

TLC Homecare Services

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Inspection report

25a Market Place
Uttoxeter
Staffordshire
ST14 8HL

Tel: 01889566117

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08 June 2016

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Good ●
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Is the service safe?	Good ●
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Is the service effective?	Good ●
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Is the service caring?	Good ●
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Is the service responsive?	Good ●
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Is the service well-led?	Good ●
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Summary of findings

Overall summary

We inspected this service on 8 June 2016. This was an announced inspection and we telephoned 48 hours' prior to our inspection in order to meet with people who use the service. This was the first inspection of this service.

TLC Homecare Services provides domiciliary care for people who live in their own home in Utttoxeter and the surrounding area. At the time of our inspection, 14 people were receiving personal care support from the provider.

There was a registered manager at the service. 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. The provider of the service is made up of a partnership. The partners jointly manage the service and are both registered with us as registered managers. We refer to the managers as the 'provider' in the main body of the report.

People we spoke with told us they felt safe and were comfortable having staff come into their home. Staff recognised their responsibilities to protect people from abuse and were confident the provider would take action if they raised any concerns. Risks to people were assessed and managed to keep people safe whilst promoting their independence. People received their medicine as prescribed and were supported to apply any creams they needed.

People's needs and preferences were met when they were supported with meals and the provider ensured people accessed the support of other health professionals when their needs changed.

There were sufficient staff to meet people's needs and checks were made to confirm staff were suitable to work with people in their own homes. The support was flexible and responsive to changes in people's needs. Staff received an induction and training to gain the skills and knowledge to support people. Staff felt valued and supported by the management team.

People received personalised care from staff that knew them well. People valued their relationships with the staff team and felt they often 'go the extra mile for them' when providing care and support. Staff gained people's consent before supporting them and understood their responsibilities to support people to make their own decisions. Staff treated people in a caring way, respected their privacy and dignity promoted their independence.

People felt comfortable raising any concerns and were confident they would be taken seriously. People were asked for their opinions on the service informally and the provider was developing formalised systems to drive continuous improvement. Staff felt supported and valued by the provider and were involved in the development of the service. The provider had systems in place to continuously monitor the safety and

quality of 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.

People felt safe when they received care. Staff understood their responsibilities to keep people safe from avoidable harm and protect them from abuse. There were sufficient, suitably recruited staff to meet people's needs. People were supported to take their medicines and apply creams as required.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

People's needs were met by staff that knew them well and had completed training so they could provide the support people wanted. Staff supported people to make their own decisions and sought their consent before providing care. Where agreed, people received support with meals and drinks. Staff monitored people's health to ensure they were supported to access health care professionals.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

People and their relatives had good relationships with staff and were comfortable with them being in their home. They were positive about the way staff provided their care and support. Staff understood the importance of encouraging people to maintain their independence.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

People received personalised care that met their needs and preferences and were involved in reviews to ensure they were happy and the care remained relevant. People were confident that any concerns they raised would be addressed.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well led.

People, their relatives and professionals felt the service was well managed and the provider and staff team provided a high standard of care and support. The provider sought people's opinions on the service and was developing systems to drive continuous improvements. Staff felt supported and valued by the provider.

TLC Homecare Services

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 on 8 June 2016 and was announced. The provider was given 48 hours' notice because the location provides a domiciliary care service. We wanted to arrange home visits and telephone calls to people who used the service and to ensure staff were available to speak with us. The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

We checked the information we held about the service and provider. This included the Provider Information Return (PIR), statutory notifications that the provider had sent to us about incidents at the service and information we had received from the public. The PIR is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. A statutory notification is information about important events which the provider is required to send to us by law.

We used a range of different methods to help us understand people's experience of care, including visiting three people in their home, speaking with one member of staff and the two registered managers. We also telephoned three professionals to get their views on the service.

We looked at three people's care records to check they were accurate and up to date and reviewed records relating to the management of the service, including quality checks.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People told us that before they were offered a service the provider had visited them to discuss what support they wanted. We saw that risks associated with providing care in people's homes had been assessed and plans were in place to reduce the risks of harm to people whilst promoting their independence. People told us the provider and staff listened to them and they were able to make choices about the risks associated with their care and support. A relative told us, "They have all the equipment such as slide sheets and a hoist to move [Name of person] safely and they've figured out how to do things together". The environmental assessments also included information regarding electricity, gas and water cut-off switches to ensure the safety of people and the members of staff providing care and support. We saw that the plans were reviewed and updated to ensure people continued to be supported in a safe way. A member of staff told us when there were changes to people's needs, the provider briefed them by phone and they read the care plans when they arrived at people's homes. This meant people were supported safely as their needs changed.

People told us they felt safe because they knew the staff team who visited them. They told us the provider had supported them at first and when new staff had been recruited, they had been introduced to them before visiting alone. One person told us, "They've taken on three new staff, we've met them all now and they've started to come on their own now, I can't fault them". Relatives we spoke with told us, "It's a relief to us that the care is in place, there's never been any issues and we've met both of the managers".

