

Altogether Care LLP

Altogether Care LLP- Blandford Care at Home

Inspection report

6 Georgian Passage
East Street
Blandford Forum
DT11 7DX

Tel: 01258445040
Website: www.altogethercare.co.uk

Date of inspection visit:
03 February 2021
04 February 2021
08 February 2021

Date of publication:
01 March 2021

Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Inspected but not rated

Is the service safe?

Good 

Is the service well-led?

Good 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Altogether Care LLP- Blandford Care at Home is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes. Not everyone who used the service received personal care. CQC only inspects where people receive personal care. This is help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. At the time of this inspection, 94 people were receiving the regulated activity of personal care from the service.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

People and relatives spoke extremely positively about the service they received. We were given many examples that showed people received quality care and support from kind, caring staff that so often went the extra mile to ensure people were kept safe, were happy and felt well cared for.

Staff spoke knowledgeably about all aspects regarding safeguarding people. Staff had completed safeguarding training and understood their role in identifying and reporting any concerns of potential abuse or poor practice.

Risks were individually assessed, regularly reviewed, clear and covered all areas of people's health as well as any potential environmental risks. Risks assessments ensured staff were given current guidance and information to enable them to support people safely whilst allowing them to maintain their independence.

People were supported by sufficient numbers of trained, experienced staff to meet people's needs. People received their support from a consistent team of skilled staff that knew people well and delivered their care in ways people preferred.

Safe recruitment practices were followed. Appropriate checks were completed to ensure that only suitable staff were employed. There was a strong commitment to developing and supporting staff through regular training, supervisions, observations and appraisals. Staff spoke positively about the training they received which they told us was well delivered and of good quality.

Staff supported people to take medicines safely. Staff were trained in medicines management and knew how to ensure that people received their medicines on time and as they had been prescribed. Clear audit processes were in place to monitor the accuracy of administering and recording medicines.

There were robust procedures in place to ensure people were protected from infections that could affect both staff and people using the service. Staff had completed infection prevention and control training and understood the actions needed to minimise the risk of avoidable harm, including the prevention of avoidable infection. Staff had access to plentiful supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) and followed current national guidance regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

People, relatives, health and social care professionals and staff spoke highly of the registered manager. People felt the service was well led with a strong commitment to providing the very best person-centred care.

Staff told us, and records showed, there was an open, honest, positive culture with a strong ethos on learning and development. Staff were provided with the training, skills and support to provide the best levels of care to people to enable them to live their lives as independently as possible whilst maintaining a good sense of wellbeing and happiness.

Governance systems and oversight of the service were robust. Issues were identified, analysed and discussed with staff to ensure lessons were learned. There was an open, supportive culture that empowered staff to put forward their ideas for improvement to enable people to receive quality, individualised care that impacted positively on their lives.

People, relatives, health and social care professionals, and staff consistently spoke of the effective and clear communication they had with the service.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk

Rating at last inspection

This service was registered with us on 12 November 2019 and this is the first inspection.

Why we inspected

This was a focussed inspection conducted in accordance with current CQC inspection guidance and was not in response to any concerns.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our reinspection programme. If we receive any concerning information we may inspect sooner.

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.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Altogether Care LLP- Blandford Care at Home

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 Care Act 2014.

Inspection team

This inspection was carried out by one inspector on site and an Expert by Experience who made telephone calls to people using the service. 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 homes.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of inspection

This inspection was announced.

We gave a short period of notice of the inspection because we wanted to gather as much information before the site visit as possible. This enabled us to minimise the time spent on-site to ensure the safety of people, staff and the inspector in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Inspection activity started on 4 February 2021 when we visited the office location. We spoke with staff and relatives on the phone on 5 February 2021 and gave feedback to the registered manager 8 February 2021.

What we did before the inspection

The provider was not asked to complete a provider information return prior to this inspection. This is information we require providers to send us to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We took this into account when we inspected the service and made the judgements in this report.

Before the inspection site visit we reviewed all the information we held about the service. We also asked for contact details of people using the service, their relatives, staff and health and social care professionals. All of these were received. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

During the inspection we spoke with ten people who used the service, ten relatives and six members of staff. We received written feedback from five health and social care professionals. The registered manager was available throughout the inspection.

We reviewed a range of records which included six care plans, four staff recruitment and training records, records of complaints and compliments and various completed audits.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm. This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People felt safe with the staff who supported them. One person said, "I feel very safe as they treat me very well." A relative told us, "I can leave him with the carers and know he is safe."
- Staff fully understood their role in protecting people from abuse and had received appropriate training on safeguarding adults. One member of staff said, "I know all about safeguarding and whistleblowing. I haven't had to report anything yet but I know how to if I ever need to."
- The registered manager and care staff had a good knowledge of safeguarding and understood how to raise concerns with the local authority if required. Staff were confident that if they raised concerns, action would be taken to protect people.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Risks to people and staff were minimised because risk assessments were undertaken and regularly reviewed. This helped to make sure people could maintain independence in the safest way. It also supported staff to remain safe. One person said, "The manager has been to see me and does risk assessments and updates care plans."
- Staff made sure people were supported using equipment which was appropriately maintained and safe to use. One person told us, "I have an overhead hoist that I can use myself but the girls will put the sling in place so I manage it myself."
- There was a contingency plan in place in case of events that affected the service running safely, such as premises problems or adverse weather.

