

Arc Community Care Ltd

ARC Community Care

Inspection report

108 St Andrews Road South
Lytham St Annes
Lancashire
FY8 1PS

Website: www.arccommunitycare.co.uk

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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

This inspection visit took place on 27 February 2017 and was announced.

ARC Community Care Ltd is a domiciliary care agency that provides care and support to people in their own home. This includes personal care shopping, activities and appointments to people who live in their own homes. The agency provide support to people with a range of care needs and include older people, people living with dementia and people with physical disabilities. The office base is located in a residential area of Lytham St Anne's. At the time of our inspection ARC Community Care Ltd provided services to over 60 people.

At the last comprehensive inspection on 03 December 2014 the service was rated overall as good.

There was a registered manager in place. 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 had been visited by senior staff before their support began who carried out an assessment of their needs. There were procedures in place to protect people from abuse and unsafe care. We saw risk assessments were in place which provided guidance for staff. This minimised risks to people.

We spoke with people who received a service. People told us they felt safe and comfortable with staff, they received attentive care and they liked the staff who supported them. They said staff were friendly and respectful, punctual and conscientious. People told us staff had never missed visiting them. They usually arrived on time and informed them if they were delayed. People told us they were usually supported by the same group of staff who they knew and liked.

Recruitment and selection was carried out safely with appropriate checks made before new staff could start working for the service. Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience needed to care for people. They received training to carry out their role and were knowledgeable how to support and care for people. They had the skills, knowledge and experience to provide safe and effective support.

Staff understood the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). Staff had not needed to make an application when we inspected.

Staff supported people to have a nutritious dietary and fluid intake, assisting them to prepare and eat food and drinks as they needed.

Staff supported people with medicines safely. People able to manage their own medicines were encouraged to do so.

Care plans were personalised detailing how people wished to be supported. People who received support or where appropriate their relatives were involved in making decisions about their care. Their consent and agreement were sought before providing care.

People who used the service and their relatives knew how to raise a concern or to make a complaint. The complaints procedure was available and people said they were encouraged to raise any concerns.

Senior staff monitored the support staff provided to people. They checked staff arrived on time and supported people in the way people wanted. Audits of care records and risk assessments were carried out regularly. People and their relatives were encouraged to complete surveys about the quality of their care.

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 remains good.	Good ●
Is the service effective? The service remains good.	Good ●
Is the service caring? The service remains good.	Good ●
Is the service responsive? The service remains good.	Good ●
Is the service well-led? The service remains good.	Good ●

ARC Community Care

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.

This inspection visit took place on 27 February 2017 and was announced. The provider was given 48 hours' notice because the location provides a personal care service to people who lived in the community. We needed to be sure that we could access the office premises.

The inspection team consisted of an adult social care inspector.

Before our inspection on 27 February 2017 we reviewed the information we held on the service. This included notifications we had received from the provider, about incidents that affect the health, safety and welfare of people the service supported. We also sent questionnaires to people who used the service, staff and professionals involved with the service. We checked to see if any information concerning the care and welfare of people who were supported had been received.

During our inspection we went to the ARC Community Care office and spoke with a range of people about the service. They included five people who used the service, the registered manager and five staff members. We received 21 responses to our questionnaire from people who used the service, staff and other professionals.

We looked at the care records of three people, training and recruitment records of three staff members and records relating to the management of the service. We contacted Healthwatch Lancashire prior to our inspection. Healthwatch Lancashire is an independent consumer champion for health and social care. We also spoke with the commissioning department at the local authority. This helped us to gain a balanced overview of what people experienced accessing the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People and their relatives who spoke with us told they felt safe and comfortable with the staff who supported them. One person said, "I get on brilliantly with my carers. They really look after me." Another person said, "They are the best care people in this area. They make sure I am safe and comfortable before they leave."

The service had procedures to minimise the risk of unsafe care or abuse. Staff had received safeguarding training and understood the process to follow to report any concerns about people's safety. They told us they would report any unsafe care or abuse. There was a whistle-blowing policy in place so that staff could report concerns anonymously if they chose to.

