

Carers and Companions Limited

# Carers and Companions Ltd

## Inspection report

Upper Floor, The Arcade  
South Hawksworth Street  
Ilkley  
LS29 9DY

Tel: 01943609484

Website: [www.carersandcompanions.co.uk](http://www.carersandcompanions.co.uk)

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### Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

### About the service

Carers and Companions Ltd is a domiciliary care agency providing personal care to people in their own homes. The service provides support to older people, people with dementia, people with a physical disability, people with a learning disability and autistic people. At the time of our inspection there were 13 people using the service.

### People's experience of the service and what we found:

We expect health and social care providers to guarantee people with a learning disability and autistic people respect, equality, dignity, choices and independence and good access to local communities that most people take for granted. 'Right support, right care, right culture' is the guidance CQC follows to make assessment and judgements about services supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people and providers must have regard to it.

### Right Support:

The provider assessed risks to people and demonstrated safety was always effectively managed.

People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

Staff received appropriate training which equipped them with the right skills and knowledge to deliver safe, person-centred care. Safe recruitment processes were in place.

People were usually supported to receive their medicines safely.

### Right Care:

Care was personalised and responsive to people's needs.

People who used the service and their relatives were very happy with the service and confirmed they were involved in planning their care.

Feedback about the management team and staff was consistently positive.

People received support from staff who were reliable, arrived on time and stayed the agreed period.

### Right Culture:

The service was consistently well-led. The management team promoted high quality care and monitored practice against the service's vision and values.

Staff were proud to work at Carers and Companions Ltd.

Effective systems were in place for engaging with people who used the service, their relatives and staff. The service had received many compliments which evidenced people received person-centred care.

Staff and management worked in partnership with other professionals.

During the inspection we identified a small number of areas to improve such as recording the administration of some medicines and formalising staff supervision arrangements. The registered manager was very responsive and took immediate action to address these issues.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was Good (published 22 December 2017).

Why we inspected

We inspected due to the length of time since the last inspection.

We undertook a focused inspection to review the key questions of safe and well-led only. For those key question not inspected, we used the ratings awarded at the last inspection to calculate the overall rating.

You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection by selecting the 'All inspection reports and timeline' link for Carers and Companions Ltd on our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk).

Follow Up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service, which will help inform when we next inspect.

# The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

<p><b>Is the service safe?</b></p> <p>The service was safe.</p> <p>Details are in our safe findings below.</p>	<p><b>Good</b> ●</p>
<p><b>Is the service well-led?</b></p> <p>The service was well-led.</p> <p>Details are in our well-led findings below.</p>	<p><b>Good</b> ●</p>

# Carers and Companions Ltd

## Detailed findings

### Background to this inspection

#### The inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

#### Inspection team

The inspection was carried out by 2 inspectors and 1 Expert by Experience. An Expert by Experience is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service.

#### Service and service type

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own houses and flats.

#### Registered Manager

This provider is required to have a registered manager to oversee the delivery of regulated activities at this location. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Registered managers and providers are legally responsible for how the service is run, for the quality and safety of the care provided and compliance with regulations.

At the time of our inspection there was a registered manager in post.

#### Notice of inspection

The inspection was announced. We gave the service 24 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because it is a small service and we needed to be sure that the provider or registered manager would be in the office to support the inspection.

#### What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and Healthwatch. Healthwatch is an independent consumer champion that gathers

and represents the views of the public about health and social care services in England. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR). This is information providers are required to send us annually with key information about their service, what they do well, and improvements they plan to make. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke with 7 people who used the service, 6 relatives and 9 members of staff including the registered manager.

We reviewed a range of records. This included medicine records and 3 people's care records. We reviewed a variety of records relating to the management of the service.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm.

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. At this inspection the rating has remained good. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse and avoidable harm

People were safeguarded from abuse and avoidable harm. People told us they felt safe receiving care from Carers and Companions Ltd and managers often visited to check they were okay. Staff received training around protecting people from abuse and understood their responsibility to report all safeguarding concerns. They were confident any issues would be dealt with promptly and appropriately by the management team.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

The provider assessed risks to ensure people were safe. Staff took action to mitigate any identified risks. Records showed people were involved in managing risks and agreed the help they needed to stay safe. One person shared an example of the care workers encouraging them to walk when using their walking frame. They said, "They help me maintain my independence and they boost my spirits." Although safety was effectively managed, we saw 2 examples where information required amending. The registered manager addressed this immediately and followed up one situation to ensure the person had the most freedom possible.

