

Key inspection report

Care homes for older people

Name:	Houndwood House
Address:	Harper Lane Radlett Hertfordshire WD7 7HU

The quality rating for this care home is:	two star good service
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A quality rating is our assessment of how well a care home is meeting the needs of the people who use it. We give a quality rating following a full review of the service. We call this full review a 'key' inspection.

Lead inspector:	Date:
Jeffrey Orange	2 4 0 9 2 0 0 9

This is a review of quality of outcomes that people experience in this care home. We believe high quality care should

- Be safe
- Have the right outcomes, including clinical outcomes
- Be a good experience for the people that use it
- Help prevent illness, and promote healthy, independent living
- Be available to those who need it when they need it.

The first part of the review gives the overall quality rating for the care home:

- 3 stars - excellent
- 2 stars - good
- 1 star - adequate
- 0 star - poor

There is also a bar chart that gives a quick way of seeing the quality of care that the home provides under key areas that matter to people.

There is a summary of what we think this service does well, what they have improved on and, where it applies, what they need to do better. We use the national minimum standards to describe the outcomes that people should experience. National minimum standards are written by the Department of Health for each type of care service.

After the summary there is more detail about our findings. The following table explains what you will see under each outcome area.

Outcome area (for example Choice of home)

These are the outcomes that people staying in care homes should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

This box tells you the outcomes that we will always inspect against when we do a key inspection.

This box tells you any additional outcomes that we may inspect against when we do a key inspection.

This is what people staying in this care home experience:

Judgement:

This box tells you our opinion of what we have looked at in this outcome area. We will say whether it is excellent, good, adequate or poor.

Evidence:

This box describes the information we used to come to our judgement.

We review the quality of the service against outcomes from the National Minimum Standards (NMS). Those standards are written by the Department of Health for each type of care service.

Copies of the National Minimum Standards – Care Homes for Older People can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or bought from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering from the Stationery Office is also available: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

The mission of the Care Quality Commission is to make care better for people by:

- Regulating health and adult social care services to ensure quality and safety standards, drive improvement and stamp out bad practice
- Protecting the rights of people who use services, particularly the most vulnerable and those detained under the Mental Health Act 1983
- Providing accessible, trustworthy information on the quality of care and services so people can make better decisions about their care and so that commissioners and providers of services can improve services.
- Providing independent public accountability on how commissioners and providers of services are improving the quality of care and providing value for money.

Reader Information

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Information about the care home

Name of care home:	Houndswood House
Address:	Harper Lane Radlett Hertfordshire WD7 7HU
Telephone number:	01923856819
Fax number:	01923853509
Email address:	houndswood.manager@craegmoor.co.uk
Provider web address:	www.craegmoor.co.uk

Name of registered provider(s):	Speciality Care (REIT Homes) Ltd
Type of registration:	care home
Number of places registered:	65

Conditions of registration:		
Category(ies) :	Number of places (if applicable):	
	Under 65	Over 65
dementia	0	23
old age, not falling within any other category	0	48
physical disability	0	4
Additional conditions:		
The maximum number of service users who can be accommodated is 48.		
This home may accommodate 4 older people who require personal care.		
This home may accommodate 4 older people with physical disability who require personal care.		

Date of last inspection	0	2	1	2	2	0	0	8
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Brief description of the care home
Houndswood House is a care home providing accommodation, nursing and personal care for older people as set out above. The home is owned by Craegmoor and registered under Speciality Care (REIT Homes) Limited.
Houndswood House was opened in 1997 and is situated in a rural area between London Colney and Radlett. It is a period house with modern extensions, set in extensive parkland gardens with pathways a large patio area and a sensory garden

Brief description of the care home

area all accessible to people living in the home.

The home is divided into two areas, identified by staff as the main house and the extension. The older part of the house has one large ground floor lounge and a small sitting room. The extension has communal areas all on the ground floor, which include dining, lounge and conservatory areas. All bedrooms in the new area have en-suite facilities with toilets. A lift serves each end of the home and a wheelchair lift is in place to enable improved access to one part of the older building.

The premises are reached via a driveway from Harper Lane. Car parking facilities are provided to the front and rear of the building. Houndswood House is not served by public transport, but is close to Junction 22 of the M25 Motorway.

