Learning disability care home
Keys to Life inspection report

Threshold Support Services - Residential

Inspection completed on 20 January 2016
Service provided by Church of Scotland trading as Crossreach

Service provider number: SP2004005785

Care service number: CS2003001401

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1. Introduction

Threshold Support Services - Residential is a care home service for adults with learning disabilities. The service is provided in three houses in South Lanarkshire, one in Hamilton, one in Larkhall and one in Kirkmuirhill. Two of the houses are purpose built bungalows and the other is a more traditional detached house. Each house can accommodate four people. Eleven people were using the service at the time we inspected, with a vacancy in the house in Larkhall. People living there have their own bedrooms and share the living room, dining room, kitchen, utility room and accessible bathrooms. There is an enclosed accessible garden, parking area and office space for staff’s use at each house. The service was previously known as the Cornerstone Project and changed its name in the last year in line with the other Threshold services in Lanarkshire. It was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The service is provided by Crossreach, the social care arm of the Church of Scotland. Their mission statement is, “In christ’s name we seek to retain and regain the highest quality of life which each individual is capable of experiencing at any given time”.

What we did during our inspection

We wrote this report after an unannounced “Test of Change Thematic” inspection. This is a pilot inspection of new way of inspecting care homes for adults with a learning disability which perform at good or better levels. We inspected this service in line with the Inspection Focus Area (The Keys to Life Strategy), however the way we inspected was different in that this was a more focussed inspection and was not evaluated (graded), and the findings of the inspection have been reported in a different format.

We visited the service on 12 and 14 January 2016, giving feedback to the registered manager and managing coordinator on 20 January 2016.

We took account of the completed annual return and self assessment forms that the service had sent us.

We looked at the five care standard questionnaires and three staff questionnaires returned to us.

We spoke with

- six of the people living at the service
- the registered manager and managing coordinator
- both senior care practitioners and support staff who were there when we visited.

We looked at

- individual’s care and support records
- residents meetings information
- you said, we did information
- complaints information
- incident/accident recording systems
- environmental and equipment safety checks and maintenance
- a sample of staff records
- staff training information
- staff meeting records
- internal audit records

We took into account information from Crossreach’s national forum and quality assurance group for people who use services. We confirmed that staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council or a relevant professional body. We attended the staff meeting in one of the houses.

This year we are using an Inspection Focus Area (IFA) to identify excellence and to promote and support improvement in care homes and combined housing support and care at home services. We have asked providers to complete a self assessment as well as answering a number of specific questions during the inspection which explore health outcomes for people with a learning disability. The IFA also provides a focus on Human Rights, Safety, Supporting communication and the wider recommendations from the Keys to Life and Winterbourne View findings. Information gathered from our inspection activity in 2015–2016 will provide valuable intelligence at all levels, including a national overview.

Views of people using the service

We met six of the people living in Threshold Support Services - Residential during our visit. One person was able to tell us her views of the service, though this changed as her mood was changeable. Overall though she was happy and able to tell us about a lot of things she enjoyed doing with support. Others were not able to tell us verbally their views about the service. We saw they were very comfortable and relaxed in their home and with the staff supporting them. One person returned a questionnaire to us. Their key worker had helped them fill it in. They said they were very happy with the service.

We received questionnaires from four relatives. Three strongly agreed and one agreed they were happy with the quality of care and support their family member received. One said, "I am extremely satisfied with the service given. Staff have been excellent. No complaints whatsoever." One mentioned some concerns they had about their family member’s care and support. During our visit we heard the manager had met with them and had agreed a number of ways to address their concerns.

Self assessment

Every year all care services complete a 'self assessment' telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this is accurate.

We received a completed self assessment from the service. They included what they thought the service did well, some areas for improvement and any changes they had planned. They told us how the people living at Threshold Support Services - Residential and their families were involved in improving the quality of the service.
2. What the service has done to meet any recommendations or requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous recommendations

1. The service should restate the frequency of staff supervision and audit that this timetable is met.

The service has put in place a planner for staff supervision, including personal quality and development planning, in line with the expected frequency of supervision. We agreed they need to include audit of supervision records in the manager’s audit checklist to make sure supervision and personal quality and development planning happens as planned. We are continuing this part of the recommendation. See section 5, quality of staffing.

2. The service should have mechanisms to record and retain the views of relevant stakeholders on the quality of service it provides.

