

Independence with Dignity Support Services Ltd

Independence with Dignity

Support Services Ltd - Head

Office

Inspection report

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12 May 2023

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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

About the service

Independence with Dignity Support Services is a domiciliary care agency providing personal care for up to 25 people in their own homes. The service provides support to older people, young adults, autistic people, people with dementia, sensory impairments, learning disability or physical disabilities. At the time of our inspection there were 4 people using the service. 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. Where they do, we also consider any wider social care provided.

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 assessments and judgements about services supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people and providers must have regard to it.

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

Right Support:

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.

The registered manager told us their primary aim was to support people to achieve and maintain their independence with dignity. People were observed to be confident and relaxed in approaching and interacting with staff, and they felt comfortable and safe in their environment. People, their relatives and staff spoke positively about the service and the care provided.

The service had effective systems in place to ensure people's safety. People and their relatives told us they felt safe using the service. People received comprehensive assessments of their needs prior to commencement of care with the service. Recruitment processes ensured suitability of staff for their roles and the service had enough staff to meet people's needs.

Right Care:

People received care from staff who were familiar to them and knew them well. Staff engaged well with people, their relatives and external agencies involved in their care to ensure the best outcomes for people.

Right Culture:

The registered manager inspired confidence in the staff team and led by example. The registered manager worked closely with staff and people, ensuring close oversight of the service and any issues that arose. She understood her responsibilities to inform people or their representatives when necessary, and the service fostered a culture of openness and transparency where everyone involved felt valued, involved in decision

making and listened to.

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

Rating at last inspection and update

This service was registered with us on 1 March 2022 and this is the first inspection.

Why we inspected

This was a planned comprehensive inspection as a newly registered service. This inspection was part of our scheduled plan of visiting services to check the safety and quality of care people received.

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.

Is the service safe?

Good ●

The service was safe.
Details are in our safe findings below.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.
Details are in our effective findings below.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.
Details are in our caring findings below.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.
Details are in our responsive findings below.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.
Details are in our well-led findings below.

Independence with Dignity Support Services Ltd - Head Office

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 one inspector and an 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 homes.

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

We gave the service 48 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.

Inspection activity started on 11 May 2023 and ended on 12 May 2023. We visited the location's office on 11 May 2023 and 12 May 2023.

What we did before the inspection

We looked at all the information we held about the service including notifications. A notification is information about events that the registered persons are required, by law, to tell us about. 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 checked information held by Companies House and we looked at online reviews. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke with 4 people who use the service and 4 relatives about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with 7 members of staff, including the registered manager. We reviewed a range of records. These included 4 people's care records, 4 staff files and a variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures.

After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found and sought feedback from healthcare professionals involved with the service.

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 of 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 were supported by staff who knew them well and understood how to protect them from abuse.
- People and their relatives told us they felt safe. One relative said, "I do feel safe, they are very conscientious, they seem to genuinely care about her, and I can't praise them enough."
- All staff received safeguarding training and demonstrated an understanding of the signs of abuse and were aware of how to raise concerns.
- Where concerns had been raised, they were investigated fully and dealt with appropriately. The registered manager made the necessary referrals to the safeguarding team and staff told us they were confident the registered manager would act on any concerns raised to ensure people's safety. When asked what they would do if they had a concern one staff member told us, "I would let them know I am here to support them and share my concerns with my boss. I am confident [Registered manager] would be able to sort it."

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- People we spoke with told us they had confidence in the service to maintain their safety. One person told us, "We have had several different services over the years and this one is 100% safe. The company do a brilliant job."
- The registered manager took a proactive approach to assessing and mitigating risks to people's safety.
- Risks associated with the provision of people's care and support had been assessed in detail. Risk assessments were comprehensive and person centred and were updated annually or when people's needs changed.
- Environmental risks within and around people's homes had been assessed and care plans contained clear guidance on actions required to ensure people and staff were safe.

Staffing and recruitment

- The registered manager followed safe and effective recruitment practices to make sure that all staff were suitable and of good character.
- The registered manager had completed new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all staff to ensure they were still safe to provide care to people. DBS checks provide information including details about convictions and cautions held on the Police National Computer. The information helps employers make safer recruitment decisions.
- Feedback from people and their relatives about staff was positive. One relative told us, "They always come on time, and we know who is coming, they have a rota and tell us the day before."
- Staff told us that they felt there were enough staff to provide the level of care that people needed. One staff member told us, "There is always plenty of time to complete all the tasks that need to be done with

each client to the best standards to ensure they are getting the right level of care."

