



Inspection Report on

Oak

**Alexander House
Highfield Park
Denbigh
LL16 4LU**

Date Inspection Completed

18/06/2024

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About Oak

Type of care provided	Care Home Service Adults Without Nursing
Registered Provider	Mental Health Care (Highfield Park) Limited
Registered places	8
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	09 December 2021
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service anticipates, identifies, and meets the Welsh language and cultural needs of people who use, or may use the service.

Summary

People's quality of life has been enriched living at Oak. There is significant emphasis on creating an environment which fully supports communication, choice making and independence ensuring everyone's needs are met. People have new and enjoyable experiences and achieve their goals which are always celebrated. They form new meaningful friendships and strengthen their relationships with their own families.

There is exceptional leadership and management. Staff are highly skilled, motivated and have many opportunities to progress further in their roles. Staff comments include *"I really love it here, such a rewarding job, nice job to be in"* and relatives told us *"Every worker is really great"*. A positive culture is promoted with the company values imbedded into the service and events held which bring everyone together.

Oversight of the service is extremely robust. The responsible individual (RI) and manager are fully committed to ensuring people receive the best possible care and support which exceeds expectations. Staff told us *"Residents in Oak certainly get the best of care and support"* and *"The quality of care is top notch"*. Management meetings and focus groups are highly effective in sharing good practice, lessons learnt and support the need for changes. Staff told us there is *"Great management, always striving for better, constant development and improvement"*.

Well-being

People have strong control over their day-to-day life. Staff are fully focused on ensuring people are able to effectively communicate with extensive visual information made available both inside and outside the home. People are supported by their preferred staff members who they feel most comfortable with. Approaches and praise are used by staff to actively encourage people to engage, building their confidence and skills. The manager and staff told us people's ability to communicate their needs and make their own choices has increased considerably.

People's physical, mental health and emotional wellbeing needs are superbly met and support offered by staff is of a high standard. Extensive health checks and medication reviews are completed, with hospital passports ready in case of admission. Staff have access to comprehensive explanations regarding people's health conditions, how this affects them and how best to support them. People lead healthier lifestyles and staff told us the cook is *"very person-centred"* providing different menus daily for every person living at Oak. People actively request which staff they want to be supported by. A bilingual activity board has an extensive range of activities on offer which are readily available, with no waiting time. The manager told us they really focus on having *"The best staff"* and *"The best activities"* available to people. Their achievements are celebrated including trying things for the first time, for example visiting Blackpool, holidays and rides on a boat or train. Professionals told us *"The activities they provide are incredible and my young person enjoys them all"*. People are spending more time with those they live with and are socialising and forming new friendships with others at social clubs and on activities. They are also supported to maintain, strengthen, and extend their family relationships forming stronger bonds with them.

People are well protected from harm. Staff receive a wide range of training and risk assessments and approaches are used to ensure people's safety. Information about raising concerns and providing feedback regarding the service is easily accessible to all. The manager spoke in-depth about how gathering information has resulted in positive changes made to people's care and support and a reduction in incidents.

People live in a highly creative environment taking in to account their different sensory needs. Staff comments include *"Extremely neat environment"*. Professionals told us *"The home itself is a very calm environment and full of visual, useful information"*.

Care and Support

People have extremely detailed and up to date personal plans. Plans contain lots of person-centred information to ensure staff understand and consistently offer continuity of care and support. People, families, professionals and staff are involved in creating personal plans and attend reviews to help make changes. Relatives told us the manager informs them at the beginning of the week how the person has been and what they have been doing. Professional comments include *“Communication with the team is fast and efficient and I get weekly updates”*. They also told us *“All my young person’s plans are regularly updated and the placement meets all his needs and more”*.

High-quality care is provided through a service which actively listens to and supports people. Visual aids used throughout the service, encourage people to make their needs known over all aspects of their lives. The active offer of Welsh is promoted with bilingual signs, documentation, resources available and there are some Welsh speaking staff. Relative’s comments include *“The new registered manager and his deputy have shown us they have an excellent understanding of our son, we receive a weekly update and they will always consider our feelings and wishes”*. Care staff comments include *“This care home offers quality care and active support”* to every person, *“It also encourages independence”*.

