

# Oakleaf Care Limited

# Clifton Lawns

## Inspection report

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Date of inspection visit:  
07 November 2016

Date of publication:  
13 December 2016

## Ratings

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Overall rating for this service | Good ● |
| Is the service safe?            | Good ● |
| Is the service effective?       | Good ● |
| Is the service caring?          | Good ● |
| Is the service responsive?      | Good ● |
| Is the service well-led?        | Good ● |

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 November 2016. The service was last inspected in July 2014 when we found it was meeting all the required regulations.

Clifton Lawns is registered to provide accommodation for up to 18 men who require support with nursing or personal care. The service specialises in providing a rehabilitation service for people with enduring mental health conditions. People who use the service have their own en suite bedrooms and access to the communal areas. At the time of this inspection there were 16 people using the service.

There was a registered manager in place at Clifton Lawns. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run. The registered manager was present during the inspection. They were supported in the day to day running of the service by a deputy manager.

People who used the service told us staff were supportive and helpful in enabling them to achieve their goals. The service used creative means of engaging with people including art therapy, Reiki and Thai Chi; these helped people to develop strategies to manage their mental health conditions.

Staff had received training in safeguarding adults. They were able to tell us of the action they would take to protect people who used the service from the risk of abuse. They told us they would also be confident to use the whistleblowing procedure in the service to report any poor practice they might observe. They told us they were certain any concerns would be taken seriously by the registered manager.

Systems were in place to ensure staff were safely recruited. Staff demonstrated a commitment to providing high quality personalised care for the individuals who accessed the service.

Robust systems were in place to ensure the safe handling of medicines. People were supported to take responsibility for their own medicines whenever possible.

Regular checks took place to ensure the safety and cleanliness of the environment. People who used the service were responsible for cleaning their own bedrooms, with support from staff as necessary. Systems were also in place to reduce the risk of cross infection in the service.

Staff told us they received the training and supervision they needed to be able to carry out their roles effectively. Staff were able to demonstrate a good understanding of the legal frameworks under which individual's placements at Clifton Lawns were arranged. The registered manager had also taken appropriate action to apply for restrictions in place in a person's best interests to be legally authorised.

Staff we spoke with told us they enjoyed working in the service and felt valued by both colleagues and the registered manager. Staff felt able to raise any issues of concern or make suggestions to improve the service in supervision and staff meetings. We saw evidence that the registered manager listened to and acted upon the views of staff in order to drive forward improvements in the service.

Care records we reviewed included information about the risks people might experience. Care plans were in place to help ensure staff provided the level of support necessary to manage the identified risks. Care plans were regularly reviewed to address any changes in a person's needs. People who used the service told us staff provided the right level of support to meet their needs.

People who used the service were able to access meals from the central kitchen or prepare their own meals with staff support as necessary. Staff told us they would try and encourage people to choose healthy ingredients and cooking methods.

People who used the service had opportunities to comment on the support they received. We saw that their views had been taken seriously and acted upon in order to improve their experience in the service.

Quality assurance systems were in place including regular audits and checks completed by the registered manager and an external management consultant employed by the provider. We found that the managers and staff demonstrated a commitment to continuing to drive forward improvements in the service.

We received positive feedback from community based professionals regarding the quality of care provided in the service.

## The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

### Is the service safe?

Good ●

The service was safe.

People told us they had no concerns about their safety in Clifton Lawns. People were cared for in a safe and clean environment.

Staff had received training in safeguarding adults. There were systems in place to help ensure staff were supported to report any abuse they witnessed or suspected.

Staff had been safely recruited and there were enough staff to meet people's needs.

Systems were in place to help ensure the safe administration of medicines, including where people who used the service took responsibility for their own medicines.

### Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

A number of creative and alternative therapies supported people to manage their mental health conditions.

Staff received the induction, training and supervision they required to be able to provide safe and effective care.

Staff had a good understanding of the MCA, DoLS and the MHA. The registered manager had taken appropriate action to apply for restrictions in place in a person's best interests to be legally authorised.