The service user guide includes contact details for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and copies of the latest inspection report are available in the home.

Current fees range from £525 - £1100 (As at September 2009). Additional charges apply for newspapers, hairdressing, personal toiletries, chiropody and private dentistry.

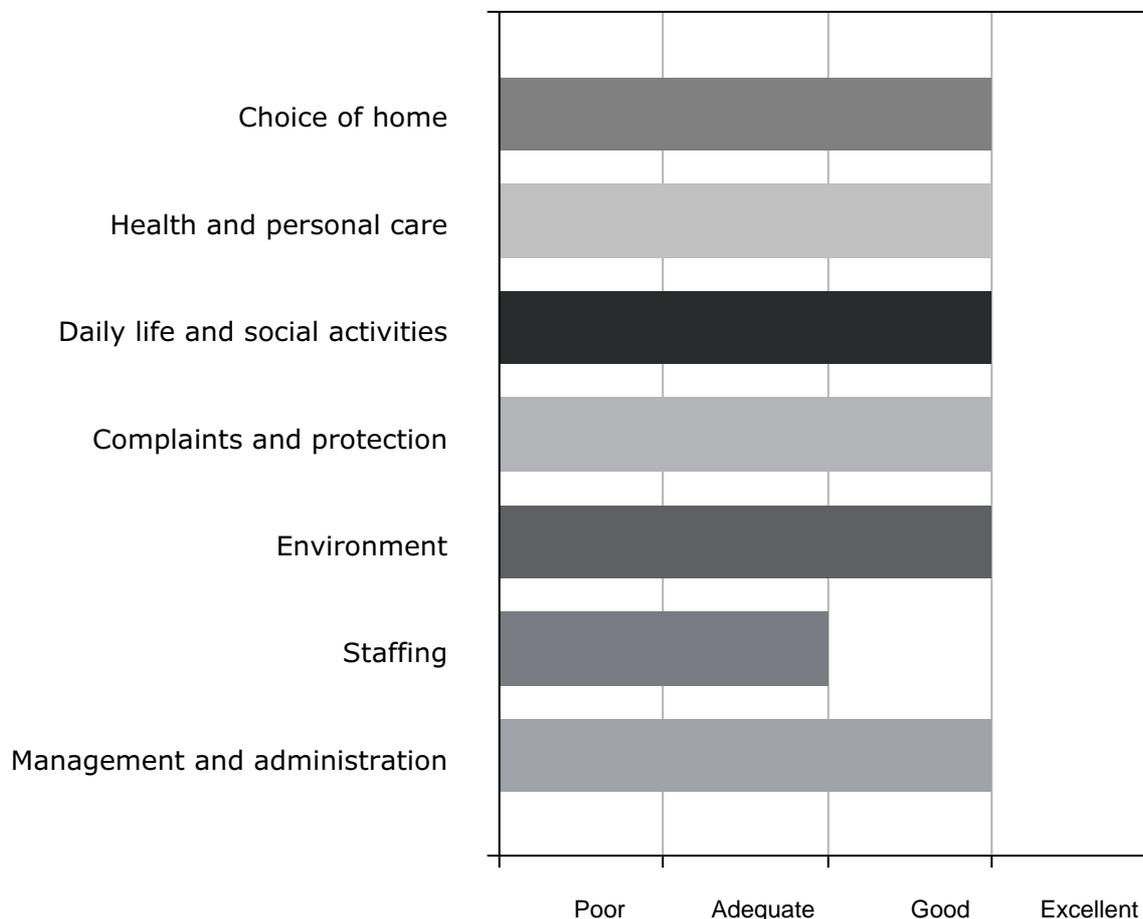
Summary

This is an overview of what we found during the inspection.