Risk assessments were in place for each person who received support and their home environment. These provided guidance for staff, assisted them in providing the right care and reduced risks to the person and to staff. There were procedures in place for dealing with emergencies and unexpected events. Emergencies, accidents or incidents were managed appropriately. We saw a relative had called the office to thank a carer for staying with their family member who was ill, until they could take over. Senior staff evaluated the situations for any lessons learnt and shared these with the staff team.

People told us staff supported them with their medicines safely. Their care records identified the support they provided. Staff received medicines training to ensure they were competent to administer medicines. They confirmed they had been trained to support people to take their medicines.

We looked at recruitment procedures and the files of three staff who had been employed by the agency. Recruitment processes were thorough and all references and checks made before new staff began working with people. We spoke with two recently appointed staff who confirmed their recruitment had been robust. They told us they had to wait for all checks to be completed before they could work for the agency. One person said, "The recruitment process has given me confidence in the agency. It was thorough and senior staff were pleasant and approachable."

We looked at how the service was staffed, looked at staff rotas, spoke with people supported and with staff. People said staff had never missed calls for them and they stayed the full agreed times. People said they were usually supported by the same group of staff who they knew and liked. Two people told us occasionally they would get someone they didn't know but it would be because of sickness. People said staff usually arrived on time and informed them if they were delayed. One person said, "My carers are here bang on time." Another person told us, "They have only ever been late if they have needed to stay with someone who was ill and they let me know they would be late. They don't leave me in limbo."

We asked if staff had enough time on visits to support people as they needed. People said staff had the time to carry out agreed tasks and support. Staff said they were able to complete the care needed at each visit and to travel from one visit to another. Staff told us they would report it to senior staff if there was not

enough time to complete care. This would then be reviewed.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People told us staff were trained and knew how to support them. They told us they were pleased with the care and support they received. We spoke with five staff and looked at staff training records. Staff were positive about the quality of training on offer. They said they had useful and interesting training and could always ask for extra support. New staff had a comprehensive induction which included a period of working along experienced members of staff. A member of staff said, "I have had an excellent induction, from knowing nothing I feel I know what to do now. It helps we are able to ring the office if at all unsure." Staff new to care work completed the Care Certificate and most staff had achieved or were working towards national qualifications in care. This assisted them to provide appropriate care.

People told us staff visits were arranged with so they could assist with preparation of meals where needed. Care plans seen confirmed people's dietary needs for health or culture had been assessed and any support they required with their nutrition documented. Staff confirmed they had received training in food safety and were aware of safe food handling practices.

People said staff supported them to attend healthcare appointments. We saw one person had contacted the agency to thank their carer for their help and support at a hospital visit. They said they had eased the stress for them and assisted them to ask and answer any questions. The registered manager told us the carer volunteered to work on their day off so that they could accompany the person to their hospital appointment as the person was anxious about attending alone.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making particular decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that as far as possible people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible. Records were in place to indicate that people consented to their care, and care plans included information in relation to the level of the person's capacity. People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA. Staff demonstrated an understanding of the legislation as laid down by the Mental Capacity Act (MCA).

Records seen and staff spoken with confirmed they received regular supervision and appraisal of their performance. Staff said these were very frequent when they first started working for the agency and they could ask for one at any time. Staff told us they were encouraged to make suggestions about improving care, their training needs and any support they needed in their role. They told us they were well supported by senior staff and could ring or call in the office anytime.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People we spoke with told us staff were polite, caring and considerate. They said they were happy with the support they received. One person said, "They will do anything I ask. They are really willing and so caring." Another person said, "I can't say anything but good about them." People told us their carers went 'above and beyond.' We saw a staff member recognised that the living situation and property an individual lived in, was contributing to their low mood. They helped the person to complete an application to get more appropriate housing. We learnt of a carer who picked apples for a person they supported so that they could make home-made apple pie. Another carer regularly went out of their way to get a specific make of drink for a person they supported, as it was their favourite and not available in the local shop. Another carer knew one person they supported was having a special birthday. They had no family visiting, so the carer took balloons and cupcakes for them to celebrate together.

