

Universal Care Agency Ltd

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Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Requires Improvement ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service effective?

Requires Improvement ●

Is the service responsive?

Requires Improvement ●

Is the service well-led?

Requires Improvement ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection of this service on 24 June 2015. Four breaches of the legal requirements were found. Recruitment and selection procedures were not followed, robust or safe. Staff who were recruited did not have the skills, experience and appropriate training to meet people's needs. Supervisions and appraisals were not completed for staff. Systems were not in place to identify, record, handle and respond to complaints by people and other persons in relation to the regulated activity. The provider did not have effective systems to improve the quality and safety of the service provided. After the comprehensive inspection, two warning notices were served on the registered provider and registered manager requesting that they meet the legal requirements by 21 September 2015. We also requested the provider send us an action plan for further breaches of the legal requirements. The provider and registered manager wrote to us to say what they would do to meet legal requirements in relation to these breaches and that they would meet them by 21 September 2015.

We undertook this announced focused inspection on 18 January 2016 to check that they had followed their plan and to confirm that they now met legal requirements. This report only covers our findings in relation to those requirements. You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Universal Care Agency Ltd on our website at www.cqc.org.uk

At the inspection on 18 January 2016 we found that sufficient improvements had been made and the provider and registered manager had met the requirements of the warning notices.

Universal Care Agency Ltd is a domiciliary care service which provides care and support to adults and older persons in their own homes. At the time of the inspection there were ten people using the service. There were twelve care staff who provided care to people, a registered manager two recruitment officers and one co-ordinator who scheduled people's care and managed staff recruitment.

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 service carried out safe recruitment and selection processes before new staff were employed to work with people. Checks were made to ensure staff were of good character and suitable for their role.

Staff were provided with appropriate support, induction, supervision and professional development. However staff were not always appraised.

The provider had an effective system in place to deal with complaints, but did not always deal with requests about people's care in a timely manner.

Improvements had been made in assessing the quality of the service and monitoring of staff training, incidents and accidents.

We found the provider had made some improvements with understanding their role and responsibilities. The provider had informed the Local Authority and investigated the potential safeguarding concern; however the Commission had not been notified of a report of potential abuse.

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.

We found that action had been taken to improve the safety of people because safe recruitment and selection processes to ensure staff were suitable to work within a care setting were carried out.

Is the service effective?

Requires Improvement ●

The service was not always effective.

We found some improvements had been made and staff were provided with appropriate support, induction, supervision and professional development. However staff were not always appraised.

Is the service responsive?

Requires Improvement ●

The service was not always responsive.

We found the provider had an effective system in place to deal with complaints but did not always respond to people's requests about their care in a timely manner.

Is the service well-led?

Requires Improvement ●

The service was not always well led.

We found the provider had made some improvements with understanding their roles and responsibilities. However, the Commission had not been notified of a report of potential abuse.

Improvements had been made in assessing the quality of the service and monitoring of staff training, incidents and accidents.

Universal Care Agency Ltd

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

We undertook an announced focused inspection of Universal Care Agency Ltd on 18 January 2016. This inspection was undertaken to check that improvements to meet legal requirements planned by the provider after our 24 June 2015 inspection had been made. The service was inspected against four of the five questions we ask about services: is the service safe, effective, responsive and well led. This is because the service was not meeting some legal requirements.

The inspection was undertaken by one inspector. As part of the inspection we spoke with one person who used the service and one relative. We also spoke with three care staff, the registered manager and the co-ordinator. We also spoke with the local authority safeguarding team and the commissioning team.

Before the inspection we reviewed action plans the registered provider had sent to us informing us how and when the service would meet our regulations. We reviewed two warning notices that had been served on the registered provider and registered manager. We also reviewed previous inspection reports, safeguarding records and other information of concern received about the service. We checked if notifications had been sent to us by the registered provider and manager. A notification is information about important events which the service is required to tell us about by law.

We reviewed a range of records about how the service was managed. We looked at complaints, incident and safeguarding logs and service quality audits. We looked at recruitment records for seven staff members and supervision, appraisal and training records for four staff members.

We asked the registered provider to send us copies of their policies and procedures, minutes of staff meetings, recruitment documents and training records after our visit. These were received.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People and relatives said they felt safe when they or their relative received personal care. One person said, "I feel very safe indeed, I trust my carer with my life and they are absolutely fantastic." One relative said, "My [relative] feels very safe, and I feel safe to leave them with their carer."

