personal goal.

People enjoyed a busy and activity life, which included activities, events and tasks which were personalised to their needs, wishes and goals. Each person had a personalised activity plan as well as a documented list of the activities they enjoyed. This had been set up to ensure people had access to activities which they could choose on that day. For example, one person wanted to go out with their key worker, this request was acknowledged and accepted. Another person had been supported to go into Gloucester to purchase some new shoes. They proudly showed their shoes off to staff and the inspector.

On the second day of the inspection, most people were enjoying excursions with the social care workers. Some people had been supported to enjoy a shopping trip, whilst others were enjoying a trip to the seaside. One person who was independent had taken themselves into Gloucester to do some research in relation to purchasing a football top. People were given full choice over events and activities including where they wanted to go for an evening meal. Social care workers told us they all enjoyed their job and an important part of their role was helping people to go on activities and live their life to the fullest. One social care worker told us how they supported one person to enjoy train rides and days out. They said, "We've been to Bristol, Birmingham and Cardiff. (Person) wanted to go to Cardiff castle; they chose it so we went." Activities were also part of people's goal setting and therefore they were discussed at their key worker meetings. One person told us "My goal is to go into town on my own." The deputy manager explained that they were using graded exposure for this person to gradually increase their confidence and independence.

We were told about how a gardening competition had been set up to improve the look of the garden. The registered manager explained the positive impact this had on people, how they spent time on the internet planning and the hours they spent enjoying gardening. One person had smoked for about 50 years but because of their enjoyment and focus on gardening the staff noticed his smoking had reduced until one day he stopped altogether.

There were strong links to the community and people were supported to engage in local community projects. Two people attended the church regularly and helped set tables and chairs out every fortnight for church meetings. One person regularly undertook duties as a server in the church. Another person enjoyed helping with a recycling project and learnt why it was important to recycle and the benefits it had on the

environment, they had taken house hold items down to the recycling centre. Later this year they were looking towards working with Gloucester Rangers to go on a litter picking trip as they wanted to help keep the local community clean.

We looked at the home's compliments and complaints records which were held by the registered manager. The registered manager explained that they had not had any complaints since 2013 when a person had complained about their meal. We could see that this had been addressed and actioned appropriately and had been discussed in a full team meeting. There was an easy read complaints policy in place so that people understood how to make a complaint if they wished. People we spoke with understood that they could complain and how to do it. One person told us "I would go to the boss lady; she's good, go with any question." Relatives told us the registered manager responded to and acted upon any concerns. Comments included: "If I do have any concern, I ring (registered manager) very approachable" and "If you need to moan, (registered manager) is always there to listen."

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

There was a strong and dedicated management team in Stroud Lodge. The registered manager was supported by a deputy manager and a team of team leaders. People and their relatives spoke positively about the registered manager and the leadership within Stroud Lodge. One relative told us, "Fantastic, issues get dealt with and there is always good communication." People living at Stroud lodge were able to tell us who "the boss lady" (registered manager) was and also managers employed by Choice to assess and monitor the quality of the service.

Healthcare professionals felt the service was well led and people living at Stroud Lodge benefitted from a dedicated and strong registered manager. Comments included: "The managers are good role models to both service users and staff"; "The Manager goes beyond her role" and "I find the Managers (Registered manager and deputy manager) very proactive regarding their clients."

Social care workers told us they were incredibly supported and felt Stroud Lodge was really well led. Comments included: "(Registered manager) is a brilliant manager. They are a good role model. They really listen to the service users"; "I feel tremendously supported by the management. This place is the best how it's run, you come here, you know where everything is and where you find things" and "(Registered manager) has a handle of everything. They have the ability to inspire."

The registered manager benefitted from support by the provider. They had an established supervision and annual appraisal schedule with the area director where their performance was looked at and any personal development plans could be discussed. The registered manager also said that they work on a buddy system with other registered managers to encourage learning and support. There was also an annual staff conference that allowed for networking with other managers.

The provider was committed to driving improvement through nurturing staff and developing their managerial and leadership skills. They had introduced 'The Choice Care Group Academy' which had been set up in 2010. The academy ran three management development programmes suitable for beginners to more senior staff. The academy was run by managers within the provider organisation and the registered manager of Stroud Lodge was a trainer at this academy. One social care worker was due to start the management development programmes as they had a desire to develop their career. This social care worker told us, "It's a good thing about this company. I know I'm ready, and they think I'm ready".

The registered manager had developed a clear ethos and culture that people came first and Stroud Lodge was led by the people that lived there which was evident during our inspection. Social care workers all shared this ethos and agreed this made Stroud Lodge a special place for the people that lived there. One social care worker said, "(Registered manager) puts it across its people's home and they come first."

