

# Adult social care, community – characteristics of each rating level

## Introduction

We have developed these characteristics to help you make a judgement against each question and then rate them. Once you have done this, you put those ratings into our rating aggregation tool which works out the overall rating for the service.

The starting point is a description of the characteristics of a good service. This is consistent with our approach of looking for good when you inspect services.

The sections describing the characteristic of 'good' for each key question have the most detail. This should help you to inspect for good. The remaining three sections (outstanding, requires improvement and inadequate) build on this description and describe how the characteristics differ from the description of good. If you find that a service is good under a question, for example safe, you should then go on to check whether you have sufficient evidence to show that it is outstanding. If a service is not good, you will need to review your evidence to judge whether it requires improvement or is inadequate.

The characteristics are not a checklist and are not exhaustive. While they link to the prompts in the key lines of enquiry, they are not meant to map across exactly. They are written to give you a picture of a service in respect of the five key questions. You will need to make a professional judgement, based on the history of the service and the evidence you have gathered. A service does not have to meet every area covered in the characteristics to fit in that rating section. You may also find that some of the characteristics may not always be appropriate for different types of services.

You will need to take a proportionate approach when a service sits somewhere between two rating levels. You should consider the size and type of the service, whether you have enough evidence, the outcomes for people and the severity of any breaches of regulations. You may need to speak to your line manager to get a second opinion or carry out a management review.

We need to be as consistent as we possibly can so that our ratings are reliable and provide accurate information. This will also help reduce the numbers of requests for review. As you consider your evidence following an inspection you may develop a sense of what the rating for a particular question could be. However, you must make sure your rating decisions for each of the five key questions are determined by assessing your evidence against the characteristics set out in this document.

## Shared Lives

You will need to judge and rate Shared Lives services in the same way as you would for any community-based service, by using the characteristics. Because of the nature of Shared Lives and how they are managed and operated, not all aspects of the characteristics will apply and you will need to keep in mind that you are judging the service as a whole and not individual Shared Lives carers. To help you judge and rate Shared Lives we have set out some further characteristics of good, outstanding and requires improvement, that can be used in conjunction with the community services characteristics.

### Good

People are supported to have freedom and are a part of their local community (Safe and Responsive). The scheme has a flexible approach to the needs of people and their Shared Lives carer (Responsive). The service involves people to help them shape the scheme and this helps them feel like the place they live is their home and that they are with family and friends (Well-Led).

There is a real sense of partnership between people, their Shared Lives carer and the scheme and they are all working together for a common goal (Caring). Shared Lives carers are supported to meet up with other Shared Lives carers to learn and influence the development of schemes (Well-Led). The scheme draws on the knowledge and skills of the Shared Lives carer to help develop the service (Well-Led). Time is taken to make sure that Shared Lives carers are well matched with the people they care and support (Safe).

### Outstanding

In addition, the scheme encourages Shared Lives carers to support and enable the person they care for to do extraordinary things, within their capabilities. As a result, their quality of life is enriched and optimised to the full (Responsive). The scheme and the Shared Lives carers are innovative in their thinking about what individual people can achieve with their support (Caring). People's individual needs are assessed in detail and the scheme develops the service with a view to meeting those needs (Responsive). The scheme and Shared Lives carers work in innovative ways with the health services that people use, to improve service delivery and actively improve outcomes for individuals (Effective). The scheme is willing to go 'the extra mile' for people who may have struggled with placements in the past and they are confident when taking risks in this respect (Well-Led).

### Requires improvement

The scheme does not have systems in place to provide respite services for Shared Lives carers for breaks or unplanned leave (Effective). Recruitment and selection is rushed and Shared Lives carers may not have understood the role and responsibilities they have taken on (Safe). The scheme takes people on emergency placements and the selection and matching of Shared Lives carers is rushed, resulting in poor placements and limited outcomes for people (Safe).

