

In-Home Carers Limited

# Caremark (North Herts & Stevenage)

## Inspection report

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07 July 2016

08 July 2016

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## Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service effective?

Good ●

Is the service caring?

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

This inspection took place on 06, 7 and 8 July 2016. On the 07 and 08 July 2016 we contacted people and relatives to obtain feedback about the service they received. Caremark (North Herts & Stevenage) is a domiciliary care service that provides care and support to people in their homes. At the time of our inspection, Caremark was providing support to 76 people.

There was a manager in post who had registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). A registered manager is a person who has registered with the CQC 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 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

Potential risks to people's health and well-being were identified by staff and they knew how to manage these effectively and protect people from harm. Risk assessments were completed to keep people safe.

People told us that they were involved with their care and staff always asked for their consent when providing care.

People and their relatives told us that their family members were kept safe and well cared for when they were being supported by the service. Staff had received training in how to safeguard people from potential abuse and knew how to identify the risks associated with abuse.

Recruitment processes were robust and ensured staff employed to deliver care and support for people were of a good character and suitable to meet people's needs safely. There were sufficient numbers of staff available to meet people's individual needs, and the service provided was flexible.

People told us staff supported them to take their medicines. Staff were trained in safe administration of medicine practices and had their competency regularly observed.

People and their relatives were very complimentary about the abilities and experience of the staff that provided care and support. Staff received training and regular updates to ensure they were up to date with their knowledge and best practice guidance.

Staff supported people to stay safe in their homes, and people were supported to maintain their health and well-being. Staff developed appropriate positive and caring relationships with the people they supported and their families, and feedback from people was consistently positive about the service they received.

People and their relatives where appropriate were involved in the initial planning of the care and support people received. People's personal information was stored securely and confidentiality was maintained.

People told us they felt the staff provided care and support that was delivered in a way that promoted their

dignity and respected their privacy. Staff were knowledgeable about people`s preferred routines and delivered care that was individualised to the person they were supporting.

People told us they felt that staff listened to them and responded to them in a positive way. People and their relatives knew how to raise concerns and they were confident that the manager would take appropriate action to address any concerns in a timely way.

People were asked to provide feedback about the service they received regularly and we saw these were positive. Yearly surveys were sent to people who used the service, their relatives, staff and health and social care professional to gather feedback about the service they offered.

People and their relatives were positive about the staff and the management of the service. The registered manager regularly audited the service any improvements needed were actioned.

## 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.

People were kept safe by staff trained to recognise and respond effectively to the risks of abuse.

Safe and effective recruitment practices were followed to help ensure that all staff were fit, able and qualified to do their jobs.

Sufficient numbers of staff were available to meet people's individual needs at all times.

People were supported to take their medicines safely by trained staff.

Potential risks to people's health and well-being were identified and managed effectively in a way that promoted their independence.

### Is the service effective?

Good 

The service was effective.

Consent was obtained by staff before care and support was provided.

People were supported by staff that were well trained and received the appropriate support.

People were assisted with a healthy balanced diet which met their needs.

People had their day to day health needs met with access to health and social care professionals when necessary.

### Is the service caring?

Good 

People were cared for in a kind and compassionate way by staff that knew them well and were familiar with their needs.

People were involved in the planning, delivery and reviews of the care and support provided.

People's privacy and dignity was promoted.

People had access to independent advocacy services and the confidentiality of personal information had been maintained.

### **Is the service responsive?**

**Good** ●

The service was responsive.

People received personalised care that met their needs and took account of their preferences and personal circumstances.

Detailed guidance made available to staff enabled them to provide person centred care and support.

People were given extensive opportunities to help them pursue social interests and take part in meaningful activities relevant to their needs.

People and their relatives were confident to raise concerns which were dealt with promptly.

### **Is the service well-led?**

**Good** ●

The service was well led.

People, staff and relatives were all positive about the service.

Effective systems were in place to quality assure the services provided, manage risks and drive improvement.

Staff understood their roles and responsibilities and felt supported by the manager.

