



Part of the Healthwatch Staffordshire remit is to carry out Enter and View Visits. Healthwatch Staffordshire Authorised Representatives will carry out these visits to health and social care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation – so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand. Healthwatch Staffordshire Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Staffordshire safeguarding policy, the service manager will be informed and the visit will end. The Local Authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

Provider Details

Provider: Upper Moreton Rural Activities CIC
Address: Upper Moreton Farm, Wolseley Bridge, Staffordshire ST18 0XD
Service Type: Day Services for people with Learning Difficulties
Date of Visit: 26th February 2019

Authorised Representatives

This visit was made by two Authorised Representatives of Healthwatch Staffordshire Catherine Wetton and Bridget Stokell.

Purpose of Visit

Healthwatch Staffordshire is making a series of visits to Day Services throughout the county in order to report on the range and quality of these services. Each service will have an individual report and an overview report on Day Services in Staffordshire will be compiled once the visits are completed.

A good service should...

1. Have strong, visible management
2. Have staff with time and skills to do their jobs
3. Have good knowledge of each individual client, their needs and how their needs may be changing.
4. Offer a varied programme of activities unless a specific service is offered.
5. Offer quality and choice to their clients around food and mealtimes, where applicable.
6. Accommodate clients personal, cultural and lifestyle needs.
7. Be an open environment where feedback is actively sought and used

The methodology to be used is to:

- Consider the care and services offered and whether this is delivered in a way that promotes dignity and independence.
- Consider staffing levels and the level of the care provided.
- Talk to people using the service, if they are happy and willing to do so to gain their views on the opportunities available to them.
- Talk to relatives, if they are available to ask if they are happy with the care provided to their relatives and whether they are aware and feel able to report any concerns/ complaints.
- Consider staff training and the support offered to enable staff to do their jobs well.
- Observe interaction at all levels between clients, staff, Manager, and visitors.

Physical Environment

External

The centre is part of a working farm, the approach is down a farm road (bumpy, surfaced with limestone chat and compacted earth once you leave the tarmac). The access road takes you past the working areas of the farm before you reach the Day Service, which has a large area for parking. The farm itself is clearly signposted with small green signs on the approach. Due to the HS2 line being built in the valley adjacent to the farm (the farm is on the top of a hill) HS2 will be redeveloping the road, as they will want to use it for access.

Due to the HS2 development, the Day Service Buildings and outbuildings of the farm are currently being redeveloped. The building work is well sectioned off and Health and Safety guidelines are adhered to. The classrooms and office are temporary buildings (portacabins) and will be moving to a separate part of the farm in due course, but currently are well maintained, clean and surrounded by flower pots and containers. All the buildings have wheelchair access, with wire on the ramps, due to the majority of the farm and Day Centre grounds being field, grass turf, or bare earth.

There are several lakes or ponds on the site. There is a large pond next to the donkey field and the barn that is undergoing conversion adjacent to the main Farm House. There are duck and hen houses between the pond and the Farm House, which are regularly moved (the recovering grass could be clearly seen) and a track to the donkey field running between the hen houses and the pond. There is a smaller brick barn which houses hutches for guinea pigs and rabbits, and an area where the service users do woodwork. There are areas where equipment has been stored. The areas were all clean and tidy.

On the other side of the Farm House there is a garden with low bed and low raised beds, a poly tunnel with a raised work area. The clients were using this area to plant shallots and seedlings for summer cropping. There were a lot of flowers and herbs in these, and the garden looked well-tended and maintained. The garden has a high hedge one side, separating it from the horse field, and is fenced on two sides, with a cow and goat field the other side. The garden is on a gentle slope and is accessed by gravel paths through a gate.

There is a second site at the farm's fish ponds. This is open to the public and maintained by the farm and some of the service users. There are two large fishing ponds surrounded by trees, bushes and grass, with a large variety of plants also around. There are ducks and moorhens that live on the ponds. Adjacent to the ponds are two marshy nature ponds. One is a nature reserve, the other is maintained by the farm and the water level can be manually topped up. Here there are bird feeders and a willow hedge and arch, made by the service users. The farm uses this area to teach nature conservation and willow weaving. The access to this area is down a potholed track to a parking area, where there are public toilets as well as the fishing shop. There is also camping and caravanning points adjacent to the car parking area, with hard standing for touring caravans.