# SAFE

Rating description	Judgement
Safe Good	<p>People's feedback about the safety of the service describes it as consistently good and that they feel safe</p> <p>People of all ages are safe because the service protects them from bullying, harassment, avoidable harm and potential abuse. The staff have a comprehensive awareness and understanding of potential abuse which helps to make sure that they can recognise cases of abuse. The service does this consistently so that people feel safe in the community. Staff know what they need to do to make sure that people in vulnerable situations who are isolated in the community are protected.</p> <p>There is a culture of learning from mistakes and an open approach. The service manages incidents, accidents and safeguarding concerns promptly, and, where required, investigations are thorough. There is a consistent approach to safeguarding and matters are always dealt with in an open, transparent and objective way.</p> <p>The service has a proactive approach to respecting people's human rights and diversity and this prevents discrimination that may lead to psychological harm.</p> <p>When people behave in a way that may challenge others, staff manage the situation in a positive way and protect people's dignity and rights. They regularly review how they do this and work with people, supporting them to manage their behaviour. They seek to understand and reduce the causes of behaviour that distresses people or puts them at risk of harm. They make sure people are referred for professional assessment at the earliest opportunity. Staff only use restraint if they have been trained to use it and when it is safe and necessary to do so.</p> <p>There are policies and procedures for managing risk and staff understand and consistently follow them to protect people. Restrictions are minimised so that people feel safe but also have the most freedom possible – regardless of disability or other needs. Staff give people information about risks and actively support them in their choices so they have as much control and independence as possible. Risk assessments are proportionate and centred around the needs of the person. The service regularly reviews them and takes note of equality and human rights legislation. There are strategies to make sure that risks are anticipated, identified and managed.</p> <p>Providers with national and regional structures make sure they keep an overview of risk and safety to inform their business planning and strategic oversight to provide corporate direction to the organisation.</p>

Staff manage medicines consistently and safely. Where the service is responsible, it stores medicines correctly, disposes of them safely and keeps accurate records. People are assured that they receive their medicines as prescribed. Where appropriate, the service involves people in the regular review and risk assessment of their medicines and supports them to be as independent as possible.

To protect people with limited capacity to make decisions about their own care or treatment, the service follows correct procedures when medicines need to be given to people without their knowing, or when people require specialist medication. To reduce the risk of errors, staff talk with each other, their managers and other agencies and carers, who may share the responsibility for giving medicines. The service assesses the risk when people wish to manage their own medicines.

Where the service is responsible it keeps equipment serviced and well maintained. It takes all possible action to reduce the risk of injury caused by the environment people live in and looks for ways to improve safety. Staff use equipment correctly to meet statutory requirements and keep people safe. People say they know that the service will always keep them and their belongings safe and secure.

The service manages the control and prevention of infection well. Staff follow policies and procedures that meet current and relevant national guidance and are kept up to date. Staff understand their role and responsibilities for maintaining high standards of cleanliness and hygiene.

There are always enough competent staff on duty who have the right mix of skills to make sure that practice is safe and they can respond to unforeseen events. The service regularly reviews staffing levels and adapts them to people's changing needs. The service makes sure there is staff cover across the geographical area so people receive a consistent and reliable service. The service considers travelling time to make sure people receive the amount of care that has been agreed in their care plan. Short calls are avoided, unless the assessed care can be delivered safely in the time slot without being rushed.

Recruitment systems are robust and make sure that the right staff are recruited to keep people safe. Staff have the support and back up to protect people and themselves from harm. This may mean working in pairs or having someone they can contact for extra assistance when needed. The service makes sure staff are able to contact them and their colleagues and have access to personal safety equipment.

There are arrangements to deal with situations when carers cannot make visits due to urgent unexpected demand. People are informed when staff need to change at short notice so they know who will provide their care and support and their personal security is protected.

	<p>Management identifies risks to the service and manages them well. Staff understand how to minimise risks and there is a good track record on safety and risk management. If action plans are required, they are monitored to make sure they are delivered. The service consistently focuses on how they can improve their safety record.</p>
<p>Safe Outstanding</p>	<p>For a good service to be rated outstanding there are additional key characteristics that make the service exceptional and distinctive. People’s feedback about the safety of the service describes it in these terms.</p> <p>There is a high level of understanding of the need to make sure people are safe. People who use the service and staff tell us they are actively encouraged to raise their concerns and to challenge when they feel people’s safety is at risk. They tell us there are no recriminations for doing this and it is seen as part of day-to-day practice</p> <p>Staff have exceptional skills and the ability to recognise when people feel unsafe. Staff and their mix of skills are used innovatively to give them the time to develop positive and meaningful relationships with people to keep them safe and meet their needs.</p> <p>The service is creative in the way it involves and works with people, respects their diverse needs and challenges discrimination. It seeks ways to continually improve and puts changes into practice and sustains them.</p> <p>Staff show empathy and have an enabling attitude that encourages people to challenge themselves while recognising and respecting their lifestyle choices.</p> <p>There is a transparent and open culture that encourages creative thinking in relation to people’s safety. The service seeks out current best practice and uses learning from this to drive improvement.</p> <p>The service uses imaginative and innovative ways to manage risk and keep people safe while making sure they have a full and meaningful life. The service actively seeks out new technology and solutions to make sure that people have as few restrictions possible.</p> <p>The service sustains outstanding practice and improvements over time.</p>
<p>Safe Requires improvement</p>	<p>A service that requires improvement may also have areas of strength, but good practice is not sustained. An inconsistent approach means that, at times, it places people’s safety, health or well-being at risk. Regulations may or may not be met.</p> <p>People who use the service are usually safe but they may not be confident this can be sustained. This may be because the service does not involve or listen to them or act on their concerns about safety. The culture of the service may be risk averse, which means that it places unnecessary restrictions on people which limit their lifestyles.</p>

