



Part of the Healthwatch Staffordshire remit is to carry out Enter and View Visits. Healthwatch Staffordshire Authorised Representatives will carry out these visits to health and social care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation – so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand. Healthwatch Staffordshire Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Staffordshire safeguarding policy, the service manager will be informed and the visit will end. The Local Authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

Provider Details

Provider: Chase Aqua Rural Enterprise (CARE)
Address: Lower Drayton Farm, Penkridge ST19 5RE
Service Type: Day services for people with Learning Difficulties and Mental Health Issues
Date of Visit: Monday 18th February 2019

Authorised Representatives

This visit was made by two Authorised Representatives of Healthwatch Staffordshire.

Purpose of Visit

Healthwatch Staffordshire is making a series of visits to Day Services throughout the county in order to report on the range and quality of these services. Each service will have an individual report and an overview report on Day Services in Staffordshire will be compiled once the visits are completed.

A good service should...

1. Have strong, visible management
2. Have staff with time and skills to do their jobs
3. Have good knowledge of each individual client, their needs and how their needs may be changing.
4. Offer a varied programme of activities unless a specific service is offered.
5. Offer quality and choice to their clients around food and mealtimes, where applicable.
6. Accommodate clients personal, cultural and lifestyle needs.
7. Be an open environment where feedback is actively sought and used

The methodology to be used is to;

- Consider the care and services offered and whether this is delivered in a way that promotes dignity and independence.
- Consider staffing levels and the level of the care provided.
- Talk to people using the service, if they are happy and willing to do so to gain their views on the opportunities available to them.
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- Talk to relatives, if they are available to ask if they are happy with the care provided to their relatives and whether they are aware and feel able to report any concerns/ complaints.
- Consider staff training and the support offered to enable staff to do their jobs well.
- Observe interaction at all levels between clients, staff, Manager, and visitors.

Physical Environment

External

CARE is located on a working farm close to Penkridge, just off the A449. The farm also has a children's rural activity centre which is open to the public, but which is entirely separate from CARE. CARE is located next to this public area but is wholly fenced to maintain privacy. There are prominent notices on all gates identifying CARE as a private area. There is separate car parking for CARE and for the public activity area. Good signage is provided.

CARE is approached via a long unmetalled farm track. This track is shared for much of its length with the public activity area. At the time of the visit major development work was underway to install a play barn at the farm. This involved contractors. As a result of use by heavy machinery the track had many potholes and ruts. In wet weather (as experienced on a pre-visit) the pot holes were filled with water and driving had to be undertaken with care. We are advised that the track is maintained on a regular basis by the farm (see additional information at end of the report).

CARE appears to be well tended, in neat order and all livestock is well housed with a high level of cleanliness. The site comprises:

- Garden areas with pergolas
- Raised beds
- Animal pens, hutches and enclosures
- Various barn-type structures for craft activities, cookery, computer work, socialising etc.
- Purpose built toilets (locked on the day of the visit to prevent use by members of the public visiting the farm activity centre during half-term)
- Designated pathways
- Ramps for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility.

Internal

The internal environment of the purpose built, timber barn is bright, well cared for and clean. The work of service users is prominently displayed on walls and notice boards.

We were unable to visit the toilet facilities as these were locked (see above). No comment can be made about these. We understand that there are facilities for appropriate personal care and for wheelchair users. CARE is not able to provide facilities for those who require a high level of personal care because of permanent incontinence.

CARE have since advised us that the toilets were locked to ensure safeguarding (on the day of the visit only) as they were having work done to their boundary fencing on that day, leaving car park/toilets potentially accessible to the public visiting the farm. All staff have access to keys and they were opened as required for CARE service users, staff and visitors. They sent us photographs of the toilets which are clean and well equipped with appropriate rails to assist people with being able to use the facilities independently.

Client Numbers

We were advised that the numbers of service users varies and we were not advised how many people currently use the service.

Staff Numbers

We were advised that staffing is strictly assigned in accordance with service users at CARE each day with the staffing ratio varying from 1:1 to small groups of 1:4.

Management

Management - A good service should have strong visible management.

The manager should be visible within the service, provide good leadership to staff and have the right experience for the job.

Our findings

The Manager and Director has a very visible presence and was responsible for the establishment of CARE in 2011 as a non-profit making community interest company. She is clearly passionate about CARE's work. She undertakes hands-on work with service users and appears to know both them and her staff very well. In her commitment to the service users she is protective and vigilant. She required us, as Healthwatch Volunteer Authorised Representatives, to go on a pre-visit to explain the philosophy underpinning CARE. She was at pains to stress that she did not want the wellbeing of service users to be compromised by changes to their routine or by our presence as strangers. She is very mindful of the requirement to keep the service users safe. The Manager is totally committed to the work and mentioned to us the long hours that she puts in to ensure that high quality is achieved in all areas of CARE's work.

We understand that the Manager has considerable experience in the field of rural activities and animal husbandry.

Comments

From our limited exposure time at CARE we feel that the manager is visible within the service, provides good leadership to staff and has the right experience for the job.

