

7th March 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 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: Options for Life

Address: Meadowside Leisure Centre, Meadowside Drive,
Burton On Trent, Staffordshire, DE14 1TL

Service Type: Day Service for Adults with Learning Disabilities

Date of Visit: 7th March 2019

Authorised Representatives

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

Dave Bassett (Authorised Representative)

Ian Wright (Community Outreach Lead and Authorised Representative)

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

The session is held within a room in the Town's Leisure Centre. The Centre is close to the town centre and is clearly signposted, and it also has a large pay and display car park. There are both steps and a ramp to gain access to the building, and the session room is on the ground floor enabling disabled access. There are automatic doors.

The centre uses CCTV outside.

Internal

Access once inside is via the main reception, used by the general public and attendees to Options for Life. There is an indoor café with plenty of seating.

The public areas and the hired room appear to be well maintained, clean and free of clutter.

Toilet facilities are available on the ground floor - men's, ladies and disabled, and these are cleaned and maintained regularly.

When entering the room, we were asked by one of the participants (which is the term used for the attendees) to sign the Visitors Book.

Client Numbers

The maximum number of participants is 14, depending on support needs. Currently 7 participants are attending at this location. Staff to participant ratio varies according to need and could be 1:4, 1:2 or 1:1 if necessary.

Staff Numbers

There is a manager and 3 support staff for this service.

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 has been with the company for 13 years and has very definite views on the type of service that should be offered, both in Burton at the Leisure Centre 3 days per week and the other Options for Life sites at Grange St, Burton (with Burton Albion Community Trust) 2 days per week and Tamworth 5 days per week. The services have developed over time and are based on feedback received from Participants. The Manager will spend time visiting all locations.

The headquarters is in Oldbury, where the company Management team are based and the company run services in several locations in the West Midlands and Staffordshire.

The manager told us that their flexible, user centred, service model can be rolled out anywhere and has been shown to deliver good outcomes for service users, which was helpful as there was a short lead time in setting up the Meadowside offer.

The service offers a Person Centred Learning Plan, which becomes part of a support plan

Comments

The participants all know and engage with the Manager, who exhibits good leadership within the room.

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

Staff appear positive about the service they provide. On the day of the visit, there were 4 staff and 5 participants.

There has only been 1 member of staff leave recently, and that was due to a house move.

There are regular staff meetings, and the Manager speaks to all members of staff on the phone by 9am each day if she is not physically there.

Today's participants attend for between 2 - 5 days each, from between 9-10.00am to 3.30-4.00pm.

Although only 5 attendees today, they could go up to 14 attendees as they have adequate full time, part time and bank staff to call on should the ratios require it.

3 of today's attendees also attend another service as well.

We were informed Participants and staff plan outings in advance - going out for a meal would be planned 6 weeks beforehand. They will look at whether to go by bus or walk, accessibility, noise levels and ensure the service is good, not something just to be tolerated, as it is vital the participants feel part of the Community. Staff will look at dietary requirements.

2 members of staff will accompany, based on required ratios, and the participants then give feedback on whether it was a positive experience or not.

There is a training officer based at the company HQ in Birmingham, who ensures staff training is all up to date and a training matrix is maintained.

Staff can ask for specific training, and training can be adapted for special requirements.

Mandatory training includes:

- Basic training
- Care certificate
- Manual handling including hoist
- Safe Handling of medication
- First aid
- Safeguarding of adults
- Epilepsy awareness
- Positive behaviour

- MAPPA levels units 1-10
- Food hygiene
- Autism awareness
- Food and nutrition awareness
- Infection control
- Health and Safety
- Risk assessment

Fire awareness

Additional training available includes:

- NVQ
- Makaton
- Dysphasia awareness
- Diabetes awareness
- PEG feeding
- Fire marshal training
- Other training may be available to meet the support needs of individual participants

Comments

The various branches of the organisation means there is always adequate staff to call on. As there are 5 participants who are epileptic, staff are trained to assist with medication either by taking and administering or by just reminding as appropriate to the individual.

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

All participants are reviewed regularly by social services. The Tamworth branch is better at seeing family, participants and provider together, where Burton seems to favour having individual meetings which the Manager believes just creates triple the work.

Some participants have day books to communicate with parents, but all have link workers and daily communication when picking up from home - all have log sheets, support plans and risk assessments in place.

Staff are aware of those participants that may have challenging behavior - they try to deal with it quite subtly, just by taking them out of the room and down to the café area. They can however normally spot signs that something may be about to happen, and ensure they deal with it before it escalates.

The staff encourage participants to become a Champion, who will then do things for others. We were met and greeted by a Champion with the Visitors book on arrival.

They are currently setting up regular transition days with a couple of local schools so that potential participants can see what it's like - there is no funding for this but the schools attend with their own staff so it can be managed.

Comments

All aspects of the participants needs are assessed before entry and are regularly updated as changes occur.

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

Types of Activities on offer - on offer but not limited to				
Indoor	Outdoor	Off-site	Visits / trips out	Other activities
Craft	Health walks	Allotment	Conkers	Craft stalls
Sewing	Outdoor gym	Exploring the community	Blackpool	Work experience
Basic Skills Including money, banking, IT	Food shopping	Crazy golf	NEC - This morning live, craft shows, gardening shows	Horse riding or stable management
Singing signing		Swimming	Cinema	Sporting events
Jewellery making		Cycling		
Independent living skills		Indoor Bowls	Sporting events	
Communication - Makaton sessions, PECS, Objects of reference		Bowling	Pubs / cafes	
Healthy eating		Library		
Cooking / cookery		Museums		

Being based in the Leisure Centre, participants can access facilities such as the gym and swimming at no extra cost.