We saw recent compliments from people grateful for the care and support provided by ARC. People's comments included, 'My carers are professional, knowledgeable and considerate. And '[Carer] has done a grand job. She looks for what needs doing and gets on with it.' And 'She is absolutely brilliant – second to none.' We had received responses to the CQC questionnaire which were praising of the service. A selection of these were: 'Arc is better than any other agency we have tried.' And 'My carer is lovely, caring and sympathetic and very hands on with everything. Absolutely fantastic.'

Staff were aware of people's individual needs around privacy and dignity. The service had dignity champions who provided training and support to staff to assist them in providing personalised, respectful care. People told us staff were polite, protected their dignity and respected their privacy. They said staff were aware of their individual needs and preferences and they usually had the same carers. One person said "They know exactly how I like things done and in what order. I am very impressed with them." Another person commented, "I never have to ask [carer] to do anything. It is done before I ask."

We looked at three people's care records. We saw their personal information was easily accessible to them. It was personalised and people had been involved in developing and updating their care plans. People told us staff respected their family and personal relationships and encouraged them to make choices about their daily life. A relative of a person supported asked if a carer could support their family member to go on a day trip to the Christmas markets. The carer rearranged their schedule to go and both had a lovely time. People said staff met their different needs in a caring and sensitive way. This included their preferred form of address, their food choices, the way they wanted their care delivered and the level of information they wanted family and friends to have. One person said, "Nothing is ever too much trouble for them."

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People we spoke with told us senior staff met with them to discuss their needs before the service began. We saw informative assessments had been carried out which assisted staff to support people as they requested. People told us staff supported them with personal care and to manage tasks they could no longer do. They said their carers paid attention to detail in everything they did. They said they could change the times of their visits if needed and their preference of carers was always taken notice of. One person said, "I only have to ask for extra help and it is organised. The way ARC treats people is excellent."

We saw the service had procedures in place to respond to emergencies. One member of staff told us a visit was recently extended because the person was ill when they arrived. Senior staff rearranged other visits so the member of staff could stay longer. We saw staff had stayed with the person until help arrived. The person's relative had contacted the service to thank them. Other professionals were positive about the service provided. The fire service commented on the CQC questionnaire that ARC community care regularly engaged with them for advice on fire safety to make their clients safer.

We looked at three people's care records. These were personalised and provided guidance to staff on how to support people with their daily routines and personal care. Care plans and risk assessments were regularly reviewed and updated in response to any changes in care or circumstances.

The service had a complaints procedure which was made available to people they supported and relatives involved with the person's care. People told us knew how to make a complaint if they were unhappy about anything. Everyone we spoke with said they were satisfied with the care they received and had no complaints. One person said, "I did complain about a carer once and it was dealt with straight away. The manager was very helpful and efficient." The service had not received any formal complaints since our last inspection, but kept in contact with people to check there were no issues or concerns. One person told us, "I have no complaints but it is good that they ring and check how things are going. I know that any problems would be sorted out quickly."

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People were complimentary about the care and support they received. They told us staff and managers were approachable and easy to contact. One person said, "The manager and everyone in the office are friendly, approachable and willing to help. The carers are wonderful." Another person commented, "ARC is a well-run and consistent service. The staff are well managed and the management are approachable."

The registered provider and registered manager sought the views of people who received support and their relatives where appropriate. These included telephone contact and monitoring visits and satisfaction surveys to see whether people were satisfied with the staff and the care provided. They checked staff were punctual, stayed for the correct amount of time allocated and people supported were happy with the service. Comments seen showed people were satisfied with the service they received and were praising of their carers.

The management team understood their responsibilities and legal obligations, including conditions of registration from CQC, and those placed on them by other external organisations. They had systems in place to assess and monitor the quality of their service and the staff. People were encouraged to give their opinions and telephone calls to people and spot checks on staff were frequent. Care records were also monitored during the visits. The outcome of checks had been documented and any issues found on audits were acted upon promptly.

We saw staff meetings were held to involve and consult staff. Staff spoken with told us the team meetings were held on a regular basis. Staff told us they were able to contribute towards the development of the service through team meetings, and supervisions. They found the management team approachable and enthusiastic. One member of staff told us, "I couldn't pick a better company to work for. They give great flexibility for service users and staff and we give that back as well." Another member of staff commented, "The management are really supportive of staff. I worked for another company and ARC are better in every regard."