There is no CCTV on the farm, security is provided by the two farm dogs, who alert the staff to any visitors. There are also security lights. Everyone who comes to the farm is requested to sign in and out. There is no odour other than that of a very clean farm yard, it is not excessive, and even when the cows were brought in to the farmyard, the smell was not strong.

There is a portacabin housing toilets for the staff and service users.

Internal

The internal areas of the office and class rooms, and the small animal barn, were all in good order, clean, tidy, colourful and well maintained. Some areas within the portacabins were looking a little worn but were still in good repair. The décor was well maintained, bright and colourful, the pictures relevant and current. Next to the class room there is a kitchen that the service users can use at lunch time. No more than two service users are allowed in there at a time to avoid over crowding and to avoid any risk of harm by having too many people in there at one time.

Client Numbers

The maximum number of service users that can be accommodated is 25. Currently there are 22 people using the service.

Staff Numbers

	Total throughout the day
Trained / qualified Activity Staff	1
Carers / support staff	4 UMRA staff 3 additional staff support a particular group of students
Maintenance	1
Administration	1
Management	1

Management

Management - A good service should have strong visible management.

The manager should be visible within the service, provide good leadership to staff and have the right experience for the job.

Our findings

The manager and staff were warm and friendly. Health and Safety was excellent. The housekeeping of risk assessment and instructions in the event of a fire was dealt with immediately on arrival once we'd been welcomed. The manager was working with the service users when we arrived, so we were greeted by one of her admin staff. This member of staff has disabilities himself and he makes a great role model for the service users and is excellent at his job.

The manager doesn't micro-manage and trusts her staff to manage the daily running of the services. When needed she supports the staff and the services users equally. She maintains a good relationship with the carers and families of the service users but finds sometimes she needs to maintain the boundaries between them, as the families and carers can occasionally become too reliant on her to sort out their issues.

Comments

We found that the manager provided good leadership and maintained good relationships with both the staff and the clients.

Staff Experiences and Observations

Quality Indicator 2 - Have the staff the time and skills to do their jobs

Staff should be well-trained, motivated and feel they have the resources to do their job properly.

Our findings

The staff are well trained and come from a variety of backgrounds. The staff are able to do any relevant training they wish to, in order to meet the service users needs.

Mandatory training includes:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable adults
- Basic First Aid

Additional Training includes:

- Autism Awareness
- Mental Health First Aid
- Project related training e.g. Animal Care Level 2/3, Horticulture Level 2/3 through E Learning
- Food hygiene,
- Defibrillator training

Training is mostly supplied through e-learning or external providers.

The staff feel well supported by the manager. They find her approachable, quiet and laid back. She never gets angry and is always helpful. Between the staff and volunteers there is adequate cover for each shift and if they are short the manager steps in to support them. The service has a relaxed and tranquil attitude due to the nature of the environment. There is always plenty of time to get everything done, and if a task runs over then there isn't an issue, it's picked up the next day and the time table adjusted accordingly. Sometimes there may be a problem with an animal or their care, or with the weather, so the service is always flexible. The staff are well motivated and feel they are part of a team. They get on well and mutually support each other.

Comments

There is a good relationship between the staff and the manager and the service provides a good working environment. This is reflected in the motivation of the staff and the calm and happy atmosphere on the farm.

Quality Indicator 3 - Do staff have good knowledge of each individual client, their needs and how their needs may be changing
Staff should be familiar with clients' histories and preferences and have processes in place for how to monitor any changes in wellbeing.

Our findings

The staff have excellent knowledge of the service users. There are files kept in the main office in relation to each service user. They contain details of funding, health, preferences and any other relevant information. Any changes are dealt with by the manager, who then passes the information on to the staff as well as putting it in the folders. Any safeguarding issues or any other issues are immediately communicated. We were told about one occasion when the manager had updated staff first thing on a Monday morning after she had been contacted by a family over the weekend.

