



Care Quality Commission

Coombe House Residential Home

Overview

Overall Rating: Outstanding

The service is performing exceptionally well.

Summary

Safe	Outstanding
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Effective	Good
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Caring	Outstanding
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Responsive	Outstanding
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Well-led	Outstanding
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Overall Service Commentary

Date of assessment: 25 February - 9 March 2026. Coombe House Residential Home is a 'care home' providing support for a maximum of 16 people living with dementia. On the day of our site visit, 15 people were living at the service.

The service was exceptional at treating people with kindness, empathy and compassion. They proactively listened to, understood and acted on people's needs and wishes. People were supported in a way that was exceptionally personalised, which considered their own personal life experiences and choices.

The home was clean and welcoming. People were able to move around freely and could always access the extensive grounds. All necessary checks had been completed to ensure the safety of the environment and equipment.

People were protected from all forms of abuse and staff had the skills to meet people's needs. Staff understood the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

People's needs were identified and risks associated with their specific needs were assessed. The management and staff ensured people were able to live their life as they wished and managed associated risks positively. The wishes and preferences of people living at the home were always respected and family members were involved to ensure people had an excellent quality of life.

Staff were safely recruited and appropriately deployed to ensure people's needs were promptly met.

Medicines were managed safely.

The provider had a very clear shared vision, strategy and culture. This was based on transparency, equity, equality and human rights, diversity and inclusion, engagement, and an exceptional understanding of the challenges and the needs of people living with dementia.

The registered manager provided exceptional leadership and commitment. Staff, relatives and healthcare professionals commended the dedication to continuously seeking new ways of working to ensure people's dementia diagnosis did not define or restrict them.

There were systems and processes to support the registered manager to identify and address quality concerns and risks to the organisation. Feedback was sought to improve the service, findings and actions were recorded and shared.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Overall People's Experience

We observed staff interacting with people and used a structured observation tool to understand people's experience of care. We saw exceptional support was provided compassionately and was not rushed.

Mealtimes were seen as a social event and people were served meals that they could choose and had helped to prepare. Staff sat with people at dining tables and encouraged conversations with people about things that had mattered to them such as life events and hobbies.

People and their relatives were very complimentary of the staff and service. Comments included "It's wonderful in every way, very unique" and staff are "very kind". People had confidence in the management of the home and any concerns they raised had been acted upon.

The manager and staff demonstrated an exceptional commitment to ensuring people had the opportunity to participate in activities that mattered to them, such as pottery and gardening. Every person's relative we spoke with were positive about the way in which people had opportunities to continue doing things they loved. One relative told us, "There is all sorts of things for people to do, they [the staff] go well above and beyond".

[↑ Back to top](#)

Safe

Rating: Outstanding

Percentage Score: 88.00 %

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

This service is exceptionally safe

Commentary

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm. At our last assessment we rated this key question good. At this assessment the rating has changed to outstanding.

This meant people were protected by a strong and distinctive approach to safeguarding, including positive risk-taking to maximise their control over their lives. People were fully involved, and the provider was open and transparent when things went wrong.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Safe

Learning culture

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider had a proactive and positive culture of safety, based on openness and honesty. Staff listened to concerns about safety and investigated and reported safety events. Lessons were learnt to continually identify and embed good practice.

There was a proactive culture of analysis and identifying improvement opportunities. Accidents and incidents were recorded and analysed to identify areas of learning or how practices could be amended to reflect people's individual needs.

The registered manager ensured any learning from incidents was shared promptly with the staff team. Regular staff meetings were held, to look at lessons learned and any improvements needed to existing practice. Staff knew people very well and recognised early signs of potential distress and mitigated risks through regular positive intervention.

↑ [Back to top](#)

Safe

Safe systems, pathways and transitions

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with

them.

Processes

The provider always worked with people and healthcare partners to design, establish and maintain safe systems of care, in which safety was always well managed and monitored. They made sure there was always continuity of care, including when people moved between different services.

Assessments to identify people's needs before they moved into the service were completed by the management team. One person was admitted from another care home, the registered manager explained they had taken significant time to get to know the person during the assessment and had met with the person and their family in their previous placement.

Staff knew and demonstrated an in depth understanding of people's needs. Health and social care professionals were contacted immediately when required to offer support and guidance.

People, their relatives, and other professionals were involved in planning how people's care and support would be provided. Multi-disciplinary meetings were held to discuss safe care and treatment pathways for people, and staff knew when to refer to specialist services for support.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Safe

Safeguarding

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider worked with people and healthcare partners to understand what being safe meant to them and the best way to achieve that. Staff concentrated on improving people's lives while protecting their right to live in safety, free from bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, avoidable harm and neglect.

People's relatives told us they could raise concerns to staff and the registered manager and were confident actions would be taken.

All incidents in which there may have been a risk of harm were acted upon straight away and staff managed these situations calmly.

The provider ensured staff received safeguarding training to recognise signs of abuse and how to escalate concerns.

People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment with appropriate legal authority. In care homes, this can be done through a procedure called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) which is part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA). We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA and how they managed DoLS within the service.

