

Lean on Me Community Care Services Ltd

Northolt

Inspection report

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05 April 2017

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Good ●
Is the service safe?	Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

This inspection took place on 05 April 2017 and was unannounced. Our last inspection of the service was in February 2017 when we rated the location as Good for all five questions. Following the February 2017 inspection we received information of concern regarding staff recruitment practices at the provider's location in Exeter. We carried out this inspection to reassure ourselves that the service operated robust recruitment procedures to ensure staff were suitable to work with people using the service.

Northolt is an agency providing personal care and support to people in their own homes. At the time of this inspection, the service employed 85 care workers and was supporting approximately 180 people. The service had a registered manager. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

We found that the provider had a clear policy and procedures for the recruitment of new care workers. They carried out checks to make sure all care workers were suitable to work with people using the service. If required, the provider sought advice from the Home Office before employing people to work in the service.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

Good ●

The service was safe.

The provider had a clear policy and procedures for the recruitment of new care workers. They carried out checks to make sure all care workers were suitable to work with people using the service. If required, the provider sought advice from the Home Office before employing people to work in the service.

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Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection checked whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008. The inspection was prompted by information we received from colleagues in another Care Quality Commission region about staff recruitment practices at the provider's location in Exeter.

This inspection took place on 05 April 2017 and was unannounced. One inspector carried out the inspection. Before the inspection we reviewed the information we had received and the last inspection report.

During the inspection we reviewed 19 staff recruitment files. We also spoke with the registered manager and the service's supervisor with responsibility for overseeing the recruitment of new staff.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

The provider had a clear recruitment policy and procedures and we saw a copy of this was included in each of the files we reviewed. The procedures included checks on the person's identity, home address, employment history and, where required, their right to remain and work in the United Kingdom. The provider's policy also required the applicant to provide a minimum of two referees and to apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal records check.

In the recruitment files we checked we saw that the provider took colour photocopies of the applicant's passport, National Insurance number and, where applicable, their right to remain and work in the UK. The records also included copies of utility bills as proof of the applicant's home address.

Application forms included a full employment history and those we checked did not show any gaps or omissions. All of the files included a minimum of two references, either from a previous employer or someone who knew the applicant well enough to provide a character reference. In all cases, the provider made a phone call to the person providing the reference to verify they had provided it and to confirm the information contained in it.

On one of the 19 files we reviewed we noted that the provider had obtained and verified three character references from friends of the applicant. However, in the application form, the person said they had worked for three other care agencies in the previous two and a half years. We discussed this with the service's supervisor with responsibility for recruitment. They agreed the provider should have asked for references from the person's previous employers to ensure there were no concerns about their suitability to work with people using the service. The supervisor told us they would follow this up with the registered manager and make arrangements to obtain the references.

18 of the files we checked included a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal records check. One file did not include a DBS check and the provider had noted that the care worker should only work alongside another carer until they received it. When we checked with the supervisor responsible for recruitment, they were able to show us they had confirmation from the DBS that the check had been sent to the applicant more than a year ago. They told us they would make sure the care worker brought the certificate to the office so that they could check it.

The supervisor also told us they had completed online training in safeguarding and safer recruitment which enabled them to check identification documents to check their validity. They said they would report any concerns to the registered manager. The registered manager told us if the supervisor brought concerns to them about a person's documents they would carry out a check with the Home Office to ensure the person had the right to remain and work in the UK. They said they had done this on a number of occasions and had told some applicants they were not able to employ them, following Home Office advice.