	<p>The service may have policies and procedures about upholding people’s rights and making sure diverse needs are respected and met, but these may not be fully understood or consistently followed.</p> <p>The service may not always provide enough staff, with the right mix of skills, competence or experience to keep people safe. Staff absence may not be covered with appropriately skilled staff to meet people’s needs. People are often not informed about staff changes and who may be visiting them. The service may sometimes expect staff to give care in a timescale that makes people feel rushed or unsafe. People may receive the care they need to be safe but staff may not always have the time to be flexible or respond to changing needs. Turnover of staff may be high and the care and support people receive may be inconsistent and not always safe.</p> <p>People can usually expect to receive their medicines but the service may not consistently follow safe practice around storing them, giving them to people and disposing of them.</p> <p>Staff working at the service may not consistently apply infection control practices.</p> <p>Where the service is responsible, it may not always keep all equipment safe and fit for purpose, with some safety certification being out of date.</p> <p>When managers identify shortfalls in the safety of the service they do not always act on them effectively. Organisations with national and regional structures may not consistently keep a necessary overview of risk and safety and do not have a track record of managing risk and safety well over time.</p>
Safe Inadequate	<p>A service that is inadequate may have some areas of safe practice, but in general people are not safe. Some regulations are not met.</p> <p>People tell us that they do not feel safe or that they have actually been harmed or abused. This involves neglect and acts of omission, physical abuse, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse, discrimination or institutional abuse. People may not have their human rights upheld and may not be treated with respect for their equality and diversity.</p> <p>The service may not allow staff time to give people the care they need or to respond to emergencies or incidents. The service does not regularly review its staffing levels and mix of skills to make sure they are able to respond to people’s changing needs.</p> <p>Staff changes are made, often at short notice or without notice, and people are unable to check if the member of staff visiting them is genuine.</p>

If staff have training about how to keep people safe, including how to involve other professionals under safeguarding procedures, they often do not act on this which puts people at risk. People may not be involved in the management of risks that may affect their safety. The way staff respond to risk may be disproportionate, resulting in people being deprived of their liberty without the appropriate safeguards being in place.

The service does not always protect people and their belongings. There are shortfalls in security and safety of equipment with items and systems.

Where the service is responsible for medication, people are placed at risk because staff do not handle medicines safely or people do not always receive them as prescribed. People may be at risk because of the poor prevention and control of infection.

The management of the service takes inadequate or no action to improve the safety of the service for people. Where action is taken to address risks, plans are not clear or coordinated. The service cannot assure people they will be safe and people are sometimes not safe.

The practice in the service places people at risk of harm or does not protect them from actual harm.