At our last inspection on 24 June 2015 we found the provider to be in breach of Regulation 19 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. The provider failed to follow their recruitment and selection procedures and meet the requirements of Schedule 3 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008. Recruitment checks had not been carried out to ensure staff were suitable to work within a care setting and check whether they were of good character. We issued a warning notice and told the provider and registered manager they were required to become compliant with this regulation by 21 September 2015. At this inspection we found the provider carried out safe recruitment and selection processes to ensure staff were suitable to work within a care setting.

At the inspection on 18 January 2016 the registered manager and co-ordinator confirmed they had implemented a new recruitment process following the inspection on 24 June 2015. They said they had implemented the new process to ensure all necessary checks had been completed for staff and they were suitable to work within a care setting. Eight care workers had been recruited since our last inspection on 24 June 2015. We viewed the recruitment records for five new care workers. We also viewed the recruitment records for two previous care workers who were working for Universal Care Agency Ltd at our last inspection on 24 June 2015 and did not have the appropriate recruitment checks completed. At our inspection on 18 January 2016 documents showed application forms had been updated and included details of applicant's full employment history and reasons for leaving their previous employment. Gaps in employment had been explored. Satisfactory information about any physical or mental health conditions relevant to the applicant's ability to work were completed. Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) had been undertaken for all care workers. The DBS helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and helps prevent unsuitable people from working with people who use care and support services. Five out of the seven recruitment records viewed contained written references. The co-ordinator said references for two care workers were being progressed, however the two care workers were not working at the time of the inspection. Following the inspection the recruitment officer provided evidence on 20 January 2016 that references had been received for these two care workers. Staff confirmed they had completed the recruitment process which included all the relevant checks.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People and their relatives felt staff were sufficiently skilled and experienced to care for them or their relatives and meet their needs. One person said, "My carer is very experienced and looks after me very well. She worked in a nursing home previously. They are expert at helping me with everything. I have no concerns about my care whatsoever." One relative said, "My [relatives] carer is very skilled and experienced." They confirmed their relatives care worker had previous experience of working with other people with the same condition as their relative.

At our last inspection on 24 June 2015 we found the provider to be in breach of Regulation 18 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. The provider failed to provide all staff with induction, supervision, appraisal and professional development. We asked the provider to send us an action plan to tell us how they were going to meet this regulation. At this inspection we found some improvements had been made and staff were provided with appropriate support, induction, supervision and professional development. However, staff were not always appraised.

At the our inspection on 24 June 2015 staff had an induction programme but it was not always completed in line with the provider's policy and did not follow nationally recognised guidance. The provider's action plan stated they would implement a new induction process. At the inspection on 18 January 2016 the registered manager and co-ordinator confirmed they had implemented The Care Certificate into their induction programme and additional training had been provided to staff as a result and in line with the provider's policy. The Care Certificate is an identified set of standards that health and social care staff adhere to in their daily working life. Records and staff confirmed this. All staff said they could request additional training and had received enough training to enable them to care and support people effectively. Two care workers had completed a higher qualification in Health and Social Care prior to working for the provider.

At our last inspection on 24 June 2015 staff did not always have a supervision or appraisal. The provider's action plan stated staff would have a supervision or an appraisal with their manager. At the inspection on 18 January 2016 records showed and staff confirmed they had received a recent supervision. Staff said they felt very supported by the registered manager and provider. One member of staff said, "It's a good company to work for. Good training, good support."

One care worker had been working for the service for more than a year and had not received an appraisal. They confirmed they had not received an appraisal but had met with the registered manager in December 2015 for supervision. They confirmed they met with the provider regularly and felt supported. The provider's supervision policy and procedure updated on 24 November 2015 states, "Universal Care Agency Ltd believes that all employees should be formally supervised. A clear difference will be established between employee appraisals and supervision." This meant the registered manager did not always follow the provider's policy for appraising staff."

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

At our inspection on 24 June 2015, we found the provider to be in breach of Regulation 16 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. We found the provider listened to people's experiences but did not have effective systems in place for identifying, receiving, recording, handling and responding to complaints by people and other persons in relation to the regulated activity. At this inspection we found the provider had an effective system in place to deal with complaints. However, people's requests about their care were not always dealt with in a timely manner.

