

Birch House Care Home Care Home Service

9-12 Brighton Court
Brighton Place
Peterculter
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Telephone: 01224 734 400

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 April 2024

Service provided by:
Sanctuary Care Limited

Service provider number:
SP2019013443

Service no:
CS2019378607

About the service

Birch House is a modern purpose-built home situated in a quiet residential area of Peterculter, Aberdeen. The service provider is Sanctuary Care Ltd.

The care home is registered to provide care for up to eight adults with learning disabilities. The home had eight residents at the time of the inspection ranging in age from late twenties to eighties. It also provides 24-hour nursing care. The service comprises of two separate flats on the first floor with a bedroom in each, complete with en suite facilities, lounge and kitchen. The ground floor has six bedrooms all with washing facilities and communal bathrooms. There is a lounge/diner and kitchen on the ground floor. There is also a level-access communal sensory garden to the back of the home for everyone to enjoy.

The aim at Birch House is to enable people to live in a homely environment, where they will be treated as an individual, free from discrimination, feeling safe, secure and having the respect of those who support them.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 2 April 2024 between 09:00 and 16:15. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with eight people using the service and one of their representatives
- spoke with seven staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- considered the questionnaire responses from three relatives, four visiting professionals and 13 staff.

Key messages

- People benefitted from a comprehensive health care assessment that promoted people's health, safety and wellbeing.
- People enjoyed a tasty, varied and well-balanced diet.
- People's care and support met their needs and was right for them.
- The service actively supported people to plan for and meet their dreams, which bolstered people's sense of achievement and wellbeing.
- Staffing arrangements allowed for people's needs to be met in a relaxed, friendly and engaging manner.
- There was a consistent and experienced staff team who worked well together to achieve the best possible outcomes for people.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in the care provided at Birch House and how these supported positive outcomes for people. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

People benefitted from a comprehensive health care assessment that promoted people's health, safety and wellbeing. Staff were quick to recognise when people's medical needs changed and acted promptly so that people were assessed by the right medical professional, at the right time. Staff were skilled at using a variety of tools to support them in making those judgements and provided that information to allied health professionals so that effective treatment was sought. We observed staff following the medical advice given, for example, modifying someone's meal so that it was the correct consistency to prevent choking. The leadership team had good oversight of all health-related matters and regularly spot-checked staff practice to ensure it was of good quality. Taken together this ensured people's health care needs were met in a timely and consistent manner and helped people to stay well.

People enjoyed a tasty, varied and well-balanced diet. The residents' group helped to plan the menus and there were plenty of healthy options for snacks throughout the day including fresh fruit and vegetables. The service had purchased a hot drinks machine which enabled people to prepare a variety of hot drinks for themselves and we saw that this gave people a sense of achievement and independence. The menu plan was flexible so that people could change their minds and have a BBQ on warm days or a takeaway as a treat. Mealtimes were a social event and people told us they really enjoyed the food and the company. All of this contributed to people experiencing a relaxed and enjoyable mealtime.

Support plans reflected people's needs, choices and wishes. The plans gave an accurate representation of the care people needed and wanted and how it was to be provided. Information was person-centred and accurately reflected people's chosen outcomes and aspirations. People benefitted from personal plans that were regularly reviewed and updated so they remained current. People were regularly consulted on their plans and were able to make adjustments to their goals and outcomes. For example, one person was keen to go on holiday and there were regular updates as to their thoughts and feelings over where they wanted to go. This ensured that people's care and support met their needs and was right for them.

The service actively supported people to plan for and meet their dreams. People spoke with pride and enthusiasm about what they had achieved and happily showed us their photo books. For some this was pursuing lifelong goals, such as, travelling on an aeroplane, going to London, visiting Benidorm or attending a football match at their cherished stadium. This bolstered people's wellbeing and helped them to get the most out of life.

The care home had an active and varied in-house entertainment programme which included therapy pets, singers and dancing. Staff were skilled at supporting people to make the most of celebratory events such as festivals and birthdays and decorated the property with residents making it interesting, festive and fun. At the time of the inspection the lounge/diner had been decorated in an Easter theme with balloons, Easter eggs and crafts. Residents showed us where they had helped, what they had made and how much they enjoyed the experience. This contributed to the 'family' feel people described at Birch House, where the atmosphere in the service was relaxed, content and people told us they were happy.

Although, we found that people did go out and about into the community, as well as having community events within the care home, we found one person particularly may have benefitted from exploring other

opportunities such as employment, education or more structured leisure pursuits outwith the care home. The leadership team demonstrated that this was already underway and they were actively in consultation with the person and their placing authority, exploring potential opportunities. As this was already in process, we have not made an area for improvement and we look forward to following this up at the next inspection.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in the staffing arrangements at Birch House and how these supported positive outcomes for people. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Staffing arrangements allowed for people's needs to be met in a relaxed, friendly and engaging manner. Staff were observed to interact with people in a kind, compassionate and dignified manner. They spent time talking to people, building up relationships and gave people time to respond at their own pace. Staff were intuitive to people's needs, offering help and guidance in a timely manner. This also contributed to the warm atmosphere within the service.

There was a positive learning culture within the service where more experienced staff took the time to demonstrate and support good practice. For example, a resident had become distressed and the days following the incident, the staff worked together to reflect upon why the incident occurred and what they could do differently to prevent the person becoming distressed in the future. This was very good practice as it not only improved the knowledge and skills of staff, but it also improved the safety and wellbeing of residents. In part, it was this culture, that enabled the home to have a consistent and experienced staff team who worked well together to achieve the best possible outcomes for people.

Relatives provided positive feedback regarding their experience of the staff. These included:

'The staff are always very welcoming and pleasant and willing to listen to you.'

'All the staff I have met are very friendly and approachable.'

'Think my (relative) has come a long way since coming to Birch House and (they) love it there and the staff.'

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

The provider should ensure that there is a person-centred approach to supporting people with their finances. A clear and accurate record should be maintained of income and expenditure for each individuals who is supported with their money.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'If I need help managing my money and personal affairs, I am able to have as much control as possible and my interests are safeguarded' (HSCS 2.5).

This area for improvement was made on 1 September 2021.

Action taken since then

The service had developed person-centred support plans for each person in relation to their finances, as well as maintaining clear and accurate records for people's income and expenditure. It was clear how much money people had, who was responsible for the money and any legal controls such as power of attorney.

On this basis, this area for improvement has been deemed as met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To maintain the improvements the provider and manager should ensure cleaning schedules, IPC checks and audits cover all areas of the home.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22).

This area for improvement was made on 1 September 2021.

Action taken since then

This is because the service had robust cleaning schedules and IPC checks that covered all areas of the home. The home was visibly clean and audits demonstrated that it was being cleaned regularly.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The provider and manager to review staffing available in the home to ensure it is flexible enough so as to be able to support people to engage activities of their choice in their own local community.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience care and support free from isolation because the location and type of premises enable me to be an active member of the local community if this is appropriate' (HSCS 5.9); and

'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15).

This area for improvement was made on 1 September 2021.

Action taken since then

The service had reviewed its staffing and used the hours more flexibly to support outings and activities.

The area for improvement has been met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
3.3 Staffing arrangements are right and staff work well together	5 - Very Good

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