The quality rating for this care home is:

two star good service

Our judgement for each outcome:



How we did our inspection:

We last inspected this service on the 2nd December 2008. This inspection was unannounced and was carried out by two inspectors. Where the report refers to 'we' it recognises that it is written on behalf of the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The inspection began early in the morning and lasted for approximately six hours. During that time it was possible to observe the early morning routine of the home as people who live there were being helped to get up and ready for the day ahead. We were able to observe care outcomes throughout the morning including any activity sessions taking place. We spoke to people who live in Houndwood as well as to staff and the management team. During the inspection we looked at some key records, including those for staff recruitment, care planning and the administration of medication. This report also draws on information contained in those surveys that were returned to us by people living in the home. Following the inspection we also spoke to some health care professionals associated with the home. As part of the routine monitoring of care services, the home submitted an annual quality assurance assessment or AQAA. The

AQAA is a self-assessment document that sets out how well care outcomes have been achieved for people living in Houndswood. It also contains some useful statistical information, for example about complaints and staff training. We have also made use of any information that we have received about Houndswood since the last inspection in December 2008. This could be in the form of notifications from the home about significant events or from other health and social care professionals associated with the home in any way or from relatives and friends of people living in Houndswood or anyone else who has knowledge or experience of Houndswood.

What the care home does well:

"They look after me very well" was a typical comment received from a person living in the home. The surveys returned to us were overwhelmingly positive about the standard of care and we observed good care interactions between care staff and people living in the home throughout this inspection.

Care staff we spoke to indicated that they felt well supported by the training and supervision they receive and several of them again noted that in the past twelve months there have continued to be improvements in most areas of the home's activity.

The improvements in dementia care training and the involvement of palliative care specialists with the home demonstrate a commitment to providing care in line with current best practice that is already benefiting people who live in the home with dementia or who are approaching the end of their life.

The home's grounds have been thoughtfully redesigned and enhanced and on the day of the inspection were being used by people who live in the home to sit quietly in or as part of the home's activity programme.

Care plan documentation is now in a settled format and is well completed and provides care staff with the information they require to provide an informed, person centred level of care to individual people living in the home, taking account of their particular needs and preferences.

The quality assurance system in place to monitor the home's performance is particularly thorough and robust and should provide people considering Houndswood as a home for themselves or someone they are responsible for with confidence that the operation of the home is subject to rigorous scrutiny and performance management.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The requirements made following the previous inspection have been met and the progress that was acknowledged then, particularly in the medication and care planning areas has been maintained and taken forward.

Staff spoken to acknowledged the improvements in the home as they experience them and overall the staff team were very positive and even enthusiastic about their work.

There is altogether a more positive feel about Houndswood than was the case eighteen months ago and this is reflected in the improvements in care practice that have been noted in this report.

What they could do better:

The improvements noted have been the result of concerted and co-ordinated efforts by all concerned within the home and responsible for it at area management level. This commitment and focus must be maintained in order to sustain and continue to take forward the progress made.

One area of particular concern that should be focused on is the staffing level within the home at certain key times, for example first thing in the morning. We noted staff being under pressure in some cases and this could have implications for the health, safety and well-being of people living in the home if it is not addressed. It is significant that the only 'adverse' comment made in any of the surveys returned to us reflected this concern when it suggested "more staff" as being the only thing about the home that needed improving.

If you want to know what action the person responsible for this care home is taking following this report, you can contact them using the details on page 4.

The report of this inspection is available from our website www.cqc.org.uk. You can get printed copies from enquiries@cqc.org.uk or by telephoning our order line 0870 240 7535.

Details of our findings

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Outstanding statutory requirements

Requirements and recommendations from this inspection

Choice of home

These are the outcomes that people staying in care homes should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

People are confident that the care home can support them. This is because there is an accurate assessment of their needs that they, or people close to them, have been involved in. This tells the home all about them and the support they need. People who stay at the home only for intermediate care, have a clear assessment that includes a plan on what they hope for and want to achieve when they return home.

People can decide whether the care home can meet their support and accommodation needs. This is because they, or people close to them, have been able to visit the home and have got full, clear, accurate and up to date information about the home. If they decide to stay in the home they know about their rights and responsibilities because there is an easy to understand contract or statement of terms and conditions between them and the care home that includes how much they will pay and what the home provides for the money.

This is what people staying in this care home experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

People considering Houndswood as a home for themselves or someone they are responsible for can be confident that they will only be admitted if their needs have been thoroughly assessed and can be met satisfactorily. They can also be assured that they will be able to visit the home before they make a final decision about moving in.

Evidence:

In their AQAA the home confirmed that there is a comprehensive 'Statement of Purpose' in place and this was seen to be displayed in the home, this document is also included in the 'Service User's Guide' and is given as part of the information pack prepared for all people considering Houndswood as a home for themselves or someone they are responsible for.