We found the registered manager and staff ensured people's capacity to make decisions was assessed. Where people lacked capacity, any restrictions imposed to keep them safe, such as the use of sensors to alert staff, were in people's best interest and the least restrictive option available.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) applications had been made to the local authority for authorisation and any conditions imposed were met. One person's relative explained they had been "Very involved in that process".

[↑ Back to top](#)

Safe

Involving people to manage risks

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider always worked well with people to fully understand and manage risks by thinking holistically. Staff provided care that fully met people's needs and was safe, supportive and enabled people to do the things that mattered to them.

People were supported to take positive risks to promote independence. The home's environment was designed to promote independence and minimise restrictions.

The registered manager promoted a safety culture in which they told us people were "not locked up" and were free to carry out activities and tasks that replicated what the person may have completed before living with dementia.

All the people living at the service were able to walk around freely. The front door was not locked and allowed people to access the extensive gardens and outside spaces. One person's relative told us "[Name of person] has the freedom to walk out whenever they want in a secure environment. [Name of person] can go into the kitchen at any time. It's that freedom that I appreciate most".

The registered manager ensured people's relatives were aware there were risks associated with people being free to access the service grounds. Following a recent review, a relative had written to the service and stated they "Are fully aware this will occasionally expose [relative] to the risk of injury. However, the general improvement in health [they] experienced whilst living with you is far more important".

During the assessment we observed people were able to move around without restriction and entered the kitchen to make a hot drink, assist with meal preparation and cleaning as they wished. Staff, including gardening and domestic staff, were aware of the risks and ensured any potentially dangerous equipment was appropriately secured when not in use.

Care records informed staff about risks associated with people's health and wellbeing and the action they needed to take to mitigate identified risks. One person had a health condition that resulted in incidents where the person may suddenly fall. The care plan fully directed staff on the actions they should take to reduce the risk of injury.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Safe

Safe environments

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► How do we score this?

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider was fully aware of all potential risks in the care environment and controlled them well so people could live their lives to the fullest. They made sure equipment, facilities and technology supported the delivery of safe care.

The environment was safe, clean, and homely, with regular checks on fire safety, water quality, and equipment. People lived in a home which was personalised, well maintained and met their needs. Equipment was regularly serviced and risk assessments were regularly reviewed. This ensured the provider monitored the risks to people, managed and mitigated concerns when people's needs changed. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) were tailored to individuals should people need to be evacuated in an emergency.

The provider had completed detailed risk assessments for the environment which included best practice information to support the decision-making process.

The potential risk of harm for people accessing the garden and grounds through unlocked doors, were comprehensively considered and included the risk of sun exposure. As a result, a large pergola was built to provide people with shelter whilst enjoying the garden. Research and guidance was also used to inform people's risk assessments which stated the benefits provided "More opportunity to move about, maintains mobility and actually decreases the risks of falls" and recorded information provided by a consultant psychiatrist whom had stated "International studies have found that time spent out of doors, even in the rain, is more powerful than the highest doses of anti-depressants".

To ensure people had the freedom to move around in the least restrictive way, the provider had recently installed cameras (CCTV) covering the driveway. Each person's relative had been written to and provided with a clear rationale as to why and how this information would be used and stored. The system had the ability to take pictures of any person seen walking down the driveway in order to show who it was and what they were wearing. This meant that people could be easily identified and guided back home if required.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Safe

Safe and effective staffing

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

[▶ How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider made sure there were always enough qualified, skilled and experienced staff, who received thorough support, supervision and strong development opportunities. They worked together well to provide safe care that met people's individual needs.

The registered manager told us, and we observed, staffing was deployed with exceptional flexibility, shaped entirely around people's individual needs and preferences. This meant staff were readily available at the times people wanted support, enabling them to choose what they wished to do and when they wished to do it.

Relatives were confident the service was well staffed and told us, "Staff are always available" and "Everyone who works there seems to love it and enjoys working there". Staff said, "There is enough staff, it is good. You can't have too many staff. We agree what each staff member will do and then it works pretty well. Like a well-oiled machine" and "There are enough staff. It is absolutely amazing I would want to come here".

Staff were recruited safely and had the knowledge and skills to meet people's needs. Staff had received training in a broad range of topics including specific training to enable them to meet people's individual needs and ensured people received safe care.

The service employed a variety of people to cover different roles such as deputy manager, carers, cooks, housekeeping staff and gardeners. Each member of staff provided support to people who lived at the service in a unique

way and understood what people needed. Records showed planned staffing levels were routinely achieved and the staff team reacted flexibly during periods of unexpected staff absence to ensure people's safety.

↑ [Back to top](#)

Safe

Infection prevention and control

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider assessed and managed the risk of infection. They detected and controlled the risk of it spreading and shared concerns with appropriate agencies promptly.

The home was clean and staff worked throughout the day to ensure all areas remained tidy.

Staff had been trained in infection prevention and control. Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves and aprons, was discreetly stored around the home and staff used these when required and washed their hands immediately after use.

Cleaning schedules were designed to ensure all areas of the home and equipment was regularly cleaned.

↑ [Back to top](#)

Safe

Medicines optimisation

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► How do we score this?