All the staff are DBS checked and well trained. The staff we spoke to obviously enjoy their roles, especially when they see a positive change of behavior by people using the service.

Comments

The staff told us about one service user who came to them a couple of months earlier and was very withdrawn in his behavior. He was 'addicted to screens' and would get very agitated and sullen when asked to come off the equipment. He was always the last out of the door and trying to get him to change into wellies would take a long time. Within four weeks of attending the service, he is a changed person. He's outgoing, enthusiastic, and now always the first out of the door. When talking about this service user the staff were observed to be somewhat surprised, but very pleased and incredibly positive about the changes in this individual over the space of a few weeks.

Activities

Quality Indicator 4 - Activities - Does the service offer a varied programme of activities?

Services should provide a wide range of activities and support clients to take part in activities, unless the service offers a specific type of service rather than a wider range of opportunities.

Types of Activities on offer				
Indoor	Outdoor	Off-site	Visits / trips out	Other activities
Craft -----	Animal Care -----	Visits for educational learning Food Production, The Environment, Sustainability i.e. Farms, Farm shops, recycle centre -----	Visits to places of interest (The National Trust, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust- local history and wildlife National Arboretum _ related to Poppy Day Cannock Chase Museum Hednesford Park Amerton Farm Canalside Farm -----	Craft fayres Upper Moreton Rural Activities Open Days/Awareness Days ----- Annual Christmas party -----
Cooking and Baking -----	Practical gardening -----	Fishing - at the Carney Pools site -----	Recreational day trips - the seaside -----	Service users can be supported with E Learning in animal care level II/III -----
Basic literacy skills -----	Conservation -----	Community Visits St Augustine's Church Other Community Groups -----	Trips to other organisations for floristry/willow weaving -----	Service users can be supported with online learning in equine care -----
Theme based classroom work -----	Themed projects -----	Cultural Awareness visits i.e. Remembrance Day, British Apple Day -----	Growing items for local produce show -----	
Woodwork Making flower/veg planters, bird, bat boxes, insect homes and outdoor furniture -----	Nature walks Health and Wellbeing walks (Mindfulness) Scavenger hunts Orienteering/map reading -----			
Polytunnel work Growing seeds, planters, perennials, soft fruit and vegetables -----	Rural Crafts (willow craft, corn dollies) -----			
Small Animal Care - rabbits/guinea pigs -----	Equine Care - donkeys and Shire horse -----			
Floristry Seasonal floristry and wreath making -----	Keeping hens -----			
Equine Care - donkeys and Shire horse (under cover in wet weather) -----	Seasonal gardening - looking after flower borders, growing soft fruit, herb gardening -----			
Goat care Animal Rescue - hedgehogs -----				
Pet care				

Our findings

Most of the activities on offer are of an agriculture or rural nature. The agricultural activities include animal care and general husbandry through to small scale crop growing. Clients can choose to undertake specific tasks but if they become over focused, they are encouraged by staff to try something else. For example, one client really enjoys growing flowers but she is also encouraged to grow vegetables or fruit. Animal care is a central theme as it helps clients to be relaxed and calm due to the presence of the animals and it seems very popular. Some maintenance tasks are also undertaken and always supervised. During our visit the one of the clients was painting a fence panel with one of the staff and as other clients walked by they were also encouraged to have ago. Recently a group of clients have also undertaken some tasks to improve the environment around the farm's fishing pools.

There are other activities in the form of rural crafts which include willow weaving and carpentry. The woodworking is generally offered once a week which helps clients construct bird feeders and related items. This theme supports the ideas of rural care and management that is not just about domesticated animals but also the wilder environment. One the favourite activities is taking the farm dogs for a walk. Staff reported that sometimes clients were reluctant to participate, but always enjoyed the walk so long as they saw a purpose in it. The presence of the dogs and a mindful approach to what can be seen all help client enjoyment.

