

Allenby Douglas Limited

# Allenby Douglas Ltd

## 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?

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

Good 

Is the service well-led?

Good 

### Overall summary

The inspection was carried out on 14 October 2015 and was announced.

Allenby Douglas Limited is a family run domiciliary care agency that provides personal care and support to people in their own homes. At the time of our visit the agency was providing a service to 80 people. The frequency of visits ranged from one visit per week to four visits per day and they also provided overnight care where needed.

There was a registered manager in post who was present during the inspection. 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 were extremely positive about the support they received. They told us they received support from staff

# Summary of findings

who were caring, helpful and kind. Staff were highly motivated and treated people with dignity and respect. People were supported to remain as independent as possible. People were encouraged to maintain contact with people who were important to them and to attend social events

People benefitted from a flexible service that was responsive to their changing needs. People were able to make changes to their care visits as and when required and additional care was provided in a timely manner when people were unwell

People felt safe and comfortable with the staff and the support they provided. They took comfort from receiving support from the same care staff who would let them know if they were going to be late. Staff knew how to keep people safe from harm and abuse.

There were enough staff to ensure people's needs were met. The provider had completed checks on new workers to ensure that they were safe and suitable to provide care to people who used the service.

People received support from staff who received training and support relevant to their role. Staff felt well supported by management who provided regular guidance and support to develop their skills and knowledge.

Staff sought people's consent before supporting them and encouraged people to make decisions for themselves. Where people refused support this was respected. Where people had difficulty communicating verbally staff would look for other forms of communication such as body language, gestures or writing things down for people.

People received a personalised service which was tailored to their individual needs and preferences. People's care plans were kept under regular review and people were actively encouraged to give feedback on the quality of the service. The provider had a complaints process and complaints were thoroughly investigated and action taken to prevent re occurrence.

The registered manager and provider were very committed to delivering a quality service and had systems in place to check on the quality of the service. They actively sought feedback from people relatives, staff and health care professionals in order to develop and improve the service.

The service had a positive working culture with open and honest communication. Staff took pride in working for the service and were highly motivated to deliver the values of the service.

# Summary of findings

## The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

### Is the service safe?

The service was safe.

People felt safe and comfortable with the care and support provided by staff.

People took comfort from receiving support from the same staff who would let them know if they were going to be late. Staff knew how to keep people safe and who to report any concerns to. Staff had received training to ensure people were given their medicine as prescribed to promote good health.

Good



### Is the service effective?

The service was effective.

People were supported by staff who had the skills and knowledge to do their job and who were highly motivated. People's choices were respected. People received the support to eat and drink. People were supported to see health care professionals as and when required.

Good



### Is the service caring?

The service was caring.

People were treated with kindness and compassion. People were given choices about their care in a way they could understand. People's dignity and privacy was respected and they were supported to remain as independent as possible. People were encouraged to maintain contact with people who were important to them and to attend social events. Staff were well motivated and showed they cared about the people they were supporting.

Outstanding



### Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive.

People received personalised care which was regularly reviewed. People received a flexible service which was adapted to suit their preferences. People received support to maintain social contact. People were encouraged to comment on the quality of the service.

Good



### Is the service well-led?

The service was well-led.

People were positive about the culture and management of the service. The registered manager was committed to delivering a quality service. Staff took pride in working for the provider and shared the vision for the service. The provider had systems in place to check the quality of the service and made improvements to improve the service.

Good



# Allenby Douglas 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.

This inspection took place on 14 October 2015 and was announced. The provider was given 48 hours' notice because the location provides a domiciliary care service for people in their own homes and we needed to make sure there would be someone in the office. The inspection team consisted of 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

As part of the inspection we reviewed the information we held about the service, such as statutory notifications we had received from the provider. Statutory notifications are about important events which the provider is required to send us by law. We also reviewed the Provider Information Record (PIR). The PIR is a form where we ask the provider to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and what improvements they plan to make. We asked the local authority and Health Watch if they had information to share about the service provided. We used this information to plan the inspection.

During the inspection we spoke with 10 people who used the service and six relatives. We received feedback from the local pharmacist and three health care professionals who had contact with the service. We spoke with nine staff which included the registered manager, a director and care staff. We viewed two records which related to assessment of needs and risks and consent. We also viewed other records which related to management of the service such as complaints, accidents and recruitment records.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

All the people and relatives we spoke with felt safe and comfortable with the staff and the support they provided. People took comfort from a regular group of staff and knowing who would attend each visit. One person said, “They have given me the confidence that I can always remain in this flat because I know they are always there.” People told us staff would always check if they needed anything else doing before they left and would stay longer if required. One person said, “They [staff] do everything they should and what I ask them to do.” Another person said that staff, “Always saw that the job was done”. People told us that on the rare occasion where staff were running late, the staff would telephone them to explain that they were going to be a bit late and apologised for this.