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider always made sure that medicines and treatments were safe and met people's needs, capacities and preferences. Staff always involved people in planning, including when changes happened.

People received their medicines safely from staff who had received specific training to carry out the task. Managers and staff monitored the impact on people from changes in medicines and ensured regular communication with health professionals and relatives which ensured people's treatment met their needs. The registered manager and a healthcare professional explained frequent reviews of medications were carried out to ensure people did not take unnecessary medication.

During the assessment we heard staff contact the GP to request a review of medication for 1 person who had recently moved in. The person acquired specialist medication using a private prescription service. The registered manager discussed this particular medicine with the senior staff team, and they considered how this medicine could be provided safely with the best interests of the person as their main priority. There was a clear plan to involve the person, their relative and healthcare professionals in decision making.

Some people were prescribed medicines on an 'as required' basis. Personalised protocols gave staff clear guidance about how each person would express the need for these medicines and included specific strategies staff could deploy to support the person prior to administering medicines.

We observed medication being provided to people in a calm and relaxed manner. People received their medication as they preferred, and staff asked how the person was feeling and if they were in any pain.

Medication was stored safely in people's rooms and medication which required stricter controls such as controlled drugs, were held securely. The controlled drugs register showed procedures had been followed and during the assessment we found the amount of medication tallied with the records.

Effective

Rating: Good

Percentage Score: 79.00 %

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

This service is effective

Commentary

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people’s care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence.

At our last assessment we rated this key question good. At this assessment the rating has remained good.

This meant people’s outcomes were consistently good, and people’s feedback confirmed this.

↑ [Back to top](#)

Effective

Assessing needs

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people’s care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider always made sure people's care and treatment was effective by thoroughly assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Managers completed assessments of people's needs before they were offered a place in the service. Assessments included details of people's health, mobility and social needs and identified any risks that people needed support to manage. These assessments included the person and their relatives.

Information was requested from people and their families to gather further details on the person's life history, communication needs, preferred routines and if anything made the person anxious or upset. The form used was designed by the 'Alzheimer's Society' and the 'Royal College of Nursing'. This meant that the home ensured all aspects of a person's health and wellbeing was recorded and used to form the care plan. One person's relative told us "They are brilliant, [person] been there for about a month. Really informative. Settled in well. [deputy manager] was really helpful and wanted to know everything about [person] so they could help them settle. Staff are all great".

People's care needs were assessed regularly by the management team and senior staff. They involved people, where possible, and their next of kin. People told us they were informed of any changes and, when necessary, professionals such as district nurses or doctors were due to visit "so we are able to come as well".

[↑ Back to top](#)

Effective

Delivering evidence-based care and treatment

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider always planned and delivered people's care and treatment with them, including what was important and mattered to them. They did this in line with legislation. They worked to develop evidence-based good practice and standards.

The registered manager demonstrated an exceptional commitment to supporting people living with dementia.

Care and treatment were provided using the latest guidance and research findings to promote good practice and outcomes for people. For example, the registered manager had considered how a study by the 'UEA Norwich Medical School' had recommended ways in which care homes could reduce the risk of dehydration and malnutrition for people. Changes had been made based on this research. Staff enjoyed sharing lunch with people whilst ensuring relaxing music was played in the background. staff had completed additional training combining physical movement and psychological exercises, in which people participated and as a result their appetite increased.

The home and staff worked to the principles of the 'Butterfly Approach' which included staff 'being with' people, rather than a task led role and people being able to participate in cooking, gardening and household chores to maintain a sense of purpose.

A leading expert in dementia care told us the registered manager had imbedded best practice dementia care and created a "new culture of dementia care", which had developed over time".

[↑ Back to top](#)

Effective

How staff, teams and services work together

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider worked well across teams and services to support people. They made sure people only needed to tell their story once by sharing their assessment of needs when people moved between different services.

The management and staff teams worked jointly with other services and professionals to ensure people received effective and timely care. There were good relationships between the service and external professionals, such as district nurses.

Professionals told us the service worked with them well and commented, "When we attend the home it is always clean and tidy, the staff are friendly. it's the nicest home we go to" and "My medical students are taken to see what a good care home should be like...I am grateful it's in my patch; they have looked after tricky patients in a person-centred way".

[↑ Back to top](#)

Effective

Supporting people to live healthier lives

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider supported people to manage their health and wellbeing to maximise their independence, choice and control. Staff supported people to live healthier lives and where possible, reduce their future needs for care and support.

Care records showed a range of health care professionals were involved in people's care and treatment, and staff made appropriate and timely referrals to support people to stay healthy. Staff followed the recommendations of professionals, who confirmed staff worked closely with them to ensure people's health and medical needs were met.

Lunch was served in the dining room and was observed to be a very social occasion. Staff sat with people and enjoyed having lunch together. A variety of dishes were served including jacket potatoes, salad, grated cheese and tuna in which everyone could help themselves and offer the serving bowl to other people. This meant people could choose what they wanted and how much. Mealtimes were calm, unrushed and soft music was playing in the background.

