

Choices Healthcare Limited

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Inspection report

152 Hamlet Court Road
Westcliff On Sea
Essex
SS0 7LL

Tel: 01702344355

Date of inspection visit:
28 April 2017
02 May 2017

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25 July 2017

Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

We carried out a focussed inspection of this service on 28 April 2017 and 02 May 2017.

When we last inspected the service on the 23 and 24 January 2017 the outcome of the inspection was Good in all areas and we had no concerns.

Choices Healthcare Limited provides care services to people within their own homes. Care services include personal care, a sitting service and domestic services. The service provided are either through private arrangement or social services funding. The service covers Southend on Sea and Essex.

The service had a registered manager who was also the registered provider of 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.

In April 2017 we received some concerns around the service recruiting staff aged between 16-18 and not having appropriate safety measures in place when they are lone working. We found the service to have appropriate measures in place in regards to safe recruitment and in light of the concerns that had been raised the registered manager reviewed the recruitment process as to ensure additional support was made available for staff aged between 16-18.

We also reviewed records relating to an incident whereby care staff had left a person's home without turning off the cooker. The registered manager has cascaded a message to all staff reminding them that staff are not to prepare a meal using a cooker unless a risk assessment has been completed.

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 at the service. The provider's arrangements ensured that staff were recruited safely and people were supported by sufficient staff to meet their needs and ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Service had appropriate measures in place to ensure the safety of people and staff.

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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 checked 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 was prompted following concerns being raised with us, informing that the service was recruiting staff aged between 16-18 and did not have adequate measures in place to ensure their safety. We also had a concern raised in regards to staff leaving a person's cooker switched on after preparing a meal for them and leaving the premises.

Our findings indicated potential concerns about the management and risks associated with:

- ☐ Staff recruitment and induction procedures
- ☐ Keeping people safe

The concerns raised form part of the following domain: Is the service safe? Our findings are reported under this domain.

The inspection took place on 28 April 2017 02 May 2017. The first day of the inspection was unannounced. The first day consisted of two inspectors and day two was completed with only one inspector.

During our inspection we spoke with the registered manager, office staff and one member of care staff.

We looked at a range of records including all staff recruitment and induction records, staff rotas, investigation documentation specific to the reported incident.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

We carried out a focused inspection of Choices Healthcare on the 28 April 2017 and 2 May 2017. The service remains Good overall.

In April 2017 the Care Quality Commission received information advising that the service had been employing staff under the age of eighteen, and staff were not being offered appropriate support to ensure they were kept safe whilst lone working. In addition, concerns had been raised following an incident where care staff had not turned a person's cooker off after preparing them a meal during lunchtime and leaving the premises. In response to the latter the registered manager cascaded a message to all staff reminding them that staff were not to use people's cookers to prepare meals unless a risk assessment had been completed and adequate measures were in place to ensure the safety of people using the service.

Prior to visiting the offices of Choices Healthcare we also spoke to the registered manager about the concerns that had been raised around recruitment of staff aged between 16-18 and the service not having measures in place to ensure they were safe when lone working.

During our initial enquiries, the registered manager informed us that they were not aware of any member of staff aged under eighteen working at the service. We carried out a visit to the office and reviewed the provider's recruitment processes and procedures, including all staff personnel records. We found the service had one member of staff who was under the age of eighteen. This information was shared and discussed with the registered manager who informed us that they were not aware of the member of staff's age as they had been recruited by the recently departed office manager. In response to our findings, the registered manager agreed to review the member of staff's folder. The service's recruitment policy did not incorporate how to support people aged between 16-18 whilst lone working, the manager informed they would seek advice from Skills for care and the local authority.

Following our visit to the service the registered manager contacted us to inform us that they had reviewed the staff recruitment process and obtained guidance on employing people aged between 16-18 from Skills for Care. Skills for Care helps create a better-led, skilled and valued adult social care workforce. They provide practical tools and support to help adult social care organisations in England recruit, develop and lead their workforce. Skills for Care encourages employers to help young workers become apprentices. This guidance confirms that 16-18 year olds can be employed in adult social care providing they have completed or are undertaking an approved training programme in health and social care and the registered manager or a delegated person assesses the competence and confidence of the young worker to carry out all the tasks required of them, including where necessary intimate personal care. The registered manager advised that the new guidance had been used to review the member of staff's folder. In addition, the registered manager planned to have regular supervisions with the member of staff and this process would be applied to any new members of staff aged between 16-18. The registered manager also stated that staff aged between 16-18 would not lone work and would always work with a more experienced member of staff.