



Inspection Report on

Elm

**Alexander House
Highfield Park
Denbigh
LL16 4LU**

Date Inspection Completed

15/05/2024

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About Elm

Type of care provided	Care Home Service Adults Without Nursing
Registered Provider	Mental Health Care (Highfield Park) Limited
Registered places	8
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	24 June 2021
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	The service provides an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It anticipates, identifies and meets the Welsh language and cultural needs of people who use, or may use, the service.

Summary

Relatives told us people's quality of life is "*excellent*," they really enjoy living at Elm and are "*happy and settled here*." People are provided with very high-quality care and support. Their health and wellbeing is always prioritised with careful planning for them to successfully access healthcare services. There are plenty of opportunities for them to do meaningful activities either on their own or with other people they live with. Goals are being achieved and positive risk taking encourages people to try new experiences, further enhancing their lives.

A strong staff team are highly skilled and motivated to support people effectively. In-depth inductions and training is provided to understand and support a wide range of people's complex needs. Staff feel it is a rewarding job, they are very well supported by management and are actively encouraged to progress in their careers. They are supervised more often than is required and feedback from staff about management is extremely positive.

There are many systems and processes in place, providing comprehensive and effective oversight of the service by the responsible individual (RI). The RI visits Elm to look at what is working well and identify any areas to further improve service delivery. Information is shared constantly and lessons are learnt to continually enhance the service.

Well-being

People have very strong control over their day-to-day life. Emphasis is placed on ensuring people are listened to and their methods of communication are fully understood and supported by staff. People whose first language is Welsh is acknowledged by staff who can speak or are learning to speak Welsh. People make choices and decisions using aids and pictorial boards to show what they want each day. A board with readily available activity options is used by people to tell staff what they want to do. Preferences and rights are respected with key worker and review meetings helping them to make changes in their lives. Their independence and skills are increased preparing them to successfully move on to other services.

People's physical, mental health and emotional wellbeing needs are met consistently and a very high standard of support is provided. Planning and preparation is expertly done to promote healthier lifestyles and address health issues; this has significantly improved people's lives. Management work closely with healthcare professionals to ensure people receive and access the support and services they need. Relatives told us *"Access to health, doctors, dentist is all taken care of."* People do things that are really important to them including following their specific routines. Staff commented *"routines are followed and work very well to fulfil their quality of life."* Information about people's sensory needs is clearly documented for all staff to be aware of. People pursue their own interests as well as going out with other people they live with, for example group walks, day trips and holidays. Relatives said, *"They are always thinking of new activities."* People are supported to visit and spend quality time with their families who are complimentary about staff.

People are protected from harm. Management complete assessments and staff use strategies, approaches and follow plans to keep people and others safe. There are policies and procedures including safeguarding, staff receive training and information about raising concerns is easily available for everyone. Positive risk taking is promoted. Staff commented on people being *"supported, safe and living in an environment which is positive and fulfilling"*.

People live in a home which meets their complex and sensory needs and increases their independence. Changes have been made to the environment with communal rooms being redeveloped and redesigned. Research on autism friendly environments has been carried out and applied to how the home looks and what it can offer people.

Care and Support

Personal plans are highly detailed and updated. Plans record who has contributed to them and contain comprehensive information about how best to support people. Any changes are communicated to staff. The manager told us they often send families and professionals photos and update emails of people's progress. Reviews of people's care and support are carried out and relatives told us they are always looking at ways to help their family member live to their full potential. Professionals commented *"reviews are always a pleasure to attend and are always well structured and very positive."*

People are provided with high quality care and support through a service which includes them and considers their personal wishes, risks and any specialist needs. People's plans take into account their preferences and specific routines ensuring consistency of support from staff who are matched with them. People achieve their goals which are set, monitored and celebrated with photos displayed on a board for people and their families to see. Staff commented people are now doing more than ever, have a better quality of life and are achieving outcomes they did not think were possible. Different staff are chosen to be innovative and take ownership in arranging 'big days out' each month. Six possible places are suggested, which people choose from and this is then planned for. Detailed assessments, strategies, approaches and plans are highly effective in reducing risks and promoting positive risk taking. Grab sheets are provided for staff to take with them as a quick reference guide. Elm has successfully achieved their Autism Accreditation and is committed to understanding and setting the standard for best practice. Relatives commented *"The care and attention here is second to none"* and their family member has *"improved massively"* since living at Elm.