The manager had considered recent research which identified physical activity had the benefit of increasing appetite. The manager told us 2 staff members had attended additional training. This training was focused on providing an exercise class especially designed for people living with dementia. The activity sessions included physical exercises and had psychological benefits as it was designed to be fun and interactive.

The service was designed to maximise people's independence and facilitate engagement with tasks and activities within the house and its gardens. A range of interesting activities designed for people living with dementia was available to maximise people's wellbeing.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Effective

Monitoring and improving outcomes

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider routinely monitored people's care and treatment to continuously improve it. They ensured that outcomes were positive and consistent, and that they met both clinical expectations and the expectations of people themselves.

The provider consistently monitored outcomes and used feedback to improve care and quality of life. Regular reviews and audits were completed, and feedback from people and relatives informed changes and improvements.

Relatives told us they thought the dedication and commitment of staff and oversight of the registered manager, meant people had positive outcomes. They spoke of how the registered manager and staff were in regular contact and kept them up to date. Records of care confirmed staff monitored people's care and took prompt action when any changes were noted.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Effective

Consent to care and treatment

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider told people about their rights around consent and respected these when delivering person-centred care and treatment.

During the assessment people made their own choices and decisions about what they did, what they ate and how they filled their time. Our observations confirmed staff respected people's choices and decisions.

All care was provided in the least restrictive way. People could access all areas of the home, including the gardens as they wished.

Caring

Rating: Outstanding

Percentage Score: 100.00 %

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

This service is exceptionally caring

Commentary

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the provider involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.

At our last assessment we rated this key question outstanding. At this assessment the rating has remained outstanding.

This meant people were truly respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service.

↑ [Back to top](#)

Caring

Kindness, compassion and dignity

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

People's Experience

The provider was exceptional at treating people with kindness, empathy and compassion and in how they respected people's privacy and dignity.

Staff demonstrated an extremely compassionate approach with people. Staff consistently showed warmth and respect in every interaction, ensuring people felt valued and listened to.

People and relatives repeatedly told us staff were exceptionally kind and caring. Comments from relative's included, "[Person's name] is happy, cared for and loved here" and "The way they are with everyone is lovely, they give people a hug, it has taken so much pressure off the family it is amazing".

This exceptional level of kindness had a tangible and powerful impact on people's quality of life. People were emotionally secure, relaxed, and felt genuinely at home, which enabled them to build trusting relationships, express preferences confidently, and engage more fully in daily life. Relatives told us this compassionate culture reassured them that their loved ones were not only well cared for but genuinely cherished. Such The emotionally supportive approach to care contributed to people experiencing increased wellbeing, reduced anxiety, and a strong sense of belonging within the home.

The service had a welcoming, positive environment, and we heard lots of laughter and meaningful interactions during our visit. People were encouraged to retain and fully express their individuality and share their sense of humour with others. We observed staff engaged in relaxed, friendly conversations, using humour appropriately and always maintaining privacy.

Healthcare professionals told us the atmosphere and staff behaviour seen on the day of our inspection was "not for show" and reported staff were consistently kind and caring.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Caring

Treating people as individuals

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and

communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider treated people as individuals and was exceptional in how they made sure people's care, support and treatment met people's needs and preferences. The provider took account of people's strengths, abilities, aspirations, culture and unique backgrounds and protected characteristics.

Care plans were highly personalised, reflecting cultural, social and religious needs alongside communication preferences.

People were respected and celebrated as individuals, with diverse and unique skills and stories to share. We observed staff practice being exceptionally patient, person centred and very responsive to individual needs. For example, one person who was taking part in group activity decided that they no longer wanted to participate and wanted to go into the lounge. Staff supported the person immediately in a kind manner that did not disturb the group.

People gave positive feedback about the care, empathy and understanding shown by the staff team. One person explained their relative's dementia had deteriorated prior to living at the home "But since being here she is less anxious".

The service fully demonstrated that treating people as individuals was embedded in its culture and practice. This included staff having a clear and detailed knowledge about each person's life, preferences, and values. During the assessment staff shared people's interests prior to us meeting them. For example, one person had appeared in a fashion magazine, this article was framed in their bedroom and allowed visitors and staff to be able to chat to the person about their experience which the person appeared to enjoy.

People were fully respected as individuals and were supported to achieve their goals. For example, each person had highly personalised care provision, which was directed by them, as a partner in their support planning. This was evident in the interactions between staff and people, the activities planned with people, and ensuring people were fully engaged in decision-making where possible.

The service supported people to regain and maintain their independence, make choices, and feel a sense of control over their lives. For example, 1 person had been living at the home and had an authorised Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard (DoLS) in place, which meant the person would continue to reside at the home. The person wanted to return to their house and a legal challenge resulted in the DoLS being lifted. The service supported the person during this process and ensured they were able to return if they changed their mind.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Caring

Independence, choice and control

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► How do we score this?

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider was exceptional at promoting people's independence, so people knew their rights and had choice and control over their own care, treatment and wellbeing.

People living at the home and their relatives were involved in all aspects of their care and support. The manager was dedicated to ensuring choice was consistently provided to promote outstanding care provision. The manager said, "We are determined to prove that in the last years of life with dementia there is still Joy".

