

The Firs' Response to the CQC report

This document aims to summarise our response to the Care Quality Commission's latest inspection report, following an inspection at the end of August and start of September, and reveal our action plan to improve our service at The Firs. We hope that this better informs residents, families and friends of the service as to how we plan to move forward. We have a new management team in place, who you may have already met, who are transforming the way things are done at The Firs.

We were happy to see that the CQC had recognised positives in the service including how residents felt safe and that the environment was clean and safe. It also mentioned how staff felt well supported by new management and how our recruitment process was safe. We also had positive comments about the kindness of the staff with quotes such as: "They're kind indeed", and "They're kind and gentle". A relative told them, "Staff are very caring. No complaints about Mum's care".

The report also mentioned that: 'People were encouraged to live healthy lifestyles, and to make informed choices about their nutrition and ongoing wellbeing' and 'There was a relaxed atmosphere, and people approached staff with ease.'

However some issues were identified which needed to be addressed. Below we have detailed the actions we have taken to resolve these issues.

Actions needed:

Risk Assessments:

CQC identified that we did not have all necessary risk assessments in place. Risk assessments are forms which identify risks to residents and how we can mitigate them. The relevant risk assessments have now been completed and added to care plans.

Staffing vacancies:

We are now fully staffed and will recruit further if the needs or numbers of our residents change. New staff now receive a proper induction to the service to ensure they are aware of all residents' needs. As a team we will make sure that our standards are sustained by the recruitment of bank staff to allow enough staff to cover for sickness and annual leave.

Staff morale is currently very high with several long-standing members of staff having been awarded a certificate of appreciation for their long service and dedication.

Dining experience & quality of the meals need improvement:

We have employed a new kitchen manager, Jo, who has completely redesigned the menus and injected passion into the kitchen. She is also looking at local suppliers we can use who provide better quality ingredients. We have invested into a full kitchen refit with new appliances to help support the improvements.

In terms of monitoring weight loss, we have enlisted the help of a Dietician and had input and training Speech & Language Therapists. We have also updated all Nutrition & Hydration Care plans to better reflect the needs of each resident, as well as the MUST scoring tool, which helps identify weight issues. We have a new folder set up in the kitchen which hold residents' preferences so that all kitchen staff are aware of these.

We have organised training called 'Dining with Dignity' to improve the dining experience for the residents and help staff understand how best to assist residents with their meals. We have also recently undertaken refresher Dementia training to further improve the staff's understanding.

We have ensured that there are always at least 2 hot choices for every meal and we now have pictorial menu boards displayed, to make it easier for some residents to recognise the meals.

Every afternoon we have a 'nutrition and hydration boost' which has been very successful so far and as well as improving nutrition and hydration, it is improving skin integrity and weight control. Fresh fruit is offered daily.

All SALT (speech & language therapist) assessments are now completed and residents who are at risk of choking have care plans in place for this. As well as this all staff are now trained on how to react in the event of a choking incident.

Care plans:

We were in the process of transferring the care plans to our new electronic system when we had the inspection which meant that information was not all in the same place. We have now completed the transfer which makes it easier for staff and agency staff to find information about each resident. As we have transferred the care plans, they have been improved to become more person-centred and they have been discussed with residents or their families to gain their input. Oral Health Care plans have also been improved.

DoLS:

Deprivation of Liberty (DOLs) applications are now all in place with a DOLS care plan in place so all our residents are less restricted and supported to continue to go out in a safe manner.

Layout of lounge:

The report commented that the lounge layout was not dignified due to the position of the furniture. These were immediately moved to offer more privacy to those who need extra support.

Inductions & Training:

Since the inspection, we have had training in a vast range of topics, including 'end of life' care which was mentioned in the inspection as well as another round of training on our new electronic care planning system.

Staff inductions are being completed for new recruits and have been completed retrospectively for those who did not have a proper one when they joined. The manager is currently working through the formal induction process with the Area Manager.

Supervisions are now all up to date for all staff and will continue to be held on a 2 month rotation.

All residents have been allocated a key worker to support them and ensure their paperwork is constantly reviewed. We are also implementing Champions in different areas, for example Nutrition, whose job will be to ensure that we are meeting our targets and moving forward in these areas. Champion roles will improve personal development and empower staff members as they will be focussing on an area which they are passionate about. We already have in place the Quality Assurance and Care Plan Champion and we will be allocating a Champion role to all staff members to ensure all areas are covered and our residents' needs are met.

Medication:

All Team Leaders are now medication trained and completing documentation correctly.

Team leaders are now signed up to complete the 4/5 Health and Social care awards.

Improvement of Activities:

The activities timetable is being changed to ensure we are providing a range of activities for all residents, taking into account their ability to interact as well as their individual hobbies and interests. It is being compiled with input from residents and displayed where it is easily viewable. Feedback forms are going to be made available after activities so we can ensure we are offering activities of interest. We are also now having a weekly outing using a minibus for anyone interested in going, including trips to local attractions. Wellbeing care plans are being implemented and new person-centred memory boxes are being introduced with the help of families who are involved by bringing in sentimental items to put in the boxes.

A new Wellbeing & Activities Coordinator is being recruited to enable us to extend the hours that activities are held and hold an increased variety of activities and outings. Staff now have quality time to also assist with activities, these can be followed on our Facebook page.

Complaints & Concerns:

There is a new complaints log in place and the manager has an open door policy.

The compliments log is also now in place and we have already received great feedback from family, friends and outside professionals.

Audits & Governance:

The Firs has been working with the Devon Quality Assurance Team to help implement a new set of governance tools and design new monitoring tools so that quality can be monitored more closely by the provider.

We have also employed a new Area Manager for Devon who will be offering support to the manager as well as completing regular audits and quality checks. The new Area Manager will be present at The Firs 1 - 2 days per week.

Meetings:

We have recognised that we have not been involving residents and relatives in the development of the service as much as we could have been. Therefore we are introducing regular resident and family meetings to canvas opinions and ideas for the future, one of which has already taken place. In addition to this, we will also be sending out an annual survey to residents and their families.

The home will also hold regular Staff and Head of Department meetings and issues raised will be actioned and learnt from.

Thank you all for your support during this time.