They have a large allotment in Burton and participants can go there 4 days/week. There is funding to install an eco-toilet there. Participants have done all the design work and day to day care of the allotment.

They have access to the RSPCA cats and dogs giving participants chance to develop skills with animals.

Last week they had a trip to the Two Rivers school in Tamworth to talk to 200 staff students and parents.

Whilst we were there, 3 participants went out for lunch with 2 staff. They bring their own lunch money in. The other 2 participants continued doing crafts and had the lunch they had brought in.

They use a bus to attend indoor bowls - they then drop off at various bus stops on the way back where they are met by a family member. All are supported to ensure they get home safely.

They have done coach trips to Blackpool and Conkers, plus other outings - there are additional charges for these.

On the day of our visit it was World Book Day - the other hubs have dressed up accordingly, but the participants here did not want to.

There are a range of activities available in the room - crafts ,singing, games, all stored away when not in use in a storage unit nearby. They also have the use of lockers at the Leisure Centre. One of the participants sang beautifully for us during our visit and was rightly very proud of her achievement.

We were advised that the service provides in house training on health and safety for the allotment and areas of the food hygiene certificate - if they identified anyone who was able and wanted to complete the official food hygiene certificate we could arrange an online course.

We were told about how the service has sourced various work-related programs for their participants including a couple of hours a week for one participant who loves dogs volunteering at a Kennels (they support the participant through the placement due to his support needs).

We learned how the services has taken small group to carry out a 6-week programme at a local stable. Courses covered have included stable management and horse care.

Options for life are very keen to promote the voices of their participants and have nominated participant champions with in each hub. Staffordshire have two champions representing the participants at local events, marketing events, partnership work. Participant champions are encouraged to take the lead in conversations about what matters to them and their peers.

Participants will often run craft sales at local community events, putting their money and social skills into practice. Also selling the items that they and their peers have made.

Comments

There are a wide range of activities on offer, and all activities are planned in advance by the participants depending on what they wish to do. As mentioned previously, they plan 6 weeks in advance to go out for a meal.

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

No meals are provided, participants either bring their own food or dinner money so they can go out and buy it.

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

An assessment of participants needs and preferences is carried out prior to joining. There are currently no special cultural or religious needs.

Personal interactions are closely monitored and friendship is encouraged, as is the opportunity to do things for others in the role of a Champion.

There is no personal care offered by the service, but staff will assist with attending the toilet.

Comments

All the participants we saw were treated very much as individuals.

Client Experiences and Observations

The participants are in a large room with 2 or 3 large tables. There is plenty of room for them to carry out different activities with staff should they so desire.

It tends to be slightly older participants (over 30) in Burton, whereas we were advised that in Tamworth they are generally younger (under 30).

All achievements are shared on the Facebook page, but there are no specific achievement books or diaries.

The overall atmosphere seemed happy and relaxed.

Family / Carers experiences (if available)

No family or Carer's were present at the time of our visit.

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

Participants jointly plan all activities with the Providers, and there appears to be a lot of flexibility.

There is daily contact with Parents - all participants currently live at home, and the providers are keen to use participants to talk to potential participants about the service.

There is a formal complaints procedure which is outlined on the contract given to the families, but they've not received any complaints to date.

We were advised that most participants payments are routed through the Rowan Organisation, a fee-charging organisation providing support to people to manage their Personal Budgets, Direct Payments, Personal Health Budgets. Options for Life has experienced some issues with payments not coming in promptly.

Participants are still charged if they can't attend, but if they give 30 days notice (eg, for a holiday) they are not charged. Charging still takes place during bad weather, unless the Provider cancels.

Comments

The participants and their families appear to be very involved in modelling the care provision on a regular basis.

Additional Information

Options for Life services in Staffordshire currently operate as follows:

Tamworth - DAC activity centre, Deltic, Glascote, Tamworth. Staffs. B77 2DU
(Monday - Friday)

Burton - Burton Albion Community trust, Casey Lane, Burton On Trent, Staffs DE14 2ER
(Monday and Wednesday)

Burton - Meadowside Leisure centre, Meadowside Drive, Burton On Trent, Staffs DE14 1TL
(Tuesday, Thursday and Friday)

Summary, Comments and Further Observations

The service provider and the Manager have a lot of experience in providing Day Care for Adults with Learning Disabilities. It is not a service that is formally regulated by the CQC which can make it difficult to work to a specific framework, but the Manager is proud of the service they offer and was pleased that we had visited as it gave her the opportunity to show what they do.

As all the services provided by Options for Life across Staffordshire are a similar provision with common management we would expect that, like the location we visited for this report, that they all meet the quality standards set out in this report providing a good service to their clients.

Comments

We would like to thank the Manager, Staff and Participants for making us so welcome on the day.

We felt it was a very useful and informative visit.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Action

There are no recommendations for future action.

Provider Feedback

To be filled in by Healthwatch if feedback received

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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