



Enter
& View

healthwatch
Staffordshire

Elite CIC

Newcastle under Lyme
23rd April 2019

Report



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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 clients, 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

Name: Elite CIC Newcastle

Address: The Pavilion, Victoria St, Newcastle upon Tyne,
Chesterton, Newcastle ST5 7

Service Type: Day Opportunities Service

Date of Visit: 23rd April 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.
- 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

Elite CIC is a Day Opportunities service which is not necessarily building based but does use The Pavilion in the local park as a base for their services. The services go out into the community with days out, shopping trips, visits to interesting places etc. The building is owned by Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council. The building looks like it was built within the past 10 years or so and is well kept on the outside. There are metal bars on the front of the building that allow it to be locked up overnight. The public toilets are to the left of the building looking at it from the front. A children's playground is adjacent to the left hand side of the building and a green lawn area in front. The park and its facilities are accessible to clients

There are parking spaces just on the perimeter of the building for those clients who have mobility problems. There is also a Public Car Park at the bottom end of the Park where Bowling takes place which clients can use. Although this isn't signposted, we were told that new Clients are made aware of this

The CCTV is discreet. There are some signs up around the outside of the building indicating it is in use. The cameras merge well with the décor and signage is due to be replaced internally. CCTV can be viewed from the main office, and the cameras show the immediate areas adjacent to the building (behind the bars on the small patio) and internal areas and not the public park areas.

There is no bell, keypad or intercom. There is an Elite sign on the front of the building and we were told that there are hopes to replace this with something more substantial and more appealing when budgets allow. The fire (escape) doors of the adjacent room were open due to it being a warm day.

Internal

If you enter the building through the main entrance, the visitor's book is directly in front of you. The only odour was that of lunch cooking, which was rather pleasant.

The internal décor is bright and cheerful; white walls with art work done by the clients decorate the space and brighten the well-lit interior. One wall features photographs of the clients. We were told that this is called "The Wall of Fame" where the photos capture clients engaging in activities and days out and that this is a focal talking point when new clients or carers come to have a look around. The chairs look new and are brightly coloured or have cushions, upholstered in fun fur and other tactile fabrics.

The largest room, generally referred to as the 'dining room' has shelves with games, books and arts and crafts materials stored on them. They are tidy and well used; an art class was going on when we arrived and the materials being used with people were going through them, making their selections. The shelves looked well organised, however the games were piled quite high up due to the lack of space in the room. We were advised that the service hopes to acquire some new cupboards in the future to better house the games.

In the smaller of the two main rooms, generally referred to as the 'Activities Room', there were videos and computer games, accessible to the clients, and a large flat screen television that was on in the background. Next to the television was a games console with a large monitor. This didn't distract from the television but did allow visibility as to what was being played. There is a corner kitchen area where clients have access to a sink. The activities room is an area where people can socialise with each other in addition to the activities they wish to engage in.

In this report we shall refer to dining room and activities room, as the service and it's clients do, rather than the larger or smaller of the main rooms

There are two smaller rooms off the activities room which houses a quieter room for the use of clients and which also seems to double as storage and an office space. The other is the main office for the Day Service. This contains the monitor for the CCTV, a couple of desks and office equipment. It is bright, naturally well-lit and looks out over the children's play area.

The kitchen is off the dining room. It is a large space with a door and serving hatch facing the dining room. It is well used and well maintained.

The entrance hall leads into the living room; the hall is quite a small area containing a small table with the visitors' book.

The Pavilion uses the public toilets which, as previously mentioned, are next to the rooms used by the service. While Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council maintains the building, the service looks after the toilets. There are male, female and disabled toilets. They are clean and well maintained; lots of toilet paper and soap available and hand dryers that are gentle, not too noisy and work well. There is no odour, unlike many public toilets. There is a baby changing unit in the disabled toilet and bars to help people stand up in one of the ladies cubicles as well as the disabled. We did not go into the male toilets. The public toilets meet the needs of the clients as none of them have severe enough disabilities to warrant hoists etc.

The Day Opportunities service also utilises the public areas in the park and has recently acquired an allotment and uses local sports facilities. They are looking to turn the kitchen and dining room into a local community café, hoping to further integrate the clients with the local community. They hope that the clients will be working in the kitchen and serving customers, as well as taking their lunch in the café. Whilst this may limit the available inside space for the clients, the staff feel that the integration with the local community is important.

Client Numbers

25 Clients; while there is room for up to 30, the staff feel this would be too crowded.

15-20 can be accommodated at lunch time.