People told us the quality of food served in Clifton Lawns was good. People also received support to plan and cook healthy meals. People were supported to maintain good physical and mental health through regular monitoring in the service and attendance at external appointments.

### Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

People who used the service told us staff were supportive and helpful.

Staff demonstrated a commitment to providing high quality support and care. People told us staff would always support them to develop their independent living skills and to achieve their rehabilitation goals.

### **Is the service responsive?**

The service was responsive.

Arrangements were in place to help ensure people received individualised care to meet their diverse needs.

People who used the service were involved in reviewing the support they received in Clifton Lawns. This helped to ensure the service was responsive to people's changing needs.

People were encouraged to provide feedback on the service they received. Any complaints or suggestions were acted upon to help improve people's experience of the service.

**Good** ●

### **Is the service well-led?**

The service was well-led.

The service had a manager who was registered with the Care Quality Commission and was qualified to undertake the role. They demonstrated a commitment to ensuring people's experience of the service was positive.

Staff told us they enjoyed working in Clifton Lawns and felt well supported both by their colleagues and the managers in the service

Quality assurance systems in place were used to drive forward improvements in the service.

**Good** ●

# Clifton Lawns

## Detailed findings

### Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

This inspection took place on 7 November 2016 and was unannounced. The inspection team consisted of one adult social care inspector.

Before our inspection we reviewed the information we held about the service including notifications the provider had sent to us; a notification is information about important events, which the provider is required to send us by law. We contacted the local authority safeguarding team, the local Healthwatch organisation, the local authority quality assurance team and a number of community based professionals to obtain their views about the service.

During the inspection we spoke with four people who used the service. We also spoke with the registered manager, the deputy manager, a registered mental health nurse, a support worker, the chef and a visiting community based professional.

We carried out observations in the public areas of the service and looked at the care and medication records for three people who used the service. In addition we looked at a range of records relating to how the service was managed; these included five staff personnel files, training records, quality assurance systems and policies and procedures.

## Is the service safe?

### Our findings

Not all the people we spoke with were happy living at Clifton Lawns as they did not necessarily recognise that they needed the care and support provided at the service; because of this they were subject to restrictions under the Mental Health Act 1983. However everyone we spoke with who used the service told us they felt safe at Clifton Lawns and had no concerns about their treatment by staff. Comments people made to us included, "I feel safe and don't suffer any anxiety here" and "I feel safe; there is no reason not to."

Staff also commented that they felt safe working at Clifton Lawns due to the support they received from their colleagues and senior managers. One staff member told us, "I feel safer here than other places I have worked. That's because we have staff you can trust and rely on." All the staff we spoke with told us they would have no hesitation in reporting any poor practice they witnessed from colleagues and were confident they would be listened to. They were aware of the organisations they could contact, including CQC, if they felt the registered manager or provider had not taken their concerns seriously.

Staff we spoke with told us they had received training in safeguarding adults; records we reviewed confirmed this to be the case. Staff were able to tell us the correct procedure to follow if they witnessed or suspected abuse. We saw that safeguarding was included as an agenda item in team meetings and supervision sessions; this served as a reminder to staff about their responsibilities to report any concerns they had. We saw that the minutes from one team meeting included positive feedback for a staff member who had taken appropriate action to deal with concerns which had come to their attention. Information was also on display in the service about how people who used the service could keep themselves safe and report any abuse they might experience.

We checked to see that staff had been safely recruited. We reviewed five staff personnel files and saw that each file contained an application form with included a full employment history, at least two professional references and confirmation of the person's identity. Checks had also been carried out with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for all applicants. The DBS identifies people who are barred from working with children and vulnerable adults and informs the service provider of any criminal convictions noted against the applicant. These checks help to prevent unsuitable people from working with people who use care and support services.

We saw there were procedures in place to confirm that that all nursing staff maintained an up to date registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). This should help ensure people received care and treatment from nursing staff who met national standards and code of conduct.

