

Austin Ben Ltd

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## Inspection report

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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

We carried out the inspection on 23 March 2016. The provider was given 48 hours' notice because the location provides a domiciliary care service and we needed to be sure that someone would be in available. This was the first inspection of the service since it registered in 2015

The service is a home care agency that provides live in carers to people. The cares provide personal care to people in their own homes. At the time of our inspection there were seven people using the service.

The service had a registered manager. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

People told us they felt safe with staff in their own home. Risks were assessed and managed, there was information available to staff about what to do in an emergency. Staff received training and understood their responsibility to keep people safe.

People were supported to receive their medicines as and when they needed.

People were supported to remain independent and staff always obtained permission from people before giving people care.

The registered manager and the staff team understood and followed the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

The registered manager had assessed the care needs of people using the service. Staff had a clear understanding of their role and how to support people who used the service as individuals. People's needs were kept under review and plans were changed to reflect changing needs.

Staff were able to develop meaningful relationships with people and knew them well. People received consistent care that was delivered by staff who understood their role and received the training to carry it out to a good standard.

People were supported to maintain their health and wellbeing. People's health needs were met and when necessary, outside health professionals were contacted for support.

Staff felt supported by the registered manager. Staff received regular supervision from the registered manager and were regularly checked for their competency to carry out their role. People who used the service felt they could talk to the registered manager and had confidence concerns would be acted upon.

People felt the service was well managed. There were systems in place to monitor the 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.

Staff understood their responsibilities to keep people safe. Staff were employed following suitable pre-employment checks.

Risks were identified and measures were taken to minimise risk.

People received the support they needed with their medicines.

### Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

People were supported by staff who had the right knowledge and skills and who were themselves supported through training and supervision.

Staff understood their responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

People were supported with their nutritional and health needs.

### Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

People were supported by staff with dignity and respect.

Staff respected people's privacy. People were involved in decisions about their care and staff respected and supported these decisions.

### Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

People received care and support that was centred on their individual needs.

People knew how to raise concerns and were confident they were listened to.

## Is the service well-led?

Good 

The service was well led.

People using the service and staff were involved in developing the service.

People felt the service was well led. The provider had effective arrangements for monitoring and assessing the quality of the service.

# Austin Ben Ltd

## **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.

The inspection team consisted of an 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. We spoke with two people who used the service. A third person we spoke with had recently left the service.

We looked at the care plans of three of the people who used the service at the time of our inspection. We spoke with six care workers employed by the service. We looked at three staff recruitment files to see how the provider recruited and appointed staff. We also looked at the records the registered manager provided concerning their procedures for monitoring the quality of the service and evidence of staff training.

Before the inspection we reviewed notifications that we had received from the provider. A notification is information about important events which the service is required to send us by law. We also reviewed Provider Information Return (PIR). This 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.

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# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

People we spoke with told us they had every confidence in the work of the carers. We were told that the care was provided over long periods of time and people said that the carers arrived on time and if held up they would ring to inform the person. They also mentioned that carers would stay beyond their finish time if requested by the person. One person said, "I have one carer from a team of carers from 7:30 am to 10:30 pm seven days a week. I know them very well and feel very safe with them and have every confidence in them. I would not change any of them. They always arrive on time and don't leave until I'm happy for them to go. They will always go the extra mile for me."

Another person told us, "My wife and I feel very safe with our carers. They come at 5:00 pm and leave at 10:00 pm. Sometimes they will stay longer if there is something we are watching on the television and want to go to bed a bit later. We always get the same group of girls and we have every confidence in them."

We were told that suitable staff were available to ensure people remain safe and supported by people who understood their needs when their regular carer was unavailable either due to planned breaks or sickness. A staff member told us, "We all support one another and if some is ill then another one in the team will cover so that only a person the client knows goes."

Staff were aware of how to report and escalate any safeguarding concerns that they had. We saw that there was a policy in place that provided details of how to report safeguarding concerns and all staff had access to this policy when they were working. Staff had received training about their responsibility to keep people safe. All the staff we spoke with told us they would contact the manager if they had concerns. One staff member commented, "If I think something is not right then I will talk with the manager." Staff also confirmed they were aware of how to report concerns to outside organisations such as the local authority or CQC.

We saw that the service had a recruitment policy in place which was followed to ensure that all relevant checks were carried out on staff members prior to them starting work. Records showed that no one worked at the service without the required background checks being carried out to ensure they were safe to work with the people who used the service. Staff recruitment files that we looked at had the required documentation in place.

Risks associated with people's care had been assessed and assessments were reviewed. Staff had access to these risk assessments at all times while they were working. A member of staff told us, "I always check before I do anything that might have a risk." Another member of staff said, "I always make sure before we do anything that the client is safe." Risks associated with the environment were also assessed to ensure that staff and people using the service were safe.

Records held at the service showed that people were supported to access emergency health professionals if required. A member of staff told us, "If I have any concerns either medical or otherwise then I would contact the manager. If it were a medical emergency then I would contact the emergency services immediately." Staff had access to emergency contact telephone numbers and were clear on how to summon help if

required.