All people living in Houndswood have an agreement covering the financial arrangements for their residence. We were informed in the AQAA that these are kept under review if the person living in the home's financial circumstances change.

Evidence:

When we asked people living in Houndswood about the information they received before they moved in, most thought that they had enough information to make a well informed decision, although some informed us that all the arrangements were made for them either by family or placing authorities.

When we looked at the pre-admission assessments for people living in both units of the home, we found that they were comprehensive and well completed and included the information care staff would require in order to establish the needs of the person concerned and to draw up an initial care plan from it. Where people have been placed in Houndswood by a local authority, the information they provide is taken into account in the persons assessment.

The home have previously confirmed that people are able and encouraged to visit the home before making any decision about moving in.

Health and personal care

These are the outcomes that people staying in care homes should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

People's health, personal and social care needs are met. The home has a plan of care that the person, or someone close to them, has been involved in making. If they take medicine, they manage it themselves if they can. If they cannot manage their medicine, the care home supports them with it, in a safe way. People's right to privacy is respected and the support they get from staff is given in a way that maintains their dignity.

If people are approaching the end of their life, the care home will respect their choices and help them feel comfortable and secure. They, and people close to them, are reassured that their death will be handled with sensitivity, dignity and respect, and take account of their spiritual and cultural wishes.

This is what people staying in this care home experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

People who live in Houndswood can be assured that they will receive effective health and personal care support, that they will be treated with respect and that systems, records and practice for the administration of their medication are accurate and efficient.

Evidence:

"They look after me very well" was a typically positive comment received about the standard of care from a person living in the home. Throughout this inspection, we observed a good standard of care being provided, any moving and handling practice seen was acceptable and took account of the need to protect the dignity of the person concerned. When we looked at care plans on both units we found that the previously noted improvement had been sustained and taken forward. It is positive that a settled format has now been arrived at and that staff are confident in its use. This is shown in the good standard of completion found, and in the way reviews and risk assessments are being kept up to date. When we spoke to care staff they were positive about the support they receive and previous comments about 'things improving' were confirmed and endorsed. When we spoke to care staff we found that some had a particular

Evidence:

interest in palliative care which is an important area of any care home's operation. This positive interest and determination to improve practice in the home was confirmed when we spoke to specialist palliative care services working with Houndswood. This means that people living in Houndswood can be confident that the end of life care they receive will be sensitive and appropriate and will reflect what is current good practice.

When we checked medication records in both units we found that they were accurate and well completed, with a system of monitoring and checks in place that should identify any errors made promptly and ensure that people receiving assistance with their medication are adequately protected.

Daily life and social activities

These are the outcomes that people staying in care homes should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

Each person is treated as an individual and the care home is responsive to his or her race, culture, religion, age, disability, gender and sexual orientation. They are part of their local community. The care home supports people to follow personal interests and activities. People are able to keep in touch with family, friends and representatives. They are as independent as they can be, lead their chosen lifestyle and have the opportunity to make the most of their abilities. People have nutritious and attractive meals and snacks, at a time and place to suit them.

There are no additional outcomes.

This is what people staying in this care home experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

People who live in Houndswood can be confident that they will be encouraged and enabled to exercise choice in and control over their lives, including their daily activities and routines. They can be assured that they will be able to maintain and build contacts with friends and the community.

Evidence:

When we arrived early in the morning to carry out the inspection we were able to observe the routine in the home as people were being prepared for the day. We heard and saw choices being given to people about the time they would get up, nobody we saw was woken up before they were ready to get up and people were seen to be having breakfast at different times throughout the morning.

Choices were seen to be offered at breakfast and for the other meals of the day there is a pictorial menu to enable choices to be made. There are snacks and fruit available at most times for people who want them in between main mealtimes.

When we asked people who live in the home about the meals the majority told us that they 'always' or 'usually' enjoyed them.

Evidence:

We saw good use being made of the very attractive and accessible garden area and we were told that next year it is intended to develop this further with a designated 'allotment' area for those people who live in the home who would like to grow their own vegetables.

The activities programme is varied and staff try various means to canvas the views of people living in the home and those responsible for them for additional activities to include.