People who used the service told us there were always enough staff on duty to provide the support they needed. Staff we spoke with told us extra staffing was always arranged if people required support to attend appointments or particular activities. On the day of the inspection we saw that additional staff were on shift to enable a nurse and support worker to leave the premises in order to undertake an assessment of a person's suitability for Clifton Lawns. The registered manager told us that cover for sickness and leave was usually provided by permanent staff completing extra hours. They advised us that if agency staff were

required, every effort was made to ensure staff were used who had worked previous shifts in the service; this helped to ensure consistency and continuity of care for people. Our examination of the staff rotas confirmed staffing levels were provided at consistent levels.

We reviewed the systems in place for the safe handling of medicines. Only trained nurses were responsible for administering medicines. We saw that they had received training for this role and annual checks had also been undertaken of their competence to administer medicines in line with the policies and procedures in place.

We saw that, wherever possible, people who used the service were supported to take responsibility for their own medicines using a staged approach. The registered manager told us they had also recently begun to support people, where necessary, to collect their prescribed medicines from the local hospital in order to promote their independence in carrying out this task.

We looked at the medication administration record (MAR) charts for three people. We saw that these records were fully completed to show that people had been given their medicines as prescribed. We checked the stock of medicines held for three people and found these to correspond accurately with the records held.

We saw that some people were prescribed medicines to be taken on an 'as required' basis. Although the MAR charts had been annotated to indicate for what reasons these medicines were prescribed, there were no protocols in place to provide guidance for staff about in what circumstances each medicine should be given. The registered manager assured us these protocols would be put in place immediately following the inspection. All of the people we spoke with told us they always received the medicines they required.

Care records we reviewed contained information about the risks people might experience including those relating to deterioration in their mental or physical health, compliance with medication and the misuse of alcohol or substances. Detailed risk management plans were in place to guide staff on the action to take to mitigate the identified risks. Risk assessments were also in place for activities people were supported to undertake including dog walking and dog walking.

Records we looked at showed us risk management policies and procedures were in place; these were designed to protect people who used the service and staff from risks including those associated with cross infection, the handling of medicines and the use of equipment. Records we looked at showed us all equipment used in the service was maintained and regularly serviced to help ensure the safety of people in Clifton Lawns.

People who used the service were supported, where necessary, to maintain the cleanliness of their bedroom area; domestic staff also completed a monthly deep clean of each bedroom. We saw that all communal areas were clean and well maintained. Systems were also in place to reduce the risk of cross infection in the service; this included the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary and regular checks regarding the cleanliness of the environment. The registered manager told us there was an ongoing programme of refurbishment in place to help ensure the environment was maintained to the highest standards.

Inspection of records showed that a fire risk assessment was in place and regular checks had been carried out to confirm that the fire alarm, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers were in good working order and the fire exits were kept clear.

Records were kept of the support people who lived at Clifton Lawns would need to evacuate the building

safely in the event of an emergency. We also noted a business continuity plan was in place to provide information for staff about the action they should take in the event of an emergency such as a failure of the gas or electricity supply to the premises.

A community based professional we contacted prior to the inspection to ask their opinion of the service told us, "The living environment is of a good standard and a lot of improvements have been made to the building to achieve this. I also always notice that the premises are kept very clean .There are always quite a few staff around and the staff group seems to have been fairly consistent for some time which I feel helps to promote stability for the service users in working towards their recovery." Another professional commented, "I am aware that a significant amount of work has been undertaken to ensure that the environment is safe for people. A variety of risk assessments are completed individually and I know that the person I support is always escorted off the grounds and in the community."

## Is the service effective?

### Our findings

People who used the service told us staff had the right experience and skills to be able to support them effectively. One person commented, "No place is perfect but here is very good. Staff know me well and what I like." Another person told us, "Staff are helping me get where I want to be."

We saw that the service used the 'Recovery Star' to engage people in discussions about their support needs; this is a nationally recognised tool which supports people who use services to work collaboratively with staff to identify what is important to them and the goals they wish to achieve.