Using medicines safely

- Where people had 'when required' (PRN) medicines there was not always a protocol in place. However, when we raised this with the registered manager, she rectified it immediately.
- Staff had received training in the safe administration of medication and their competency was assessed annually by the registered manager to ensure they maintained good practice.
- Where people were safe to continue to manage their own medicines, this was supported.

Preventing and controlling infection

- The provider had infection control policies which were in line with current practice.
- All staff had completed infection control training.
- Staff were knowledgeable about protecting people from the risk of infection and had access to disposable face masks, gloves and aprons. During the inspection we observed staff following infection control protocol.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Incident and accident records reviewed contained written evidence of action taken to improve the service and lessons learned.
- The management team ensured there was a culture of learning within the service. The registered manager told us, "You learn more from making a mistake than you do from getting it right every time."
- The registered manager explained how incidents and accidents were investigated, the lessons learned from the results of the investigations, and how learning was shared with staff to prevent recurrences.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people's care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law

- People's care plans were personalised and included information about their physical and mental health needs and goals.
- People and their relatives told us they were fully involved in the assessment process and felt confident in the service's ability to keep them safe while working towards their personal goals.
- Staff we spoke with confirmed they were confident in the service's ability to provide care to people. One staff member told us, "We are always going above and beyond to make each client feel safe and happy, and to allow them to be as independent as possible in their homes."

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Not all staff's training was up to date at the time of the inspection. However, when this was raised with the registered manager, she immediately organised the necessary training for staff.
- People told us they had confidence in the staff's abilities. One person told us, "They all know what they are doing. Everyone knows everyone and it works."
- Staff were required to complete mandatory training during their induction, and a minimum of 2 weeks shadowing other staff and getting to know people before working alone.
- Staff received a range of training including autism and learning disability training.
- Health and social care professionals we spoke with provided positive feedback regarding the capabilities of the service. Comments included, "Both Managers are highly qualified along with making sure their staff are also kept up to date with all training" and, "If I have an Adult with complex needs, my first care agency I would go to would be Independence with Dignity and Support Services, knowing they have the skill base to work with vulnerable adults with specific needs."
- Staff we spoke with expressed satisfaction with the training provided. One staff member told us, "We as a team strive to continue learning and achieving the best for all."
- The registered manager and the duty manager both had training in assessing competencies of staff, and the registered manager was planning to gain a qualification in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS).

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet

- People's care plans identified people's allergies, dietary requirements, and if they required support with their meals or drinks. Where people required support, their food and drink preferences were documented within their care notes.

- During the inspection, staff were observed supporting a person to maintain a healthy diet. The staff member told us she knew what the person would like for dinner but was heard asking them what they would like to have.
- People and their relatives told us staff supported people to maintain their independence with meal preparation and eating and drinking. One relative told us, "My brother and I are always there to get her breakfast, but sometimes mum says I want to get my breakfast today, and they are so flexible that is always all right."

Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care; Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support

- Staff knew people well, enabling them to identify and respond to people's changing needs quickly by contacting healthcare professionals such as GP's or district nurses.
- The registered manager was in regular contact with local authorities and professionals involved in their care. The registered manager and duty manager provided multiple examples of ways they have worked collaboratively to support people.
- Feedback from health and social care professionals we spoke with was positive. One professional told us, "Independence with Dignity and Support Services not only support people to access all healthcare services, they will support and attend themselves if the person they are working with needs help and support" and, "I can rely on them to report any concerns either by email or telephone."

Ensuring consent to care and treatment in line with law 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.

People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA. When people receive care and treatment in their own homes an application must be made to the Court of Protection for them to authorise people to be deprived of their liberty.

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA

- People's care plans identified if people had capacity to consent to receiving care and if they required support to make decisions.
- People told us staff respected their decisions. Comments included, "They always ask each day before they start to do anything" and, "They ask me before they do anything."
- All staff completed MCA training. Staff demonstrated best practice around assessing mental capacity, supporting decision-making and best interest decision-making. One staff member told us, "If someone had capacity and didn't want to do something, I wouldn't force them, if it was something that was unsafe, I would advise against it. If they insisted, I would contact [Registered manager] and get some advice from her."