# EFFECTIVE

Rating description	Judgement
Effective Good	<p>People's feedback about the effectiveness of the service describes it as consistently good.</p> <p>The service makes sure that the needs of people are met consistently by staff who have the right competencies, knowledge, qualifications, skills, experience, attitudes and behaviours. Staff have a thorough induction that gives them the skills and confidence to carry out their role and responsibilities effectively so that people have their needs met and experience a good quality of life. The service has a proactive approach to staff members' learning and development. Their needs are identified to make sure that can effectively meet the people's needs and preferences.</p> <p>The service keeps up to date with new research, guidance and developments and has links with organisations that promote and guide best practice and use this to train staff and help drive improvement. Supervision and appraisal are used to develop and motivate staff and review their practice or behaviours. Volunteers are equally supported and trained for the role and tasks they carry out.</p> <p>In the community newly recruited staff do not work alone unsupervised until they and the manager are confident they can do so. The service makes sure that people are introduced to staff who are going to provide their care. They allocate staff effectively focussing on their skills, experience and compatibility with the person they are supporting.</p> <p>Staff understand and have a good working knowledge of the key requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. They put these into practice effectively, and ensure people's human and legal rights are respected.</p> <p>People are always asked to give their consent to their care, treatment and support. Staff always consider people's capacity to take particular decisions and know what they need to do to make sure decisions are taken in people's best interests and involve the right professionals. Where people do not have the capacity to make decisions they are given the information they need in an accessible format, and where appropriate, their friends and family are involved.</p> <p>People experience positive outcomes regarding their health. Staff know their routine health needs and preferences and consistently keep them under review. The service engages proactively with health and social care agencies and acts on their recommendations and guidance to meet people's best interests. Appropriate</p>

	<p>referrals are made to other health and social care services. The service takes preventative action at the right time to keep people in good or the best of health. People feel informed about, and involved in, their healthcare and are empowered to have as much choice and control as possible.</p> <p>Staff protect people, especially those with complex needs, from the risk of poor nutrition, dehydration, swallowing problems and other medical conditions that affect their health. People's needs are regularly monitored and reviewed and relevant professionals and people using the service are actively involved in this. Where food is provided, people say that the food and mealtimes are consistently good and speak positively about the menu and the quality of food provided. They feel actively involved in this aspect of the service and able to give feedback on a regular basis.</p>
<p>Effective Outstanding</p>	<p>For a good service to be rated outstanding there are additional key characteristics that make the service exceptional and distinctive. People's feedback about the effectiveness of the service describes it in these terms.</p> <p>The service has innovative and creative ways of training and developing their staff that makes sure they put their learning into practice to deliver outstanding care that meet people's individual needs. The service works in partnership with other organisations to make sure they are training staff to follow best practice and where possible, contribute to the development of best practice.</p> <p>The service sustains outstanding practice and improvements over time and works towards, and achieves, recognised accreditation schemes. There is a proactive support system in place for staff that develops their knowledge and skills and motivates them to provide a quality service.</p> <p>Staff confidently make use of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and use innovative ways to make sure that people are involved in decisions about their care so that their human and legal rights are sustained.</p> <p>There are champions in the service who actively support staff to make sure people experience good healthcare outcomes leading to an outstanding quality of life. People experience a level of care and support that promotes their wellbeing and means they have a meaningful life.</p> <p>Links with health and social care services are excellent. Where people have complex/continued health needs, staff always seek to improve their care, treatment and support by identifying and implementing best practice.</p> <p>There is a strong emphasis on the importance of eating and drinking well. Where the service is responsible, innovative methods and positive staff relationships are used to encourage those who are reluctant or have difficulty in eating and drinking. This approach makes sure that people's dietary and fluid intake, especially those living with dementia or those with a learning disability, significantly improves their well-being.</p>

	<p>There are excellent links with dietetic professionals and staff are aware of people's individual preferences and patterns of eating and drinking. These preferences are sustained over time, as their health allows.</p> <p>People say that the mealtimes and support with eating and drinking is outstanding and that their individual needs are met and staff go out of their way to meet preferences.</p>
Effective Requires improvement	<p>A service that requires improvement may have some features of a good service, but there may be a lack of consistency in the effectiveness of the care, treatment and support people receive. Regulations may or may not be met.</p> <p>The service monitors people's health and care needs, but does not consistently act on issues identified, people may not have the best possible outcomes and their health could deteriorate. Healthcare professionals may report that the service does not always effectively put into place the care and/or treatment that they have directed.</p> <p>Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and the key requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 may not be fully understood despite staff attending training.</p> <p>Management know that staff need training and support, but may not keep this up to date or make sure it covers the right areas to meet people's needs. This is demonstrated by shortfalls in the service's practice and support, which may, at times, have affected people's care. The training and development provided may be sufficient in some areas but is not fully understood or consistently demonstrated by staff in their behaviours and practice. There is limited evidence to show that training has been put into practice.</p> <p>Where the service is responsible, people at risk of poor nutrition and dehydration are not always sufficiently monitored, managed or encouraged. This can result in increased risk to their health and wellbeing. People say that mealtimes are not always a pleasurable experience, with people not getting the support that they would need or like.</p>
Effective Inadequate	<p>A service that is inadequate may have some effective practice. However, there will be widespread and significant shortfalls in the care, support and outcomes people experience. Some regulations are not met.</p> <p>Staff are not adequately trained and this is demonstrated in their practice and approach to the care, treatment and support people receive. Staff do not know about best practice and do not always recognise poor practice. Induction for new staff to the service is not thorough and people may be cared for by staff who do not have the skills and knowledge to meet their needs effectively. Volunteers are not supported or clear about their role.</p>