We saw that the service had responded to people's needs by arranging for an external professional to plan and lead therapeutic groups in the service. These included a group to help people with issues of identify and self-esteem as well as one focused on sensible drinking. We saw that a report was provided in relation to each person who attended the group in order to direct staff in relation to individual's ongoing support needs. We saw that a number of creative and alternative therapies were also offered in Clifton Lawns. These included Thai Chi, Reiki and art therapy. We noted that artwork produced by people was on display in the communal areas of the service. The therapies available to people helped them to develop their skills and confidence in managing their mental health needs.

Comments we received from community based professionals prior to the inspection when we asked their opinion of the service included, "When dealing with Clifton Lawns I have found the staff to be both effective and considerate of the needs of my patient. They are sensitive and work within the patients best interests. He is provided with a named nurse and a wide selection of care plans in relation to all of his treatment at Clifton Lawns. They communicate with myself should there be any issues in relation to my patient, his mental or physical health needs and have provided information when I have requested this" and "I have seldom encountered as an effective or professional facility."

We looked at what consideration the provider gave to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA). The MCA provides a legal framework for making particular decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that, as far as possible, people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.

People can only be deprived of their liberty so that they can receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA. The application procedures for this in care homes and hospitals are called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA and whether any conditions on authorisations to deprive a person of their liberty were being met.

The registered manager and staff we spoke with had received training in and demonstrated a good understanding of MCA and DoLS. We saw from one person's record that staff had recognised the level of support a person required to access the community was potentially a deprivation of their liberty as they did

not always have the capacity to consent to these arrangements. An application had been made to the relevant local authority in December 2015 to request the restrictions be legally authorised under DoLS but an assessment had still not taken place. The registered manager told us they regularly contacted the local authority to check on the status of the application and had been told it remained on a waiting list. They told us that, while they were waiting for the application to be assessed they continued to assess the person's capacity and ensured they were providing care in the least restrictive manner possible. When they spoke about the person concerned one staff member told us, "[Name of person] lacks capacity for some things but he is able to express his own views and wishes in relation to certain decisions; we don't act on his behalf we try to make him part of every decision." This demonstrated a commitment to protecting and upholding people's rights.

Several of the people who lived at Clifton Lawns were required to do so under restrictions placed on them by the Mental Health Act (MHA) 1983. Staff were able to tell us about the MHA status of the people they supported and any conditions placed on them due to a statutory order. Records we reviewed showed that where necessary staff supported people to access independent advocacy services and to exercise their right to challenge their detention under the MHA in accordance with statutory timescales. Records we reviewed showed restrictions on people's freedom were minimised as much as possible in order to support people to access community resources and to maintain contact with family and friends. A community based professional we spoke with during the inspection told us, "Staff have a good understanding of the legal framework under which [name of person using the service] is placed here; he is free to come and go."

We saw that the staff team was very stable and few new staff had been appointed since our last inspection. We spoke with one member of staff who had changed role from support worker to qualified registered nurse after completing their training while working at Clifton Lawns. They told us they had completed a comprehensive induction into their nursing role and had been supported to gain experience of working both nights and days before they were asked to work independently as the nurse on shift. They told us that the support they had received from the registered manager and other staff had been excellent and that this continued throughout their employment in the service. They also commented, "I get both professional and informal supervision from [registered manager]. I have always felt supported and know that I can ask anyone for advice or guidance."

We looked to see how staff were supported to develop their knowledge and skills. Records we reviewed showed that staff employed in the service had received training to help ensure they were able to provide people with effective care and support. This training included areas such as equality and diversity, MCA and DoLS, mental health awareness, communication, infection control, safeguarding adults, first aid and food hygiene. We were told that following the completion of a training course staff had to complete a knowledge workbook and test; this helped to ensure staff had fully understood the content of the training. The registered manager told us that in addition to this mandatory training nursing staff were also able to access courses provided at the local university which covered topics such as working with people with a personality disorder, motivational interviewing and suicide and self-injury. This helped to ensure trained staff remained up to date with best practice guidance. In order to support succession planning within the service we noted that two nurses had also completed a level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

Records we reviewed confirmed staff received regular supervision and appraisal. We saw that staff received feedback on their performance and were supported to consider their training and development needs on an on-going basis.