People were supported by staff to receive their medicines. One person told us "I take all my own medication and the girls remind me and check that I have taken them. They also record it each time in my care record. They are so much better than the care company we had before." Another person said "They always give our tablets to us on a tray and make sure that we take them and then write it up in our care record."

Staff received training to enable them to give people their medicines safely. We saw that clear records were kept to enable staff to know when and how to help people take their medicines. All the staff we spoke with confirmed they had received training to support people with their medicines. One staff member commented, "I have been trained to give medication and assessed and I always write everything up on the MAR (medicines administration record) sheet in the care record."



## Is the service effective?

### Our findings

The two people we spoke with felt that their staff team were well trained and knew what they needed to do and how to do it. They spoke positively of staff being respectful and courteous and that they always sought their consent before doing anything. One person told us, "My carers certainly know what they are doing and how to do it. They are certainly not clock watchers and will stay until the job is done. We have a really good relationship and we all get really well. They are becoming part of the family." Another person said, "The girls who come here certainly know what they are doing and are very well trained. We do occasionally get a carer who is shadowing. We are always informed when its going to happen and it is part of the process to bring a new member into our team. They are very good like that, so there are no surprises. We a really happy with what we get. They are all very polite and will always ask if it is alright to do things for us."

We saw from records that staff received regular training and supervision. The registered manager told us they had introduced a new training programme that ensured all staff had the training the needed. The first layer of training was nine mandatory training courses completed yearly, this included moving and handling, safeguarding people and first aid training. They also had ten courses that were completed every two years, these included dementia awareness, pressure care, infection control and privacy and dignity. They had a third layer of training that supported staff who needed specialist training. These included, mental health, diabetes and end of life care.

Staff confirmed they received comprehensive training to enable them to carry out their role. One member of staff said, "The training we get is very extensive. If we say there is something we are not sure about they will always make sure we are trained up in it, particularly as clients' needs change." Another staff member told us, "I have regular training and I have done my NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) Level 2 & 3. We also have access to E learning which helps to fit in with the work. I feel confident that I know what I am doing which improves what the client gets."

Records showed that staff were able to raise issues relating to practice as well as any training needs they may have. Staff confirmed they found the manager supportive and they were able to discuss issues regarding practice with them.

The Mental Capacity Act 2015 (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), is legislation that protects people who are not able to consent to their care and support. It ensures people are not unlawfully restricted of their freedom or liberty. We found that the registered manager was able to demonstrate that the service was following the legislation. Where people had the capacity to understand and consent to their treatment we found that they had done so and been actively involved in decisions around their care. Where people did not have the capacity to consent to care and treatment the necessary assessments to confirm this and ensure that the person received the care that takes into account their specific needs and wishes had been made.

We saw that people's care plans had information on their ability to make decisions for themselves. People we spoke with told us that staff always asked permission before they completed any care or support. One

person told us, "We are really happy with what we get. They are all very polite and will always ask if it is alright to do things for us."

People were supported to have sufficient to eat and drink. One person told us, "They help me prepare the meals which makes helps my independence and I am really happy with what I get." Another person said, "They don't prepare meals for us, that is done by another organisation, but they will serve it to us." A staff member told us, "I do prepare meals for my client which I enjoy. If I notice that things are running out I always bring food in to make sure they don't run out and they don't have to worry about it."

We saw that people were being supported to maintain good health and a positive wellbeing. Records indicated that people were supported to see healthcare professionals when they needed to. A person we spoke with told us, "The district nurse comes every day and the carers work with her to make sure that I get the best." A member of staff told us, "I work closely with the District Nurse to make sure I am clear about my client's changing needs."

# Is the service caring?

## Our findings

People told us that the service they received was caring. People described their care as being excellent. They described staff treating them with respect whilst supporting them. They told us how staff worked at maintaining their independence.

One person commented, "The care I get is excellent and cannot fault it. They always go the extra mile for me and I could not live without them. All of the team that help me are a real joy to work with. They are always respectful and are always polite and courteous. They always urge me to do as much as possible for myself and to do my exercises." Another person told us, "The care we get is excellent. Nothing is too much trouble for them and they will always do whatever we ask. The girls are all very respectful and are always polite. They always help me to do as much as possible for myself even though we are housebound."

Records showed that people received the care they needed when they needed it. We saw that the registered manager had introduced a form called 'Personalise my support'. This form was used to find out information that staff would need to understand people's preferences and personal histories.

Staff we spoke with told us how they ensured that people who used the service matter. One staff member said, "Working as a team with one client makes a real difference. We get to know them and they get to know us which makes the relationship between client and carer really work." Another member of staff commented, "When you care for the person day in day out you start to understand them and their needs and how they want them fulfilled. You also have to make sure that they are treated with respect whatever their condition. This is one of the most rewarding jobs ever."

