



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

Corporate Provider Annual Performance Report

Name of Corporate Provider:

The Avenues Trust

Name of Provider Relationship Manager:

Winnie Spencer

April 2007 – March 2008

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The Avenues Trust

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Director of Corporate Affairs: Diane Walker
Director of Humans Resources: Jo Land
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Brief description of organisation:

The Avenues Trust is a not for profit company, providing support services for people with complex or challenging needs, including residential services within the local community. The Trust provides services for people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health problems.

The organisation operates 43 care homes for younger adults in the London, Eastern and South East CSCI Regions, along with 2 domiciliary care agencies and 1 care home for older people in the South East Region.

The Avenues Trust's vision is, "To deliver services with the individuals we support, placing their needs and hopes first, working with them to enjoy their lives within their communities."

The Avenues Trust supports over 800 people in London, Cambridge and the South East, offering community and home-based support to people with mental health issues, learning disabilities or physical disabilities, including a home care service mainly for older people. The Trust also supports people in registered care homes, providing support services to people with high support needs, including challenging behaviour and profound and multiple learning disabilities (including a registered nursing home for people who need long-term support with their mental health).

The Trust has recently started a support service for young people with learning disabilities.

For the purpose of this annual report, 43 regulated (registered) care services were operating for the period covered by the report.

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1 SUMMARY

What the organisation does well for people:

The domiciliary care agencies and the care home for older people performed extremely well, exceeding the national average and meeting 100% of key National Minimum Standards (NMS). Specific areas of improvement were noted in the care homes for young adults and these are detailed in the next section.

People using the services were able to exercise choice and control in their day-to-day lives and were consulted regarding their care and support needs. Assessments were fully completed and people's needs were set out in care plans, which included risk assessments.

The organisation was good at ensuring people's equality and diversity needs were promoted and considered, as well as their personal preferences when carrying out assessments and formulating care plans.

Areas of good practice included enabling people to take an active role in learning disability forums, an 'our say' team in the organisation and opportunity sessions to help people express their views regarding the service. People were also provided with access to independent advocates to support them in expressing their views or concerns.

The Avenues Trust provided people with excellent opportunities to lead varied and fulfilling lifestyles and to reach their potential. People had access to a range of social, educational and recreational activities and were able to maintain and enjoy relationships with family and friends.

The management of the services was generally described in the sample of inspection reports as open and inclusive. Staff, relatives and/or representatives and other health care professionals, commented positively towards the management of the services.

Staff were well supervised, trained and competent to provide care and support to people. The Avenues Trust provided a variety of training and development opportunities including National Vocational Qualifications, mandatory and specialist training for their employees.

Positive feedback was received regarding the staff and the care provided. For example, relatives stated, "In my opinion they do everything to the best of their ability I am pleased with everything that is done for my relative" and, "The accommodation is superb, the care is genuine and it is a real home. We are very happy with the services. The care staff are very

welcoming, they always offer us a cup of tea”.

The organisation’s policies and procedures for safeguarding and complaints protected people from harm or abuse and enabled them to voice their concerns. There were good arrangements in place for monitoring the quality of the services, which took into account the varied needs of people using the services.

How the services have improved for people:

The Avenues Trust domiciliary care agencies performed extremely well and achieved 100% compliance in terms of key NMS met, which exceeded the national average.

In the care home for older people The Avenues Trust made a significant and marked improvement overall in the number of key NMS met from 71% to 100%, exceeding the national average.

In care homes for younger adults The Avenues Trust again made a marked improvement overall in the number of key NMS met from 66% to 89%, again exceeding the national average.

Improvements were noted in specific outcome areas. For example, in the outcome area of choice and control, the care homes for older people and younger adults performed well and exceeded the national average. People using the services were provided with increased opportunities to exercise choice and control over their lives.

In the outcome area health and wellbeing, the care homes also performed well and exceeded the national average with very good systems in place to promote and ensure the health and well being of people living in the care homes.

The outcome area of safeguarding also improved, with the care homes for older people exceeding the national average and the care homes for younger adults improving in line with the national average. People living in the care homes were therefore protected and safeguarded from abuse or harm.

The care homes continued to perform well in the outcome area of fulfilment, with a slight improvement noted in care homes for younger adults and people were offered a range of opportunities to lead fulfilling lifestyles and reach their potential.