Some Services Users require one on one care; the Service is unable to supply this but welcomes the Service User's carers.

Staff Numbers

2 Directors

1 Manager

1 Workshop Practitioner

There are 2 full time and 2 part time staff along with several Volunteers including Administrator, Kitchen Staff, Arts/Crafts, Activities, Carers and Befrienders.

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 director of the Day Service is the son of the Manager who had recently retired from Directorship. She and her husband still essentially run the day service, with their son and another director. The director we met with is very keen and obviously loves his job. Both of the Directors have backgrounds of working with people with special needs. The Manager, has the knowledge and experience of running Day Services for people with mild to moderate learning disabilities and her son is enhancing his experience so that she can fully retire.

All the Clients know the staff and we observed warm, friendly behaviour between the staff and the clients. It was apparent that the Manager and Directors care a lot about the clients and there is a warmth in their interactions.

Comments

The Manager is well known and well thought of by the clients and has a wealth of experience and knowledge about the provision of day opportunities.

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

In addition to the two full time and two part time staff, the service has a number of volunteers; some are clients themselves. In addition, the service has student volunteers who come on work placement from Keele University.

Some of the staff / volunteers have key areas of expertise, which allow the service to offer a variety of activities. The manager advised us that many of the volunteers were highly trained and qualified with Degrees and teaching qualifications.

All core Staff are trained to Safeguarding Level 2 with further training available as necessary and Food Hygiene Level 2 for the volunteers who work in the kitchen. The management were able to advise us that their policy was to make sure that all staff are trained to a relevant level.

We were advised that all staff and volunteers have an enhanced DBS check which are up-to-date and renewed on a regular basis. Most training is through e-learning or courses run by the local council.

The staff are well motivated and obviously love what they do. The management team told us how they value experience over qualifications and emphasise that the volunteers fit their work ethic and environment. Some of the volunteers have been with the management team for over a decade, telling us they love the work and the family feel of the facility.

Comments

The service is well supported by the volunteers. We were told how the Manager postponed retirement to ensure there was a service for the community with low to medium level needs; there is no doubt that the service Elite CIC provides is very valuable.

It was obvious that the staff love the work they do, and care deeply for the clients. The current staff should benefit from further training that may be available, which in time will allow the Manager to retire in due course. While we felt the 'Youth Club' family vibe was warm and welcoming, there was an unstructured feeling which meant some clients, while quite happy in themselves, could potentially benefit from more support to get the most out of their time there. Staff and volunteers aim to ensure individual clients get the necessary levels of support required.

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

The staff keep a database with entries for each Service User, with their histories and preferences. They work with the Social Workers to ensure learning outcomes are met, and befriend the Clients so there is a trusting and respectful relationship between the two. This enables the staff and volunteers to gain information on the Clients wellbeing and to provide support with any problems and issues that the Client may be having. The data base is regularly updated.

Comments

The staff and the clients have very close relationships; it is like one big happy family. There is a genuine warm atmosphere where people can be who they are and everyone is valued. Many of the clients and staff have known each other a very long time, which further enhances the family atmosphere. We saw that this helps them pick up on any changes, even subtle ones, because they know each other so well.

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

The Pavilion has a number of indoor activities including:

- Arts and Crafts
- Expressive Arts
- Creative Dance and Movement
- Music for senses
- Cookery
- Baking and Cake decoration
- Social activities including Bingo
- Drama
- IT including basic coding, robotics and digital graphics and online safety. The staff are keen to encourage the use of IT with clients, to encourage appropriate online friendships and social inclusion, while developing an awareness of the dangers of internet use.
- There are also board games, a pool table and computer games available to the Clients. Weekly Bingo games are a firm favourite amongst the Clients and Staff.

Outdoor activities include:

- Rambling
- Photography
- Gardening
- Football
- Tennis
- Swimming

The country park, Apedale, is close by and the service often uses it for walks, rambles and photography. Once a year they have a trip, which the clients have a major input into. Places previously visited include Llandudno and Blackpool.

The Service also has parties and activities around major public holidays and celebrations such as Easter, Christmas, Hallowe'en and local community events such as music events in the park and Remembrance Day

The service has an open-door policy, allowing clients to use the park and the facilities there at any time. They also provide bus and travel training with the clients, as many travel to the Pavilion independently. There are few one to one activities; clients that come with a supporter are able to do this, but there are not enough staff or volunteers to provide this service widely.