# Caremark (North Herts & Stevenage)

## **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 was planned to check whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

This inspection took place over three days. 06, 07, 08 July 2016 and carried out by one inspector. We told the provider 48 hours before our visit that we would be coming to ensure we could access the information we needed. Before the inspection, we asked the provider to complete a Provider Information Return (PIR). This is a form that requires them to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We also reviewed information we held about the service including statutory notifications relating to the service. Statutory notifications include information about important events which the provider is required to send us.

During and after the inspection we spoke with eight people who used the service, four relatives, five support staff, the registered manager and the provider. We looked at three care plans, three employment files and other relevant documents relating to how the service operated.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

People and relatives told us they felt the service they received was safe and met their needs. One person said, "I feel very safe. They [Staff] are very professional and we have built up good relationships." A relative said, "[person] is 100% safe in their hands, the staff communicates well and I am informed of any changes."

Staff identified potential risks to people's health, welfare or safety and appropriately managed and mitigated risks to keep people safe. Staff told us that any changes to people's needs were reported back to the office. One staff member said, "I recently attended a call where the person's bed had been moved and there were exposed cables on the floor. I reported this to the office as this was a potential trip hazard and this was resolved very quickly." We saw in people's care plans that risk assessments for the person and the environment had been completed. We saw that there was clear guidance for staff on how to support people's needs.

Staff had received training about safeguarding people from harm. Staff we spoke with were knowledgeable about how to identify any signs of abuse. They knew how to raise concerns, both internally and externally. One member of staff told us, "I would always raise concerns with the office and have confidence in their support." Another staff member told us, "I would always report any concerns I had. It doesn't matter if you're wrong, it's better to be safe than sorry." The registered manager ensured staff who were newly employed were introduced to people so people knew who was visiting them and felt safe when staff arrived at their homes. Staff confirmed they were introduced to new clients. Information and guidance about how to report concerns, together with relevant contact numbers, were made available to staff. Staff had printed on the back of their identity badge the contact details for the local safeguarding teams and CQC.

Safe and effective recruitment practices were followed to make sure that all staff were of good character and suitable for the roles they performed. The registered manager conducted all the necessary pre-employment and identity checks before staff were offered employment. There were enough suitably experienced, skilled and qualified staff available at all times to meet people's individual needs. Staff received their rotas by email and the co-ordinators told us this worked well. People had been allocated regular staff to promote continuity of care. One person told us, "I have the same three carers they are all very good, very professional."

People and their relatives told us staff arrived on time and if they were running late they were phoned by the office to let them know of a delay in the visiting times. One person told us, "They [Staff] are reliable and they come on time and they stay for the full amount of time and they will run over if anything." One member of staff said, "All my visits have travel time and mostly I am on time but traffic or incidents can delay us sometimes but we always contact the office to let them know we are running late. We looked at a random selection of call times and found that calls were on time. There was a system in place to monitor calls throughout the day to ensure people received their support."

There were processes in place to monitor incidents and accidents. Staff were familiar with the reporting and recording procedures. Staff understood that reporting was important to ensure that steps would be taken to

monitor and reduce identified and potential risks. People who used the service told us that staff helped and supported them to take their medicines safely. Staff had been trained in safe administration of medicines and knew how to ensure people received their medicines safely. Staff had their competency regularly checked by the registered manager, there were also regular spot checks completed to ensure best practice. We saw that medicines were monitored and regularly audited by the registered manager.



# Is the service effective?

## Our findings

People who used the service and their relatives were positive about the staff that provided care and support. One person told us, "I have had a difficult year and was at the end of my tether but with Caremark I have really got better. They [Staff] promote my independence and help me when I need help." A relative told us, "[Relative] has had other agencies provide care in the past but Caremark has been the best agency we have used, because nothing is too big or too small. The [Staff] have the correct skills."