The service has a range of ways of gathering the views of people they support and their families. They had considered introducing a survey to gather the views of others with an interest in the service, for example social workers and members of the community learning disability team. They have decided this would be unlikely to add any more useful information as they hear these people’s views through review meetings and contact in relation to individual’s care and support. They would consider using a survey if they wanted to gather views on a particular topic.
3. Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

The people living at Threshold Support Services - Residential and, where relevant, their families were very involved in decisions about their lives. They had regular review meetings and made sure they were available to discuss any concerns or suggestions. We heard how the manager had met with one person’s family to discuss their concerns and agree things they could try. They were working well with another person’s family to make sure they could be as involved as possible. The manager was working on making sure arrangements were in place, such as welfare and/or financial guardianship and certificates of incapacity under Section 47 of the adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000, to support decision making on each person’s behalf.

Each person’s personal plan included lots of detail about all aspects of their life. They had been put together by staff and others who knew the person well and gave a real sense of the person, their likes and dislikes, what they needed support with and what works/doesn’t work for them. The service had been working on introducing outcomes focused support, which staff had training on. They have made a good start with introducing this. Everyone has one or two personal outcomes they are working on and plans are detailed as to how staff should support them with this. This is an area they want to continue to develop to make sure individual’s support is personal to them. We shared it may be helpful to look at the language used to make sure the plan is clearly what the person and those important to them want. We also suggested using the Keys to Life strategic outcomes; a healthy life, choice and control, independence and active citizenship, to help staff work with individuals and their families to come up with new ideas.

Most of the staff, including the manager, had known the people living at Threshold Support Services - Residential for a long time. They were very aware of the different ways they communicate. We saw personal plans included communication passports that had lots of details about how the person communicated, including words or signs they used and what they meant. We talked about continuing to work with the speech and language therapist to look at how individual’s communication could be developed, particularly thinking about one person’s potential. The service had training on Talking Mats planned and felt this would be a useful tool for use with some people. We also discussed that some people used their behaviour to communicate and suggested the service could look at developing positive behaviour support plans with those people.

We found very good examples of how the service makes sure the people living at Threshold Support Services - Residential stay as well as possible. They use the Boots monitored dosage system to make sure people take their prescribed medication. Everyone sees their GP when necessary and has regular dental checks and optician visits. Relationships with the community learning disability team are positive and individuals get support to attend any appointments. Family members are welcome to be involved in any appointments and the service follows up any health issues family members want them to. Some people had particular needs around eating and drinking. We saw information on this was easily available for staff in the kitchen. We saw that everyone had a detailed health and communication passport that they could take with them if they needed to stay in hospital.
People with learning disabilities often experience barriers to health screening. Where relevant, the service made sure individuals used bowel screening kits. We acknowledged that supporting individuals to take part in cervical and breast screening can be particularly challenging. The managers thought it would be useful to discuss this with the community learning disability team and work with their health colleagues to improve this.

Everyone had opportunities to get involved in a range of activities they enjoyed, including attending day services and getting involved in social and leisure activities. Some of the people living in different houses had known each other for many years. The service made sure they organised regular social get togethers and outings so friends could meet up. The manager wants to make sure people get the opportunity to try new things so that people don’t continue to just do things that are safe and comfortable. The outcomes focused approach gives opportunities to develop this.

Staff were aware of the Winterbourne View enquiry and the government’s Keys to Life strategy to improve the quality of life for people with a learning disability. The personal plan format covers all the key areas included in the Keys to Life. We suggested the service needs to continue to promote awareness of the Keys to Life and how it relates to the people living at Threshold Support Services - Residential. The new format for individual’s monthly updates and using the Keys to Life strategic outcomes; a healthy life, choice and control, independence and active citizenship when planning personal outcomes would help with this. We suggested the monthly updates could be shared at team meetings, which would give the manager the opportunity to make the link between the headings covered and the Keys to Life priority outcomes.

**Requirements**

0

**Recommendations**

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4. Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection
The houses are comfortable, homely, well furnished and decorated. Each person’s bedroom was furnished and decorated to their taste. They were personal to them, with photos of their families and other things that reflected their interests. The service had a plan in place for maintenance and refurbishment. For example, they were discussing replacing the kitchen in one of the houses. Relatives feel welcome to visit at any time and see this as their family member’s home.

Each house had two accessible bathrooms. One house had recently had bathrooms upgraded, with the occupational therapist advising on aids and adaptations to make sure they were accessible for people living there. The other two houses had an accessible bathroom and shower room so individuals could choose if they prefer to have a shower or a bath. Each person chooses where to spend time when at home. We saw some people liked to spend time in their own room, while others preferred to be mostly in the living room. They could move around their home as they wished. All the houses have outside space where people can spend time in better weather.

As we said under the quality of care and support, the people living at Threshold Support Services - Residential used the local community and had lots of opportunities to do ordinary things in ordinary places. The service had been thoughtful about how individuals could get out and about easily and some people had motability cars. Everyone has the necessary aids and adaptations to assist their mobility. We heard that one man’s mobility was changing and they had made a referral to the community learning disability team for assessment.