People who used the service told us the meals provided at Clifton Lawns were of good quality. We spoke

with the chef who had been recently appointed. They told us they had gathered the views of people who lived at Clifton Lawns regarding the meals they liked. They told us they were aware of people's cultural requirements in relation to food and halal meat was purchased to ensure these could be met.

We found the kitchen was clean and well organised. We saw the chef had received training in food preparation and food hygiene. Checks were carried out to ensure food was stored and prepared at the correct temperatures. We saw that there were plentiful supplies of fresh produce as well as tinned and dried goods. The service had received a 5 rating from the national food hygiene rating scheme in April 2016 which meant they followed safe food storage and preparation practices. They had also received a 'Recipe 4 Health' Gold Award from the local authority in recognition of the healthy option meals provided at Clifton Lawns.

We saw that, as part of their rehabilitation programme, people who used the service were encouraged to maintain or develop their independent living skills by taking part in 'shop and cook' sessions. The registered manager told us people were given a budget for these sessions and were expected to purchase fresh ingredients for their meals. This should help promote healthy eating for people who used the service.

From the records we looked at we saw people in Clifton Lawns were supported to access health care services in relation to their mental and physical health needs. This included attendance at the well man clinic at the local health centre as well as appointments with dentists, opticians and GPs. Where necessary physical health care plans were in place to identify people's needs and included the action staff should take to support people to meet these needs. Nurses in the service completed monthly health checks with people. Staff we spoke with told us they encouraged people to take part in physical activities including swimming, cycling and dog walking. This showed people were supported to maintain good physical and mental health.

## Is the service caring?

### Our findings

People we spoke with who used the service told us staff were supportive and helped them to achieve their goals. Comments people made included, "Staff will try and help me to find accommodation" and "Staff are good and helpful." We also received positive feedback about staff from the community based professionals we contacted prior to the inspection.

We looked at the results of the professional visitor's survey distributed by the provider in March 2016. Although only three responses had been received these all provided positive feedback about the caring nature of the service. Comments professionals had made included, "Excellent standard of care provided at Clifton Lawns", "All staff are welcoming and professional" and "The care provided is of an excellent quality."

During the inspection we observed warm and friendly interactions between staff and people who used the service. We saw that staff encouraged people to decide what activities they were going to take part in during the day. We also saw staff knock to gain entry to people's bedrooms in order to respect their dignity and privacy.

We saw that the service supported people to be involved in making decisions about the care and support they required. One person who had only recently moved into the service told us they had already had meetings to discuss their care plan and the goals they wished to achieve during their time at Clifton Lawns. We saw people had signed care plans to indicate their agreement with the level of support which they were to receive. People were encouraged to retain a copy of their care plan for their own reference and staff had documented when this had been refused. We saw that all care records were held securely. This should help ensure the confidentiality of people's personal information.

We saw people had individual bedrooms with en suite facilities. This meant they were able to have the privacy they needed in the home. Facilities were also provided for relatives and community based professionals to see people who used the service in private.

All the staff we spoke with demonstrated a commitment to providing high quality support and care in order to help people who used the service meet their rehabilitation goals. One staff member told us, "I like working with people on the rehabilitation pathway. I like to see progress and people move on." People who used the service confirmed that staff would always support and encourage them to do as much as they could for themselves. One person who had recently moved into Clifton Lawns told us, "I do my own cooking. I am pretty much self-sufficient."

The registered manager told us there was a stable staff team at Clifton Lawns. This meant people who used the service had the opportunity to develop consistent relationships with the staff who supported them.

People who were admitted to the service were given a service user guide which contained information about the support they could expect to receive during their stay at Clifton Lawns including how they could get their views heard and acted upon. The registered manager told us people were supported to access

independent advocacy services if they needed help in ensuring their health and social care needs were met. We saw that information regarding advocacy services was on display on notice boards throughout the service.