Improvements were evident in the outcome area of management and staffing and the care home for older people made a marked improvement exceeding the national average and the care homes for younger adults also improved in the number of key NMS met and was broadly in line with the national average. This meant that people living in care homes received a well managed and structured service, which was run in their best interests.

Within the outcome area of quality assurance, the domiciliary care agencies and care home for older people both performed well, while the care homes for younger adults made a marked improvement. The systems in place ensured that the quality of services was monitored and that the views of people were sought and taken into account in the development and improvement of services.

What the organisation could do better for people:

In one service performing less well, the inspection report stated that improvements could be made in the area of risk management and assessment for one person using the service.

The Avenues Trust could also improve the arrangements for medication management to protect people's wellbeing. Areas for improvement were identified in five inspection reports in respect of medication management.

In the care homes for adults, further improvement was needed to ensure a well-maintained and safe environment for people. These included maintenance and repair, the need to review infection control practices, the storage of hazardous substances and the storage/labelling of food and fire safety to ensure people's safety and welfare.

In one service performing less well, the inspection report identified that people using the service could be placed at risk as a result of the failure to address hot water temperatures and risks associated with the lack of radiator covers.

There was a minor shortfall identified in one care home regarding a lack of induction records for two staff and in some services the need to consider and review the staffing arrangements including the use of agency staff in order to promote consistency in the care provided.

Methodology:

This report is a retrospective report drawing on inspection findings from April 2007 to March 2008, and covers a 12 month period. Data was extracted from all available inspection reports of registered services operated by the provider during this period, with the most recent score for each standard reported on. In line with the commission's inspection methodology in relation to the frequency of inspections, a number of services may not have been inspected during the period covered by this report. Where possible, data will be captured from the last time the standard was inspected prior to this period. The data was extracted from the reports of:

- 1 Care Homes for Older People
- 43 Care Homes for Younger Adults
- 2 Domiciliary Care Agencies

The performance of the services against the national minimum standards was analysed.

The narrative of 22 reports was examined to help interpret the data extracted and to identify strengths, areas for development and examples of good practice. The sampling was based proportionately on the range of performance reflected in the data analysis.

Communication with the provider throughout the year was considered and information from meetings and correspondence is included in the evidence section of the key findings.

Communication with the Commission's regulatory teams was also taken into account.

Data analysis in the form of tables, bar and pie charts were used to support the narrative in the report.

2 KEY FINDINGS

Choice and Control

Intended Outcome: People using or living in the organisation's services are able to exercise choice and control.

Judgement:

The Avenues Trust provided people with good opportunities to exercise choice and control in their lives by involving them in the decision-making process.

People's needs were assessed and set out in a plan of care and risks to people using the service were identified and addressed.

Evidence:

There are no key NMS in respect of domiciliary care agencies for this outcome area. Evidence was reviewed under the standard 1 statement of purpose and service user guide, and standard 4 contract. The Avenues Trust domiciliary care agencies met 100% of NMS 1 and 4 exceeding the national average.

The Avenues Trust had a comprehensive statement of purpose and service user guide, which provided people using the service and/or their representatives with sufficient information to decide if the agency can meet their needs.

People using the domiciliary care agencies were provided with a contract, which included details of charges for the services and a statement of terms and conditions.

In the care homes for older people and young adults The Avenues Trust performed well and exceeded the national average for both types of service. The care home for older people met 100% of the key NMS and care homes for young adults made a four percentage point improvement in meeting 94% of key NMS in this outcome area.

People using the service had their needs assessed prior to admission and set out in care plans, which were regularly reviewed. Risk assessments were completed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people using the

service.

An inspection report stated, "The assessments indicated that information was taken in regards to different aspects of daily living, communication needs and social preferences, and included health needs and evidence of assessing compatibility with other service users". Another inspection report said, "Where risks were identified, procedures and care plans reflected how these were being managed".

Inspection reports sampled stated that the people using the service and/or their relatives and health care professionals were consulted and involved in the decision-making process. The inspection report sampled for the older people's care home stated that people were provided with opportunities to make choices and take control "within the limitations of an individual's disability".

An inspection report on a care home for young adults stated, "Residents were involved in decisions about them, supported to be as independent as possible", and "Individual plans were comprehensive and involved service users and their representatives, including family or advocates and other professionals involved".

In one service performing less well, the inspection report stated that improvements could be made in the area of risk management and assessment for one person using the service.