Most of the time the clients are outside but there is scope for indoor work when the weather is poor. As stated above there is woodworking available as well as willow weaving. Care of the small animals is also undercover. There are some activities such as baking which are offered which helps to support clients with life skills. One of the clients was particularly interested in drama and literature and staff encouraged him to spend time writing a play. While we were visiting a short course in first aid took place with the clients. There was much excitement from the clients as to who could "faint" and who got "bandaged".

Often activities can be based around an external or national event. Some activities had been undertaken around wild bird identification as part of the RSBP "Big Bird Count".

Comments

The website does not fully demonstrate the wide range of activities available at the farm nor the direct benefits they can have for clients. A little more clarity and detail might help promote the service.

Catering Services - where applicable

Quality Indicator 5 - Catering - Does the service offer quality, choice around food and mealtimes?

If relevant, Services should offer a range of meal choices and adequate support to help clients who may struggle to eat and drink and accommodate different preferences and needs around individual dietary requirements.

Our findings

There are no catering services as such at the Centre, however, there is a kitchen that the clients can use. The staff allow no more than two students in at any one time, to minimise risk. The clients are quite independent and able to prepare or reheat their own or ready meals, which they bring with them. Alternatively, they bring a packed lunch. The clients are encouraged to be independent, but the staff have their lunch with them, so are on hand should their support be needed.

Occasionally the kitchen is used for baking, which the clients enjoy greatly. There is a large warning sign on the wall of the kitchen that one of the service users is not allowed chocolate. Allergies are also identified.

There is a tea urn in the kitchen and cold drinks are provided alongside. These comprise of water or squash.

The dining room can also double as a class room. It is sociable and easily accessed up a ramp. There are seating areas outside and also a couple of picnic tables, including one under a pergola for shade. The day we visited it was very sunny and quite warm, some of the clients chose to eat outside. A member of staff sat with each group.

The clients are encouraged to wash and clean up after themselves (independent living skills). The staff are chatty and encouraging, and ensure any medication the clients should be taking is taken.

We observed the closeness of the client community, one chap left his food on an external picnic table for a moment. While he was absent, one of the chickens took an interest in his dinner. Another client chased the chicken away and stayed until the first client returned, to ensure the chicken didn't eat the dinner. This showed us the friendship between the clients as well as that they have knowledge about chicken behavior!

Comments

Mealtimes are relaxed and sociable on the farm with people able to choose where they ate their lunch. Care is taken in the kitchen in respect of allergens and physical environment to keep people safe.

Quality Indicator 6 - Does the service accommodate clients personal, cultural and lifestyle needs?

Services should be set up to meet residents cultural, religious and lifestyle needs as well as their care needs, and shouldn't make people feel uncomfortable if they are different or do things differently to other clients.

Our findings

As covered earlier in the report, records are kept about all aspects of client requirements and updated on a regular basis. The service uses the environment of a working farm to help clients feel included and show that their contribution is valued. There is some diversity in the background of clients as well as their level of disability and the service has a flexible approach.

It was obvious that staff fully understood the varied needs of clients and adjusted the activities and tasks around them. For example, one of the clients wanted to help with painting the fence panel but needed a little physical support and guidance with the paint brush. This assistance was carried out discretely and gently. An example of accepting individual difference, was that one client preferred to sit outside and to eat his lunch away from the others, this was not a problem to the staff or clients.

Comments

The service met the individual client needs with care and discretion.

Client Experiences and Observations

All the clients spoken to seemed very comfortable with the service and the activities they undertook. They acknowledge and accepted the differences in each other's needs and where possible supported each other. One of them spoke openly of their initial doubts about whether they would enjoy attending the farm, but now felt happy in the company of the others and with the available activities.

The general culture of support and friendship based on teamwork was obvious from observing the service in action.

Family / Carers experiences (if available)

There were no family members or carers at the farm during our visit.

Quality Indicator 7 - The service should be an open environment where feedback is actively sought and use.

There should be mechanisms in place for clients and relatives to influence what happens in the service, such as a Clients and Relatives Committee or regular meetings. The process for making comments or complaints should be clear and feedback should be welcomed and acted on.

Our findings

The day centre has meetings as and when needed with the carers and relatives of the service users. However, most people tend to contact the manager directly, including during out of hours. This contact aids collecting feedback and suggestions as well as supporting the families of the clients.