## Is the service responsive?

### Our findings

We saw that a detailed assessment was completed before people were accepted to the service. The registered manager told us an important part of this assessment was to make sure that people understood the philosophy of the service and the need for them to actively engage in a rehabilitation programme. We saw that each assessment included a recommendation about whether the service provided at Clifton Lawns was appropriate for the individual's needs and the support the person would require to ensure a smooth transition to the service. The nurse we spoke with told us they were regularly involved in completing assessments and that they had no hesitation in refusing to accept a referral if they felt the service was not appropriate for the person's current needs. They told us they were always supported in their decisions by the registered manager and the Board of Directors; this showed that the service was committed to ensuring they were able to respond appropriately to people's needs

We looked at the care records for three people who used the service. We noted these contained detailed information regarding people's health and social care needs. We saw that there was a system in place to ensure people who used the service were involved in reviewing and amending their support plans as their needs changed. People we spoke with confirmed they had been involved in regular review meetings both with staff from Clifton Lawns and with other professionals involved in their care. A staff member told us, "I always ask people where they want to be and discuss the steps they need to take to get there."

We were told that each person in Clifton Lawns was allocated a keyworker who offered them regular 1-1 sessions to discuss the support they were receiving and any changes they wished to make to their support plan. When we looked at people's care records we saw evidence of these 1-1 sessions. We saw one person had commented to their keyworker, "I don't have any issues. I am happy with everything at Clifton Lawns and with everything I am doing."

People who used the service were supported to undertake activities both within Clifton Lawns and in the local community; these activities included dog walking at a local dog rescue centre, involvement in a locally organised cycling group, using local leisure facilities, computer games and pool. We saw that each person had an agreed plan for each day which included support from staff as required to undertake cooking, laundry and other activities of daily living. We saw that the level of support people needed was regularly reviewed and reduced as appropriate in order to avoid creating dependence on staff. All the people we spoke with who used the service told us they had access to enough activities to promote their health and well-being.

A community based professional we contacted prior to the inspection commented, "They provide consistently high quality progress reports on the work they undertake with the clients. They care for and understand client need well and are meticulous in protecting the client's interests. The service is always able to demonstrate that they are actively attempting to involve the client in activities and promote their recovery."

The registered manager told us they had arrangements in place to ensure people's religious and cultural

needs could be met. They told us a prayer room was available to be used by both people who used the service and staff.

We saw there were a number of opportunities available for people to provide feedback about the care and support they received in Clifton Lawns. Regular community meetings were held where people were able to make suggestions about any changes they wished to see to the activities or support provided. We saw that a 'You Said, We Did' poster was on display on the noticeboard for people who used the service. This showed that managers and staff had listened to the views of people who used the service and taken action to address any requests or comments made, including arranging additional activities to local tourist attractions. We noted that feedback had also been given to people when it had not been possible to action their requests, with explanations given for this. A staff member we spoke with told us, "We always ask people to tell us if they don't like something and we will do something different."

We saw that the provider had distributed a satisfaction survey to people who used the service in March and April 2016. We saw fourteen responses had been received and most people rated the care and support they received as either 'good' or 'very good'. Comments people made included, "I enjoy being here and have settled in well" and "I am happy here and how I'm being looked after."

We looked at the system for managing complaints in the service. We noted a complaints procedure was in place which provided information about the process for responding to and investigating complaints. Information was also on display in the communal areas to advise people how they could provide feedback on the service they received. A suggestion box was also available for people to use. All the people we spoke with during the inspection told us they knew how to make a complaint if they were dissatisfied with the support they received and were confident their concerns would be taken seriously.

We looked at the complaints log maintained in the service and saw that no complaints had been received in the previous 12 months. The registered manager told us they always encouraged staff to record any concerns raised by people who used the service in order to demonstrate the action taken to resolve matters, even if this was done on an immediate and informal basis. This demonstrated a commitment to on-going service improvement.