Health and Wellbeing

Intended Outcome: The organisation has robust systems in place to ensure the health and well being of people using or living in their services is promoted.

Judgement:

The organisation had systems in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of people, and delivered care in a way that promoted the dignity, respect and privacy of individuals.

In some services, the management of medication could be improved further to promote the safety and wellbeing of people.

Evidence:

The Avenues Trust domiciliary care agencies continued to perform well and met 100% of the key NMS for this outcome area, exceeding the national average.

People using the domiciliary care agencies had their needs assessed prior to a service being commenced and had support plans in place, which were regularly reviewed and included risk assessments. An inspection report stated that people were treated with dignity and respect and that the medication administration policy and procedures protected their welfare.

In the care homes for older people and young adults The Avenues Trust performed well and exceeded the national average for both types of service. The home for older people made a marked improvement in the number of key NMS met from 60% to 100% and in care homes for younger adults there was an improvement from 90% to 95% in this outcome area.

People's needs were set out in care plans, which were described in some inspection reports as comprehensive, person-centred and regularly reviewed with those involved. Positive feedback was received regarding the service provided. A relative stated, "In my opinion they do everything to the best of their ability I am pleased with everything that is done for my relative".

The personal and healthcare needs of people were met appropriately and support was provided in a dignified manner. The organisation's policies and procedures supported people's equality and diversity needs and personal

preferences. For example, the provision of personal care support and the gender preferences of people using the services.

One inspection report stated, "The home supports individuals from ethnic minorities and also has a multi-cultural staff team", and another stated, "Staff were observed providing various aspects of personal care support for the service users, this support was offered in a manner that promoted the service users' dignity and privacy".

Care plans included information and actions to address people's healthcare needs and health action plans were in place. Other healthcare professionals and specialists were consulted as required regarding people's healthcare needs.

People using the service were generally protected by The Avenues Trust policies and procedures for the administration of medication and staff were trained and competent in medication management. Inspection reports stated, "Medicines were safely managed" and, "All staff involved in the handling and administration of medication are trained and are subject to an annual assessment and top up training".

People were provided with nutritious meals and the necessary support during mealtimes. Special diets were catered for and feedback from people using the service regarding the food provided and the mealtime activities was positive. Some inspection reports stated that people living in the care homes were fully involved in the purchase, preparation and cooking of food where possible.

Inspection reports stated, "Meals provided were varied and planned to meet the residents choice and preferences", and "The staff were observed sitting at the table with service users and were offering support and encouragement in a dignified and sensitive manner".

Areas for improvement were identified in five services in respect of medication management. These included gaps in recording practices and auditing arrangements to ensure that the amounts held were accurate in two services. One inspection report commented on the need for protocols in relation to medication prescribed on an 'as required' basis and two inspection reports highlighted the need to evidence that staff have received an up to date assessment of their training and competence in the administration of medication.

Safeguarding

Intended Outcome: The organisation is able to demonstrate that people who use or live in their services are safeguarded and protected from harm or abuse.

Judgement:

People were safeguarded from harm or abuse by the organisation's policies and procedures. Good systems were in place to ensure complaints from people using the service and/or their representatives were listened and responded to.

The Avenues Trust care agencies and care home for older people performed well, exceeding the national average in the percentage of key NMS met in this outcome area. Performance had also improved in respect of the organisation's care homes for adults, although in some services, areas for further improvement were needed to ensure a well-maintained and safe environment for people.

Evidence:

The Avenues Trust domiciliary care agencies performed well and met 100% of the key NMS for this outcome area, exceeding the national average. People using the care agencies were protected by the organisation's policies and procedures for safeguarding, complaints and health and safety.

An inspection report stated, "Service users can be confident that the agency follows good health and safety procedures and that its policies and practices will promote their welfare and safeguard them from abuse or harm". The inspection report indicated that the agency had risk management arrangements in place to ensure people's safety including assessment of individual risks and risks related to the environment. The agencies staff were trained in safeguarding.

In the care home for older people The Avenues Trust made a marked improvement in the number of key NMS met in this outcome area from 50% to 100%, exceeding the national average.

In care homes for younger adults The Avenues Trust again made an improvement in the number of key NMS met in this outcome area from 74% to 78% which was broadly in line with the national average.