Care plans were seen to include a section to record involvement of people living in the home in organised activities and also to include life histories, which enables activities staff to understand the background and significant events in a person's life when trying to develop a person centred approach to the activities provided for them.

We noticed that one person living in the home in particular was encouraged and enabled to help with laying the table for meals. This demonstrates that the routines and activities of daily living are 'owned' by people living in the home and not just 'done' for them.

The AQAA and activities programme seen, together with photographs of recent events demonstrate and confirm that contact with family, friends and the community is encouraged and facilitated in the routines and activities of the home.

Complaints and protection

These are the outcomes that people staying in care homes should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

If people have concerns with their care, they or people close to them know how to complain. Any concern is looked into and action taken to put things right. The care home safeguards people from abuse and neglect and takes action to follow up any allegations.

People's legal rights are protected, including being able to vote in elections.

This is what people staying in this care home experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

People who live in Houndswood and those responsible for them can be confident that if they want to make a complaint they will be able to do so and that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken. Not all people are aware however of how to make a complaint. People living in the home can be assured that staff have the training they need to help them recognise abuse and the action to be taken if it is seen or suspected.

Evidence:

When we asked people living in the home in surveys whether they knew how to make a formal complaint, the majority said they did not or did not answer that particular question. However, we saw that throughout the home are various compliment, complaints and comment cards available and the complaints policy is prominently displayed. There is additionally an 'easy read' version of the policy to help those who would otherwise find it difficult to understand or access. In their AQAA the home informed us that 4 complaints were received in the previous 12 months of which all were answered within 28 days and 2 of which were upheld.

The CQC were copied into an anonymous complaint made to the home and we noted that this had been appropriately dealt with and that opportunity had been given to anyone who wanted to to contact Craegmoor management outside of the home confidentially to do so.

Evidence:

When we looked at the recruitment practice of the home, we found that it makes the checks on potential care staff that are required to protect people living in the home from the employment of unsuitable people to care for them.

Staff training records seen include appropriate training in the safeguarding of vulnerable people and this should mean that staff are able to identify abuse if it occurs and to know what is the appropriate action to take.

Environment

These are the outcomes that people staying in care homes should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

People stay in a safe and well-maintained home that is homely, clean, pleasant and hygienic.

People stay in a home that has enough space and facilities for them to lead the life they choose and to meet their needs. The home makes sure they have the right specialist equipment that encourages and promotes their independence. Their room feels like their own, it is comfortable and they feel safe when they use it.

This is what people staying in this care home experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

People living in Houndswood can be assured that the home will be kept clean, safe and well-maintained and that it will provide a pleasant and comfortable environment for the people who live or work there.

Evidence:

When we asked people who live in Houndswood about the home's environment they were all very positive and felt that it was always or usually fresh and clean. On the day of the inspection the home was essentially free from any unpleasant odour and was tidy and appeared well-maintained.

The outside area of the home is particularly attractive and well thought out, with various sitting and walking areas. We saw a number of people making use of the garden to sit and relax in and the home's activity staff made use of it to take people to sit and enjoy the sunshine.

The physical environment for people living with dementia is thoughtfully practical, within the overall constraints of the building with good signage and themed decor in particular areas to help people make sense of and feel comfortable with their surroundings.

When we saw individual bedrooms we found that they were individualised to reflect

Evidence:

the personalities and interests of the people concerned.

In their AQAA the home informed us that a strategy plan is in place and being followed for continuing refurbishment and decoration of the home.

Staffing

These are the outcomes that people staying in care homes should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

People have safe and appropriate support as there are enough competent staff on duty at all times. They have confidence in the staff at the home because checks have been done to make sure that they are suitable to care for them. Their needs are met and they are cared for by staff who get the relevant training and support from their managers.

There are no additional outcomes.

This is what people staying in this care home experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **adequate** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

People who live in Houndwood can be confident that they will receive care from staff who have been recruited through a robust and thorough process and that care staff will receive the training they need to ensure that they can meet their care needs appropriately. There are key times of the day when there may not consistently be sufficient numbers of care staff available to ensure good and safe care outcomes for all of the people living in the home.

Evidence:

When we looked at the recruitment files for some staff who had recently joined the staff team we found that the required checks had been completed and the information needed obtained to ensure that people receiving services and care from them are safe and that their care needs are met appropriately.