The service allows the Users to become volunteers, should they so choose, and supports some of their users in employment. Once Service User we spoke to works a couple of hours a week as a cleaner, others work in local charity shops for a few hours a week.

Clients are encouraged to be involved in activities, decisions on what is on offer (within reason) and designing menus and trips out. On the days the service is most busy, they will often have a group chat after lunch to make decisions about trips, activities and any other issues.

The service works with each individual's support plan and learning outcomes, but also works at befriending each service user to ensure their likes and dislikes are known and they can engage with the clients as fully as possible.

Comments

The clients seem to have a lot of input into their activities at the service. It was observed that one Service User spent his time playing computer games without a hardly taking a break from the screen. When raised as a potential Health and Safety issue, it was explained to us how this gentleman has been coming to Elite CIC for many years and only attends on this one day per week, arriving around 11 am and leaving after he has had his lunch around 2 pm. He already accesses other Day Opportunities where they do not have any computer games and that his time at Elite is his life-line to enable him to enjoy something that he does not have the opportunity to do anywhere else. This information reassured us that there was no issue to be considered.

Catering Services - where applicable

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

The Service offers snacks such as crisps and fruit during the day and a meal at lunch times. Clients are encouraged to have the meal, but can also bring a packed lunch or buy something locally. Light meals/ snacks such as toasties are also available. Breakfast is sometimes provided to those clients that need it.

The menus are discussed with the clients and are healthy and nutritious. Seasonal local produce is used as and when appropriate and it is hoped that the allotment plot will encourage this and supply the service with fresh, seasonal produce. The staff try to maintain a varied menu, taking into consideration Clients preferences.

Clients are encouraged to take part in the cooking; some have gone on to become kitchen volunteers and cook the main meal of the day. One particular service user loves to clear up and load the dishwasher, an activity that is supervised and encouraged by the staff.

Occasionally local members of the public will use the facility, especially when the fire-escape doors are open. The service is hoping that when it becomes a community café, more members of the public will use it, especially as they aim to be moderately priced to encourage use. They also hope that it will be accessible to anyone who is homeless and needs a hot meal or drink.

The staff stated that they have been inclusive of those with different religious or cultural dietary needs in the past, and anyone who has a particular allergy; however, at this present moment in time there aren't any clients that have any particular dietary requirements.

Comments

The service wants to open a community café in the hope that it will break down social barriers between the local community and the clients, as well as give the community and clients somewhere inexpensive to eat while at the same time providing wholesome, nutritious food. They hope to be able to use vegetables and herbs grown on their allotment and to produce fresh and seasonal food.

While we are aware that the clients really enjoy working together to make the lunches, and we have seen community cafés work extremely well in other services we were concerned whether it may restrict the space available for activities.

The Manager explained that they have listened to their clients and it is the client wish to open a Community Café, encouraging social inclusion. She explained that they used to have a Community Cafe which was held in Newcastle Library on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays and this is what they wanted to create at the Pavilion.

It is clear that they are aware of what is involved in opening a Community Café and confirmed that this would be mainly for refreshments for local people who use the park.

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

The service has a very inclusive feel to it; it feels like a large family and the Clients have known each other a long time; in some cases decades. The majority of Clients are White British with a varying Christian background, so the Service doesn't often have to adapt to someone with different cultural, religious and lifestyle needs. However, on speaking to the staff about this issue, they were confident that they would be inclusive.

Client Experiences and Observations

As the service was open and friendly it was easy to chat to the clients as they went about their chosen activities. The level of communication was dependent on the ability of the client, but it was possible in most cases. Previously mentioned was the gentleman who preferred to spend his time playing computer games. He told us that this was what he wanted to do, and he didn't want to do anything else

At the art table in the dining room, it was a little cramped but no-one seemed to mind. The focus of the day was in moulding clay and one person was making a plaque for his Dad's birthday, in the end it was finished with a bit of assistance. There were plenty of different materials in use and one service user who didn't want to use the clay was enjoying gluing patterns of glitter on to templates. One of the carers present did tell us that her client likes to do a particular activity so it didn't seem worth the trouble to try to change things too much. It may be worth researching different art & craft activities to possibly provide a greater variety of activities available to people. As the Service has links with Keele University they may be able to incorporate future changes and developments into a student programme.

Another popular activity with both clients and volunteers was playing pool. There is an ongoing competition involving a group of specific players, but everyone was encouraged to play. One service user was very supportive and helpful towards the less experienced, providing hints and tips to help improve their game.