The day centre has a complaints procedure which the clients and relatives/carers are aware of. There is also a suggestion box which the clients and carers can use to make suggestions on activities they want to do. These consist of days out or learning about a particular subject. The box is checked weekly, is bright and has a good selection of pens and paper for the clients to use.

Comments

The service does collect feedback and suggestions. There did not appear to be a formal system for dealing with any feedback. It may be more effective if suggestions and ideas were logged by staff so that that it can be demonstrated that feedback is welcomed and acted upon.

Summary, Comments and Further Observations

We learned that Upper Moreton Farm operate day opportunities provision on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and that they have their own mini-bus to support individuals with travel as well as trips out into the community and places of interest.

Upper Moreton Farm also deliver Community Learning courses to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. Courses are funded through Staffordshire County Council and are free of charge to potential learners. Courses are based around animals, gardening, the countryside, healthy eating and cooking and rural crafts including willow weaving, floristry and woodwork. All learners receive a free lunch and support with travel costs.

Upper Moreton Rural Activities CIC is also part of the Building Better Opportunities Programme supporting unemployed people across Stafford and South Staffordshire with free training, courses and advice. Further information on this is available from Upper Moreton Fam.

Finally, Upper Moreton Rural Activities also offers work experience and free educational access visits for schools, colleges and voluntary groups/community groups.

When we were talking to the Manager, she had concerns about whether she was reaching the right target audience. She felt that there were others in the Adult Disabilities community who would benefit from what the farm offers, but she didn't feel she had the right contacts to reach them. She mentioned problems with contact with Social Workers, they have had issues with the Social Workers providing proper information and "messaging around" with client funding, to the point where one client was coming for free while her funding was being sorted out. The Manager was trying to help with this.

We felt that this type of day services is incredibly important to the service users, allowing them time outdoors and getting exercise in an environment where they won't necessarily feel they've been exercising, as they would in a gym. The clients were observed to be very happy and it has a very positive and calm atmosphere.

We are aware that there will be some changes to the day service with the onset of HS2 and hope that they can continue to operate in a similar way as they do now, which seems to be extremely beneficial to staff and clients alike.

Comments

We would like to thank all the staff and people using the service for making us welcome and allowing us access to all aspects of the service. It was a very pleasurable visit for us.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Action

We do not feel that we need to make any recommendation for this high quality service, save for perhaps considering to they record feedback as mentioned in the above report.

Provider Feedback

When asked what they felt worked well about the way the Authorised Representatives carried out the recent Enter and View visit at your premise, they responded:

The two authorised representatives were very knowledgeable and were respectable to all participants and staff. Both representatives allowed our participants to carry out their daily activities without causing any interruption to the normal working day. The representatives took time to engage with everyone and their approach to questioning participants and staff was relaxed, yet thorough. Participants and staff were given adequate time to answer - which helped to put everyone at ease.

When asked were there any aspects of the Enter and View visit which they felt did not work well or could be improved, they responded:

We do not feel anything could be improved. When we asked our participants for feedback about the day most said that they enjoyed talking to the representatives and found them to be very friendly.

When asked as a provider of a service, did the Enter and View visit help them to identify areas for improvement and if so, in what way, they responded

We believe that it is beneficial to all services to receive Enter and View monitoring visits, as areas for improvement can be identified and improved. Likewise, best practice can also be shared. As a team, we constantly strive to develop our service and aim to continue with our commitment to giving our participants the best quality service possible.

I welcome the comment about our website, and I agree the website would benefit from more clarification and detail to reflect the wide range of activities and learning that is offered by Upper Moreton Rural Activities.

Other comments

Thank you for the very positive report. We are extremely pleased that your representatives' rate Upper Moreton Rural Activities as a high-quality service and feel that no recommendations need to be made only that of considering recording feedback to demonstrate that it is being welcomed and acted on.

We will set up a separate log to record client suggestions and ideas so that we can formally demonstrate that feedback is welcomed and acted on

DISCLAIMER

Please note that this report only relates to findings we observe on the specific date of our visit. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all residents and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



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