

Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Forestcare

Inspection report

Commercial Centre
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Bracknell
Berkshire
RG12 7QT

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Website: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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12 February 2020

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11 March 2020

Ratings

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| Overall rating for this service | Good ● |
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| Is the service safe? | Good ● |
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| Is the service effective? | Good ● |
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| Is the service caring? | Good ● |
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| Is the service responsive? | Good ● |
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| Is the service well-led? | Good ● |
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Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Forestcare is a domiciliary care agency. They provide personal care, occasionally and if needed, as part of their emergency responder service. The responder service includes staff visiting people in emergencies and providing whatever support is indicated, which may include personal care.

They provide the service from their 24-hour, 365 days a year telecare response centre based in Bracknell. They also offer a range of telecare solutions to individuals to provide support for them in their own homes. This support includes, emergency assistance when someone has a fall and cannot get up; rapid response for an unplanned discharge from hospital; emergency support when another agency has not been able to provide planned support and help when unforeseen circumstances occur where the family has other commitments.

Not everyone using the service receives personal care. CQC only inspects where people receive personal care. This is help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. At the time of this inspection there were 1506 people signed up to the responder service. During the seven months between 1 June 2019 and 31 December 2019 staff visited 263 people in response to an emergency. Out of those visits, personal care was provided 56 times.

People's experience of using this service

People were protected from the risks of abuse. Recruitment processes were in place to make sure, as far as possible, that people were protected from staff being employed who were not suitable.

People received effective support from staff who were well trained. They told us staff had the training and skills they needed when providing their support. Where people required healthcare support, staff were skilled at obtaining the appropriate support without delay.

People's rights to make their own decisions were protected. They were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

People were treated with care and kindness. They were consulted about their support and their wishes and views were recorded in their support plans. People were treated with respect and their dignity was upheld. This was confirmed by people who provided feedback.

People's right to confidentiality was protected and they received support that was individualised to their personal preferences and needs. People said staff and management responded well to any concerns they raised. One person said they had not had to raise any concerns but felt the service would take action if they did.

People benefitted from a service which had an open and inclusive culture. They thought the service was well-led. Staff were happy working for the service and people benefitted from staff who felt well managed and supported.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk

Rating at last inspection:

The last rating for this service was good (published 6 September 2017).

Why we inspected

This was a planned inspection based on the previous rating.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our re-inspection programme. If we receive any concerning information we may inspect sooner.

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.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

Details are in our effective findings below.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

Details are in our caring findings below.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

Details are in our responsive findings below.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Forestcare

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

Inspection team

The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

Service and service type

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes.

At the time of this inspection the service did not have a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. The current manager was in the process of applying to be registered and became registered by the time this report was published. A registered manager is a person who is legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided. It is a requirement of the provider's registration that they have a registered manager.

Notice of inspection

We gave the service 48 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because it is a small service and we needed to be sure that the manager would be in the office to support the inspection.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return. This is information providers are required to send us with key information about their service, what they do well, and improvements they plan to make. This information helps support our inspections. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke with 10 members of staff including the manager, the interim assistant director, the field service team manager and seven emergency response officers. We reviewed a range of records. These included six people's records and associated documentation relating to the care provided. We looked at four staff files in relation to recruitment and staff training, supervision and appraisal logs. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures were also reviewed.

After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found. We received feedback from eight people who use the service, 18 members of staff and one health and social care professional.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Staff knew how to recognise and protect people from the risk of abuse and had received training in safeguarding adults and children.
- Staff knew what actions to take if they felt people were at risk of harm.
- People said they felt safe with the staff and found it reassuring to know they only had to press their pendant button to get assistance. One person commented, "It is nice to know they are there. They are absolutely splendid."

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- People were protected from risks associated with their health and care provision. When people first applied to sign up for the responder service, one of the service's assessors would visit them. During that visit they carried out an assessment of the person's abilities and any medical concerns or conditions that the service may need to know about.
- Risk assessments were also carried out to identify any risks to people when providing them with emergency support or care. Identified risks were incorporated into the support plans and included guidance to staff on what to do to minimise any potential or actual risk.
- One professional thought the service and risks to individuals were managed so that people were protected. They added, "We witnessed a dedication by staff to go the extra mile to reassure and resolve issues for their customers. We felt that this was being managed well and that users were protected."
- Staff were aware of the lone working policy in place to keep them safe in their work. One member of staff told us, "We have our lone worker pendants in case of emergencies. We are also required to mark ourselves on site and off site to ensure that the office are aware of where we are and can check in on us if required."
- Emergency plans were in place, such as plans for dealing with issues related to internet access and loss of electricity supply that would affect the receipt of emergency calls.