Staff had all received training on how to keep people safe and had a good understanding of the different forms of abuse, when and who they should report any concerns to should they witness or become aware of any abuse. Staff told us they that they could speak to the registered manager or office staff at any time should they have concerns about a person’s wellbeing and how to support them. The registered manager told us there had been two safeguarding referrals made in the past twelve months. We saw that the provider had taken appropriate action in identifying, reporting and managing the safeguarding concerns raised.

Risks to people’s health, wellbeing and their environment were routinely assessed, monitored and reviewed. One person told us they felt safe with how staff supported them to move around in their home. Staff were aware of people’s different needs and the level of support and equipment that was needed to promote people’s safety. Staff told us they would only use equipment that they had received training and guidance to use. Staff had a clear understanding of their responsibilities and informed us that they would contact the office if there was a change in people’s needs and associated risks.

Staff were confident of what action to take when an accident or incident occurred. One relative told us how on two occasions their family member had fallen and had been discovered when staff arrived. On both occasions, the

staff had alerted the office and the paramedics. The relative said that the staff and registered manager had dealt with the incidents efficiently and done everything that they could. Staff reported incidents to the office and the registered manager completed the accident book and entered details on their electronic system. They analysed the information and took relevant action such as contacting health care professionals for advice or equipment to help reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

People told us that they received their care when they needed it. On the rare occasion where staff were running late, they would telephone them to let them know and apologise. The registered manager ensured that there were sufficient staff available to meet people’s needs. They told us there was always spare capacity within the workforce to deal with increases in people’s needs or to deal with urgent situations. The provider had purchased a four wheel drive vehicle which could be used to get to people in inclement weather conditions. They also allowed staff to use this vehicle if their vehicle broke down or was in the garage in order to maintain the service. Staff told us that the provider completed checks to ensure they were safe to work with people prior to them starting work. These included references from previous employers, identity checks and disclosure and barring service checks. Recruitment records we saw confirmed this.

People told us that staff reminded them to take their medicine, one person said, “They are good about getting me into a [medication] routine”. Staff we spoke with told us they had received training to administer medicine. They were aware how to record when people had taken or refused medicine and what to do if there was an error with medicine. Where there were concerns about people refusing to take their medicine this was reported to the office and they would contact the doctor. Staff told us that the administration records for medicines were checked during spot checks completed by the registered manager and senior staff. The registered manager informed us they maintained good links with the pharmacist and that most people’s medicine was delivered to the service. This was confirmed by the pharmacy who told us the registered manager and staff regularly contacted them in relation to people’s medicines.

# Is the service effective?

## Our findings

People told us that they were supported by staff who had the skills and knowledge to do their job. This was confirmed by a health care professional who regularly worked with the provider who said, “My overall experience of working with Allenby Douglas and observing the carers within their practice has been excellent, the carers all seem to have awareness and skills to manage the people that we also visit.” They found that staff had knowledge and understanding when working with older people, particularly those living with dementia. They found that their approaches were effective in supporting people to ease their anxieties.

Staff told us that they had the opportunity to and had undertaken various training courses to enable them to do their job. Some staff had received specific training to meet the needs of people who used the service such as skin care and caring for people living with dementia. Staff felt that the training was of great benefit as it gave them the confidence to deal with a broad spectrum of people with various needs. One staff member told us how much a course on supporting people with dementia had helped them. They said, “Training gives you more insight into people’s needs, the knowledge of how best to approach people”. Staff told us they received a structured induction before they started working with people. This included training sessions in the office and working alongside experienced staff until they gathered experience and confidence to undertake their role independently.

Staff told us that they received excellent support from the registered manager and office staff, they felt able and were encouraged to contact the office if they had any worries or concerns. One staff said, “I have a lot more confidence since working here, if I have any concerns I contact the office.” Staff received annual appraisals and regular supervision where they were able to discuss their development needs and any concerns they may have. Staff told us that the registered manager and senior staff completed regular spot checks on their practice and that they received constructive feedback to allow them to develop their skills and practice. We observed that records of supervision, appraisals and spot checks were kept on staff records.