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. This meant people were supported and treated with dignity and respect; and involved as partners in their care.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- All of the people and relatives we spoke with praised the company and the staff for their high level of care. Comments included, "They are absolutely perfect I have no complaints at all" and, "They come in all happy and chat away and I love it."
- Staff received training on equality and diversity as part of their induction process.
- People's protective characteristics such as their disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation were taken into consideration when supporting them and the registered manager provided a variety of examples of how they achieved this.
- During the inspection we observed a staff member's interaction with a person using the service. They appeared empathetic, caring and were very familiar with the way the person liked things to be done and their characteristics.

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care

- People and their relatives told us they were involved in decisions about their care and felt comfortable expressing their views. Relatives told us, "I am totally involved in drawing up the care plan. We have regular reviews" and, "I was involved in the care plan at the very beginning and there is a leaflet that I could read if I wanted to but you can see mum is well looked after and cared for and so I don't bother. She is very happy with them."
- People were supported to express their views and were encouraged to be involved in making decisions about their care and support, and this was demonstrated throughout their care plans.
- The registered manager reviewed people's care plans annually or when people's needs changed. This ensured they were accurate and reflected people's current needs and preferences.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- Staff were observed treating people with respect and dignity. Feedback from people and their relatives supported this. One relative told us, "The girls are lovely, they make us laugh and cheer us up. They always care and treat us both, and our home with dignity and care" and, "They are very nice people and build up a relationship with their clients and the relatives."
- Care plans included individualised plans to support people to maintain their independence.
- Staff spoke positively about their roles and their ability to support people to maintain their independence. One staff member told us, "We are always going above and beyond to make each client feel safe and happy and to allow them to be as independent as possible in their homes."
- The information in people's care plans guided staff how to support people to be as independent as possible. This included references to what people were able to do for themselves and how staff should make

sure there was time during the call to support people.

- The service followed data protection law. Information about people was kept securely to maintain confidentiality.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people's needs.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated [insert rating]. This meant people's needs were met through good organisation and delivery.

Planning personalised care to ensure people have choice and control and to meet their needs and preferences

- Care plans were comprehensive, individualised, and contained up to date information about people and the care they required.
- People and their relatives told us they were involved in their care planning. One relative told us, "My brother and I, and the care workers are like a team. We complement each other, it is all about team work."
- People's needs were reviewed annually or if there were changes, and staff were updated of changes by the management team who were in regular contact. One staff member told us, "We have staff meetings every few months and the managers are always checking up on us after shifts to make sure everything is ok."
- People were supported by a small team who knew them well and worked closely and collaboratively to deliver care. One person told us, "The girls can sort out anything. We have no need to contact the office, it all gets sorted, no problems at all."

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard. The Accessible Information Standard tells organisations what they have to do to help ensure people with a disability or sensory loss, and in some circumstances, their carers, get information in a way they can understand it. It also says that people should get the support they need in relation to communication.

- The service had an information and communication policy in place which includes the Accessible Information Standard guidance.
- Care plans contained an assessment of communication needs and guided staff to ensure they communicated effectively with people. For example, "[Person] is registered blind and needs all documents in font size 18 point so she is able to read it."
- Staff were aware of people's individual communication skills, abilities and individual preferred methods. They were able to communicate effectively with people through speech and/or, pictures and symbols, or by interpreting gestures, signs and body language.
- The registered manager was proficient in British Sign Language and Makaton (a form of sign language).

Supporting people to develop and maintain relationships to avoid social isolation; support to follow interests and to take part in activities that are socially and culturally relevant to them

- People and their relatives told us staff supported them to maintain relationships and avoid social isolation. Comments included, "they have explained to me and my brother all about dementia. Lots of things we didn't understand, lots we didn't know. It has helped us to understand dementia and they recap as time goes on keeping us up to date with any changes they notice in mums health" and, "If we are going

out for the day they come early and get my wife ready to go out. I say do you mind if you don't come tomorrow because we want to go out, and they arrange to come early so she is all sauced up and ready in time."