During the assessment we observed a range of activities taking place which reflected people's previous hobbies and interests, these included pottery, gardening, art and cooking. Feedback from relatives included "[name of person] Mum used to be a ceramicist and they do that with [them], they have chickens and an art room, they have got everything [name of person] would want" and "they do such a lot, [person's name] loves the music, they ensure [person's name] is involved. Loads of activities, always something going on".

Staff respected and valued people's contribution to the running of the home. People were encouraged and supported to take responsibilities for tasks and chores around the service. Staff ensured people were able to engage with tasks whenever they wished. For example, we observed a member of staff in the kitchen hand washing dishes. A person entered the room, the staff member immediately ran cold water into the sink, to lower water temperatures and once safe, stepped back to allow the person to take over this task if they wished. This subtle and enabling action demonstrated the service's commitment to supporting people to be as independent as possible. This person later told inspectors in response to a question about the quality of food in the service, "It really is good, I am one of the cooks".

The service had extensive grounds that were accessible to everyone as doors were not locked. Seating areas and covered spaces were provided for people to enjoy being outside. There was a 'potting' shed in which people helped the gardeners. People told us they enjoyed being outside and relatives said this ability and 'freedom' had a positive impact.

The manager was focused on providing the environment and support necessary to enable people living with dementia to live their best lives. They told us, "Anyone who lives here lives with dementia and need have no boundaries to their everyday life...daily recording shows the richness of life here". We reviewed the care notes which demonstrated how staff had provided support and encouragement to enable people to achieve their goals. People were able to get up and go to bed when then wished and breakfast was served throughout the morning when people choose to get up.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Caring

Responding to people's immediate needs

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

People's Experience

The provider was exceptional in how they listened to and understood people's needs, views and wishes. Staff responded to people's needs in the moment and acted to minimise any discomfort, concern or distress.

Staff responded in a calm and caring manner when a person required assistance or urgent medical help. Any changes in a person's condition were identified immediately because staff knew people well. This meant specialist support could be requested promptly. For example, 1 person had recently

started coughing occasionally during meals. The staff ensured that a referral to the 'Speech and Language Therapist' (SALT) team was made to ensure the person was safe and did not experience any distress.

The staff team acted to ensure people recovering from illness were supported to achieve optimum levels of health and wellbeing and reduce symptoms. Following a recent illness one relative contacted the home and stated, "I know [name of person] is always in good, safe hands with you, but the way everyone helped [name of person] to recover from this illness was exceptional. The love and kindness, the attention to little things all made a difference- like bringing [them] chopped fresh fruit, encouraging [them] to stand tall, making [them] laugh. Suggesting the giant game of scabble which [they] really enjoyed, enjoying cuddles with Sean the dog, and getting [them] involved in pottery again. All these things and more so clearly helped build [their] strength and happiness".

The manager described how care and support extended to people's relatives and loved ones to reduce anxiety and ensure personal relationships were maintained. One relative stated, "[Name of person] only moved in on Monday. [The manager] and the girls have been amazing. They have made a very difficult thing quite pleasurable. They have made [name of person] feel safe and comfortable and [name of person] has all of [their] special things around [them]. They are outstanding"

[↑ Back to top](#)

Caring

Workforce wellbeing and enablement

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider always cared about and promoted the wellbeing of their staff and was exceptional at supporting and enabling staff to always deliver person-centred care.

The manager demonstrated exceptional care of each staff member and told us, "We want the staff to feel as looked after as much as the people that live here".

Staff told us they loved working at the home and valued the opportunity to support people's independence. Staff comments included, "It's really good, really friendly, big happy family. Everyone is working towards same goal. Everyone treated the same way, respected and supported to do what they can" and "The best bit is some of the quirky conversation you can have with people. You just feel you are making a small impact in that moment. Making people not feel different, I think it is special".

Staff wellbeing when incidents occurred was considered, and discussions were held to give staff the opportunity to discuss how they felt in difficult situations and what could have been better. This practice supported both staff wellbeing and practice development as any learning was shared promptly with other staff to help minimise the risk of similar events reoccurring.

The home employed staff to fulfil several roles. The manager told us the rotas were completed with an understanding of individual staff needs, such as childcare arrangements. Staff also told us shift patterns were changed to ensure a good work life balance.

Supervisions were carried out and any concerns could be raised and addressed.

When staff resign, they were encouraged to complete an 'exit interview' in order for the manager to understand their reasons for leaving, what that staff member had enjoyed and what had been a challenge whilst working in the home. The manager told us this was a way of continuously improving the experiences of staff. We reviewed these records and noted that staff had resigned due to issues unrelated to their work. One staff member had commented, "I am very grateful for the kindness that was shown to me after announcing my resignation".

The home worked in partnership with a local college and encouraged volunteers to come and assist in the home to develop their skills and experiences. We observed one volunteer who was laying the dining room tables for lunch. They were supported by a member of staff from the college. The volunteer was very conscientious and spoke with people whilst carrying out their task. The manager had ensured appropriate checks and risk assessments had been completed with the college to ensure the volunteer and people who live in the service were safe. By offering these volunteering opportunities the service supported development of individuals and enabled their practices to be shared with other local care providers.