People and their relatives told us that staff always asked their consent and asked them what they wanted to do before supporting them. Staff had a good understanding of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and ensured that they gained people’s consent prior to supporting them. Staff stressed the importance of people being given informed choice, they therefore talked everything through with people so that they knew what was happening. Where people refused support they would respect their choice. Where people had difficulty with verbal communication staff said they would either write things down for them or use gestures or body language to communicate. The registered manager was aware of their responsibilities under the MCA and people’s mental capacity was considered when undertaking assessments of people’s needs.

People who received help with their food and drinks told us they were happy with the support they received. One person said that when staff made their breakfast they made their porridge ‘properly’ followed by bread and marmalade. Another person told us that staff helped them with their meals by cutting up their food when they were unable to do this themselves. Staff were aware of people’s dietary needs and which people required pureed meals or thickened fluids. Where there were concerns about people’s nutrition staff put monitoring systems in place to check that people were eating and drinking enough.

Relatives told us staff would contact health care professionals as and when needed. One relative told us that staff recognised when their family member was unwell and contacted the office with their concerns, they said, “They see what needs doing. My [relative] would not tell them, they take the initiative, without barging in and being bossy.” Another relative told us that the registered manager liaised with the doctors about their family member’s medicine. Staff told us that they would contact the office if they found someone was unwell when they visited or if they felt that they needed guidance or support from other healthcare professionals. The registered manager told us that they regularly liaised with healthcare professionals to discuss concerns about people’s emotional and physical needs. This was confirmed by healthcare professionals we spoke with. One said, “I feel we work as a team to ensure the patient receives the best possible care.”





# Is the service caring?

## Our findings

People and relatives spoke very highly of the staff and the support they provided. They described staff as kind, helpful and friendly. One person said, “The carers treat me so well. They treat me like a human being. They love to talk to me. It’s a pleasure to see them coming.” Another person said, “They have all got good hearts, they are superb”. Staff were well motivated and wanted to provide a good service which allowed people to remain in their own homes. One staff member told us how much they enjoyed supporting people to stay in their own home, they said, “A smile and a kind word costs nothing – absolutely love it – getting the best for everybody”. One relative thought that the service was “absolutely amazing” and was certain that it had saved their family member’s life by enabling them to keep their independence and stay in their own home. They felt that they did not need to worry about anything as the provider took care of everything. A health professional who worked with the service told us they observed that staff had a caring approach and showed people respect.

One relative told us they found that the registered manager and staff were brilliant. They went onto to tell us their family member received a seamless service and that the registered manager and their family even went to the extent of visiting them on Christmas morning which was very welcomed as the person lived alone. They felt that the service should be shown as a ‘Beacon of light’ to every care home and care agency. People were reassured that staff took the time to introduce new staff to them and explained their role thoroughly to them before they started to work with them on their own. People felt involved in decisions about their care and support and told us that staff offered them choice about what to eat and drink and the support they received. Staff stated that they always offered people choices as this enabled them to make decisions. One staff said, “We just ask them, most of them will tell you what they want”

People told us that staff supported them to maintain contact with people who were important to them and to attend social events. One person told us how staff took them out to a local club to meet up with their friends. Another person told us that the provider always did their best to accommodate their requests for support to attend appointments and various activities. Staff respected people as individuals, they told us that everyone was different, that

everyone had their likes and dislikes and their own set of priorities. Staff told us they took time to talk to people and to get to know them. They would sit with them, look at their old photographs and talk about their pasts. They recognised the little things that mattered to people such as memorable days, for example the birthdays of loved ones who had passed away. This was confirmed by a relative who said, “They [Staff] are good at talking to my [relative] I look at them as friends.” One staff member spoke of the benefit of finding common ground as they found this put people at ease. This was reflected by a relative who told us that a staff member talked with their family member about interests they had in common

People told us how staff encouraged them to remain independent, but offered them assistance when needed. One person said, “They [staff] know exactly when to withdraw and when to offer help”. Another person told us how staff always allowed them to do as much as possible for themselves, but were always available to step in and lend assistance when needed. Relatives also felt staff had a positive approach. One relative told us that they found staff conscientious and terrific with their family member. They said, “[Relative] is unwilling to engage with them but they are kind, thoughtful and considerate with them”. Another relative said, “They encourage my [person’s name] to go outside for some fresh air. They try even though [name] is resistant. They are friendly and positive”. When we spoke with staff they recognised the importance of people maintaining their independence and self-esteem. One staff said, “We try and encourage people to do as much as possible for themselves, we give them ownership to make their own decisions, to promote their wellbeing and to empower them”. Staff also said they needed to be observant to notice changes in people’s moods. If people were feeling low they would try and find out what was troubling them and if they could do something to make them feel better.