The provider and staff were aware of the signs to look for that might mean a person was at risk of abuse and knew how to report their concerns to the local safeguarding team. There was a whistleblowing policy and staff knew they could contact external agencies such as CQC if they needed to. Whistleblowing is a way in which staff can report misconduct or concerns about wrong doing in their workplace. A member of staff told us, "If I reported anything, I have complete faith the managers would get it sorted". This showed the staff and provider understood their responsibilities to keep people safe from harm.

Some people told us they received support to take their medicines. One person told us, "They always check I've taken them". The provider had procedures in place to ensure people were supported to receive their medicines and apply any creams as prescribed. Staff had undertaken medicine training and had their competence checked to ensure they supported people safely. They told us the provider carried out spot checks by observing their practice and monitoring the medicines administration records (MAR). These were completed by staff to record when medicine has been given, or if not given the reason why.

There were enough staff to provide people with the agreed level of support. The provider was clear about the future of the service and how care should be provided. They told us, "We are very 'hands on' but as we've recruited more staff, our intention is to cover sickness and holidays in order that we can remain involved with people. We gather detailed information about people's needs and are very careful not to take on any support unless we can provide the care properly. We have a waiting list and are in the process of recruiting more staff but we always ensure that all our visits are covered". A professional told us, "They focus on quality rather than quantity and won't accept anything they can't fulfil. They would cover in an emergency, I have no doubt".

Recruitment checks were carried out to ensure new staff were suitable to work with people. A member of staff told us they were unable to start work until all of the required checks had been completed. Records we looked at had all the required documentation in place which meant the provider followed the necessary procedures to demonstrate staff were suitable to work in a caring environment, including a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS is a national agency that keeps records of criminal convictions.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People received effective care and support from staff that were well trained and knew how to care for them and promote their wellbeing. One person told us, "We have confidence in them all". Another said, "I'm happy with my care. The staff team have experience of other people with my condition and we can ask their advice". A relative told us, "[Name of person] has fantastic care; it's been the same since day one". Professionals we spoke with were very complimentary about the service. One told us, "They are very supportive with people, I've observed them, the standards of care are exceptional and they understand people's needs". Another said, "The care is excellent and patients tell us they are very satisfied with their care". A third said, "The provider has extensive experience and provide a high standard of care. All the feedback we have had from people has been very positive". People and their relatives told us new staff shadowed the provider on a number of occasions before they worked with them independently. A relative said, "The provider has trained the staff really well and they are always asking for feedback to check we are happy".

Staff told us they received an induction into the service which included completing the nationally recognised Care Certificate, which meant they were being supported to gain the skills and knowledge needed to work in a care environment. A member of staff told us, "I wasn't new to care but I learnt some new things and the good thing is I can refer back to it at any time as we keep the workbook". They told us that the provider was very clear about how they wanted things to be done, "We have regular meetings and receive feedback on our performance and any areas that need to improve. I go into the office weekly and can always talk about any problems I have". The provider told us they met with staff on a weekly basis and we saw they were in the process of introducing a formalised supervision and appraisal system. These arrangements showed that staff were supported to fulfil their role effectively.

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. 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.

We checked whether the provider was working within the principles of the MCA. People told us the staff asked for their consent before providing care. One person told us, "If ever I don't feel like having a shower, they respect my wishes". The provider and staff knew about people's individual capacity to make decisions and understood their responsibilities to support people to make their own decisions. A member of staff told us about how they supported a person who had difficulty verbalising their wishes. They said, "They mouth things and I look for their facial expressions". This showed the staff understood the importance of gaining consent.

People who were supported with mealtime visits told us staff encouraged them to eat and drink enough to maintain good health. One person told us, "Staff make sure I have everything I need. As soon as they arrive

in the morning, they make up two bottles of juice, one for the lounge and one for my bedroom and a pot of coffee with a few biscuits". Staff were aware of people's dietary needs and followed plans to ensure they were supported to maintain good health. A member of staff told us how they met one person's specialist needs, "They have special bread and we even have to use a separate toaster". We saw this was documented in the person's care plan.

People retained responsibility for managing their own health but told us the staff supported them to access other health professionals if needed. A relative told us, "We are happy for them to liaise with other health professionals involved because we know they act in their best interests". Professionals we spoke with told us, "Communication is brilliant; they contact us if they have any concerns about people".

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People were positive about the provider and staff. They told us they listened to them and treated them with respect. One person said, "They ask what I want and don't take over". Another said, "I feel I can ask them anything and never feel stupid, they are very obliging". A relative said, "We love them, they are brilliant". People valued their relationships with the staff team and told us they often 'go the extra mile' for them when providing care and support. A relative told us, "We asked for a check call when we had a family emergency. The staff rang to let me know they had been and they'd also let the dog out. I can't praise them enough". One person said, "The staff go above and beyond and help you with anything you've got a problem with. We struggle to put the washing out sometimes and they do that for us". People and their relatives told us the staff were friendly and one relative told us, "We have a laugh together; we have that kind of relationship".

