

The Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Society for the Blind

Princess Alexandra Home For The Blind

Inspection report

Bosworth Place
Squires Gate
Blackpool
Lancashire
FY4 1SH

Date of inspection visit:
05 December 2018

Date of publication:
28 January 2019

Tel: 01253403091

Website: www.nvision-nw.co.uk

Ratings

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

Summary of findings

Overall summary

Princess Alexandra is registered for 40 people who are visually impaired and is situated close to the sea front and South Shore. Additionally, as part of their capacity the home provides respite beds and permanent placements for people who have a learning disability. Accommodation is single occupancy with en-suite facilities. There are a range of nearby amenities, including a public house, shops and a retail park. Public transport is easily accessible with links to surrounding areas.

At the last inspection on 01 June 2016, the service was rated good. At this inspection we found the evidence continued to support the rating of good and there was no evidence or information from our inspection and ongoing monitoring that demonstrated serious risks or concerns. This inspection report is written in a shorter format because our overall rating of the service has not changed since our last inspection.

During this inspection visit, we observed staffing levels were sufficient to meet people's different needs. When we discussed this with those who lived and visited the home, they confirmed adequate staff meant they felt safe. One person said, "When I've used my call bell, staff came and helped me quickly, I feel safer now than when I did in my flat."

Princess Alexandra had implemented respite support for individuals with a learning disability in addition to caring for people with a sensory impairment. We discussed with those who lived at the home how this was implemented and their sense of community living and received positive comments. A staff member told us, "They feel they can help [each other], it's beneficial for us all."

Personnel files evidenced the management team used the same safe recruitment procedures we found at our last inspection. Staff records showed personnel received good levels of training.

Staff administered medication with a calm and patient approach. We found storage areas were clean and secure and staff told us they received relevant training to enhance their skills. The registered manager completed regular audits to assess the continued safety of procedures.

The registered manager adopted good systems to maintain a safe environment. Control measures in care records guided staff about mitigating the risks of inappropriate or unsafe care. Staff showed a good awareness about protecting people from and reporting abuse or poor practice.

When we discussed nutrition with people who lived at the home, we received positive comments. We observed staff supported them with their meals, where required, with a respectful approach.

People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible. The policies and systems in the service supported this practice. We found evidence people or their representatives had documented their consent to care.

Staff were consistently kind and patient when they supported people. Relatives we spoke with told us they were encouraged to visit to maintain their important relationships with their family members. One relative said, "I visit often and I'm always made to feel welcome." People and their relatives commented staff were keen to include them in their support planning.

Princess Alexandra had a wealth of activities and events to maximise people's social stimulation and wellbeing. One person commented, "There are activities every day and the staff are wonderful. They can't do enough for me."

Care records we saw were of a good standard, detailed and personalised to the person's needs. There was clear evidence of a multi-disciplinary approach to create holistic assessments and support plans.

We found the registered manager sought and acted on people's opinions to enhance care delivery. Various quality audits had been completed to assess everyone's safety and wellbeing.

Further information is in the detailed findings below.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe? The service remains good.	Good ●
Is the service effective? The service remains good.	Good ●
Is the service caring? The service remains good.	Good ●
Is the service responsive? The service remains good.	Good ●
Is the service well-led? The service remains good.	Good ●

Princess Alexandra Home For The Blind

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

Princess Alexandra is a 'care home.' People in care homes receive accommodation and nursing or personal care as a single package under one contractual agreement. CQC regulates both the premises and the care provided, both of which we looked at during this inspection.

The care service has been developed and designed in line with the values that underpin the Registering the Right Support and other best practice guidance. These values include choice, promotion of independence and inclusion. People with learning disabilities and autism using the service can live as ordinary a life as any citizen.

This inspection took place on 05 December 2018 and was unannounced. The inspection team consisted of an adult social care inspector, an adult social care inspection manager and a specialist advisor, with clinical experience of supporting people with a learning disability. The inspection team also consisted of an expert by experience. An expert by experience is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service. The expert by experience for the inspection at Princess Alexandra had experience of caring for individuals who lived in a care home setting, including people with a learning disability.

Before our unannounced inspection, we checked the information we held about Princess Alexandra. This included notifications the provider sent us about incidents that affect the health, safety and welfare of people who lived at the home. We also contacted other health and social care organisations such as the local authority commissioning team and Healthwatch Blackpool. Healthwatch Blackpool is an independent

consumer champion for health and social care. This helped us to gain a balanced overview of what people experienced living at Princess Alexandra.

Furthermore, we looked at the Provider Information Return (PIR) the provider had sent us. This is information we require providers to send us at least once annually to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make.

Additionally, we spoke with a range of individuals about this home. They included six people who lived at Princess Alexandra, one relative, the registered manager and five staff. We observed care and support in communal areas and looked around the building to check environmental safety and cleanliness. This enabled us to determine if people received the care and support they needed in an appropriate environment.