People told us that staff always maintained their dignity and privacy. They described staff as considerate and sensitive. They felt that staff showed genuine concern for people and their families. Staff spoke about people in a respectful manner, they supported people’s privacy and promoted their dignity. They told us that they would always keep doors shut and cover people’s body’s when delivering personal care. One staff member said, “We treat them as we would want to be treated ourselves”. Staff allowed people privacy with some aspects of personal care but



## Is the service caring?

ensured they were nearby so that they could be called when needed. This was confirmed by a relative who told us that staff were gradually introducing support for their family member and would encourage them to have a shower and left the room while they put their clothes on.

Staff talked about people with compassion and respect. One staff member said, "Listening to people's story, it can be so heart-warming". Another staff member said, "I love the job when you go in and get to know people, have a chit chat, seeing that smile on their face makes me smile".



# Is the service responsive?

## Our findings

People told us that they made choices about what they wanted to do and about the support they received. People said that the provider had assessed their needs prior to their care starting. Staff we spoke with were knowledgeable about people's needs and were able to identify any changes and would report these to the office. Where there were any changes in people's needs these were effectively communicated to staff. One health care professional told us that they found that the provider's documentation was of a good standard and that staff carried out their roles as instructed. We observed that staff had access to detailed care plans which identified people's needs and their preferences for care delivery.

People told us that the provider was quick and responsive if they raised any issues or made any requests. People and their relatives felt the provider took the initiative to ensure that people were happy with their care and the staff. One service user said, "They phoned to ask if I was happy with the carer". People and their relatives told us the provider would withdraw any staff that did not suit the person. Staff told us they felt that the provider was good at matching staff to people. The registered manager felt that it was important to put the right staff in to ensure that people felt comfortable and safe. They would regularly review people's care plans to establish if any changes were needed. Where people had requested changes they told us that the

registered manager had listened to them and the necessary changes were made. We observed records which showed that one person had requested a change of staff and this had been arranged.

People and their relatives told us the provider was flexible and prepared to adapt the service to fit in with their individual preferences and needs. One person told us how prior to them having an operation the provider was outstanding, they said, "They [provider] phoned the hospital and liaised with them about when I would be coming home. They were at the door when I arrived home from hospital." Another person said, "Occasionally I ask them for an early call and if you give them enough notice, they are very good about it." One relative told us they had found staff considerate and helpful when arranging call times they wanted for their family member. Where additional care was required this was arranged in a timely manner. One relative told us that when their family member was unwell the provider arranged for staff to stay with them overnight. They said, "It is an incredible service". People felt able and comfortable to raise any concerns or complaints they may have with the service but had not found reason to complain. They felt that issues or concerns were dealt with as they arose. The provider had a complaints process and this was included in an information pack which each person was given when they started using the service. Staff we spoke with were aware how to deal with any concerns or complaints they received. The provider had received one complaint in the last 12 months, we saw that this was thoroughly investigated and provoked a review of quality monitoring systems

# Is the service well-led?

## Our findings

People and their relatives were extremely positive about the registered manager and culture of the service. Most people and relatives had either spoken with the registered manager or met them in person. People told us they found that they were friendly, flexible and reliable. Everyone we spoke with said they would not hesitate to recommend the provider to anyone else. One person said, "It's the best agency in the area". Another person said, "The service they provide is really excellent. It is beyond anything we expected or hoped for. The Company has strong management with a strong caring ethos, carers who really do care and a manager who knows his clients, cares about them, is willing to step in and provide the care himself when needed and would have my vote for a sainthood!"

The provider had a clear vision statement to provide comprehensive, high quality care and support to enable people to live fulfilled lives. The registered manager told us they had built a good reputation for doing just that. Whilst they acknowledged they were running a business they were not looking for growth. They would not take on extra work unless they had the capacity to do so, as they were not prepared to compromise the care they provided to people who already used the service. The registered manager told us it was vital that they employed the right type of staff who shared their vision and values to ensure people received a good service. Staff we spoke with were motivated and demonstrated passion and commitment to delivering good quality care. One staff member said, "It's rewarding when you makes someone's day, making sure they are okay, you may be the only person they see that day".

There was a clear management structure in place and everyone was aware of their responsibilities. The provider was very visible in the service and provided support and guidance to staff and was readily available to step in and cover when the registered manager was not available. The provider told us they were keen to develop the service and invest in their staff. They had recently introduced new responsibilities for some staff as they were keen for staff to develop in their role. They felt by increasing staff knowledge and competence in specialist areas, this in turn provided more care options to people who used the service.

