

Inspection Report

9 September 2021



The Firs

Type of service: Residential Care Home
Address: 16 Fair Green, Church Street, Ballygawley, BT79 2LJ
Telephone number: 028 8556 7048

www.rqia.org.uk

Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

Information on legislation and standards underpinning inspections can be found on our website <https://www.rqia.org.uk/>

1.0 Service information

Organisation/Registered Provider: The Firs Services (Ireland) Limited Registered Person: Mrs Pauline Gormley	Registered Manager: Mrs Pauline Gormley Date registered: 1 April 2005
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mrs Pauline Gormley	Number of registered places: 8
Categories of care Residential Care (RC) LD – Learning disability. LD(E) – Learning disability – over 65 years.	Number of residents accommodated in the residential care home on the day of this inspection: 6
Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates: This home is a registered Residential Care Home which provides health and social care for up to 8 residents. The home is akin to a domestic type bungalow, which rooms are located on a ground and first floor level.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection was conducted on 9 September 2021, from 9.40am to 2.00pm by a care inspector.

The inspection sought to determine if the home was delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and if the service was well led.

The home was clean, tidy, well ventilated and free from malodour.

Staffing levels were found to be in keeping with resident dependencies and the size and layout of the home.

Staff were seen to be professional and polite as they conducted their duties and told us they were supported in their roles with training and resources.

Residents were seen to be well cared for. There was clear evidence of attention to personal care and dressing and social needs being met.

Feedback from residents confirmed that they were satisfied with the care and service provided for in The Firs.

RQIA were satisfied that the delivery of care provided for in The Firs was safe, effective, compassionate and well-led.

3.0 How we inspect

RQIA's inspections form part of our ongoing assessment of the quality of services. Our reports reflect how they were performing at the time of our inspection, highlighting both good practice and any areas for improvement. It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure compliance with legislation, standards and best practice, and to address any deficits identified during our inspections.

Throughout the inspection RQIA will seek to speak with residents, their relatives or visitors and staff for their opinion on the quality of the care and their experience of living, visiting or working in this home.

Questionnaires and 'Tell Us' cards were provided to give residents and those who visit them the opportunity to contact us after the inspection with their views of the home. A poster was provided for staff detailing how they could complete an on-line questionnaire.

The daily life within the home was observed and how staff went about their work.

A range of documents were examined to determine that effective systems were in place to manage the home.

4.0 What people told us about the service

Residents told us that felt safe and that they were satisfied with the care delivery in the home. They spoke positively with their relationship with staff, the provision of meals and the provision of activities. Observation during the inspection indicated that residents' needs were met.

Staff spoke positively about working in the home and advised there was good team work within the home. Staff further advised that they felt well supported by the manager.

The four responses to the resident questionnaires received were all positive.

5.0 The inspection

5.1 What has this service done to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since last inspection?

The last inspection to The Firs was undertaken on 26 November 2020 by John McAuley care inspector; no areas for improvement were identified.

5.2 Inspection findings

5.2.1 Staffing Arrangements

Safe staffing begins at the point of recruitment. A review of recruitment records confirmed that these procedures were in accordance with legislation and standards.

All staff working in the home were provided an induction appropriate to their roles and duties. There were systems in place to ensure staff were trained and supported to do their jobs. Review of records showed that training comprised of a range of relevant and mandatory topics, with the majority of courses provided for on an eLearning platform and courses with practical elements delivered face to face.

Staff said that they felt they were adequately trained to perform their roles and duties.

Review of records provided assurances that all relevant staff were registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and that these registrations were effectively monitored by the manager on a monthly basis.

The duty rotas accurately reflected the staff working in the home over a 24 period. Staff told us that they knew who was in charge of the home at any given time. Any member of staff who have responsibility of being in charge of the home in the absence of the manager has a competency and capability assessment in place to account for this responsibility.

The manager confirmed that safe staffing levels were determined and/or adjusted by on-going monitoring of the number and dependency levels of residents in the home. It was noted that there was enough staff available in the home to respond to the needs of residents.

Residents told us that they were satisfied with the delivery of care and the kindness and support received from staff. One resident said; "I am very happy here. We all get on like one big family. Pauline (the manager) and the staff are all great."

Staff told us that they were satisfied with the staffing levels in the home and described the care as being "very good" and "excellent".

Staff were seen to attend to residents' needs in a timely manner and to maintain residents' dignity by offering personal care discreetly. Residents were offered choices throughout the day, for example, from where and how they wished to spend their time and what activity they wished to engage in.

In summary, assurances were provided that staffing arrangements in the home were safe and staff conducted their jobs in a professional and polite manner.

5.2.2 Care Delivery and Record Keeping

Staff were knowledgeable of residents' needs, their daily routines, and their likes and dislikes.

Staff were observed to be prompt in recognising residents' needs and any early signs of request for assistance. Staff were skilled in communicating with residents; they were respectful, understanding and sensitive to their needs. Staff interactions with residents were observed to be friendly, polite, warm and supportive. Staff were seen to seek residents' consent when delivering care with statements such as: "Would you like to..." or "Can I help you with..." and to knock resident's bedroom doors to seek permission of entry.