	<p>Staff do not understand what they must do to comply with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty safeguards. They sometimes do not act within the law.</p> <p>Where the service is responsible, there is poor monitoring and management of people's eating and drinking, which puts people who use the service at risk. People are not sufficiently supported by staff with the right skills to make sure that they have enough to eat and drink.</p>
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# CARING

Rating description	Judgement
Caring Good	<p>People who use the service, those that matter to them and other people who have contact with the service, are consistently positive about the caring attitude of the staff.</p> <p>People receive care and support from staff who know and understand their history, likes, preferences, needs, hopes and goals. The relationships between staff and people receiving support consistently demonstrate dignity and respect at all times. Staff know, understand and respond to each person's diverse cultural, gender and spiritual needs and meet their in a caring and compassionate way.</p> <p>People are proactively supported to express their views and staff are skilled at giving people the information and explanations they need and the time to make decisions. Staff communicate effectively with every person using the service, no matter how complex their needs. People who use the service know about and have access to advocacy support and the service has links to local advocacy services where available.</p> <p>Staff know people's individual communication skills, abilities and preferences. There are a range of ways used to make sure people are able to say how they feel about the caring approach of the service and whether they have a sense that they matter and belong. Staff know that they need to spend time with people to be caring and have concern for their wellbeing. Staff are given enough time to get to know a person who is new to the service, and read through their care plan and risk assessments. They are not expected to 'hit the ground running' and rotas are organised so that people receive care from a small number of staff who understand their needs and get along with them.</p> <p>Kindness, respect, compassion, dignity in care and empowerment are the key principles on how the service recruits, trains and supports its staff. There are robust systems that make sure that this is happening in practice. Staff develop trusting relationships, and understand and respect confidentiality. In the community the service has strategies to minimise the risk to confidentiality when people's care and support may be provided by a mixture of regulated, non-regulated and informal care. Staff recognise the importance of the values of the service and challenge behaviour and practices which fall short of this.</p> <p>When people are nearing the end of their life they receive compassionate and supportive care. These people, those that matter to them and appropriate professionals contribute to their plan of care so that staff know their wishes and make sure the person has dignity, comfort and respect at the end of their life.</p>

	<p>People are given support when making decisions about their preferences for end of life care. Where necessary, people and staff are supported by palliative care specialists. Staff liaise with services and arrange for equipment to be provided as and when needed, when this part of their role.</p> <p>The service makes sure that facilities and support are available for people, those who are important to them and staff before, during and after death.</p>
Caring Outstanding	<p>For a good service to be rated outstanding there are additional key characteristics that make the service exceptional and distinctive. People’s feedback about the caring approach of the service describes it in these terms.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>People value their relationships with the staff team and feel that they often go ‘the extra mile’ for them, when providing care and support. As a result, they feel really cared for and that they matter. Staff are exceptional in enabling people to remain independent and have an in-depth appreciation of people’s individual needs around privacy and dignity.</p> <p>Staff will be highly motivated and inspired to offer care that is kind and compassionate and will be determined and creative in overcoming any obstacles to achieving this. The service continually strives to develop the approach of their staff team so this is sustained.</p> <p>The service provides outstanding end of life care and people experience a comfortable, dignified and pain-free death. They are cared for by exceptional staff who are compassionate, understanding, enabling and who have distinctive skills in this aspect of care. Staff also care for and support the people that matter to the person who is dying with empathy and understanding.</p>
Caring Requires improvement	<p>A service that requires improvement may have some features of a good service but there may be a lack of consistency in the caring approach of staff. Regulations may or may not have been met.</p> <p>People may say that staff treat them with kindness and respect but sometimes they do not explain things clearly or give them time to respond. People feel that staff are task focused and do not sit and talk with them for any meaningful period of time, or focus on their wellbeing.</p> <p>Staff do not always understand the need to make sure that people have their privacy and dignity maintained.</p>