We examined care records of eight people who lived at the home. This process is called pathway tracking and enables us to judge how well Princess Alexandra understands and plans to meet people's care needs and manage any risks to people's health and wellbeing. We checked recruitment documents in relation to three staff. We also looked at records about staff training and support, as well as those related to the management and safety of Princess Alexandra.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People and their relatives told us they felt safe whilst living at Princess Alexandra. One person who lived at the home said, 'It feels safe here especially at night knowing that there's carers looking out for me.' Another individual added, "You're safe, it's not like any other home." A third person commented, "My bedroom door could be open all day and I don't worry that someone will come in and do anything."

We observed staffing levels were sufficient to meet people's different needs and staff carried out their duties in a calm and unhurried way. One person told us, "Every room has an alarm button and when its needed and pressed, staff respond quickly." Staff we spoke with confirmed staffing levels were adequate for them to take their time supporting people. Personnel files evidenced the management team used the same safe recruitment procedures we found at our last inspection.

Staff administered medication with a calm and patient approach. We observed they explained what the medicine was for and provided a drink. The staff member then signed records afterwards to evidence they had been administered. We found storage areas were clean and secure and completed a sample stock check, which evidenced supplies were up-to-date. Staff told us they received relevant training to enhance their skills. The registered manager completed regular audits to assess the continued safety of medication procedures.

A colour coded system was displayed on people's bedroom door to give staff quick reference to their emergency evacuation support needs. This formed part of the procedures the registered manager adopted to maintain a safe environment. Care records also contained risk assessments to manage, for example, falls, fire and environmental safety, nutrition and personal care. Control measures guided staff about mitigating the risks of inappropriate or unsafe care. Additionally, the registered manager had an accident and incident procedure staff were required to follow. This was intended to assess risk levels, the effectiveness of actions taken and any lessons learnt.

There were sufficient designated rooms to dispose of waste as part of effective infection control measures at Princess Alexandra. We observed the home was clean and tidy throughout. Audits in place evidenced infection control procedures were monitored to assess their effectiveness. The maintenance person regularly checked water was delivered within safe temperatures. Although the home's gas and legionella safety certification was up-to-date, we noted the fire risk assessment and electrical checks were overdue. However, the registered manager provided evidence to us to show they addressed these issues within the inspection process.

Staff demonstrated they had a good awareness about protecting people from and reporting abuse or poor practice. One staff member told us they would not hesitate, "To report to the officer in charge." The registered manager provided relevant training to strengthen staff skills.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

When we discussed nutrition with people who lived at the home, we received positive remarks. One person said, "I like the food, especially fish and chips and Sunday dinner. I choose what I want. [The chef] is lovely." Another individual stated, "They're good meals here and I get to choose the day before what I want the next day". A third person told us, "Yeah, I like the food."

We observed staff supported people with their meals, where required, with a respectful approach. For example, they warned each person with a sensory impairment when serving hot drinks and where they were positioned. An external catering company worked onsite to prepare and cook meals. We saw the kitchen was clean and well maintained and people we spoke with said meals were of a good standard. A relative stated, "The quality of the food is very good."

Princess Alexandra had implemented respite care for people with a learning disability in addition to caring for those with a sensory impairment. We discussed this with people, checked their sense of communal living and received positive comments. One person told us it gave them a renewed purpose in their life because they enjoyed engaging with and helping others. A person with a learning disability who lived at Princess Alexandra told us they were supported to go out as often as they chose. They added, "Where I was before the staff never took me out." We looked at the building and grounds and found they were appropriate for the care and support provided. For instance, there were wide corridors and signs to guide people who lived there.

When we reviewed care records, we found evidence people or their representatives had documented their consent to care. For example, they signed terms and conditions of their placement and their preferred priorities of care. Additionally, the provider's recordkeeping audit system checked staff had discussed, agreed and signed with people about their support plans.

People who lack 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). The registered manager told us two people had an authorised DoLS to safeguard them. Records we reviewed included an in-depth assessment of capacity and best interest decisions. Throughout our inspection, we observed people were supported to make their day-to-day decisions. One person told us, "Staff always ask me what I want."

People and their relatives told us staff assisted them to access health and social care services as part of their ongoing support needs. A person who lived at Princess Alexandra stated, "They contact my GP and support me to go there." We observed an example where one person asked staff if they could have a medication in a different format. The staff member responded considerately and advised they would contact the GP and pharmacist. Staff updated care plans to any changes made by other professionals to ensure people's continuity of care.

Staff records showed personnel received the same good level of training we found at our last inspection. Sessions covered, for example, first aid, health and safety, infection control, mental health, learning disability, dementia awareness and safeguarding. A person who lived at the home confirmed, "The staff know how to support me well." Training was underpinned with bi-monthly staff supervision to support personnel with their professional progress.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

When we discussed care delivery at the home, people and their relatives told us staff were compassionate and respectful. One person said, "The care I get here is second to none, they're wonderful the carers." Another person commented, "I do like living here and the staff help me and look after me well, they're all nice." A third individual added, "They would do anything for you. Nothing is too much trouble for the staff."

