

DHCH14

Birch Abbey

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Inspected but not rated
Is the service safe?	Inspected but not rated

Summary of findings

Overall summary

Birch Abbey provides care for up to 60 older people, including those living with dementia. Accommodation is over three floors. At the time of our inspection, the home was providing care and support to 44 people.

We found the following examples of good practice.

The home facilitated face to face visits, in line with government guidance. Revised guidance on visiting had recently been introduced at the time of our inspection and the provider had updated policies to implement the changes.

During our inspection, we observed visits being conducted between people and their relatives. It was clear to see these visits were essential in maintaining important relationships and had a positive impact on people's well-being. Alternatives to in-person visitation, such as virtual visits, were also supported, as and when necessary.

A 'booking in' procedure was in place for visitors to the home including a health questionnaire and evidence of a negative lateral flow test. This helped prevent visitors spreading infection on entering the premises.

People and staff were tested regularly for COVID-19. Staff employed at the home had been vaccinated, to help keep people safe from the risk of infection. Some staff had received their COVID-19 booster vaccinations.

Both people and staff had risk assessments in place to help mitigate the risk of contracting COVID-19.

Infection control policies and procedures helped to ensure that the home adopted best practice which complied with current guidance. The environment appeared clean and hygienic. Cleaning schedules and audits were in place to help maintain cleanliness and minimise the spread of infection. The home employed adequate numbers of domestic and laundry staff.

Staff were trained and competent in infection prevention and control best practices and how to put on and take off PPE. The manager conducted spot checks to ensure staff were following best practices. Staff had a designated area of the home where they could change into their uniforms and put on PPE before each shift.

The manager maintained links with external health professionals to enable people to receive the care and intervention they needed. Virtual and physical consultations took place as and when necessary.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

Inspected but not rated

Further information is in the detailed findings below.

Birch Abbey

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.

As part of CQC's response to care homes with outbreaks of COVID-19, we are conducting reviews to ensure that the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) practice is safe and that services are compliant with IPC measures. This was a targeted inspection looking at the IPC practices the provider has in place. We also asked the provider about any staffing pressures the service was experiencing and whether this was having an impact on the service.

This inspection took place on 4 February 2022 and was announced. We gave the service one days' notice of the inspection.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Staffing

- The provider told us they had measures in place to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 related staff pressures

How well are people protected by the prevention and control of infection?

- We were assured that the provider was preventing visitors from catching and spreading infections.
- We were assured that the provider was meeting shielding and social distancing rules.
- We were assured that the provider was admitting people safely to the service.
- We were assured that the provider was using PPE effectively and safely.
- We were assured that the provider was accessing testing for people using the service and staff.
- We were assured that the provider was promoting safety through the layout and hygiene practices of the premises.
- We were assured that the provider was making sure infection outbreaks can be effectively prevented or managed.
- We were assured that the provider's infection prevention and control policy was up to date.

Visiting in care homes

The home was facilitating visits in line with the most recent government guidance. During our inspection, we observed visits taking place and the positive impact this had on people's psychological and emotional well-being.

From 11 November 2021 registered persons must make sure all care home workers and other professionals visiting the service are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they have an exemption or there is an emergency.

- The service was meeting the requirement to ensure non-exempt staff and visiting professionals were vaccinated against COVID-19.