People's views and choices were an integral part in developing and shaping the service. The registered manager held monthly house meetings, or more frequently when required. On the first day of our inspection the registered manager held an impromptu house meeting while everyone was present to discuss colour

schemes for the home's refurbished lounge. As a group they discussed having two different colours within the room and discussed what colours these should be. One person suggested blue and green so it would be like a landscape. The registered manager asked people if they had any concerns, anything they wanted to discuss or any activities they wanted to do. One person said they wanted to go to a football match with a social care worker. The social care worker said they were looking to arrange this for the person. These meetings were recorded to ensure people's views were documented and acted upon.

People were empowered to be involved in all aspects of running the home and contribute towards the providers' procedures. For example, people living at Stroud Lodge had implemented some rules, called "How we like to live". One person proudly told us about the rules including the one that they wanted in place. These included rules such as "We should help to clean up by putting our cups and plates in dishwasher" and "If we borrow another person's items we should ask permission." These rules were on display in the dining room for everyone to view. It was clear from all people and social care workers that Stroud Lodge was people's home and they talked proudly about this. People were looking forward to the home's lounge being developed and also the creation of an activities shed, which would provide an additional space for people to enjoy.

The registered manager explained how graded exposure programmes and social stories for each person enabled the service to follow current guidance and evidence the positive impact these programmes had had on people and their wellbeing. For example, people's independence had been encouraged and their confidence to share their journey had been encouraged.

The registered manager and staff promoted people's citizenship and encouraged them to contribute to society. For example, people and staff decided to promote a theme on global warming which focused on education and small practical projects aimed at reducing their carbon foot print. The idea was discussed during a house meeting following reading newspaper articles on the melting ice caps. They had agreed to focus on recycling, grow their own vegetables, complete litter picking and also provide leaflets and posters to be used in the local community to raise awareness. As part of the project the registered manager had documented the actions people had taken and how it had had a positive impact.

Some people were part of the provider's service user committee. This was made up of people representing people from all of the provider's services. A meeting was held every three months. We looked at the service user committee meeting minutes for meetings carried out in 2017. Topics were discussed around different events held in people's homes and volunteering for an open event for the Provider. Not only did this ensure people were part of the planning for all aspects of the service but it had the added benefit of allowing people the opportunity to make friends and develop relationships outside of their home.

People had a number of easy read policies within the home that helped them understand why certain processes and protocols were in place. These policies included 'keeping safe', 'choosing staff' and the 'Mental Capacity Act'. This access to information enabled people to feel more confident at challenging practices both in the home and in the community. It also helped to set out the expectations people should have of the home.

The quality, safety and effectiveness of the service was monitored by a wide variety of quality assurance processes and audits. The service had a monthly monitoring visit from the provider and four audits a year from an area director. There was also an annual finance audit by the provider. The registered manager herself audited many of the processes and records relating to the care and support of people within the home. This included handover, mealtimes, medicine management and people's care plans. Where necessary, action plans had been developed from the audits and these results had been used to drive

improvements.

This level of audit scrutiny helped contribute to the lack of medicine errors. There had been no medicine errors within the home for the last four years. Stringent quality assurance audits also ensured that people's care plans were always an accurate reflection of where they were in their goals, achievements and all other aspects of their care. It was noticeable on inspection that the documents related to people's care and support were being constantly reviewed and updated to reflect people's changing needs.

People were also involved with carrying out audits and ensuring the safety of the service. For example, one person worked with a social care worker to complete weekly health and safety checks of the premises. The person expressed a wish to help with reporting maintenance issues and helping keep the home tidy, so they were supported to complete these checks.

Quality assurance auditing was not just the responsibility of the provider and registered manager. This work was also undertaken by an expert auditor. The expert auditor role was taken up by people that were living in one of the provider's homes, or had lived there at some point. Their job was to help the service gain a greater understanding of what a service looked like from the perspective of people that live there. This was a paid role and the person received support and training to undertake the role. The expert audits were completed every three months. The auditor wrote a report and sent their findings to the registered manager and the area director. Any actions identified would be completed by the registered manager. For example, actions in relation to record keeping had been identified. The registered manager had addressed these shortfalls through team meetings with social care workers.

Stroud Lodge had worked tirelessly with healthcare professionals to develop strategies to support people during periods of difficulty in a variety of settings. The provider and registered manager had trained social care workers to develop ways of supporting individuals proactively, actively and reactively inside and outside of Stroud Lodge looking for early warning signs of behaviours. This had reduced the number of physical interventions carried out by staff. The registered manager told us, since 2012 physical interventions have reduced from 21 a year to twice within the last calendar year.

Stroud Lodge had been at the forefront of organising Choice Care Group (the provider) Activity Programmes for the west region. The home had developed a whole team approach to activities ensuring that the service delivers bespoke activities for the company within the Gloucester and Wiltshire region encompassing social inclusion by arranging various parties and social events. The energy and determination of all staff has been the driving force of the project acting as a catalyst for other homes to follow suit. Stroud Lodge had also been a member of the activity champions network liaising with other care providers sharing and receiving ideas around activities.

We looked at the result of the stakeholder quality assurance survey of Stroud Lodge in 2017. The registered manager was reviewing the comments to see if there were any actions that could be taken, however the survey demonstrated that everyone was very happy with the service.