When we looked at staff training records and records of training planned we found that they provided people working in the home with the skills and knowledge that they require to provide a good standard of care in line with best practice.

When we asked people who live in the home if the staff were available when they needed them, the majority answered usually or sometimes. When we asked if the staff listen and act on what they said, the majority confirmed that they do. When we observed the early morning routine on the dementia unit we saw that at times there

Evidence:

were insufficient staff to provide consistently good or safe outcomes for all people living with dementia on that unit. We were told that activity staff often help care staff out and on the day of the inspection one of the activity staff was on leave.

One person living in the home when asked what the home could do better simply put; "More Staff!".

When we spoke to care staff they confirmed that they were encouraged to undertake a range of training, including appropriate level NVQ training. In their AQAA the home confirmed that ancillary staff are also encouraged to take an appropriate NVQ qualification and that all care staff who may work on the dementia unit receive a basic introduction to dementia care. We were told that the manager is undertaking a degree level course in dementia care at one of the recognised universities for the provision of dementia care training, this range of dementia care training is an important indicator of the importance placed on providing care staff and managers with appropriate specialist training to enable the service as a whole to achieve good and well-informed care outcomes for people in the home living with dementia. In their AQAA the home inform us that over 50% of care staff have now achieved the required level NVQ.

We discussed the staffing levels on the dementia unit at certain key times with the senior manager present and asked them to review the levels to see if, in practice, they are safe and adequate to ensure good care outcomes at all times.

Management and administration

These are the outcomes that people staying in care homes should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

People have confidence in the care home because it is led and managed appropriately. People control their own money and choose how they spend it. If they or someone close to them cannot manage their money, it is managed by the care home in their best interests. The environment is safe for people and staff because appropriate health and safety practices are carried out.

People get the right support from the care home because the manager runs it appropriately with an open approach that makes them feel valued and respected. The people staying at the home are safeguarded because it follows clear financial and accounting procedures, keeps records appropriately and ensures their staff understand the way things should be done. They get the right care because the staff are supervised and supported by their managers.

This is what people staying in this care home experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

People living in Houndswood can be confident that the home is well-managed and that their best interests, health, safety and well-being are promoted and protected by the home's management and administration.

Evidence:

When we spoke to care staff, people living in the home and to people associated with the home they were very positive about the way the home is now managed. Those who have known Houndswood for some time indicated that they felt recent improvements noted in CQC reports had been maintained.

When we checked the records for monies held by the home on behalf of people living there we found that it was satisfactory and that checks are carried out to ensure the interests of people living in the home are safeguarded.

Staff supervision records show a maintenance of the improvement previously noted and when we spoke to care staff they confirmed supervision takes place, although in

Evidence:

some cases it appears to be four times a year rather than six times.

The standard of record keeping is good and supports good care outcomes for people living in the home.

The internal quality assurance system in place is exceptionally detailed, thorough and robust and appears from the records seen to be realistic and effective.

The home's AQAA was well-completed and realistic, with clear evidence of a planned approach to future developments within the service.

The manager is registered with the CQC and has recently begun an advanced dementia care qualification at degree level. This will benefit not only the manager in her personal development but also the home and the people who live there with dementia in raising the awareness and understanding of dementia care and current best practice and theory.

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

Yes

No

Outstanding statutory requirements

These are requirements that were set at the previous inspection, but have still not been met. They say what the registered person had to do to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Care Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

Requirements and recommendations from this inspection:

Immediate requirements:

These are immediate requirements that were set on the day we visited this care home. The registered person had to meet these within 48 hours.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

Statutory requirements

These requirements set out what the registered person must do to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Care Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must do this within the timescales we have set.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

Recommendations

These recommendations are taken from the best practice described in the National Minimum Standards and the registered person(s) should consider them as a way of improving their service.

No	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1	16	The manager should consider what can be done to improve the recognition of people living in the home of the way that they can raise a concern or complaint formally if they want to. This recognises that whilst a great deal has already been done to try to establish this, feedback from people living in the home suggests that the level of understanding about how to make a formal complaint still needs to be improved.

Helpline:

Telephone: 03000 616161

Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

Web: www.cqc.org.uk

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