People’s personal wishes are respected, accommodated and positive risk taking is encouraged. A very specific approach is used for setting, monitoring, and reviewing people’s short, long term and individual goals which are being achieved and celebrated. People have new experiences with positive risk taking encouraged by staff who are innovative, carry out research in advance and carefully plan and support people to have the best time. Examples include people going on public transport and expanding these journeys to travelling further afield, taking driving lessons and enrolling at college. A monthly newsletter provides five ‘good news stories’ about people living at Oak. Past events include using the woodland area for a barbeque, with music, food and sheep therapy provided. Families are also invited to events and made to feel welcome, spending quality time with their loved ones and making memories. Some people are now ready to move on to more independent services due to the progress they have made since living in Oak. A professional told us *“It’s one of the best adult placements I’ve been too”*.

The service promotes hygienic practices and manages risk of infection. Infection control audits are completed, and staff have training and policies to follow. Staff have access to personal protective equipment.

Environment

People live in a home which is designed and adapted to effectively meet their individual, complex and sensory needs. Oak provides an autism friendly environment based on research. This includes specific colour schemes used in different areas of the home with attention paid to reducing noise levels. Throughout the home there are visual supports for example labels, pictures, sequences and bilingual signs to aid communication, understanding, orientation and independence. The service is being assessed for autism accreditation and the manager is taking on board advice from the assessor to make any further improvements. The manager told us the new speech and language therapist has been a massive help and is working closely with them, sharing ideas about signage and what works best for people. Some people have been on a recent trip to one of the largest multi-sensory centres in the country providing a relaxing space for them to explore and enjoy. The manager told us people want to visit again and they will be recreating in their own home, some of the sensory equipment they show the most interest in.

Careful consideration has been given to the best use of outdoor space which is exceptional. The large garden provides different sections accompanied by communication boards for water, music and sensory play areas which are bright, interesting and provide people with sensory stimulation. There is also an arbour providing people with a quiet space to rest or relax in. There is a goalpost for people who like playing football as well as a swimming pool. A smaller secret garden can also be accessed with a swing seat, lots of colourful plants and a living plant wall with a communication board about how to look after them. The manager and staff are complimentary about a member of domestic staff who is *“Amazing”* and offered to help create both sensory garden areas working alongside the maintenance team. The manager and staff told us how popular the garden areas are with people spending more time there and playing football with the staff. Staff commented they have *“Put their heart and soul into the garden, sensory and other areas and there is something there for everyone”*.

The service provider identifies and mitigates risks to health and safety. Audits are carried out including health and safety to identify any issues. Fire checks are completed and personal emergency evacuation plans are in place to support people to leave the home if needed. Staff receive training in many areas and there are policies and procedures to follow to keep themselves and others safe.

Leadership and Management

People are supported by highly motivated, skilled and dedicated staff. Recruitment checks are made and staff register with Social Care Wales, the workforce regulator. Staff complete in-depth inductions and attend a wide variety of training to effectively understand and meet people's needs. Professionals commented *"All the staff I have come across are very friendly and informative but more importantly really know the young people"*. Rota meetings are held twice a week, with bimonthly supervisions and monthly team meetings to raise and discuss any issues. All staff responded *"Excellent"* when asked about feeling valued, supported and having opportunities to learn and develop. A staff member commented on a training session being the best they had ever been on for communication. The manager leads on a staff liaison focus group and told us about all the positive changes made so far from responding to staff feedback.

Governance arrangements are robust, ensuring care and support is provided to a high standard. The RI visits Oak every three months and an in-depth quality-of-care review is produced six monthly looking at ways to continually move the service forward. Monthly management meetings and different focus groups are exemplary in bringing managers together to share important information, best practice and lessons learnt to make changes. The manager is dedicated, enthusiastic, passionate and has worked hard to implement positive changes at Oak. Staff comments include *"Oak house can boast of the best management"*, *"Manager is a genius, is getting things done in the best way"*, *"Manager and deputy fantastic"*, *"Absolutely brilliant"* and *"Excellent, seen significant change"*. Relatives told us *"The home has significantly improved since the new manager took over"*.

A positive culture is promoted with creativity and innovation. Staff comments about the service include *"Brilliant, really good, got a good vibe, positive culture and no negativity"*. They also said, *"Everyone wants to learn and come to work"* and the service is *"More positive, very different place to be for the best"*. People's different nationalities are being celebrated with four themed days held so far. There are photo collages on display showing everyone getting involved in making things. They also try new foods and gain a better understanding of other cultures as well as building positive relationships between people and the staff team. This has also been extended to staff members with some of their more traditional foods requested and added to the menus and this food is also enjoyed all together. Staff comments about the service include *"Promotion of equality and diversity"* and a *"Safe work environment"*.

Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A
34	Staffing	Achieved
36	Staff training including specialist training as appropriate	Achieved
44	Environment and external grounds	Achieved

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