## Is the service well-led?

### Our findings

The service had a manager in place who was registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and was qualified to undertake the role. The registered manager had worked at the service for several years and was very knowledgeable about the people living at the service. They were supported in the day to day running of Clifton Lawns by a deputy manager. The registered manager reported to a Board of Directors who were closely involved in monitoring the quality of the service provided. Arrangements had also been made for an external management consultant to provide support and a quality monitoring function to the service.

We were told the board of directors had regular meetings at Clifton Lawns and both people who used the service and staff were encouraged to speak to them if they had any issues they wanted to raise. This indicated there was an emphasis on maintaining an open culture throughout the service.

Before our inspection we checked the records we held about the service. We found that the registered manager had notified CQC of any accidents, serious incidents and safeguarding allegations as they are required to do. This meant we were able to see if appropriate action had been taken by the service to ensure people were kept safe. We saw that a log was maintained of any accidents and incidents which had occurred; this was reviewed regularly to see what lessons could be learned to help improve the service people received.

We asked the registered manager about the key achievements in the service since the last inspection. They told us they had worked hard to help ensure people who used the service were able to access ordinary community based activities as well as those provided specifically for people with mental health needs. This helped people to develop networks and support which they were able to continue to access once they moved to more independent living.

The registered manager told us they recognised the key challenge of the service was to continue to motivate people to develop the skills required for more independent living. They told us they continued to strive for this by ensuring the culture of the home was that which valued people who used the service as individuals and promoted their right to lead their own care as much as possible. They told us their assessment process had been improved to ensure people referred to the service understood the expectation which would be placed on them to engage in the rehabilitation programme should they accept a placement at Clifton Lawns. Our discussions with staff confirmed they understood the values which underpinned the philosophy of the service.

All the people we spoke with who used the service provided positive feedback about the managers in Clifton Lawns, particularly the registered manager. One person told us, "[Name of registered manager] is always around if you have a problem; she's very approachable and she always listens."

The community based professional we spoke with during the inspection told us they usually spoke with the registered manager when they visited and commented, "They seem to have their finger on the pulse." Other comments we received from the community based professionals we contacted prior to the inspection

included, "I have always found the service responsive and well led" and "The service is managing some very difficult people well."

Staff told us they enjoyed working in Clifton Lawns and found the registered manager and senior staff to be approachable and supportive. Comments staff made to us included, "It is brilliant to work here. The manager is very approachable and staff work well together" and "No decisions are made without staff involvement. We work things out between us as a staff team."

Records we reviewed showed regular staff meetings took place. Staff meetings are a valuable means of motivating staff, keeping them informed of any developments within the service and giving them an opportunity to discuss good practice. Staff told us they felt able to contribute in these meetings and any suggestions they made were always taken seriously. The registered manager was able to give examples of changes that had been made within the service as a result of staff suggestions. These included purchasing a defibrillator after staff had completed first aid training and recognised this equipment would be useful in the service; the defibrillator had also been registered to show other people in the community that it was in place and could be used in the event of an emergency outside of Clifton Lawns. Another staff member had recognised that the en suite showers might not be accessible to people with disabilities. The registered manager had therefore agreed with the provider that the ground floor shower rooms would be changed to wet rooms. These actions demonstrated the provider and registered manager listened and acted upon the views of staff.

We looked at the arrangements in place for quality assurance and governance. Quality assurance and governance processes are systems that help registered providers to assess the safety and quality of their services. This ensured they provided people with a good service and met appropriate quality standards and legal obligations. We saw there was a system of audits in place relating to safeguarding, medication, care plans, accidents, incidents, health and safety and complaints. We saw that an action plan was put in place to address any issues identified during the audits. Checks were also carried out to confirm required actions had been completed during subsequent audits. Records we looked at showed the registered manager also completed a review of any incidents which occurred within the service to ensure appropriate action had been taken and lessons were learned to help prevent further similar occurrences in the future.