As stated earlier there are a range of activities available and clients are encouraged to be involved. It was noticeable that the atmosphere was quite noisy and chaotic particularly when the afternoon bingo was in session which was in competition with a particularly intense pool game. A couple of clients did go outside, and one chose to sit in the dining room alone and simply looked into the living room. The Manager explained this lady had Downs Syndrome and Autism and that she was very happy with what the service offered. We were told how she volunteers in the kitchen and feels safe in the dining room. The manager further explained that they have tried to encourage her to take part with the others, but that she does not really want to. The Manager advised how this lady had been attending since 2008 and came twice a week. She does not have a PA as she is very capable and does not qualify for any funding from the Local Authority, which is the case for many of the other clients.

It was apparent from chatting to the clients who wished/were able to communicate, that they knew each other well and were very supportive of each other. They enjoyed coming to the service and a couple mentioned that they would like to be able to come more often as currently they only came once a week.

Clients do initiate additional activities; as one mentioned that when he and others were off to play football, he had suggested that some of those not playing should still come for the walk.

Family / Carers experiences (if available)

We were able to speak with carers during our visit. In discussions they were very supportive and enthusiastic about the service and what it provided for people. They have all used the service for a long time and know the Manager very well. They felt that if anything was going wrong they would be comfortable to raise it directly with the Management. They were welcomed and their presence added to the family atmosphere and the generally relaxed attitude.

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

Some clients bring their carers, who are often family members, with them on occasion. The service has an open door policy where family members can visit any time by making an appointment to ensure there is no conflict with any activities.

The Service does have feedback forms and has run surveys using survey monkey in order to get feedback from the families and carers. They work closely with carers associations and other similar groups. At present they do not have regular parents/carers meetings, but as the service grows, they plan to do so.

Any disruption to service (for example severe weather) the families and clients are contacted via telephone. Letters are sent out via the clients to update and advise on any upcoming events as and when necessary.

The Service does have a clear complaints and feedback procedure that clients and relatives/carers are aware of. So far the service hasn't received any negative feedback; generally things work well. There is an internal disciplinary procedure in place.

Comments

The service provided Healthwatch with copies of appropriate policies and processes and their feedback forms which would result in good information being obtained.

Summary, Comments and Further Observations

Elite CIC went through some changes at the end of 2018. The current manager postponed retirement to continue working with Elite CIC and provide a service for people living in the Newcastle under Lyme area.

Elite CIC provide a good service with staff that are committed to providing a quality service, whether they are salaried or in a volunteer role. They are fulfilling a need which exists in their community and it is much appreciated by both clients and carers. The service has a wonderfully relaxed and comfortable atmosphere which is very like a youth group or an extended family group which is very welcoming of outsiders. There is an excellent range of activities on offer which can be tailored to a wide range of abilities.

The service is currently undergoing development as new people gaining experience to undertake its management. This is an ongoing process and currently the service values the experience and knowledge of the Service Manager. This development is giving the opportunity to look at the whole service and review how it currently operates and how that may be developed.

Comments

We would like to thank all the staff and people using the service for their warm welcome and for sharing their experiences with us.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Action

- The service considers whether they are able to introduce any new activities to provide variety for people using the service and to encourage people to try different types of activities.

Provider Feedback

When asked what they felt worked well about the way our Authorised Representatives carried out the recent Enter and View visit at your premises, they responded:

The visit did work well because both Authorised Representatives blended in really well by being friendly and courteous with both Staff, Volunteers and Clients alike, whilst being Professional in their manner. Their interaction with all clients was well received by them again, promoting "Social Inclusion".

When asked were there any aspects of the Enter and View visit which you felt did not work well or could be improved, they responded:

On a whole no. Although verbal feedback was very helpful and asked relevant questions. Our main concern is mainly on the written Report which was somewhat misleading in some areas but the appropriate corrections have been made following further discussion between Elite CIC and Healthwatch Staffordshire.

Other comments

We pride ourselves in being the “Experts By Experience”, delivering the service which we have always prided ourselves in. We are passionate about what we offer to everyone and we provide “Social Inclusion” for everyone, whether disabled or non-disabled and irrespective of their ability to pay for our services.

Some family members provide transport to and from the Pavilion but they do not stay for the duration of the day as this would not allow them to have time to themselves, as Carers. This is called “Giving the Carer a Break” knowing that their loved ones are being left with excellent care and support, until they return to take them home.

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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