People told us the staff knew them well and understood the things that were important to them and how they wanted to be supported. One person told us the staff understood how they wanted to maintain their independence as much as possible. They said, "Staff understand and are aware when I'm not feeling so good and adapt the care they give on a daily basis". Another person told us, "The staff encourage me to do things for myself but help me if needs be". Discussions with the staff team demonstrated that they knew people's individual needs and were concerned for their wellbeing". A member of staff told us, "Being a small service, we get to know people really well, it's like I'm seeing my family and I know how important it is for people keep their independence as long as possible". A professional we spoke with told us, "The staff team understand people's needs. They spend time with people and their families, finding out what they want and need, they don't just presume". We saw that people had been asked for their preferences in all aspects of their care and their choices and decisions were reflected in their support plans. People had a copy of their records in their home and we saw they had signed their agreement to their support. One person told us, "I'm happy with the care and what's written in the plan".

People told us the staff respected their privacy and dignity. One person told us, "Staff put me at ease more or less straight away, they don't just see it as a job. They fit into my life rather than the other way around". A relative told us they felt comfortable with the staff being in their home, "They don't interfere with our routine. I'm happy to come down in my pyjamas while they are here, they are just like part of the family".

We saw that the provider had received positive comments about the service. One relative had written, "You always brightened up [Name of person's] day and treated them as you would your own relation". Another had written, "You provided excellent, individualised, quality care".

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People told us they were happy with the support they received and confirmed it met their individual needs. One person told us the care and support was helping them to recover and said, "I'm slowly picking up". The person's relative told us the staff team had helped them to source equipment to promote their relation's independence, which was very important to them. They told us, "We have had some equipment installed to make sure [Name of person] is able to do as much for themselves as possible and some equipment here is just for back up and is only used when they are having an off day". They went on to tell us the service was flexible and the staff team were able to meet their relation's fluctuating needs and said, "One day they came five times to reposition [Name of person] to prevent pressure damage to their skin".

People's needs were reviewed to identify any changes that may be needed to the care and support they received. A relative told us, "We've had a review with the social worker and the agency and we're happy things are working well". People's care records showed that reviews of care were undertaken after the first six weeks of support and then annually, or sooner if changes were identified. A professional told us, "Reviews to date have been very positive, the service is of a high standard, the care is person centred and there is good communication with relatives as well as people using the service". Where any changes were made, the provider told us the staff team were updated by phone and were required to sign to say they had read the updated care plan. A member of staff told us, "Things are updated quickly because the managers are out there working with us".

People told us they were supported to pursue activities and interests that were important to them. One person told us, "The staff are very good, they make sure I'm up and dressed and ready to go out before the transport comes. They also make sure I leave my emergency pendent at home as they have been known to go missing". The provider told us they were liaising with other professionals to try and secure funding for a person to have a personal assistant to support them with activities to promote their recovery.

People and their relatives told us they felt able to raise any concerns or complaints and were confident they would be taken seriously. One person told us, "If I had any problems I would just discuss them with the staff, you can talk about anything to them. I haven't felt the need to complain though, they are looking after us very well". A relative told us, "The provider is always asking for our views and I wouldn't sit back if something wasn't right. I don't need to complain though, we have a consistent level of care, it's always fantastic, and it's been the same from day one". People and their relatives told us they knew how to contact the provider's office if they needed to make any changes or cancel calls and a relative showed us a card with all the telephone numbers on. A member of staff told us they would do their best to answer any concerns people had and would report them to the provider should they need to investigate. We saw there was a complaints policy and a procedure for logging and tracking any complaints, which showed that none had been received.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People, their relatives and professionals felt the service was well managed and the provider and staff team provided a high standard of care and support. A relative told us, "They [provider] are passionate about care and are a completely different kettle of fish to every other care agency". Professionals we spoke with felt the service was well-led. One said, "I've watched them develop and grow. They've done their ground work and have the infrastructure in place to support the service". Another said, "They work well with us, communication is good, we have no concerns".

The culture of the service was positive, person centred and forward thinking. People and their relatives told us they were supported by a staff team that enjoyed working for the service. A relative said, "Staff are happy in their work, it makes such a difference". A member of staff told us, "I'm happy, the service is small and a lot more personal, everyone is more looked after". A professional told us, "They [provider] are very hands on and want the care to be right". People and their relatives were asked for their opinions on the service informally. A relative told us, "They ask for our views on the running of the service and don't take anything as a negative and are keen to make any improvements needed". The provider told us they were planning to introduce a questionnaire to gather people's views in a formal way, to enable them to make continuous improvements in the service.

A member of staff told us the management was supportive and approachable and they felt able to raise issues and concerns or put forward suggestions on how the service could improve. They told us, "The managers ask for feedback and I'm happy to give my opinions and they take our views into consideration".

We saw the provider had systems in place to check that people received a good service. A system was in place to ensure people received their support as planned and the provider was confident that there had been no missed calls. The provider carried out a range of audits, including checks on the administration of medicines and on the daily records to check for accuracy. The provider monitored any accidents and incidents to ensure action was taken to prevent reoccurrence. A member of staff told us that any concerns were discussed with them and they were supported with coaching or retraining as required.

People's confidential records were kept securely at the office base to ensure people's rights were upheld. The manager and provider understood the responsibilities of registration with us and notified us of important events that happened in the service. This meant we could check that appropriate action had been taken.