People described how they had been directly involved in the planning of their care and in meetings to update that care. One person told us, "They (staff member) are always at the planning meetings and any other meetings to relay what has been said to my wife when she returns from work." Another person told us, "I was directly involved in planning our care and I said what we wanted and that is what we get."

Records showed that the registered manager or senior carer would meet with people to discuss their care needs or changes that needed to be made to their support. Care plans we looked at showed where amendments had been made in line with people's requests or when they were assessed as needing more help. This shows that people were listened to when they discussed their changing care needs.

People told us they were always treated with respect. One person said, "They are always respectful and are always polite and courteous." Another person told us, "The girls are all very respectful and always polite."

Staff were able to tell us how they supported people in a respectful way that maintained their dignity and independence. One staff member told us, "I always make sure that I give my client choices and put them first. I always make sure that client is treated with respect and speak to them in a non patronising way. It is important to make sure that they do as much as possible for themselves which helps their self esteem." Another staff member said, "It's a job I love and I try to make sure that clients understand that I am here to

care. I always make sure that I am polite and ask what they think before starting anything."

## Is the service responsive?

### Our findings

People described how the staff knew what they liked and what they didn't like. One person commented, "My carers know what I like and what I don't like. I made a request for all female staff and that is what I have." Another person told us, "The girls who come here know what we like and what we don't like and are always accommodating to any of our requests."

Records showed that the service used teams of staff to care for people to ensure there was continuity in their care and support. Staff confirmed that they worked with the same person. One staff member commented, "I have got to know what my user likes. Working with the same person means that I get to know them really well and that makes a big difference rather than moving from one client to another."

People's views were sought and listened to. One person told us, "The manager often comes round to check as to how things are going. Sometimes she will ring to check if we are alright." Care plans we looked at showed that people had been involved in creating them and reviewing them. They provided staff with information about people's personal preferences, any interests they may have as well as what social activities they may like to take part in.

Staff told us that people were involved in planning their care. One staff member said, "We have a review about every 2 to 3 months which is done by the manager and we are involved." Another staff member told us, "I always try making sure that the client and their relatives are fully involved in the decisions about the client's care." The registered manager told us they would visit people who used the service regularly to review their care and support to ensure that it remained up to date.

People told us they knew how to raise concerns or make a complaint. One person said, "I have never had a reason to complain about anything." Another person told us, "We did complain once about a carer. I spoke to the manager and they never came again." Staff told us that if people raised concerns with them they would speak to the manager and would be confident that the manager would deal with it. The service had a complaints policy that each person received a copy of when they started receiving a care.

There were systems in place to listen to people's experiences. The service had a quality manager who visits people to discuss the standard of care they were receiving. The outcome of these visits were recorded in people's records held at the office.

The registered manager told us that they had introduced a coffee afternoon for people using the service to visit the office and meet with the registered manager and staff to discuss their views of the service. We saw invitations that had been sent to people and saw that one meeting had been held where two people attended. The registered manager told us they hoped to hold these again in the future and encourage more people to attend as they were useful to get to hear people's views of the service.

## Is the service well-led?

### Our findings

People spoke very positively of the service they received and said that they were very happy with the service. They found the office and its staff very helpful. They spoke very highly of the manager stating that "nothing was too much trouble." They also describe the registered manager as being a regular visitor to check on care and to review their care.

One person told us, "I am very happy with the service. The office are very helpful, particularly the manager and deputy manager who always go the extra mile. The whole operation is very well managed." Another person said, "Oh yes we are very happy with the service we get. The girls are first class and the manager is so very helpful. The invoices are always on time and we have no issues. The manager always comes round to check everything is to our liking. Nothing is too much trouble for them."

The registered manager was clear about the aims and objectives of the service and also received support from the providers to ensure that high standards of care were achieved. All the staff we spoke with were positive about the registered manager and the support they gave. Comments we received included, "Everybody works together and the manager is so accommodating." And "The manager is so supportive." All the staff we spoke with said they were very happy working for the organisation.

Staff told us they felt listened to if they suggested improvements for the service. One staff member said, "It is really well managed as an organisation and people listen to what you have to say."

There were systems in place to monitor the quality of the service, these included questionnaires for people to answer about the service they received as well as the recent introduction of the coffee afternoon. Records indicated that the registered manager or senior carer undertook spot checks to observe the competency of staff whilst they were working with people.

Before the inspection the provider sent us the completed PIR, which identified areas for improvement over the next twelve months. The registered manager had identified they were carrying out a review of their internal audits to ensure that they were suitable to measure the standards the service provided. The registered manager carried out scheduled checks of aspects of the service and reported findings to an area manager. Where issues were identified improvements were made.

The registered manager was able to demonstrate good management and leadership. A staff member told us, "The manager is always ready to roll up their sleeves and work with clients." Another member of staff said, "The office are brilliant and the manager is so supportive and they have such a good relationship with everybody. They knows exactly what is going on."

The registered manager was aware of the requirements upon them to notify the Care Quality Commission or other agencies of significant events within the service.