Responsive

Rating: Outstanding

Percentage Score: 93.00 %

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

This service is exceptionally responsive

Commentary

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the provider met people's needs.

At our last assessment we rated this key question outstanding. At this assessment the rating has remained outstanding.

This meant services were tailored to meet the needs of individuals and delivered to ensure flexibility, choice and continuity of care.

↑ [Back to top](#)

Responsive

Person-centred Care

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

People's Experience

The provider was exceptional at making sure people were at the centre of their care and treatment choices and they decided, in partnership with people, how to respond to any relevant changes in people's needs.

People were enabled to make choices for themselves and staff ensured they had the information they needed. We observed staff adapting care plans to reflect changes to people's needs and routines. The care plans were person centred and specific to individual needs, choices, likes and dislikes. People and their family members were involved in the care plan development and review processes, their input was valued and acted upon.

Staff had excellent knowledge of the people who lived at the home including their communication styles and needs. This enabled staff to provide person centred care which met people's changing needs and preferences. Healthcare professionals spoke very highly of the home and were complimentary of the person-centred approach. Professionals' comments included, "[The manager] leads by example and has created the very epitome of a person-centred culture of care" and "It's a wonderful home".

↑ [Back to top](#)

Responsive

Care provision, Integration and continuity

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider understood the diverse health and care needs of people and their local communities, so care was joined-up, flexible and supported choice and continuity.

The provider worked with other services, to ensure people received continuity of care. Examples included community nurses, GPs, and a consultant psychiatrist. Details of this support was recorded in people's care records.

Staff rotas were designed around continuity of care for people which meant people were supported by a consistent team of staff.

Where changes were needed, staff acted promptly and worked with professionals to review risks and adapt support. This helped ensure people's needs were understood and responded to in a timely and coordinated way. A Relative told us, "They emailed me yesterday as [name of person] had a bit of an issue. They keep me well informed and are completely transparent about everything" and "When [name of person] was poorly with a chest infection they kept me informed. It was such a relief that [they] were there, and I didn't have to worry".

[↑ Back to top](#)

Responsive

Providing Information

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider supplied appropriate, accurate and up-to-date information in formats that were tailored to individual needs.

Staff explained options in ways people could understand, using plain language and visual aids where needed. People and relatives told us they knew how to raise concerns and felt confident action would be taken. All the people we spoke with were positive about the home and stated they were kept informed.

Menu boards displayed on the dining room tables, clearly described what was available at each meal in both a written and pictorial format.

The manager and deputy described that during a recent pre assessment at another care home, the staff in that service were unable to meet the needs of a person due to their behaviour. The manager had taken time to get to know the individual's needs, likes and preferences. When the person moved into Coombe House Residential Home staff immediately identified the person was hard of hearing and could not hear staff. The person was able to write and therefore staff acquired a writing board. The person settled in quickly and enjoyed communicating with staff and was able to join in activities and regained control over their life.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Responsive

Listening to and involving people

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider was exceptional at enabling people to share feedback and ideas, or raise complaints about their care, treatment and support. Staff always involved people in decisions about their care and told them what had changed as a result.

There was a complaints policy, and we found complaints were recorded and investigated. Information about how to complain was on the provider's website and shared with people when they moved into the service. Relatives told us

they knew how to complain but said they, “Had never had any concerns” and “Staff are always available”.

Feedback was gained in a variety of ways including by listening to the people who lived in the home, suggestions from visiting healthcare professionals and from people who visited the home. There had been some negative feedback from people about the quality of a service received from an external service provider. The manager spoke with people and staff and took action to replace the company to ensure people received a good service.

A survey was sent to people’s relatives to gain an understanding of both their experiences of the care but also how the relative had felt about the admission process. This was to improve the service for people living there but also to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of family members going through the process of finding a suitable care home for their loved one who was living with dementia. The survey found people would have benefited from being able to talk about what was happening and how they felt.

Changes had been made because of the feedback and learning shared with relatives. Specific issues had been discussed with individual respondents and plans developed with the aim of further enhancing people’s and relative’s experiences who are moving into the home. These plans included providing support to people who were on the ‘waiting list’ to live at the home and offer support in the local community by arranging weekly social events such as afternoon tea.

Staff recognised and took action when people required additional reassurance or individual approaches to communication. This showed staff understood and respected people’s different ways of expressing views.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Responsive

Equity in access

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people’s care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider made sure that people could access the care, support and treatment they needed when they needed it.

We observed people had access to equipment to in line with their assessed needs. The home's layout allowed people to move freely using mobility aids. Outside areas were well maintained and designed to allow people to move independently between different areas.

The management and excellent culture of the home ensured that regardless of people's dementia diagnosis, they had the same access to healthcare and services as everyone else. This included being referred to health care professionals quickly if they became unwell, ensuring medicines were reviewed by the GP and psychiatrist, and arranging appointments for people, for example, with chiropodists and district nurses.

Care plans detailed people's equipment requirements to promote their independence. There were adapted facilities such as hoists, toilet and bathing equipment, and adapted chairs to support people to overcome physical challenges.