	<p>People may say that while this may not be intentional, this results in them not always feeling they are respected or valued.</p> <p>People's end of life wishes may not be consistently recorded or acted upon. Staff are reactive rather than proactive when issues arise, and do not always appreciate the need for good end of life care.</p>
<p>Caring Inadequate</p>	<p>A service that is inadequate has widespread and significant shortfalls in the caring attitude of staff. Some regulations are not met.</p> <p>People who use the service, and those that matter to them, and other people who have contact with the service, say they are not treated with respect, and that staff are sometimes unkind and lack compassion. This is usually serious and widespread.</p> <p>There is a lack of continuity of staff, so they are not familiar with the person they are caring for. Any evidence of kind and compassionate care may be due to the skills and efforts of individual members of staff and is not recognised by the service. Staff routines and preferences take priority and they have little understanding of the impact of this approach on the wellbeing and needs of people using the service.</p> <p>The service does not listen to people or understand how to support them to express their views. Staff communication with people with complex needs is poor so they are often not understood. Also, staff do not have access to or understand the different methods of communication that can be used.</p> <p>Not treating people, including those that matter to them, with kindness, respect and compassion is usually serious and widespread.</p> <p>People do not usually experience and comfortable, dignified or pain free death.</p> <p>People using the service are likely to need urgent action to improve their care. People may be at risk of, or subjected to, emotional, physical or psychological abuse.</p>

# RESPONSIVE

Rating description	Judgement
Responsive Good	<p>People's feedback about the responsiveness of the service describes it as consistently good.</p> <p>People receive consistent, personalised care, treatment and support. They are involved in identifying their needs, choices and preferences and how these are met. People's care, treatment and support is set out in a written plan that describes what staff need to do to make sure personalised care is provided.</p> <p>People, and those that matter to them, are actively involved in developing their care, support and treatment plans and are supported by staff that are competent and have the skills to assess their needs. Staff make every effort to make sure people are empowered and included in this process. They strike a balance when involving family, friends or advocates in decisions about the care provided, to make sure that the views of the person receiving the care are known, respected and acted on.</p> <p>Care, treatment and support plans are seen as fundamental to providing good person centred-care. They are thorough and reflect people's needs, choices and preferences. People's changing care needs are identified promptly, and are regularly reviewed with the involvement of the person and put into practice. There are robust systems to make sure that changes to care plans are communicated to those that need to know.</p> <p>Care planning is focused upon the person's whole life, including their goals, skills, abilities and how they prefer to manage their health. In some cases Health Action Plans may also be in place.</p> <p>People have a choice about who provides their personal care. They are empowered to make choices and have as much control and independence as possible.</p> <p>The service protects people from the risks of social isolation and loneliness and the service recognises the importance of social contact and companionship. Where the service is responsible, it enables people to carry out person-centred activities and encourages them to maintain hobbies and interests. Staff are proactive, and make sure that people are able to keep relationships that matter to them, such as family, community and other social links.</p> <p>The service has clear systems and processes that are applied consistently for referring people to external services. When people use or move between different services this is properly planned, people are involved in</p>

	<p>these decisions and their preferences and choices are respected. There is an awareness of the potential difficulties people face in moving between services and strategies are in place to maintain continuity of care, especially with children and young adults.</p> <p>There are a range of ways in which people can feed back their experience of the care they receive and raise any issues or concerns they may have. Concerns and complaints are always taken seriously, explored thoroughly and responded to in good time. The service is able to show a difference to the way they deliver care, treatment and support and proactively use complaints and concerns as an opportunity for learning.</p>
<p>Responsive Outstanding</p>	<p>For a good service to be rated outstanding there are additional key characteristics that make the service exceptional and distinctive. People’s feedback about the responsive approach of the service describes it in these terms.</p> <p>People tell us staff have outstanding skills, and have an excellent understanding of their social and cultural diversity, values and beliefs that may influence their decisions on how they want to receive care, treatment and support. Staff know how to meet these preferences and are innovative in suggesting additional ideas that they themselves might not have considered. This means that people have an enhanced sense of wellbeing and exceptional quality of life.</p> <p>People’s care and support is planned proactively in partnership with them. Staff use innovative and individual ways of involving people so that they feel consulted, empowered, listened to and valued.</p> <p>Professionals say that the service is focused on providing person-centred care and it achieves exceptional results. Ongoing improvement is seen as essential. The service strives to be known as outstanding and innovative in providing person-centred care based on best practice.</p> <p>The service is flexible and responsive to people’s individual needs and preferences, finding creative ways to enable people to live as full a life as possible. Where the service is responsible, the arrangements for social activities, and where appropriate education and work, are innovative and meet people’s individual needs.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the service takes a key role in the local community and is actively involved in building further links. Input from other services and support networks are encouraged and sustained.</p> <p>People are actively encouraged to give their views and raise concerns or complaints The services sees concerns and complaints as part of driving improvement. People’s feedback is valued and people feel that the responses to the matters they raise are dealt with in an open, transparent and honest way. Investigations are</p>