At this inspection people we spoke to said they had not raised any complaints with the service but on occasions the service was not always responsive with dealing with their requests. One relative said they had spoken to the manager in December 2015 and requested an invoice for the care received to be sent to them. At the time of this inspection they confirmed they were still waiting for this information. One person said they were told they would be sent a care plan in the post and this still had not been received. They told us they had not made a complaint about it as they felt the care worker understood their care needs.

At this inspection on 18 January 2016 the registered manager confirmed they had received two complaints since the last inspection on 24 June 2015. One complaint had been received on 22 December 2015 by a person who was in receipt of care from the provider. Another complaint had been received on 15 July 2015 by a neighbour of a person who was in receipt of care from the service. Both complaints had been recorded, responded to and followed up in line with the provider's complaints policy. At the time of the inspection on 18 January 2016 documents showed the complaint received on 15 July 2015 had been satisfactorily resolved. The complaint received on 22 December 2015 was still on-going. Staff said they passed on all concerns and complaints to the registered manager and they were confident that the registered manager would deal with complaints about the service. One said, "If there are any concerns I log it and pass on to manager, this includes complaints. I am confident the managers would act on complaints."

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

At our inspection on 24 June 2015, we found the provider to be in breach of Regulation 17 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. The provider failed to understand the roles and responsibilities of a registered provider and registered manager. The provider failed to operate effective systems and processes to assess, monitor and learn from audits, incidents and accidents and have this information readily accessible to the Commission. We issued a warning notice and told the provider and registered manager they were required to become compliant with this regulation by 21 September 2015. At this inspection we found the provider and registered manager had made some improvements with understanding their role and responsibilities. However, the Commission had not been notified of an allegation of potential abuse. Improvements had been made in assessing the quality of the service and monitoring of staff training, incidents and accidents.

The Commission had not received any safeguarding notifications from the service since the last inspection on 24 June 2015. At our last inspection on 24 June 2015 the registered manager informed us they had not received any reports of potential abuse and this had been confirmed by staff. At our last inspection on 24 June 2015 the registered manager said they were aware of the requirement to notify the Commission of safeguarding concerns. At the inspection on the 18 January 2016 the registered manager confirmed they had received a report of potential abuse regarding a care worker on 23 December 2015. Documents showed the care worker provided a statement of events and was no longer providing care to the person who had made the allegation. The concern had been investigated and sent to the local authority. However, the registered manager had not notified the Commission as they are required to do under Regulation 18 of the Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009.

At our last inspection on 24 June 2015 two people felt the registered manager did not always communicate well. At this inspection the registered manager said that following the inspection on 24 June 2015 they had met with the owner of the service and the co-ordinator and re-established individual roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. The registered manager said that as a result of this meeting communication had improved in the service. People, relatives and staff confirmed that communication had improved and were aware of the management structure of the service.

At our last inspection on 24 June 2015 the registered manager did not assess the quality of the service. At this inspection the registered manager had sent out a survey to people in December 2015. Documents showed that two surveys had been completed and returned to the provider. People and staff confirmed that surveys had been sent out in December 2015. We were unable to view audits as the registered manager said they were waiting for more survey's to be returned before they audited them. This meant that although audits had not been completed to assess the overall quality of the service, there was a process in place for the registered manager to assess the quality of the service.

At our last inspection on 24 June 2015 the registered manager did not have a system in place to analyse, identify and learn from incidents and accidents. At this inspection documents showed one incident had been received on 22 December 2015. The incident had been recorded to include the date and time of

incident, details about the incident and if any injuries were sustained. The incident report detailed the immediate action taken and any recommended action by the investigator.

Monthly audits were in place for the monitoring of accident and incidents. The audits showed how many incidents or accidents had been received for the month, what type of incident and whether it was reportable to the Health and Safety Executive.

At our last inspection on 24 June 2015 the registered manager did not have records in place which detailed the safe and effective recruitment, supervision, and induction training of staff. The registered manager was unable to show us how staff training was monitored because staff training records were kept on the computer and this was not working at the time of our inspection. At this inspection records were in place for the safe and effective recruitment, supervision, and induction training of staff. Records were also in place and available to assist the registered manager to monitor on going staff training to ensure it was kept up to date.

Before the inspection on 18 January 2016 we checked to see if the provider had displayed their rating on their website as the result of the inspection carried out on 24 June 2015. On the 12 January 2016 the provider's website showed the ratings from their last inspection on 24 June 2015 had been displayed clearly and legibly.