Staffing and recruitment

- Support was provided by a consistent team of experienced staff who knew people well and knew how they preferred their care and support to be given. One relative said, "My husband is safe with the carers as they have skills and are well trained." One person said, "We have regular carers which is very good, continuity is important."
- Rotas showed suitable times for travelling between visits was included. Staff confirmed they were able to request additional travel time if this wasn't the case. One member of staff said, "The travel time is ok, I'm happy to stay local and I generally work in the same two villages which I know well. I get enough time to help people with everything they need".
- The provider's recruitment practices helped to make sure people were supported by suitable staff. Staff files seen showed staff only began work for the agency once appropriate checks and references had been obtained.

Using medicines safely

- People received their medicines when they were needed and in ways they preferred. There were systems in place to ensure this was done safely. One person said, "They always check to make sure I have taken my medicine."
- People had their medicines administered by staff who had completed safe management of medicines training and had their competencies checked regularly. One member of staff said, "The training for medicines is very good."
- Where people were prescribed medicines they only needed to take occasionally, there was guidance for staff to follow to ensure those medicines were administered safely.

Preventing and controlling infection

- The risks of the spread of infection were minimised because staff received training in how to reduce risks. Staff had received additional training regarding Covid-19 and were kept up to date with all government guidelines about how to work safely during the pandemic.
- Staff had access to appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to help to keep themselves and people safe. One member of staff said, "We have plenty of masks, aprons, gloves and sanitiser, I pick it up from the office there is always plenty available. I've done all the infection control training, it's all been thoroughly covered."
- Every person we spoke with told us all the care staff wore facemasks, aprons and gloves during each visit. One person said, "They wear their gloves and aprons and always come in wearing their face masks."

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The registered manager explained there had not been any accidents or incidents since the service was registered, however they described the process they would use to regularly review and check for emerging trends or themes.
- Accidents and incidents would be seen as an opportunity to reflect on practice and continually improve outcomes for people.

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.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated 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

- People were happy with the service they received. One person said, "I have no complaints and would recommend them."
- Staff consistently told us of the positive, open, honest and supportive management structure that was in place. Everyone we spoke with described how people were very much at the heart of the service and how this culture came from the passion and drive showed by the registered manager and their commitment to provide the very best, person centred care for people. A member of staff said, "I would say there number 1 priority is their people and carers, everyone genuinely cares."
- People benefitted from a management team who promoted a person-centred culture which helped to ensure people received very individualised care. All staff said they always had time to make sure people received the right care and support to meet their needs. Staff spoke affectionately about the people they cared for demonstrating they saw people as individuals.
- Staff felt well supported in their roles, this created a happy and confident workforce. A number of people and their relatives commented on how cheerful and helpful staff were.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; Continuous learning and improving care

- People told us the service was well led. A person described the service as being "marvellous."
- People could be confident that their care was provided by an agency who monitored risks and followed up to date guidance. This inspection was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and the agency were working in line with all up to date guidelines to keep people safe. The registered manager was keeping up to date with changes by reading policy documents and linking with other professionals.
- People benefitted from a clear management structure which meant people's care was monitored by senior staff.
- The service had robust quality assurance systems which focussed on outcomes for people and ensuring high-quality care was provided. In addition to observations of practice there was a series of audits. Changes were communicated to staff through supervisions, staff training and meetings. This helped to ensure people received support which reflected current best practice guidance. A member of staff said, "The communication is good, any changes with people is put on our app so we know instantly, I'm kept well informed."
- The service used all quality assurance methods to drive improvement. When shortfalls were highlighted there were clear plans and timescales to achieve improvement.

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 registered manager and management team were open and approachable. One person told us, "They are very professional and I am very happy with the service."
- The registered manager shared information appropriately with the Care Quality Commission and other relevant agencies.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics; Working in partnership with others

- People's views were sought, and they were asked for suggestions for how the service could be improved. Records of satisfaction conversations with people showed people were happy with the care they received.
- Staff had been well supported during the pandemic and felt valued by the provider. One member of staff told us, "They have been great, I think we have all really felt we matter and feel appreciated."
- People were cared for by a staff who worked as a team to share ideas and good practice. Staff prided themselves on providing a very high-quality service. All staff told us teamwork was excellent and they had regular conversations and meetings.
- Staff worked in partnership with other agencies and professionals to make sure people's needs were met. We received positive feedback from five health and social care professionals. Comments made included; "I have always found them to be very helpful, flexible and to be as accommodating as they can be. The team are empathetic, friendly, organised and professional." And, "Always willing to help in a timely manner."