
Birchwood Care Home – CQC Inadequate

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In September the Care Quality Commission completed an inspection of Birchwood Care Home; the outcome was an overall rating of inadequate – see attached report at Appendix B. This report sets out the background to the inspection and the actions agreed to bring the home back to 'good'.
- 1.2 Birchwood is a 60 bed nursing/residential care home specialising in care for people with dementia. The service was commissioned in 2007 with the Council leasing the building from A2Dominion and contracting separately with Care UK for the care.
- 1.3 The contract was for an initial 10 year term with the option to extend for a further 3 years subject to negotiation. Initial plans were to negotiate an extension however, proposed price increases were unaffordable and, given market conditions, we did not anticipate more favourable rates if we re-tendered.
- 1.4 In addition to cost pressures, Care UK had taken the decision to close 10 beds on the ground floor. This reduction in capacity at a time of increasing demand, particularly to support hospital discharge, placed us under significant pressure. This added weight to the proposal to transfer the service in-house as it allowed the opportunity to create 10 step down beds supporting hospital discharge which was welcomed by NHS partners.
- 1.5 A project team were established to support the transfer of the service; this included appropriate representatives e.g. HR. This work started in the New Year with a transfer date of 1st June 2017.

2. What does an 'Inadequate' mean?

- 2.1 The CQC inspection framework incorporates 5 domains: Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-led. Three areas were rated as inadequate: safe, responsive and well-led, two as requires improvement: effective and caring. This means the home received an overall rating of inadequate. The full report is attached at Appendix B but key areas of deficit are detailed below:
 - (1) Safe – insufficient staff, risk assessments were not sufficiently robust to ensure residents were safe, medicines were not effectively managed, ineffective investigation and monitoring completed when incidents were reported.
 - (2) Effective – staff did not receive regular supervisions, it was unclear if nutritional or hydration needs were met due to poor documentation and services were not tailored appropriately to meet the needs of individuals with dementia.
 - (3) Caring – although the service was generally caring and privacy maintained, staff appeared to be task led rather than person centred.

- (4) Responsive – care plans did not reflect the changing needs of residents, not all personal care needs were met, measures were not put in place to manage and respond to people’s needs as and when they arose and complaints were not appropriately managed or recorded.
- (5) Well-led – home management were unapproachable, did not monitor accuracy of care, have appropriate audit processes, ensure CQC were updated about safeguarding concerns or apply the duty of candour (legal duty to inform and apologies to residents and families of mistakes in care delivery).

3. Transfer Issues

3.1 Two key issues emerged after the transfer:

- (1) The Care Quality Commission published the outcome of an inspection completed in May 2017 which rated the home overall as Requiring Improvement with key challenges in 3 of the 5 domains: Safe, Effective and Well-led. Care UK did not share information about the actions they had taken or allow us to get involved at an earlier stage. This meant we had a limited understanding of the existing issues.
- (2) The development of Silver Birch, the new step down unit funded through the Better Care Fund, took a significant amount of staff time and focus. The requirement to have the resource up and running two months after we had taken over did mean there was not as much attention on the core service. The CQC raised this as part of the inspection.

4. Actions taken

4.1 A number of actions have been completed since the inspection:

- (1) We have successfully recruited a permanent management team. The new registered manager will transfer from one of our other homes, rated as Good in all areas. She has significant experience so we are confident she will be able to drive the required improvements in Birchwood. The deputy manager starts in December and the registered manager in January. This will allow sufficient time for hand over from the interim staff. Both staff have significant experience and know what it takes to deliver service improvement.
- (2) A detailed action plan has been developed, we are meeting regularly with both CQC and the Council’s Care Quality Team to discuss progress.
- (3) We are focusing on improving practice, regular supervisions and training. We have revised the training plan to ensure priority is given to key areas.
- (4) An occupational therapist has reviewed all residents who require hoisting, ensuring care plans are appropriate and ordering new equipment where necessary.
- (5) Recruitment continues to be a challenge, we are actively working to reduce the use of agency staff to a more acceptable level.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Prior to the inspection, it was clear to us that there was a serious deficit in staff skills, and issues with procedures that needed to be resolved. The timescale of the CQC inspection was such that the analysis, planning and execution was nowhere near completed in advance of the inspection. However, the result reinforces our conclusions and action plans
- 5.2 We have a strong track record and are used to achieving positive inspection results, our five other regulated services are all rated as Good. This means we understand what it takes to turn a service round. CQC will return in six months to re-inspect, we are confident that the actions we have put in place will mean a return to Good.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1 Rick Jones, ASC Portfolio
- 6.2 Rachael Wardell, Corporate Director - Communities
- 6.3 Sue Brain, Provider Services Manager

Background Papers:

Appendix B: Birchwood CQC Inspection report
Appendix C: Action plan

Strategic Aims and Priorities Supported:

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aim:

P&S – Protect and support those who need it

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priority:

P&S1 – Good at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

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