Newly employed staff members were required to complete a structured induction programme during which they received training relevant to their role and achieved a nationally recognised 'Care Certificate'. They worked alongside other experienced colleagues and were not permitted to work unsupervised until they were competent in their duties and were introduced to the people they were supporting. Staff received training in areas such as safeguarding, medicines, health and safety, dementia, moving and handling and first aid. Staff were also encouraged and supported to obtain national vocational qualifications (NVQ). Staff we spoke with confirmed they had completed their NVQ. One staff member told us, "The training is very good and I felt supported with my training. They [Registered manager and the provider] made sure we understood the topic before moving on. When I went out I could only observe at first and when I was competent I was allowed to work on my own. I have had spot checks to make sure I am doing my job properly."

Staff had 'one to one' supervision meetings where they had the opportunity to review and discuss their performance. One staff member told us, "I have had supervisions; they ask you how you are, and am I still enjoying the job. We have the chance to discuss anything. They ask if you want more training and I get feedback on my performance." Staff told us that the registered manager was approachable. They confirmed they had the opportunity to attend meetings and staff we spoke with felt they had a voice and that the registered manager and provider listened to them.

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 Act 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. At the time of our inspection we found that the provider was working within the principles of the MCA where necessary and appropriate to the needs of the people they supported. Staff told us they obtained people's consent before they offered any support. One staff member said, "They [people who used the service] have the right to live how they want, choose what they want it is about them. Another staff member said, "I always respect their needs and ask what they want."

Staff helped, supported and encouraged people to eat a healthy balanced diet that met their needs. We found that some people needed very little support from staff just to warm their food or prepare a snack; others required staff to cook their food. One staff member told us, that they cook one person's lunch; they also supported another person by preparing their food and supporting them to eat. One person said, "They

[Staff] always make me a cup of tea."

People's needs were reviewed and documented to ensure that the care and support provided helped them to maintain the best physical, mental and emotional health. Staff liaised with appropriate health and social care services if they felt there was a change in people`s condition. One person said, when I have not been well they [Staff] contacted my doctor. They also contacted family members or relatives involved in the person`s care. We saw in people's support plan that district nurses and speech and language therapist's had been involved to promote people's health.

## Is the service caring?

### Our findings

People who used the service and their relatives told us that staff provided support in a kind, compassionate and caring way. One person told us, "They have been really helpful they bend over backwards to support me." Another said, "Caremark are excellent."

We were told by staff and the people they supported they had continuity in supporting the same people over a period of time; this gave staff and people the opportunity to develop relationships and for staff the opportunity to learn people's likes and dislikes. One person said, "I have built good relationships; it's almost like having family." Another person said, "I feel listened to they [Staff] are outstanding". One staff member told us that they supported a person to have Christmas with their family. The person had dementia and was not able to travel alone safely. The staff member supported the person to travel to a train station and meet their relatives. This ensured they spent Christmas with their family. We were told by staff that people were supported to go shopping and eat out where this had been arranged.

People we spoke with confirmed that staff promoted their independence and supported them to live at home. People and the relatives told us that staff were kind and caring and confirmed they were treated with respect. One person said, "[Staff] chat with me, they are kind and caring. They always make sure that I am well." Another commented, "I am really happy with my care, they [Staff] have become friends." A relative said, "Staff are kind and respectful, they treat my [Relative] as a person. They explain what they are doing. I have no negative comments."

People who received a service, and where appropriate their relatives, were involved in the planning and reviews of the care and support they received. One person told us, "I have sat down and reviewed my care, I am completely involved." Another person commented, "They talk to me about my care needs." One staff member said, "I always ask people how they would like things done."

Staff we spoke with knew people well and we found that care plans had good guidance for staff about the support people required. People told us, "They [Staff] never rush me, they are caring and respectful. Another said, "They [Staff] encourage me to be independent and we talk about anything, we always have a nice chat." One staff member said, "I would be happy for Caremark to look after my mum, I trust all the staff. Another staff member commented, "We have good relationships, I know them [People who used the service] well, we have a good laugh."

Records were stored securely and staff understood the importance of respecting confidential information. They only disclosed it to people such as health and social care professionals on a need to know basis.