Staffing and recruitment

- There were enough staff on duty to meet the requirements of the service offered. People said staff had enough time to support them. They said staff stayed as long as it took to make them comfortable or would wait for an ambulance to arrive if assessed as necessary. Staff said they had enough time to provide the care people needed when on a visit. One staff member told us, "We have response times which we need to abide by, however on site we are allowed to remain there until the individual is safe and our services have been carried out."
- Professionals thought the service made sure that there were sufficient numbers of suitable staff to keep people safe and meet their needs. After visiting the centre for two days one professional commented,

"Sufficient numbers of staff were available on both days to answer all calls without lengthy waiting times. We felt that the level of expertise, experience and patience to handle the complex mix of calls being received was outstanding."

- People were protected by the recruitment processes in place and followed when employing staff. These made sure, as far as possible, that people were protected from staff being employed who were not suitable. Some recruitment information was not available in the staff files, but this was quickly rectified the day after the inspection.

Using medicines safely; Preventing and controlling infection; Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Staff do not currently handle medicines. The manager advised us that, should this become part of their service in the future, staff would be fully trained and assessed as competent prior to handling medicines.
- Staff received training in the control of infection and were provided with personal protective equipment, so they could carry out their work safely. There had been no incidents or concerns raised related to the control of infection since our last inspection.
- Accidents and incidents were recorded, together with details of actions taken and the outcome of any investigation. Appropriate action was taken promptly to deal with any incidents and steps taken to ensure lessons were learnt when things went wrong.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people's care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support; Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law

- When carrying out a responder emergency visit, staff were quick to identify when people needed healthcare support and sought assistance promptly and appropriately. One person told us, "I can only speak highly of them. Their care and attention is first class."
- One professional thought the service supported people to maintain good health, have access to healthcare services and receive ongoing healthcare support. One professional stated, "From our observations the service supports vulnerable people in accessing ongoing healthcare support through the services that Forestcare provides and signposts (such as relatives, wardens, the ambulance service, etc)"
- Each person's care details were based on a full assessment, and included any individual preferences. The records demonstrated the person and/or those close to them had been involved in drawing up their care details. People's records were kept under review and amended when changes occurred, or if new information came to light.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- People received care from staff that had the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to perform their roles. People thought staff had the training and skills they needed when supporting them. One professional felt the service provided effective care and that staff had the knowledge and skills they needed to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- Staff felt they received the training they needed to enable them to meet people's needs, choices and preferences. One member of staff commented "The training I received was thorough and gave me the confidence to carry out the role appropriately."
- The service provided training in topics they considered mandatory, such as moving and handling, first aid and fire safety. All training the provider considered to be mandatory was up to date.
- The manager was aware of the recent amendments to the latest best practice guidance on mandatory training for health and social care staff. The service was in the process of reviewing and amending their training in line with that guidance.
- Staff received additional training in specialist areas relevant to the needs of individual people, as well as training in the specialist lifting equipment used.
- Staff received formal supervision every two to three months to discuss their work and how they felt about it. Staff told us they felt this enhanced their skills. Once a year they had a formal appraisal of their performance over the previous 12 months.

Ensuring consent to care and treatment in line with law and guidance

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. When people receive care and treatment in their own homes an application must be made to the Court of Protection for them to authorise people to be deprived of their liberty.

- We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA and found that they were.
- Staff received training in the MCA and were clear on how it should be reflected in their day to day work.
- Responder visit reports showed that people were involved in decision making and consent and that, where appropriate, decisions were made in their best interests.

Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care

- Staff worked well with other agencies to understand and meet people's individual and changing needs. One professional felt the service worked well in partnership with other agencies. They told us, "The service operates with a team of core operational staff that are highly knowledgeable with many years of proven experience. They operate a rota system to ensure this expertise is available 24/7."

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people were supported and treated with dignity and respect; and involved as partners in their care.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- People said, they were treated with care and kindness when staff visited them in an emergency. One person said the staff were, "Absolutely splendid" and another commented that staff, "Could not be nicer." A member of staff commented, "Forestcare is an amazing place to work, [with] caring and compassionate staff who look after the most vulnerable."
- Professionals who had spent some time at the service commented, "From our observations on site and listening to calls in May and June 2019, staff took the time to treat people with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect, and were not rushing to meet a target time to complete a call. Staff regularly took the necessary time that was needed to support a caller in receiving the service they deserved."
- People's equality and diversity needs were identified and set out in their care details. Staff received training in equality and diversity and provided support to meet the diverse needs of people using the service including those related to disability, gender, ethnicity and faith.

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care

- People's views on the support they received was regularly sought. After each emergency responder visit where personal care had been provided, staff contacted the person to make sure they were recovered and to check they were happy with the support they had received. People confirmed they were asked their opinion on the service they received.
- The care details were drawn up with people, using input from their relatives, health and social care professionals and from the staff teams' knowledge from working with them in the service.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- People said staff were respectful and protected their dignity. One person commented, "Everyone is very polite." A member of staff told us, "I am proud to work for Forestcare and of my colleagues who provide personal care. I feel they do this with the greatest respect and dignity for the person they are providing care for."
- People's rights to privacy and dignity were supported and their confidentiality was protected. All personal records were kept on password protected computers or locked away in the office.
- People felt the service helped them to be more independent. One person told us, "It is nice to know they are there." One member of staff said, "People feel as though they can be more independent with having us at the end of the phone and able to arrange help when needed."