Staff had completed training in equality and diversity. We observed staff treating people as unique individuals, using their preferred name. The home had received feedback from a paramedic that stated they were, "Struck by the residents happiness, contentment and respect and how incredibly well they were cared for" and described the atmosphere as peaceful and joyful and the staff as truly dedicated. Another healthcare professional said, "Having seen Coombe House, it shows me what the gold standard for care should look and feel like".

[↑ Back to top](#)

Responsive

Equity in experiences and outcomes

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

Staff and leaders were innovative in how they listened to information about people who are most likely to experience inequality in experience or outcomes. Staff and leaders actively used this information to provide exceptionally tailored care, support and treatment in response to this.

The manager told us that everyone deserved high quality care and the staff worked hard to ensure people had a good quality of life. They stated, "We are always trying to think outside the box to make things work for people".

The service shared information and experiences with health professionals to enable them to minimize their impact on people's wellbeing. The service had identified that community nursing uniforms caused 1-person significant distress. As a result, they had engaged with the community team and made arrangements for these professionals not to wear uniforms while visiting the service. This ensured the person consented to medical interventions and reduced any potential stress for this person.

The service had recognized that singing helped another person to relax when supported or medical interventions were required. This information had been shared with the hospital prior to a recent planned admission. However, hospital staff had not recognized the importance of this information and had experienced significant challenges supporting the person. Staff for Coombe House had visited the person in hospital, demonstrated their techniques which had enable the person to receive treatment. These practices had subsequently been adopted by the hospital team when supporting this person. The staff team's skills and willingness to share learning and best practice both supported people's wellbeing and helped demonstrate best practice to partners in the care system.

One relative had written a book about their experience of Coombe House. The book contained poems and pictures of the person at Coombe house and stated, "Every time I go through the gates.... it's like entering another world". Feedback from the relative given to the manager stated that they and their loved one had rekindled their relationship due to the exceptional care and support at Coombe house.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Responsive

Planning for the future

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

People were given exceptional support to plan for important life changes, so they could make informed decisions about their future, including at the end of their life.

Staff discussed future options sensitively and revisited conversations when people and/or the relatives were ready. The information available was detailed, person centred and truly reflected people's choices to be supported in their home where possible. The management of the home also considered individual requests from external partners when a person was at the end of their life, this was discussed amongst the staff and family, and a decision was made in the persons best interest to ensure the person's wishes were respected.

The service demonstrated a thoughtful and person-centred approach to end-of-life care. The registered manager and staff told us how they had supported a person with dignity and respect, ensuring their wishes and preferences were honoured.

During the assessment we observed family members being made to feel welcome and valued whilst visiting. Staff ensured the visitors were comfortable and arranged for additional chairs to be provided next to the person's bed so they could hold hands and spend time together in a quiet and calm environment. The relative explained that whilst the person was, "nearing the end" the care had been, "Amazing, it could not be better, wonderful in every way and very unique". A funeral director provided positive feedback of the support the service provided to peoples' families. Their comments included, "Bereaved families always tell us how wonderful the staff are".

Staff were also supported through these distressing times and offered opportunities to discuss how they felt and what had happened. This compassionate approach ensured that both the person at the end of their life, and those who were grieving afterwards, received the emotional support and continuity they needed.

Well-led

Rating: Outstanding

Percentage Score: 96.00 %

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

This service is exceptionally well-led

Commentary

Well-led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture.

At our last assessment we rated this key question outstanding. At this assessment the rating has remained outstanding.

This meant service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Well-led

Shared direction and culture

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider had a very clear shared vision, strategy and culture. This was based on transparency, equity, equality and human rights, diversity and inclusion, engagement, and an exceptional understanding of the challenges and the needs of people living with dementia.

The registered manager and management team promoted an extremely positive and inclusive culture where person-centred care was the priority. People, their families and staff were empowered to be involved in changes and improvements to the service. People's relatives told us, "What I love is the

homely feel, home from home”, “It’s a nice environment, I have never seen a care home like it” and “Nowhere compares to Coombe and the loving, happy, creative and fun atmosphere that [staff] have created”.

Observations throughout the assessment and feedback confirmed staff consistently demonstrated compassion and respect, creating a homely environment where people felt safe and valued.

↑ [Back to top](#)

Well-led

Capable, compassionate and inclusive leaders

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people’s care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider had exceptionally inclusive leaders at all levels who understood the context in which they delivered care, treatment and support and embodied the culture and values of their workforce and organisation. Leaders had the skills, knowledge, experience and credibility to lead effectively. They always did so with integrity, openness and honesty.

The registered manager had extensive experience which was shared with the deputy manager and staff. Staff, family members and healthcare professionals were extremely complimentary of the manager and comments included “Absolutely brilliant never worked anywhere like Coombe...its open and free... [Name of manager] is amazing, the love [they have] for here, [Name of manager] knows the people who live here so well. [people] are allowed to be [themselves] which is lovely” and “[Name of manager] is a unique remarkable inspiring loving and very clever person who leads by example and has created the very epitome of a person-centred culture of care”.