	<p>comprehensive and the service uses innovative ways of looking into concerns raised, including the use of people and professionals external to the service to make sure there is an independent and objective approach.</p>
<p>Responsive Requires improvement</p>	<p>A service that requires improvement may have some features of a good service, but there may be a lack of consistency in how well people are involved in relevant decisions about their care, treatment and support. Regulations may or may not be met.</p> <p>People may be involved in developing their own care, support and treatment plans, but there may not be enough time for them to engage fully with the process. People are not always at the centre of the care they receive because staff sometimes focus on the task, rather than them, as individuals</p> <p>Staff are aware of people's needs but may not always respond in good time. There may be delays in making referrals to other health and social care professionals. People and staff tell us that some delays are caused by a lack of staff, equipment or resources.</p> <p>People's care needs are not reassessed regularly and this results in their care plan being out of date and not reflecting their current needs. This puts them at risk of inconsistent care and/or not receiving the care and support they need. Care is not fully person-centred and often what is written in the care plan, even if people have had input, is not carried out in practice. People may not have been involved in the development and review of their care plans in a meaningful way.</p> <p>Staff are aware of people's preferences and choices but they may not understand and recognise the person's social and cultural diversity or values and beliefs, or how this may influence their decisions and how they want to receive care, treatment and support.</p> <p>The service is inconsistent in their approach when people use or move between services. People may have to repeat their story because the information shared is not always sufficient to make sure they receive the care they need.</p> <p>Although a complaints system may be in place, it may be managed inconsistently. When people raise complaints or concerns about the care they receive, the service may not always take their views on board fully, investigate them thoroughly or change practice to improve.</p>
<p>Responsive Inadequate</p>	<p>A service that is inadequate will have widespread and significant shortfalls in the way they respond to people. Some regulations are not met.</p>

Care records may be standardised across the service with no evidence of individualised or person centred care. People are not involved in the development of their care plan. People's care needs have not been reassessed and their care records are out of date and do not sufficiently guide staff on people's current care, treatment and support needs; this puts people at risk of inappropriate care.

People's experience of care and treatment is that it is task-centred rather than in response to their individual needs and preferences. Visiting professionals tell us their recommendations for care and treatment are often not followed or referrals are not made.

Staff may not understand or recognise people's social and cultural diversity, or the values and beliefs that influence their decisions and how they want to receive care, treatment and support. Training and development in regards to human rights and diversity is either not provided or is inadequate.

Complaints are not always dealt with in an open, transparent and objective way. People are not given an opportunity to express their views about the care they receive.

Information shared with other services people use or move to is inadequate. This results in people not having their care and support needs met.

# Well-led

Rating Description	Judgement
Well-led Good	<p>People, their family and friends are regularly involved with the service in a meaningful way, helping to drive continuous improvement. People's feedback about the way the service is led describes it as consistently good.</p> <p>The service has a clear vision and set of values that includes honesty, involvement, compassion, dignity, independence, respect, equality and safety. These are understood and consistently put into practice.</p> <p>The service has a positive culture that is person centred, open, inclusive and empowering. It has a well-developed understanding of equality, diversity and human rights and put these into practice.</p> <p>Staff have the confidence to question practice and report concerns about the care offered by colleagues, carers and other professionals. When this happens they are supported and their concerns are thoroughly investigated.</p> <p>Staff understand their role, appreciate what is expected of them, are happy in their work, are motivated and have confidence in the way the service is managed. Managers are consistent, lead by example and are available to staff for guidance and support. This should involve face-to-face meetings and enabling staff to get together to share views, information and gain support. Premises that staff can meet in are conveniently located and accessible. Staff are provided with constructive feedback and have clear lines of accountability. Support and resources are available to enable and empower the staff team to develop and to drive improvement.</p> <p>The service defines quality from the perspective of the people using it and involves them, staff and external stakeholders in a consistent in the way. Quality assurance arrangements are robust and the need to provide a quality service is fundamental and understood by all staff. Where required, processes are in place to enable managers to account for actions, behaviours and the performance of staff.</p> <p>The service works in partnership with key organisations to support care provision, service development and joined up care.</p> <p>Legal obligations, including conditions of registration from CQC, and those placed on them by other external organisations are understood and met.</p>

