

Solitaire Homecare Services Limited

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Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

This inspection took place on 05 May 2017 by one inspector and was unannounced. Solitaire is a domiciliary care agency registered to provide personal care to people living in their own homes. At the time of our inspection the service was provided to 130 people.

We undertook a focused inspection of Solitaire Home Care because we had received some concerns about the provider not responding to complaints or concerns, call cramming and the unprofessional conduct of the provider. Call cramming means that staff are required to attend more calls than time would allow, so each person's allocated time would be shortened.

This report only covers our findings in relation to this topic. You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for 'Solitaire Home Care' on our website at www.cqc.org.uk

The provider is required to have a registered manager in post. 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 a legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run. A registered manager was in post at the time of our inspection.

During this inspection we only looked at whether the service was well led. Therefore we have not reassessed the overall rating of the service.

Staff felt supported by the management team and received training to ensure that they had the skills to support people with their care.

People felt that timing of call could improve to ensure that at weekends a consistent service was provided. Records of staff rotas were not always clear about the time of calls and where staff should be. On occasions rotas showed that staff were meant to be in two places at the same time. People did not always have their call on time and were not always notified if staff were going to be late.

The quality of the service was regularly monitored through a series of audits and checks. However some people felt that complaints were not always addressed to their satisfaction to ensure that people felt that their concerns were listened to.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was not always well led.

Most people were satisfied with the service they received.

There were clear procedure in place to address concern and complaints, however these had not been followed to ensure that people felt that that they were been listened to.

There were systems in place to assess and monitor the quality of the service. However these were not always used effectively to ensure that areas for improvement were identified.

We could not change the rating for Well –led. We will check this during our next planned comprehensive inspection."

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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 was 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.

We last inspected this service on 12 November 2015 when the provider was rated as Good in all outcomes. We undertook a focused inspection of Solitaire Home Care on 05 May 2017 because we had received some concerns about the provider not responding to complaints or concerns, call cramming and about the conduct of the provider. Call cramming means that staff is required to attend more calls than time would allow, so each person allocated time would be shortened.

This inspection was unannounced and carried out by one inspector. Before our inspection we reviewed the information we held about the service. This included information that we had received via our website and complaints about a service. During our inspection we spoke with eight staff and nine people who used the service. The registered manager and the provider. We looked at staff rotas, records of staff meetings, complaints, staff training, staff allocation and the concerns that had been raised about the provider.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People gave mixed views in relation to whether staff attended their call at the right time. Some people told us that staff were not always on time. One person told us, "They [staff] are mainly on time during the week but erratic at weekends I have to wait for them to come then it's too late for me to do anything else. Another person told us, staff should come at 8am, sometimes it has been 9am others 8.30am, there does not seem to be a problem during the week I have told them and they are trying their best to sort it out."

Some people spoken with told us it was very rare for missed calls to happen and although calls could be late they had no concerns about the care provided by staff. One person told us, "I cannot fault the care that is given to my relative. When staff are late it's normally about 15 to 20 minutes; it does not happen often and normally I am informed." One person told us, "I don't have a problem in the week it's at weekends where staff have been late or early for the last few months. This appears to be a regular occurrence. Staff are very nice and caring that is not the problem it is the times of calls." Another person told us, "Calls need to be as near as possible to 7am because the person needed to take their medicines. The rota seen showed that the majority of the time the calls were made at this time, however on occasions 7.30am was logged as the time attended."

The provider was open and transparent with us and told us that they also had identified there were some problems at weekends and because of this the provider told us they had a continuing recruitment drive in an effort to ensure that there were enough staff to attend people's calls on time at all times. The provider told us in some circumstance delays may be due to an emergency at the previous calls, but staff had been advised to contact the office if they were going to be late so the next person would be told that staff were running late. However some people spoken with told us that they were not always informed when staff were going to be late. One person told us, "The office doesn't always let me know when staff are going to be late, it is only this aspect of the service that they could improve on. This shows that the systems that the provider has in place were not always implemented."

The provider told us that when people joined the service they were informed of the half hour window either side of their call times. The provider needed to be mindful that the half hour leeway was to cover emergency situations and if the evidence showed that calls were regularly not attended at the planned time this could indicate that the planning of calls was not sufficient to ensure that people were supported at the times agreed.

Staff spoken with told us that they were able to complete the calls that they were required to do. However, One staff member told us, "Sometimes calls are planned for the same time which then has a knock-on effect meaning the next person received their call late." We looked at the staff rotas and allocations. We saw in some instances calls to people's homes showed either no travelling time in between calls, or staff had been rostered to be in two places at the same time. This demonstrated that the providers systems in place to schedule calls was in effective.

We looked at how complaints were being managed by the provider. We looked at a recent complaint and

saw that a complaint received in April 2017 had not been investigated and no communication with the person to say that the complaint had been received or how the complaint was going to be investigated. We spoke with the individual who felt their concerns were not addressed appropriately. During our visit the provider adapted the complaints policy and procedure to ensure that all complaints or concerns were formally acknowledged within twenty four hours.

We looked at the quality of monitoring that the provider undertakes in relation to feedback from people who use the service. Comments included "Carers are doing a fantastic job. I'm really happy with the service provided." "There are no concerns about the service at all, staff are very friendly and office staff are always willing to help." This showed even though improvements were needed in the systems the provider had in place to monitor the quality of the service, people were satisfied with the service they received.

The provider told us that they would use the information as a learning process and was always looking at ways to improve. The provider placed emphasis on constantly trying to improve the service based on people's comments. All staff spoken to felt that the provider, managers and other staff were all very supportive. One staff member told us, "If you have any problems at all, then the manager's do their utmost to support you, for example, any personal issues the provider and the manager's will sit and talk to you to see how they can help."

Concerns were raised with us in relation to the provider's involvement on some social media sites and some employment issues. We have considered these issues and as they were found to be personal and employment issues that had no impact on the service being provided we are not reporting on these. We have found no evidence at this time that brings into question the professionalism and conduct of the provider in respect of the service provided.