People are extremely well supported to stay healthy and well and successfully access healthcare services. Plans include information about people's health and wellbeing, any signs for staff to notice and when to contact professionals. Booklets have been produced about people's diagnosis and how this affects them and the support they want. Adjustments are made for people to access appointments and treatment with the use of social stories and staff support to help reduce their anxieties.

The service promotes hygienic practices and manages risk of infection. Staff have access to personal protective equipment (PPE). Infection control audits are completed and there is an infection control policy. Staff receive training and there is an infection control champion to maintain and improve standards. Staff commented the home is always clean.

Environment

People live in a home which is designed and equipped to meet their different and complex needs. Prior to moving into Elm, the manager visits people and takes a colour pallet with them. Over the course of three days, they are asked about their colour preferences and their rooms are decorated accordingly. Rooms are personalised with their own belongings which vary depending on their preferences. Pictorial boards, sensory items and adaptations are also made to ensure people's comfort.

Management are highly creative in making changes to the environment taking into account people's sensory needs and increasing their independence. Rooms have been redeveloped and redesigned including the laundry room and bathroom and there is now a new kitchen area for people to access. There is creative use of space. The activity room has a ball pit, lots of arts, craft materials and photos on the walls of people doing different activities. The manager looks for and makes their own sensory equipment to further enhance different areas. There are two lounges, one is used more for socialising, with cinema nights, music, computer games and sensory and relaxation equipment available. There is also another quieter lounge. The manager told us about research on autism friendly environments, colour schemes used and adjustments made for example noise reduction panels and window coverings. Pictorial aids, notice boards and signs throughout the home assist people with communication and help with orientation. Staff commented the "*Environment has improved massively*" and "*the home is very suited to their needs.*"

A large garden with a decking area provides a pleasant, private space for people to use. This includes allocated areas for people, a basket swing and giant building blocks. There is also a separate secret garden offering a safe and quiet place for people to access and spend their time. Attention to detail has been paid to people's sensory needs with garden lights, different coloured fabrics, ornaments, wind chimes and planters filled with nontoxic sensory plants.

The service provider identifies and mitigates risks to health and safety. Extensive audits are carried out and the RI visits the service to identify any improvements needed. Staff receive training to keep themselves and others safe with policies and procedures in place for them to follow. Fire checks, drills and personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are completed. Maintenance work is carried out with more robust fixtures and fittings put in place.

Leadership and Management

People are supported by a staff team who are highly motivated, dedicated, and skilled. Staff files contain the necessary information and they are registered with Social Care Wales (SCW) the workforce regulator. Staff are supported and valued, commenting on good communication, openness and being able to go to the manager or senior staff with any problems. Staff comments include *“The staff really work well together and will support one another in times of need”* and *“I feel very safe and supported in this job and I couldn’t praise the management enough in the support given.”* They also said *“Supervisions bi-monthly work well to change or praise anything which helps staff feel heard.”* Staff receive in-depth inductions. Training is provided to understand and meet people’s complex needs. Professionals commented, staff are responsive, helpful, and very knowledgeable about the people they support. Relatives told us people receive care from well-trained, experienced staff, commenting on *“Lovely hard-working staff and efficient management.”* Staff are offered and encouraged to progress in their careers.

Governance arrangements provide consistently high-quality care and support for people. The RI visits Elm to identify what is working and not working. Quality of care reviews consider any feedback, identify patterns/ trends and any lessons learnt to further improve the service. The manager told us the RI is supportive, always on the end of the phone, makes time for them and their door is always open. Professionals told us it is a pleasure working with the manager and deputy manager who are helpful, engaging and work closely with them. Management meetings and focus groups are held to share information, good practice and provide support for one another.

A positive culture is promoted. At a recent management meeting the RI shared a training video on ‘Respect in The Workplace.’ Staff told us Elm has been through a lot of positive changes over the last few years and there is a *“nice ethos and attitude”* towards people. Staff comments include *“positive working culture,” “positive can-do attitudes”, “great work environment”* and a *“fun place to work”*. The manager is very passionate about promoting the Welsh language. They lead on the Active Offer focus group and work closely with Social Care Wales to assess, develop and train staff in the Welsh language and ensure a bilingual service is provided. The manager has translated documentation and produced folders with information and resources which they have shared with other services for them to use.

Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people’s well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
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N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A
56	Regulation 56 hygiene and infection control	Achieved
44	Regulation 44 (4) and 44 (10) Premises	Achieved
80	Regulation 80 Quality of care review	Achieved

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Date Published 20/06/2024