Staffing and recruitment

The provider ensured there were sufficient numbers of suitable staff. People received care and support from staff who were reliable, arrived on time and stayed the agreed period. Feedback about care workers was consistently positive. A relative said, "We can't rate them highly enough. We have had the carers since 2018, they are very caring and very thorough. They spend time with [name of person] reading the newspaper and helping them with physical exercises." Staff told us their visits were well planned and they never felt rushed.

The provider operated safe recruitment processes. Robust checks were carried out before staff worked for Carers and Companions Ltd which ensured suitable staff were employed. Recruitment records showed the management team promoted high quality care and the organisation's values at the interview stage so staff understood what was expected of them.

Using medicines safely

People were usually supported to receive their medicines safely. The service had procedures and guidance for each person to make sure people received their medicine as prescribed. One person said, "They do a great job, are very efficient and on the ball. They understand the medication and that I need it in the morning." Although medicines were generally well managed, we saw examples where additional information was required to meet a safe standard. The registered manager addressed this immediately and introduced a more robust system for checking staff were competent to administer medicines safely.

### Preventing and controlling infection

People were protected from the risk of infection as staff were following safe infection prevention and control practices. The service had systems for managing infection risks effectively which included ensuring staff had access to PPE and were appropriately trained. One person said, "They always wear gloves and aprons, wash their hands and ensure things are tidied away."

### Learning lessons when things go wrong

The provider learned lessons when things had gone wrong. Systems were in place for learning and preventing adverse events. Important information was passed to staff using different systems, including weekly messaging, individual discussions and team meetings. We saw in November 2023, at a team meeting, staff had discussed health and safety and an employee assistance programme. The service had a very low number of incidents and accidents. The last event was recorded in 2021.

### Is consent to care and treatment always sought in line with legislation and guidance?

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making particular decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The MCA requires that, as far as possible, people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.

The provider was working in line with the Mental Capacity Act. Care records contained good evidence to show people made decisions for themselves and consented to care. The management team and staff shared examples of how they offered choice and when people did not have the capacity they made sure decisions were taken in their best interests.

# Is the service well-led?

## Our findings

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 inspection we rated this key question good. At this inspection the rating has remained good. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people

There was a positive and open culture at the service. People told us they were very happy with the service provided by Carers and Companions Ltd. Staff told us they were very proud to work at the service and received good support. One person said, "I am very particular and have high standards but the agency is able to meet those standards, they are responsive. They are everything you could wish for." A member of staff said, "The ethos at Carers and Companions Ltd is that everyone who works here wants to make sure everyone is looked after. Everyone genuinely cares."

The provider had systems to provide person-centred care that achieved good outcomes for people. People told us staff were skilled and did their job well. One person said, "They are professional and are trained to do their job, they go over and above what is needed." Staff told us the registered manager was very passionate and delivered high quality training that equipped them with the right skills to do their job well.

How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong

The provider understood their responsibilities under the duty of candour. The registered manager demonstrated they focused on transparency and sharing information. People told us the service kept them informed and were confident the registered manager was always open and transparent. A relative said, "If I do have a query they answer promptly, and the manager is very open "

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements

The provider had a clear management structure that monitored the quality of care to drive improvements in service delivery. The service had clear visions and values which were shaped by the management team. The registered manager and other managers were visible and very knowledgeable about the service. They often directly provided care and worked alongside staff. Feedback from people who used the service, relatives and staff was consistently positive.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics

People and staff were involved in the running of the service and their protected characteristics were fully understood. The service involved people and genuinely welcomed feedback. People told us they were asked

by the provider to give feedback about their experience. Results from a recent provider survey were very positive. People had rated the service as 'excellent' by 72% and 'good' by 18%. The service had received lots of compliments which were shared with us. A relative said, "A very big thank you to all of you for the care you give to [name of person] and myself, you don't know how much it means to us, especially myself as without you coming in each day to start the day off, I really couldn't cope with everything. It makes a huge difference!! I hope you will be looked after when it's your turn to be looked after as well as you look after us."

#### Continuous learning and improving care

The provider had created a learning culture at the service which improved the care people received. Quality assurance systems identified risks and promoted the delivery of safe high-quality care. Regular checks were carried out by the management team and were usually effective. We identified some areas of improvement which included the oversight of one person's care package and formalising staff supervision. The registered manager was very responsive and provided assurance that appropriate action was taken to address the shortfalls.

#### Working in partnership with others

The provider worked in partnership with others. The management team and staff worked alongside other professionals to achieve good outcomes for people. Care records showed staff sought advice when they had concerns about people's health and welfare.