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people's needs.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant people's needs were met through good organisation and delivery.

Planning personalised care to ensure people have choice and control and to meet their needs and preferences

- People received support that was individualised to their personal needs. People said staff asked how they liked things done if they needed assistance with personal care. One person told us they were very happy with the service they receive.
- The initial support assessments captured details of people's abilities and wishes regarding their personal care. People's changing needs were monitored, and their support details adjusted to meet those needs if necessary.
- Professionals who had spent some time at the service in May and June 2019 felt the service provided personalised care that was responsive to people's needs. They told us, "We witnessed one instance where the caller had fallen, was hurt and could not get himself back up. The Forestcare agent contacted the warden assistance at the individual's home and called for an ambulance to respond due to the nature of the injuries. Over the course of the next 20 minutes, the agent stayed on the phone to reassure the caller, who felt embarrassed by what had happened, and to treat the caller with dignity and compassion until help arrived."

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 onwards all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). The standard was introduced to make sure people are given information in a way they can understand. The standard applies to all people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss and in some circumstances to their carers.

- The service identified people's information and communication needs by assessing them and recording this on the front page of their care details. This meant the information was readily available to the call handler if the person triggered an emergency call.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- People knew what to do if they had any concerns. They were confident action would be taken if they did raise concerns with the service.
- Staff were aware of the provider's complaints procedure and knew what to do if anyone raised a concern. The manager explained how complaints were looked into in line with the provider's policy and procedure. There had been no complaints related to the provision of personal care since our last inspection.
- One member of staff told us, "I am confident my managers would be receptive to hearing any concerns or views I might have and would deal with them effectively and in a timely manner."

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-Led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people

- Staff were very happy working for the service. They felt they were provided with training that helped them provide care and support to a high standard. One member of office staff told us, "Whilst I do not provide personal care, I speak to people, their families and friends about the service, arranging appointments for our officers to attend and discuss the service. I am also involved in completing customer satisfaction surveys following a responder service visit... I feel the training I have received allows me to complete these tasks to a high standard."
- Staff said the managers asked what they thought about the service and took their views into account. One member of staff said, "The team at Forestcare are unbeatable, they maintain a high standard of service delivery. I am proud to work at Forestcare and proud of the service we provide. The dedication of the staff is incredible and beyond doubt."
- People received a service from staff who worked in an open and friendly culture. A member of staff commented, "Since joining Forestcare ... I have found a group of people committed to making life better for others. The pride and the work ethic of staff at Forestcare is unrivalled."

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong

- The manager and staff were clear about their roles. All the registration requirements were met, and the manager ensured that notifications were sent to us when required. Notifications are events that the registered person is required by law to inform us of. Records were up to date, fully completed and kept confidential where required.
- There was an effective audit system in place that included audits of different aspects of the running of the service such as staff training, staff supervision and other documentation. Where issues were identified, actions had been carried out to ensure everything met the required standard. The manager was clear in their understanding of the duty of candour and knew the action to take should something go wrong.
- Since our last inspection there had been a number of changes at the service following a change of management. Staff were positive about the changes and felt they were improving the service provided.
- Staff were complimentary about the new management. Comments received from staff included, "The management team has a very collaborative approach now" and "The current management team is effective and improving and maintaining the success we have at Forestcare."
- Professionals who had spent some time at the service in May and June 2019 commented, "From our

observations, the service is well organised. The customer is always the service's priority and the service is responsive to their needs. In our opinion, the new leadership team continues to make significant improvements to the management and leadership of the service."

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics; Continuous learning and improving care; Working in partnership with others

- There were a number of different ways that the views of people, staff and professionals were sought and used in the monitoring and development of the service. For example, annual surveys of people and follow up calls to anyone receiving an emergency responder visit. We saw actions were taken to address any issues that were raised.
- Staff said their managers were accessible and approachable and dealt effectively with any concerns they raised. One new member of staff commented, "Since being in this role, I can honestly say I have gotten the most job satisfaction from this job than any other job I've had, I feel that the managers know the service really well and I am often in awe of the knowledge of the people I work with."
- The service worked well in partnership with other organisations. They were successful in their goal of making sure people had the support they needed, where appropriate, to stay in their own homes as long as possible."
- Professionals who had spent some time at the service in May and June 2019 felt the service demonstrated good management and leadership, delivered good quality care and worked well in partnership with others. They commented, "We are aware that the service works in partnership with other stakeholders and third parties, including other local authorities, adult social care teams and NHS (to ensure people who are discharged receive the right care and support). We have experienced the service deliver high quality care to its customers. This is driven by the leadership and the passion from its workforce to make a difference. The new leadership team promotes an open and fair culture that we have witnessed from our site visits."