Staff were consistently kind and patient when they supported people. For instance, we observed they assisted each person with their mobility, whilst continually checking if they were safe and comfortable. Interactions we saw were positive and proactive, with staff being continuously polite and attentive. People who lived at Princess Alexandra told us staff were considerate of their privacy and confidentiality. One person told us, "They always knock on my door." Information was made available to people about advocacy services. Consequently, they could access this if they required support to have an independent voice.

People and their relatives told us staff were keen to include them in their support planning. One person said they were involved in discussions about their care and supported to make decisions. They added, "Staff explain any changes in my care." We noted this process helped people to retain their self-reliance. Staff ensured the emphasis of care was on encouraging each person to be as independent as possible.

We found staff and the management team were keen to support the diverse and cultural needs of everyone who lived at the home. Records and practices centred on enhancing people's lives, such as care based on the nine core principles that underpin Registering the Right Support. This included the provision of personalised care, choice, control, access to specialist services and helping people to move on if they chose to. Those we spoke with said they found staff and care delivery met their diverse needs and they felt respected as individuals. One person who lived at Princess Alexandra commented, "The best thing about living here is I can do my own thing."

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People and their relatives told us staff were alert to their needs and knew how to support them. One person said, "The staff know me well and what I need." Another individual stated, "I get well looked after. I don't think you could better this place." A third person added "The staff help me. They help me to wash my hair, have a bath and wash my clothes. The staff look after me well."

Care records we saw were of a good standard, detailed and personalised to the person's needs. There was clear evidence of a multi-disciplinary approach to create holistic assessments and support plans. Care planning was based on information gained from the person and their family members. A person-centred approach was used to guide staff to understand each person and their backgrounds. For instance, care records included people's preferences related to hobbies and interests, religious needs, room temperature at night, smoking, meals and portion size.

In the last year, the registered manager had not received any formal complaints. We saw details were provided to people about how they could raise any concerns and the steps the service would take to resolve them. People we spoke with told us they were confident their concerns would be dealt with appropriately. One person said, "I would talk to staff, they always listen."

Princess Alexandra had a wealth of activities and events to maximise people's social stimulation and wellbeing. A person who lived at the home said, "There are plenty of activities to keep me occupied. I have the choice to do what I want." The programme of activities included a gardening club, singing and dance sessions, arts and crafts, bingo and external entertainers. Trips out and attendance at day centres also meant people were supported to access the local community. Another person who lived at Princess Alexandra stated, "They don't let you stay in your room moping, they encourage us to do activities."

Although no-one was supported with life-limiting illnesses at the time of our inspection, we found Princess Alexandra continued to maintain good practices. They underpinned this by working with the National Gold Standards Framework (GSF) in the provision of end of life care. The GSF is an external agency supporting providers to develop evidence-based approaches to optimise people's care. The GSF had awarded the home their 'Platinum' status for gold standards of care for people nearing the end of life. Staff ensured people's preferred priorities of care and advanced life decisions were current through regular discussion and review with each person.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

A registered manager was in place. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

We found the registered manager worked with the local authority in the implementation of respite care and permanent placements for people with a learning disability. The purpose of this was to ensure they delivered care in line with the principles of Registering the Right Support. These included choice, promotion of independence and inclusion so that people with learning disabilities can live as ordinary a life as any citizen. Everyone we spoke with at the home confirmed they were consulted about the changes. We saw care records centred on enhancing people's lives within the nine core principles that underpin Registering the Right Support.

Comments we received about the management of Princess Alexandra were consistently complementary. One person told us, "I can approach the manager and people in the office, they always listen, they're very good." Another individual stated, "I feel comfortable speaking to staff. If they couldn't help I would go to the office, anything you want they get for you." A third person added, "[The registered manager] is approachable and listens."

We saw the registered manager was visible about the home and had a good understanding of people's needs and backgrounds. We found they sought and acted on people's opinions to enhance care delivery. A person who lived at Princess Alexandra told us, "You can't improve it, it's great." We reviewed a sample of surveys received from those who lived at the home, relatives and healthcare professionals. Comments seen included, 'Very happy with care and service provided,' 'Fantastic home' and, 'Lovely, friendly staff.' A professional wrote, 'One of my favourite home visit destinations. Staff always helpful. Home lovely and clean.'

Various quality audits had been completed to assess everyone's safety and wellbeing. Checks included, for instance, medication, infection control, complaints, care records, housekeeping, recruitment and catering. In addition, staff were required to check a variety of areas before a person's admission, such as bedroom preparation, cleanliness, fixtures and fittings. This was good practice in maximising people's settling in period as quickly as possible. The registered manager told us they would act on any identified concerns to ensure everyone's continued welfare.

We found the provider worked with other organisations in the ongoing improvement of people's lives, including health and social care services. For example, the registered manager accessed the local provider forum to keep updated to current good practice.

Staff we spoke with told us the management team was approachable, supportive and worked closely with them in the delivery of care. One staff member commented, "Everything is good and it's well-organised."

Staff were supported to engage with the ongoing development of the home through team meetings. They said they were encouraged to make suggestions or raise any concerns. Another staff member told us, "I feel listened to."

The service had on display in the reception area of the home their last CQC rating, where people who visited the home could see it. This is a legal requirement from 01 April 2015.