The organisation had policies and procedures in place to protect people from harm or abuse and to enable people to complain. Inspection reports stated, "There are sound policies and procedures for the handling of complaints and concerns", and "Service users can be confident that their views and concerns will be listened to and acted upon and they will be protected from abuse". There was one example where a complaint from a relative had not been recorded but had been appropriately responded to.

People using the service and their relatives commented positively towards the care provided and relatives said they were kept informed and knew how to complain. One relative stated, "We've no complaints, in fact, I don't think they could do any better than they do".

An inspection report described areas of good practice, which enabled people to have their say and voice their concerns, including attendance at the local learning disability forum and the organisation's 'Our Say' team. People were also provided with opportunities to access independent advocates to raise concerns or complaints on their behalf.

Staff were provided with training in safeguarding, which was also included as part of their induction. An inspection report stated, "All staff have received adult protection training to ensure they are clear about what constitutes abuse and what to do if abuse is seen or suspected". Staff were also trained in health and safety areas including first aid, food hygiene, infection control, moving and handling and fire safety.

The Avenues Trust generally provided people with comfortable, hygienic and safe environments to live in. These were described in the majority of inspection reports sampled as homely, clean and comfortable. Policies and procedures regarding safe working practices were in place including infection control procedures. Ongoing maintenance and repair programmes were in place in the care homes and health and safety checks were completed on a regular basis and recorded.

Inspection reports stated, "Avenues Trust has a range of policies governing health and safety matters, which are underpinned by a robust level of investment in training" and, "There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere in the home. It is tidy, well maintained and very clean. Universal infection control procedures and environmental risk assessments are in place".

In services with scope for improvement, a number of inspection reports identified some environmental and health and safety shortfalls. These included the need for redecoration and repair of some areas, improvement to the external environment in three care homes and a review of infection control practices in two others.

Two inspection reports commented on the need to improve the arrangements for the storage of hazardous substances, the storage/labelling of food, and in three services the use and operation of fire doors to ensure people's safety and welfare.

In a service performing less well, the inspection report identified that people using the service could be placed at risk as a result of the failure to address hot water temperatures and risks associated with the lack of radiator covers.

Fulfilment

Intended Outcome: The organisation has systems in place to ensure people who use their services are supported and enabled to realise their full potential.

Judgement:

The Avenues Trust had very good systems in place to enable people with varying needs and aspirations to lead fulfilling lives and realise their full potential.

Evidence:

There are no key NMS in respect of domiciliary care agencies for this outcome area therefore data was reviewed under national minimum standard 9: autonomy and independence.

The Avenues Trust was good at enabling people to make their own decisions and supporting independence and met 100% of the NMS for this area, exceeding the national average.

The agencies provided a flexible service promoting the rights and independence of people using the service. One inspection report stated, "The support plans and discussions with the manager and staff show that service users are enabled to develop and maintain their independence".

In the care home for older people The Avenues Trust continued to perform well and met 100% of key NMS in this outcome area, exceeding the national average.

In care homes for younger adults The Avenues Trust made a slight improvement in the number of key NMS met in this outcome area, which is in line with the national average.

People living in care homes were provided with a variety of opportunities to take part in a range of activities and to maintain contact with family, friends and the local community. People were able to exercise choice and control over their lives and their rights were promoted.

An inspection report stated, "The service users are encouraged to make decisions and choices with support from staff". Other inspection reports sampled provided examples of advocacy services for service users to enable

them to express their views and promote their rights.

The organisation took account of equality and diversity matters and incorporated people's diverse and individual needs into their care and activity plans.

An inspection report stated, "People who use services are able to make choices about their lifestyle and supported to develop their skills. Social, educational, cultural and recreational activities meet individual expectations". Another inspection report stated, "Service users can be confident that the home will be responsive to their culture, religion, age and disability".

Demonstrating the range of activities and interests provided and promoted, another inspection report stated, "This is a home, which makes sure they have fun! One service user proudly showed the many medals he'd won playing football. Another was clearly proud of the two pigs he had been supported to keep in the grounds of the home".

Relatives comments included, "It's lovely he is always out and about", "We now make sure we phone the home before we visit to make sure he is there as he is always out" and, "The accommodation is superb, the care is genuine and it is a real home. We are very happy with the services. The care staff are very welcoming, they always offer us a cup of tea".

Management and Staffing

Intended Outcome: The organisation ensures that people who use or live in their services benefit from well managed and structured services.