- Staff knew people well, enabling them to identify and respond to people's changing needs quickly by contacting healthcare professionals such as GP's or district nurses.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- People and their relatives told us they knew how to make complaints or raise concerns.
- The service had a complaints policy in place which contained relevant information including contact details of external agencies and advocacy services if needed.
- The registered manager responded to complaints promptly and appropriately. The service's complaints and investigations log detailed the nature of the complaint/concern, the investigation, and the outcome.

End of life care and support

- There was no one receiving end of life care at the time of the inspection.
- There was a policy for end of life care, and the registered manager told us they would seek support from health care professionals to ensure they were delivering responsive care if this happened.
- People's care plans documented their needs and preferences for support at the end of their lives.

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

- Feedback from people, health and social care professionals and staff about the service was unanimously positive.
- Comments included, "The care we receive is brilliant and therefore the company must be well run" and, "They are very nice people, and they are good company."
- The registered manager told us the service's biggest achievements was "happy clients and happy staff." This was confirmed by all staff we spoke with. Staff members told us, "I'm very happy working for this care agency. Anything that I'm not sure about, they are always there and answer any questions or concerns I may have. I may work alone but I don't feel alone, I feel very much within a supportive team" and, "I really enjoy working for them, [Registered manager] is a great boss. It feels like a family, everyone is really close, and the communication is good."
- The registered manager and duty manager worked closely with people, their relatives, and staff to enable the service to deliver the support required.

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 Care Quality Commission (CQC) sets out specific requirements that providers must follow when things go wrong. This includes informing people and their relatives about the incident, providing reasonable support, providing truthful information and an apology when things go wrong. The registered manager was aware of her responsibilities in relation to this standard.
- The service had a policy in place that set out the actions staff should take in situations where the duty of candour would apply, and evidence reviewed confirmed this was adhered to by staff.
- The registered manager was aware of when to report events to CQC and the local authority. Copies of all records were saved and available to view at the time of the inspection.

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

- The registered manager demonstrated a good overview of all aspects of the service and the needs of individual people that used the service.
- The registered manager carried out audits annually which was in line with the service's policy. The registered manager informed us she plans to hire another staff member for the service to enable her to complete audits and checks for the service more frequently as the service grows.

- The registered manager submitted notifications to us when required. Notifications are events that the registered person is required by law to inform us of.
- Staff understood their roles and spoke positively about their managers. One staff member told us, "Independence with dignity is without a doubt the best care agency I've worked for, the managers are very approachable and professional, and will always do whatever they can to help us staff, as well as the clients."
- Feedback from health and social care professionals was positive. One health and social care professional told us, "Both Managers are highly competent leaders within their organisation, delivering and promoting each and every member of staff they employ to deliver high-quality person-centred care."

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

- People were empowered to express their views. People and their relatives told us they felt listened to, and the managers were accessible. One relative told us, "They are receptive and intuitive and excellent at communication. They know if something is not right, and they sort it".
- The service had an equality and diversity policy which stated their commitment to equal opportunities and diversity. Staff knew how to support people while respecting their rights.
- The registered manager told us numerous ways has supported people considering their equality characteristics. She told us, "We treat everyone like a human being, regardless of anything."

Continuous learning and improving care

- The registered manager sought feedback from people, relatives and health and social care professionals through questionnaires and maintaining regular contact.
- Regular team meetings took place and records of the meetings were reviewed. Staff were able to express their views and any concerns they may have had, and feedback was provided to staff around any changes to the service.
- The registered manager continually sought to enhance the service and people's experiences. She told us, "People say if it's not, broken don't fix it. However, sometimes when you reflect on it, even if it's not broke, you still need to fix it."
- One health and social care professional told us, "I am aware from carrying out reviews my clients have all been more than happy with the personalised care they receive. I am also aware Independence with Dignity Support will respond to the individuals request if things need to change for whatever reason."

Working in partnership with others

- The service had effective working relationships with external agencies, such as the local authority, district nursing teams, GP practices and the CQC.
- Professionals reported a positive relationship with the service and the registered manager. One health and social care professional told us, "They are able to organise with other agencies a plan centred around the individual person they both are working for to provide a seamless Service."