Staff Experiences and Observations

Quality Indicator 2 - Have the staff the time and skills to do their jobs

Staff should be well-trained, motivated and feel they have the resources to do their job properly.

Our findings

The Manager described to us the training provided for, and required of, staff. For all staff this includes:

- First aid training
- Food hygiene
- Manual handling
- Safeguarding
- Health and Safety

Staff who undertake teaching duties are required to have:

- Qualifications in relevant subject areas, e.g. husbandry, crafts, languages etc.
- Professional teaching/instructional qualification relating to appropriate age group of learners

Specialist professionals are brought in to deliver bespoke training as required by the needs of the service users, e.g.

- Management of seizures (nurse specialising in epilepsy)
- Autism
- Mental health issues

Additional training is in accordance with activities delivered e.g. green crafts, animal care etc.

Comments

From our very limited observation of mainly one member of staff, there appears to be plenty of time to undertake the work with clients. The member of staff observed appeared confident, motivated and appropriately trained. The well-resourced activity which we observed, the displays of varied work of service users and the general environment of CARE indicates that resourcing is entirely appropriate.

Quality Indicator 3 - Do staff have good knowledge of each individual client, their needs and how their needs may be changing

Staff should be familiar with clients' histories and preferences and have processes in place for how to monitor any changes in wellbeing.

Our findings

Our findings must be viewed in the light of information being provided directly by the Manager with limited direct observation of the work that was undertaken with service users. Our observations comprised:

- A one:one floristry craft session between a member of staff and an adult service user
- Discussion with an adult service user who was also interacting with the CARE Manager and a volunteer
- Perusal of a client user's CARE diary in which she and staff members had recorded personal likes, dislikes and activities which had been undertaken.

The two service users who we met were using direct payments to access CARE as a chosen service. Other service users access the facilities of CARE via Staffordshire CC Social Services, schools and other agencies.

From this limited observation we conclude that:

- The member of staff observed had an excellent knowledge of the needs, personality, likes, dislikes and strengths of the service user with whom she was working
- The personal diary/record book provided a record which extends knowledge of the individual service user
- The Manager demonstrated an excellent knowledge of all the service users

In addition to this we observed incidentally that a young man who, we were told, became very upset by change and by people he did not know, was well engaged and managed by a member of staff. From this we conclude that his needs were well understood by the member of staff with whom he was interacting.

Comments

In the light of restricted observations, it is impossible to provide comprehensive comments on this indicator other than those which we have made above. From what we observed, the indicators would seem to be appropriately met.

Activities

Quality Indicator 4 - Activities - Does the service offer a varied programme of activities?

Services should provide a wide range of activities and support clients to take part in activities, unless the service offers a specific type of service rather than a wider range of opportunities.

Our findings

CARE offers a wide range of activities and experiences. These are largely, but not exclusively, of a rural and artistic nature. They include:

Indoor	Outdoor	Off-site
Cookery/baking/jam making/butter making	Woodcraft	Angling
Art/Crafts	Animal Care	Wellbeing walks
Watercolours	Gardening/Veggies/Flowers/Fruit picking	
Woodwork	Wire Sculpture	
Animal Hygiene	Wellbeing walks	
Floristry	Survival skills	
Wire sculpture	Wire Sculpture	
Pyrography	Photography	
Willow weaving	Willow weaving	
Computer access work	Conservation activities	
Modern Languages		

Animal care and husbandry involves looking after goats, chickens, rabbits, a pig and guinea pigs

In addition to the above, service users are offered the opportunity to socialize with staff and with each other. They are supported to bring in their own work to undertake in a social situation, if this is something that they wish to do.

Service users are encouraged to take part in work which they have previously enjoyed or in which they have some experience. In this way they are able to develop their confidence, deepen their skills and enhance their self-esteem and wellbeing. Some of the displayed art and craft work was of a very high level. It was well displayed.

As well as providing the activities identified above, CARE is able to be reactive to the needs and interests of individual clients.

Comments

CARE offers a good range of activities which appear to be motivating with the right level of challenge for the service users. This enables them to extend their skills within a supportive and familiar environment.

Catering Services

Quality Indicator 5 - Catering - Does the service offer quality, choice around food and mealtimes?

If relevant, Services should offer a range of meal choices and adequate support to help clients who may struggle to eat and drink and accommodate different preferences and needs around individual dietary requirements.

Our findings

A full catering service is not provided by CARE. Drinks are provided and the Manager informed us that a selection of snacks is available should these be required. Service users are required to bring their own lunch, although they can eat food prepared in cookery sessions. A kitchen and social eating area is provided. The Manager stated that many of the users have very specific dietary requirements and likes/dislikes. This would make it very difficult to provide comprehensive catering which would adequately meet everyone's needs.

Comments

The catering and arrangements for mealtimes appeared to be wholly appropriate.

Quality Indicator 6 - Does the service accommodate clients personal, cultural and lifestyle needs?

Services should be set up to meet residents cultural, religious and lifestyle needs as well as their care needs, and shouldn't make people feel uncomfortable if they are different or do things differently to other clients.