Well-led Outstanding	<p>For a good service to be rated outstanding there are additional key characteristics that make the service exceptional and distinctive. People’s feedback about the way the service is led describes it in these terms.</p> <p>The service has a track record of being an excellent role model, actively seeking and acting on the views of others through creative and innovative methods. They have developed and sustained a positive culture in the service encouraging staff and people to raise issues of concern with them, which they always act upon.</p> <p>There is a strong emphasis on continually striving to improve. Managers recognise, promote and regularly implement innovative systems in order to provide a high-quality service. The service sustains outstanding practice and improvements over time and works towards, and achieves, recognised accreditation schemes.</p> <p>The service finds innovative and creative ways to enable people to be empowered and voice their opinions.</p> <p>The vision and values are imaginative and person-centred and make sure people are at the heart of the service. They are developed and reviewed with people and staff and are owned by all and underpin practice. The service recognises the on-going importance of ensuring these are understood, implemented and communicated to people in meaningful and creative ways.</p> <p>The service has innovative ways of communicating with staff who work in the community to make sure they are informed of changes, know about best practice and can share views and information.</p> <p>The service works in partnership with other organisations to make sure they are following current practice and providing a high quality service. They strive for excellence through consultation, research and reflective practice. It can also show how it sustains their outstanding practice and improvements over time.</p>
Well-led Requires improvement	<p>A service, that requires improvement, may have some features of a good service. There may be a lack of consistency in how well the service is managed and led. Where regulations apply they may or may not be met.</p> <p>There will be times when the leadership is reactive rather than proactive. The way the service is managed does not always identify risks, and it may not have strategies to minimise these risks to make sure the service runs smoothly.</p> <p>Staff generally feel supported but not all staff understand their roles and responsibilities They may feel their views are sought and valued but there are often obstacles to them being acted on. The culture of the service is not always open and transparent.</p> <p>The service may not have had a registered manager for more than six months and satisfactory steps have not been taken to recruit one within a reasonable timescale. The arrangements to cover the absence may not provide consistent leadership and direction for staff.</p>

	<p>Quality assurance systems are in place, but may be inconsistently applied. Management may recognise the value of transparency, but in practice, key decisions are made without fully involving people and staff. Information sharing may also be inconsistent.</p> <p>People and staff who raise concerns, including whistle-blowers, are not always supported. Issues they raise are investigated but they may not always be as fully involved as they can be, or be may not be told the outcome. Staff may be reluctant to challenge unsafe or unacceptable practice because their concerns are not always acted on and they may fear recriminations. While safeguarding matters are usually reported, there may be a reluctance to deal with the matter openly.</p> <p>Communication may sometimes be unclear. When people are involved it tends to be those with a stronger voice who are listened to. Those whose voices are more difficult to hear are not always empowered to make their views heard.</p> <p>Staff may feel isolated in their role, they may not often have the opportunity to get together with colleagues to share best practice or learn in a supportive environment.</p>
Well-led Inadequate	<p>A service that is inadequate will have widespread and significant shortfalls in the way the service is led. Where regulations apply, they are not met.</p> <p>Leadership may be weak or inconsistent. Support and resources needed to run the service are not always available. There may not have been a registered manager in post for a substantial period. Roles and responsibilities within the service are not clear and the staff are unsure who they are accountable to and what they are accountable for. Care and support provided to people is intuitive rather than guided by good practice or management support.</p> <p>Outcomes for people using the service may be poor. Staff are not adequately supervised and staff turnover may be high. Management have not developed the staff team to make sure they display the right values and behaviours towards people. Staff may refer to people in an inappropriate way.</p> <p>Management and staff do not understand the principles of good quality assurance; this means the service lacks any drive for improvement. People and staff are not given the information they need. There is a lack of communication and involvement from the managers regarding the day-to-day things that affect their lives and work.</p> <p>People and staff who raise concerns, including whistle-blowers, are not supported and issues they raise may not be taken seriously. Safeguarding matters are not dealt with in an open, transparent and objective way.</p>