## Is the service responsive?

### Our findings

People who used the service received personalised care and support based on their individual needs and took account of their preferences and personal circumstances. Staff were very knowledgeable about people's preferences and wishes. People we spoke with were all very complimentary about the service they received and about staff. One person said, "Caremark are absolutely brilliant, they are so flexible. I have sat down and reviewed my care; I am completely involved." Another commented, "I am happy with my care."

People received information about the service. In addition people told us they received care and support that met their individual needs. One person told us, "They wash my back because I can't but I do the parts I can. They [staff] look after me, I can't fault them." We saw that when unforeseen changes took place people were supported. For example, we saw that staff had made their management aware of a person's changing needs and had requested the call time be increased to allow staff more time to ensure the person's needs were met. We saw that a review was completed. We found there was good guidance for staff in care plans to enable staff to provide support. People we spoke with confirmed they were happy with their care. One person said, "Very happy with care, they [Staff] are so friendly they make me feel that someone cares."

People received care, treatment and support from staff that had guidance about people's health and care needs. People's identified needs were documented and reviewed to ensure they received appropriate care. For example guidance on how people required their support. The registered manager told us that they only take on people whose needs and preferred times they can meet. However, there are times when they will offer people alternative times until their preferred times become available. People were supported to have their say the registered manager told us that there are regular reviews and spot checks where people views are sought to ensure people are happy with the service. People who were new to the service were contacted by phone after two weeks to ensure that they were happy with their care.

There was an electronic monitoring system in place that allowed staff to monitor calls, to ensure people received their calls on time. This was reviewed throughout the day. Where people did not have the facilities to enable staff to log the calls using a telephone system; staff would send a text to indicate the call had been attended. The call times were audited regularly to ensure people were receiving their calls at the correct times. One person said, "Staff arrive on time." Another said, "I have never had a missed call, a couple of times they have been late but with good reasons. On the whole they are excellent with times." People also told us that they were contacted when staff were running late.

There was a complaints procedure in place and people told us they knew how to raise concerns. People were aware of how to make a complaint should they need to. However, everyone we spoke with told us that they were very happy with the service. One person said, "I have no complaints." Another said, "If I had concerns I know who to contact." They also told us that when they first started with Caremark, there had been a problem with communication. They talked to the provider about this and we were told that this was resolved straight away and has been good ever since.

## Is the service well-led?

### Our findings

People who used the service told us that the service was well led and they felt listened to. One person said, "I am happy with the service. Another person said, "I know who to call if required."

The registered manager and the provider were knowledgeable about the people who received support, They ensured that staff had the tools, resources and training necessary to meet people`s needs at all times. The provider and registered manager were very clear about the values and the purpose of the services provided. The provider told us that employing the correct staff was important to them. One staff member said, "I feel supported and listened to."

There were systems in place to monitor the quality of the service. We saw that the registered manager had completed audits of the service to identify where improvements were needed. There were action plans in place to make improvements. For example, there had recently been a restructure of staff with two new supervisors in place to ensure that staff were better supported. The provider talked about their plans for expansion and how this would be achieved. They were ensuring that staff were developed and in place to support this, they offered competitive packages and were introducing a bonus scheme for staff. The provider told us that he wanted staff to be happy and stay with the company.

Staff were positive about the registered manager of the service and felt there was strong leadership. One staff member said, "The communication is really good. There is always someone at the end of the phone if you need support." The manager was clear about their vision regarding the purpose of the service, how it operated and the level and type of support provided to people. They had enough staff to meet people's needs and were actively recruiting. The office staff were knowledgeable about the people who used the service and about their needs, personal circumstances.

The manager felt supported by the provider. They told us they had regular meetings to talk about any concerns or ideas they had, there was lots of daily communication. The manager had been supported with their training and development. There were independent organisations that performed spot checks on a quarterly basis this included audits to ensure a good service. The provider attended meetings to ensure best practice was maintained. There were links to the local authority for training. The registered manager said, "I feel supported and the [provider] listens to and responds to things I need." The registered manager told us that they have a good team around them. There was a clear staff structure in place and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities. The provider had a clear vision on where they wanted Caremark to be and had an action plan in place on how they were going to achieve this. There was an out of hour's service operated for people to ensure that people had support when required.