Judgement:

The Avenues Trust had good systems in place to ensure that a well-managed and structured service benefited people. People were protected by the organisation's recruitment policy and supported by trained and competent staff.

Evidence:

The Avenues Trust domiciliary care agencies performed well and met 100% of the key NMS for this outcome area, exceeding the national average. The people using the service were protected by the organisation's recruitment policy and procedures, and staff were appropriately checked and trained to undertake their roles. Staff described the training as 'excellent' and were provided with regular supervision and support.

An inspection report stated, "Service users can be confident that they will be protected by the agency's recruitment procedures and staff training programme, which ensure that staff have the right qualities and skills to meet their needs".

The inspection report sampled stated that the agency was well planned and managed and run in the best interests of people, providing a consistent service.

In the care home for older people The Avenues Trust made a marked improvement in the number of key NMS met in this outcome area from 80% to 100%, exceeding the national average

In care homes for younger adults The Avenues Trust again made an improvement in the number of key NMS met in this outcome area from 80% to 84%, which was broadly in line with the national average.

People living in the care homes were protected by the organisations recruitment policy and procedures and were supported by staff that were competent, trained and supervised. Many of the inspection reports sampled

provided feedback from the staff and relatives regarding the management of the care homes, describing a culture of openness and respect.

For example, a member of staff said that the manager "...goes that extra mile for all of us", and a health care professional said the manager "and the staff are very welcoming, friendly and always on hand to help. They meet all the patients' needs".

Inspection reports stated, "Staffing levels are sufficient, and staff receive the necessary training, supervision and support, in order to meet service users' current needs and provide a good service for them" and, "The manager communicates a clear sense of direction and staff are aware of the standards that are expected of them. She also promotes equality and diversity issues and is aware of good practice issues."

An inspection report commented that relatives spoke highly of staff stating the staff have unlimited patience and communicate well. One relative stated, "I can't speak highly enough about the staff. They are really good. I can see progress that I never thought possible".

A structured training and induction programme was in place for staff in care homes which included areas of mandatory training such as health and safety, and more specialist training including for example, management of epilepsy and diabetes. One inspection report described the development of the organisation's extensive education and training programme referred to as "The Avenues Academy". The staff had access to National Vocational Qualifications training, and the organisation had an ongoing programme to ensure staff completed their qualifications and training.

There was a minor shortfall identified in one care home regarding a lack of induction records for two staff. Three inspection reports commented regarding the reliance on agency staff where vacancies existed and stated this needed to be reviewed in order to promote consistency of care to people using the services. One inspection report included feedback from a member of staff where staffing levels had been reduced as a result of vacancies in the home. In this example, the staff stated that it was their view they were short staffed at peak periods as a result of the changes.

Quality Assurance & Continuous Improvement

Intended Outcome: The organisation has robust systems in place to monitor the quality of its services and can demonstrate development and continuous improvement.

Judgement:

The Avenues Trust had good systems in place to monitor the quality of its services and consult people regarding the care provided in order to promote continuous improvement.

Evidence:

The range of services registered with the commission and provided by The Avenues Trust all successfully exceeded the national average in relation to the number of key NMS under this outcome area.

The domiciliary care agencies and care home for older people both performed well and met 100% of the key NMS for this outcome area.

In care homes for younger adults The Avenues Trust again made a marked improvement in the percentage of key NMS met in this outcome area from 86% to 93%.

The organisation had a comprehensive quality assurance policy and procedure and structured Annual Quality Cycle. This included a monthly visit to services, an annual service review, three service review meetings each year and service audits (including a health and safety audit). Other stakeholders were consulted through meetings and/or annual stakeholder questionnaires.

People using the services were provided with 'opportunity sessions' and access to advocacy services where required. An inspection report stated, "The service has introduced opportunity sessions for residents, to establish how they feel about life within the home and what the service can do to improve where dissatisfaction has been expressed".

Staff surveyed gave positive feedback and in some examples described open and inclusive management approaches in the running of care homes.

An inspection report stated, "The home's quality assurance assessment indicates that as well as seeking feedback from service users in the

opportunity sessions and their PCP review meetings, annual questionnaires are sent out to seek views from friends, families, health professionals and other organisations involved in the service. Records seen confirmed that their views are taken into account and acted upon".

In the feedback from a recent survey a relative commented, "a big thank you, my relative looks so well and contented" and "the care was all given with love".

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