Our findings

CARE is very focused on the needs of service users. From the limited observations that we were able to make, it would seem that the lifestyle and personal needs are central to service provision.

Comments

We feel unable to comment on how cultural and religious needs are met as there was no opportunity for observation.

Client Experiences and Observations

The service user to whom we spoke said that she loved coming to CARE. She particularly enjoyed having the opportunity to be with the animals. She said that when she had originally heard about CARE she did not want to visit as she has challenges in adapting to new experiences and situations. However, once she had visited she realised how much she loved it and now wishes that she had started attendance earlier.

Family / Carers experiences (if available)

One of the volunteers undertaking this visit had the opportunity to speak to the parent of the service user whose observations are noted in the preceding paragraph.

The parent spoke very highly of the service provided by CARE. She described it as her daughter's 'lifeline' and said that she didn't know what her daughter would do without it. She identified that it had been good for her daughter's mental health and gave her the opportunity to socialise in a safe environment in which she felt comfortable. The parent was particularly pleased that the CARE provided activities with which her daughter said she felt comfortable. CARE did not try to force her daughter into doing things that would cause her anxiety and upset.

The only concern that the parent expressed related to the state of the farm track leading to CARE. Transport to the service has to be organised by the family. Unfortunately, the cessation of the South Staffordshire Connect bus service which her daughter used to use meant that she had initially resorted to using a private hire taxi. However, the state of the farm track meant that taxi drivers were unhappy about taking their cars along it. They required extra payment because external cleaning of the vehicle was required after visits. Her daughter now relies on a family member for transport, although even this family member has indicated that the track provides a challenge to keeping the car in a clean state.

She said that as her daughter was in receipt of direct payments to fund her time at CARE.

N.B. We understand that the track is the responsibility of the farm on which CARE is situated. The circumstances relating to the state of the track are outlined in the section of this report dealing with the environment.

Quality Indicator 7 - The service should be an open environment where feedback is actively sought and use.

There should be mechanisms in place for clients and relatives to influence what happens in the service, such as a Clients and Relatives Committee or regular meetings. The process for making comments or complaints should be clear and feedback should be welcomed and acted on.

Our findings

We were unable to investigate this area in detail at this visit. The Manager advised that they subscribe to certain standards regarding feedback and at our initial visit to meet her talked of CARE's feedback policy, complaints procedure and offered access to governance folder of policies, procedures and risk assessments. The Manager also spoke about monthly meetings with CPN's, Midlands NHS Trust personalisation/social navigators and social workers. She advised that they regularly visit CARE to discuss provision/feedback. She added that CARE has a close ongoing relationship with all clients at CARE/parents/carers and that feedback and making changes to accommodate ongoing needs is something that underpins everything that they do.

Comments

The manager has, since the visit, supplied us with the CARE Complaints, bullying and harassment policy and also an example of their self-evaluation sheet, which is used as and Activity Evaluation and outlines the following;

- Title of the task
- Purpose of the task
- Positives - what was good about the activity, what went well and what was enjoyed
- What has been learned
- Personal development points - what needs to be worked on or do next with space to add it would be even better if.....

This is a good example of getting feedback from people using the service on a daily basis that can be used constructively.

Summary, Comments and Further Observations

Although there were limited opportunities for observations and interactions with service users, we found that CARE was offering a valuable and valued service which was professionally managed. It offers a good variety of motivating and stimulating activities with staff who have appropriate skills and qualifications. The Manager/Director ensures that the needs of the service users are at the heart of everything that is provided. The physical environment of CARE is well tended and in excellent order.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Action

The state of the farm track by which CARE is accessed gave us some cause for concern. However, we realise that this is not the responsibility of CARE and may be of a temporary nature whilst building work is carried out. We wonder whether some representation could be made to the farmer by Healthwatch, or, indeed by Staffordshire CC, to improve the surface. However, this should not jeopardise the relationship between the farmer and CARE.

Further information would be welcomed in respect of Quality Indicator 7 as there was no clear information regarding feedback and how it is responded to by the service.

Additional information

Healthwatch Staffordshire have received some information from one of the partners of Lower Drayton Farm after CARE advised them of the comments within the report about the track leading to the service.

They told Healthwatch that they were happy that CARE showed them the draft report and they felt that they have a very good working relationship with CARE and further commented that they thought that CARE made an excellent job of running the service, that the site is a credit to them and the unique location of CARE being in a field location environment would be of much benefit to the people it supports.

With regards to the track they advised that as a farming business they are committed to maintaining and improving the track. They added that they were glad we had noted the improvements being made at Lower Drayton Farm, saying that this work is due to be completed in the summer and they thought it would compliment the work of CARE and vastly improve the farm entrance.

Provider Feedback

The Manager supplied some additional information and clarification on some areas following the visit.

The Farm have supplied information and assurances regarding the track.

Further information has been provided in respect of Quality Indicator 7 and has been added to that section of the report.

DISCLAIMER

Please note that this report only relates to findings we observe on the specific date of our visit. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all residents and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



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