The service had systems in place to keep the environment safe and hazard free. They carried out regular safety checks, such as fire checks, environmental health inspections, maintenance of special equipment and fridge and water temperature checks.

Requirements
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Recommendations
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5. Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Most of the staff team have worked in the service for many years. They knew the individuals and their families very well. They spoke very respectfully about and to each person and their families. It was clear they genuinely cared about the people living at Threshold Support Services – Residential’s wellbeing. Newer staff were well supported to get to know the individuals, how to understand them and how best to deliver their care and support.

The monthly staff meetings in each house gave the team opportunities to keep up to date with developments, share information and practice, discuss ideas and discuss any concerns about individuals living in the house. All the staff participated openly at the meeting we attended. They were confident in putting forward their views and came to decisions about what to do and who was going to do it.

Staff told me they felt well supported and it was clear they had learning opportunities through formal training and elearning. We found it difficult to see that all staff had completed and refreshed training in core topics and completed training in topics relevant to the needs of people they support. Crossreach had used the EVOC system for training analysis and were introducing an internal online system for recording training and learning. We suggested the manager needed to develop a system using the Crossreach elearning, online training records and EVOC information to make sure staff kept up to date with core learning and any other learning necessary to meet the needs of people living in the service.

We saw some records of staff supervision; 1:1 meetings with their line manager to support their practice and professional development. The records were inconsistent, which indicated staff had not been having these opportunities regularly. The service had a planner in place for staff supervision and personal quality and development planning for 2016. We are continuing part of a recommendation we made at our last inspection about staff supervision to make sure staff have opportunities to regularly meet with their supervisor (see recommendation 1).

Staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council or, if more recently employed, in the process of registering. Some staff’s registration is conditional on them achieving the required qualification. Crossreach will need to support staff to achieve those qualifications before their registration needs to be renewed.

As noted under the quality of care and support, the manager wants to make sure people living at Threshold Support Services - Residential get the opportunity to try new things. A few staff had recently moved teams to improve the mix of skills and experience in each house. Continuing to raise awareness on the Keys to Life and supporting staff to link this to the people the support should help develop a culture where individuals are supported to achieve their potential and take risks as safely as possible.
Requirements

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Recommendations

1

The service should audit supervision records to make sure the supervision timetable is followed. This will help make sure people using the service experience good quality care and support from staff whose training and expertise allows them to meet their needs.

National Care Standards Care Homes for People with Learning Disabilities Standard 5 Management and staffing arrangements.
6. Quality of management and leadership

Findings from inspection

The service has a Christian ethos and is very much focused on making sure the people living at Threshold Support Services - Residential enjoy the best quality of life possible. The manager showed strong leadership in this, striving for the best for everyone and making sure they get access to services they need and want. She leads by example in all aspects of individuals’ care and support.

The service had a clear management structure with senior care practitioners having a leadership role in the houses. We suggested it would be helpful to clearly define the role and responsibilities of the manager and senior care practitioners and structure their supervision to make sure those responsibilities were being carried out. We discussed it could be helpful to have a senior care practitioner based in each house. However, current funding for the service does not allow this.

We discussed the Scottish Social Services Council’s promotion of leadership throughout the workforce to support good quality care and support. Support staff had leadership opportunities as key workers and in taking responsibility for a variety of tasks to support the service. As we noted under quality of staffing, all the staff had opportunities to put forward ideas and suggestions and to take these forward to make sure they happen, for example organising social events and outings. We suggested that the service could be clearer about key worker responsibilities and make sure key workers are supported to develop their abilities to plan, review and co-ordinate individual’s care and support.

We discussed that the service could look at more opportunities for staff to take on a leadership role such as championing good practice in things that are important for people living in the service. This could include things like caring for smiles, continence care, epilepsy, nutrition, dementia, diabetes and positive behaviour support.

The service carried out a range of audits to make sure they are maintaining and improving the quality of the service. They regularly checked things like medication and handling of personal money. They had an online system for reporting incidents and accidents, which was monitored by the health and safety adviser for any concerns. The manager was reviewing the manager’s audit checklist to make sure it included all the things relevant to maintaining and improving the quality of the service. We noted it was important these monthly audits were completed to assure the quality of the service.

Crossreach had been very proactive in involving people who use services in improving services. One of the women living in the service had been actively involved in the national forum and quality group. The service carried out an annual survey to get the views of people using services and their families. The Threshold services in Lanarkshire had a local forum for people using services and each house had meetings with the people living there and support staff to talk about things they wanted to do. We saw the “you said, we did” boards in each of the houses that showed some of the things the service had done as a result. This was an area they
wanted to continue to develop, using more pictures and different ways for people to meaningfully have their say.

Requirements

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Recommendations

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7. Complaints

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

8. Enforcement

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

9. Other issues

We have no other issues to report.

10. Inspection and grading history

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