The managers exceptional commitment to supporting people living with dementia was recognised locally and they received a 'lifetime award for 'outstanding contribution to care and support' hosted by Cornwall council and Cornwall adult health and social care learning partnership"

All the staff we spoke with told us they felt supported and listened to by both the manager and deputy manager. Team meetings provided staff the opportunity to understand any planned changes within the home, discuss best practice and share what was working well and any challenges.

The leadership of the home ensured people experienced high quality care that is evidence based and from staff that are calm, confident and competent to carry out their role, in a kind and caring manner.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Well-led

Freedom to speak up

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider was exceptional at fostering a positive culture where people knew they could speak up and their voice would be heard.

Leaders promoted a culture where speaking up was encouraged, normalised and genuinely valued. Staff confirmed they were always listened to and that issues were acted on promptly, contributing to a workplace where people felt respected, psychologically safe and able to influence improvements.

People using the service and their relatives also told us this open and responsive culture was evident throughout all aspects of support. Relatives of the people living at the home told us, "You can tell the staff enjoy working here" and "Everyone who works there seems to love it".

The provider had ensured formal and informal methods of providing feedback were available for people, staff, family members and health care professionals to share their experiences and opinions in a way that was safe and without the fear of negative consequences. These included formal surveys, care plan reviews, staff meetings and learning from incidents.

Staff told us the manager and deputy were “Understanding if you have a problem”, “They listen if I need to say anything” and “Approachable and helpful if you have any questions”. During a staff meeting, a discussion was held about the impact of changing to a digital medication administration system. The minutes of the meeting recorded staff were able to share their opinion and jointly decided against the system as it was not considered person centred. This meant staff were involved in any decisions and were able to openly discuss continuous improvement and the potential impact on the people living at the home.

Duty of candour principles were well understood and consistently applied with leaders being honest, apologising where appropriate, and clearly explaining what action had been taken.

[↑ Back to top](#)

Well-led

Workforce equality, diversity and inclusion

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people’s care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider strongly valued diversity in their workforce. They had an inclusive and fair culture which had improved equality and equity for people who worked for them.

There was a diverse range of backgrounds, skills and experience within the workforce. The service had an open, inclusive recruitment procedure.

The staff handbook provided staff with information relating to the home and policies for them to carry out their role safely and to advise them of their rights. The manager had ensured staff were able to apply for reasonable adjustments because of childcare. During the assessment staff were seen to be able to attend work after they had taken their children to school and 1 staff member explained they had recently changed their working pattern to ensure a better work life balance.

The provider used digital systems for recording information in people's care plans and staff training. The management were mindful of staff members learning needs and ensured they were able to complete their training and records. For example, 1 member of staff was dyslexic, and was able to dictate to ensure they could record daily notes and the responses to the online training.

↑ [Back to top](#)

Well-led

Governance, management and sustainability

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Good – This service maximises the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider had clear responsibilities, roles, systems of accountability and good governance. They used these to manage and deliver good quality, sustainable care, treatment and support. They acted on the best information about risk, performance and outcomes, and shared this securely with others when appropriate.

There were systems to support the registered manager to identify and address quality concerns and risks to the organisation.

The registered manager had undertaken quality checks which included reviewing incidents and accidents and medication. Outcomes from these audits were discussed and action plans developed to address the areas required.

↑ [Back to top](#)

Well-led

Partnerships and communities

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider clearly understood and carried out their duty to collaborate and worked in partnership, and services worked seamlessly for people. They always shared information and learning with partners and collaborated for improvement.

The registered manager and staff worked an exceptionally coordinated and proactive way with health and social care professionals. They demonstrated exemplary partnership working, they consistently sought out collaboration, shared information openly, and advocated strongly on behalf of people. This meant individuals experienced care that was not just coordinated, but truly integrated, support wrapped seamlessly around their needs.

Professionals consistently praised the team for their knowledge, responsiveness and strong advocacy, describing joint working as highly effective and person-centred.

↑ [Back to top](#)

Well-led

Learning, improvement and innovation

Overall Score

1 2 3 4

► [How do we score this?](#)

Summary

Outstanding – This service is exceptional at maximising the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Processes

The provider had a strong focus on continuous learning, innovation and improvement across the organisation and local system. They always encouraged creative ways of delivering equality of experience, outcome and quality of life for people. They actively contributed to safe, effective practice and research.

The management team was committed to providing high quality care for people living with dementia based on the latest research and best practice. They attended conferences and actively sought opportunities for learning and development. As previously mentioned, research findings relating to hydration and nutrition were reviewed and actions taken to improve the experiences for people.

Best practice was shared both within the home and externally. The manager provided speeches at dementia focused conferences to other care home providers and professionals. Feedback from these events was exceptionally positive and included "It's so interesting to see what care is out there for people with dementia as so often this is not a good experience for people and their families" and "Learning that fabulous care homes exist and what makes them fabulous". One healthcare professional told us the manager "Is a major influencer, leader and promoter of the very best that dementia care can be in Cornwall and beyond".

Further information on person centred care was shared locally by the manager once a month which was facilitated by the "Cornwall health team". A variety of professionals were invited to these learning sessions to promote high quality care across other services.