The provider worked in partnership with other organisations to ensure that they were following current

practice and providing a high quality service. For example one senior staff member had completed palliative and end of life training at the local hospice. The registered manager had established and maintained good working relationships with health care professions that supported the service. This was confirmed by health care professionals we spoke with one said, "I have always found that the staff and management are keen to source and act upon advice to maintain and improve practices." Another said, "Allenby Douglas are regular contacts and clearly understand not only their legal duties and responsibilities to clients and staff, but are keen to ensure best practice and a good service". We saw that provider also completed a range of training and that staff who delivered the training had received the appropriate training to do so. The provider had systems in place to ensure that staff completed and renewed their training as and when required.

People praised the responsiveness and effectiveness of communication within the service. In particular people were impressed with the responsiveness and flexibility of the management, which meant their care requirements and preferences were being met. One relative said, "Communication is brilliant, no room for improvement they are 110%". People told us they were always able to get through on the telephone and speak with someone with responsibility who would deal with any issues they raised. One relative told us about an incident that occurred with their family member whilst they were away and had been dealt with effectively by the service, they said, "I trust them to get on with it. They give me peace of mind". The registered manager told us they delivered holistic service which enabled people to remain in their own home. They therefore take the initiative to deal with any issue that have an impact on people's wellbeing. They told us they also operated a company card system, where they paid for some people's weekly grocery shop and other bills such as hairdresser or chiropody and then invoice them or their family each month. They felt that this not only reduced the risk of financial abuse but reduced any anxieties people may have. We saw that the provider kept a clear audit trail of all transactions undertaken.

Staff took pride in working for the provider they told us that they were a very good company to work for and had a good reputation. They found the registered manager and provider very supportive in their work and also to them as individuals. Staff described the management as easy going

## Is the service well-led?

and approachable. They could speak to the management at any time of the day or night, one staff said, “They are so good, so flexible, they answer the phone anytime, even at 10.30 at night, they are always at the end of the phone”. Staff felt that the working culture was very good as there was open and honest communication throughout the service. This had been recognised by a health care professional who told us that service benefitted from good working relationships between the registered manager and the staff. Staff told us they were actively encouraged to discuss any concerns that they may have as they arose and also felt comfortable to discuss any concerns they had in supervision and team meetings. Team meetings were staggered so that everyone had the opportunity to attend and contribute to the running of the service.

Staff found that the management would listen to them and would take prompt action to address issues raised. One staff told us they requested some new clothing for a person and by the time they next visited the person the clothing was there. The registered manager told us they promoted open communication and encouraged suggestions for improvement by staff. For example one staff member had considered the risk to people who were unable to alert the office that staff had not attended. They suggested that a staff member's first call of the day should be to a person who could alert the office that the staff member was absent from work. This suggestion had been trialled and they found it beneficial as it allowed the office to arrange alternative support for that person and other people that staff member was due to attend to later that day. We saw that the provider celebrated good care and were keen to give staff recognition for their efforts. They operated a ‘Carer of the year award’ where people who used the service could nominate who they felt was the best carer.

The provider told us they were committed to delivering good quality care and had a number of checks in place to

check on the quality and safety of care provided. We saw that the registered manager and senior staff completed unannounced regular spot checks on staff practice where they observed staff approach with people and checked that care documents held in the home were accurate and completed correctly. Staff told us that they had each had spot checks completed on their practice and received constructive feedback on the outcome. We saw that the registered manager analysed information from complaints and accidents and took relevant action to prevent reoccurrence such as liaising with other professionals or making adjustment to working practices. The provider had recently introduced a red flag system of people who were deemed to be at high priority at that point in time. These measures ensured that they were monitored closely. We saw that people who were high priority were discussed during fortnightly meetings with office staff and that care staff received updates via staff memos on a weekly basis.

People and their relatives were given encouragement to express their views on the quality of the service. Each person was given an information pack and within this there was a compliment and comments form for them to complete as and when they felt necessary. People were also asked to complete annual quality assurance questionnaires about their experience of the service. The latest questionnaire had been completed in July 2015, we saw that people on the whole had given very positive feedback. Where people had raised any representation these had been explored and resolved. The registered manager told us that the overall findings of the survey would be published in the provider's newsletter.

The provider was aware of their statutory responsibilities and ensured that they submitted statutory notifications to us in a timely manner.