Residents' needs were assessed at the time of their pre admission to the home. During this stage care plans were developed in consultation with the resident, their next of kin and their aligned named worker to direct staff on how to meet residents' needs. Added to this any advice or directions by other healthcare professionals is included in the assessment and care plans. Residents' care records were held safely and confidentially.

Resident areas were free from clutter and trip hazards. Those residents who were at risk from falls had care plans in place.

Records confirmed that in the event of a resident falling, post falls protocol was followed and there was evidence that staff took appropriate action. There was evidence of appropriate on-ward referral, where required, such as Occupational Therapy or the HSC Trust's falls prevention team. Following a fall, relevant persons such as the resident's next of kin, their aligned named worker and where appropriate RQIA, were informed.

Good nutrition and a positive dining experience are important to the health and social wellbeing of residents.

There was a choice of meals offered and facilitated in a manner which aided residents' understanding. There was also a variety of drinks available. One resident made the following comment; "It's very good here. Everyone (the staff) is very good. The food is good too."

Records were also kept of what residents had to eat and drink daily.

In summary, there were no concerns identified in relation with the care delivery or record keeping.

5.2.3 Management of the Environment and Infection Prevention and Control

Observation of the home's environment evidenced that it was well maintained. Residents' bedrooms were comfortable, suitably furnished and nicely personalised. Communal areas were well decorated, suitably furnished, clean and tidy; and comfortable. Bathrooms and toilets were clean and hygienic.

The grounds of the home were well maintained with good accessibility for residents to avail of.

The manager reported that a fire safety risk assessment was scheduled for 21 September 2021. Fire safety training and fire safety drills were maintained on an up-to-date basis, as were fire safety checks in the environment.

Appropriate precautions and protective measures were in place to manage the risk of infection. The home is participating in the regional testing arrangements for residents and staff and any outbreak of infection was reported to the Public Health Authority (PHA).

Review of records, observation of practice and discussion with staff confirmed that effective training on infection prevention and control (IPC) measures and the use of Personal Protective Equipment had been provided.

Staff were observed to carry out hand hygiene at appropriate times and to use PPE in accordance with the regional guidance. Staff use of PPE and hand hygiene was regularly monitored by the manager and records were kept.

Visiting arrangements were managed in line with Department of Health guidance.

Staff reported that they followed a detailed schedule of daily cleaning and that all points which were frequently touched by residents or staff were cleaned daily.

5.2.4 Quality of Life for Residents

The atmosphere in the home was homely and relaxed with residents seen to be comfortable, content and at ease in their environment and interactions with staff. One resident made the following comment; "I am very happy here. Everyone (the staff) are very good."

Residents said that they were able to choose how they spent their day; they could get up or go to bed when they wished, wear what they wanted and spend time in their own rooms or in the lounges. At the time of this inspection, one resident was supported with going to visit their relative and later a group of residents participated in a relaxation activity. Residents commented positively on the activity provision in the home. One resident said; "They (the staff) are all lovely and friendly here. We all get on well here and there is always plenty to do."

Staff recognised the importance of maintaining good communication with families, especially whilst visiting was disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff assisted residents to make phone or video calls to their loved ones. Visiting arrangements were in place with positive benefits to the physical and mental wellbeing of residents.

The genre of music and choice of television programmes played in the home was appropriate to residents' preferences and this helped create the nice atmosphere in the home.

Residents said the range of available activities within the home kept them occupied during the day. Staff said that they enjoyed participating in activities with the residents.

5.2.5 Management and Governance Arrangements

There has been no change in the management of the home since the last inspection; Mrs Pauline Gormley has been the manager since 1 April 2005.

Staff were aware of who the person in charge of the home was, their own role in the home and how to raise any concerns or worries about residents, care practices or the environment. Staff stated that they would have no hesitation in reporting a concern to the manager.

A system of quality assurance audits was in place in the home to help the manager monitor care delivery and drive any necessary improvements. Where areas for improvement were identified, action plans were in place with associated timeframes for completion and recorded as when completed.

An inspection of the record of complaints together with discussions with the manager and staff confirmed that expressions of dissatisfaction were taken seriously and managed appropriately.

An inspection of accident and incident records found that these were managed and monitored on a monthly basis. The monthly analysis was used by the manager to identify any learning for staff.

Staff commented positively about the manager and described them as supportive, approachable and always available for guidance.

There were systems to monitor all aspects of the running of the home. There was a clear organisational structure and staff were aware of their roles within the structure.

6.0 Conclusion

Based on the inspection findings and discussions held we are satisfied that The Firs is providing safe and effective care in a caring and compassionate manner; and that the service is well led..

Residents were seen to be well cared for in a relaxed homely environment with time afforded to person centred care and interests. Feedback from residents and staff were all positive. The manager was found to have good knowledge of residents' needs, prescribed care interventions and managerial oversight of the home.

No areas of improvement were identified during this inspection.

7.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

This inspection resulted in no areas for improvement being identified. Findings of the inspection were discussed with Mrs Pauline Gormley, Registered Manager, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.



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