

Sky Futures Ltd

# Choice Care

## Inspection report

Suite 7, Blackburn Enterprise Centre  
Furthergate  
Blackburn  
Lancashire  
BB1 3HQ

Tel: 01254504905

Date of inspection visit:  
23 May 2017  
24 May 2017

Date of publication:  
22 June 2017

### 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

Choice Care's services are aimed at helping the elderly, disabled, people living with learning difficulties, terminally ill, families and those convalescing. The office is situated close to the town centre of Blackburn with good rail and bus routes. There is a well equipped office with access for the disabled and a car park. The service is available on a 24 hour call out system for emergency assistance. There are facilities for staff to be trained and supervised. On the day of our inspection there were 210 people using the service.

At the last inspection this service was rated Good. This was an announced inspection which took place on the 23 and 24 May 2017. We gave the service 24 hours notice of our inspection to make sure people were in the office and arrangements could be made to visit people in their own homes with their consent. At this inspection we found the service remained Good.

People who used the service told us they felt safe when staff members were in their homes. Staff had received training in safeguarding and knew their responsibilities to report any concerns. The service also had a whistleblowing policy in place.

Risk assessments were in place to keep people safe, including moving and handling, medicines and nutrition. These were reviewed regularly to ensure they remained relevant. Staff were also trained in the use of equipment such as hoists, slings and stand aids.

Recruitment systems and processes in place were robust. We saw references, identity checks and Disclosure and Barring Service checks were completed before staff were employed.

People who used the service and staff members told us staffing levels were adequate. The registered manager told us that recruitment was an on-going process to ensure staffing levels remained adequate.

Only staff members trained to do so were able to support people with their medicines. We saw staff members competencies were checked every three months or more if required. This should ensure people who used the service received their medicines safely.

All new staff members were expected to complete an induction when they commenced employment. Those new to care work were required to undertake the Care Certificate. The Care Certificate is considered best practice for those new to the care industry.

Staff members told us and records confirmed that they received supervisions and appraisals on a regular basis. All staff members told us they were able to discuss any training requirements they had.

We observed some carers undertaking tasks in people's homes. We observed they were kind, caring and respectful in their interactions with people and respected people's privacy and dignity when undertaking personal care tasks. All the people we spoke with told us staff were kind and caring.

We have made a recommendation about the management of complaints.

Care plans in place for people contained detailed information to direct staff on how to meet people's needs. All the staff we spoke with felt they knew people they were caring for well.

All the staff members we spoke with told us the registered manager was approachable and they felt well supported in their roles.

One staff member had received The Home Care Worker of the Year Award 2017 in recognition of their dedication to improving the quality of life for service users.

Policies and procedures had not been reviewed since they were put in place in July 2014. We discussed this with the registered manager who took steps to action this during our inspection. They informed us that updated policies and procedures would be put in place as soon as possible.

The service had received numerous compliments, thank you cards and letters from people who used the service and their relatives.

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

We always ask the following five questions of services.

<b>Is the service safe?</b> The service remains Good	<b>Good</b> ●
<b>Is the service effective?</b> The service remains Good.	<b>Good</b> ●
<b>Is the service caring?</b> The service remains Good.	<b>Good</b> ●
<b>Is the service responsive?</b> The service remains Good.	<b>Good</b> ●
<b>Is the service well-led?</b> The service remains Good.	<b>Good</b> ●

# Choice 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 was a comprehensive, announced inspection which took place on the 23 and 24 May 2017. The inspection team consisted of one adult social care inspector.

We had requested the service complete a provider information return (PIR); this is a form that asks the provider to give us some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We reviewed this and used this to inform our planning of the inspection. We reviewed the information we held about the service including notifications the provider had sent to us. We contacted the Local Authority safeguarding team, the local commissioning team and the local Healthwatch organisation to obtain their views about the service. Healthwatch is an independent consumer champion that gathers and represents the views of the public about health and social care services in England. We did not receive any concerns.

During the inspection we visited and spoke with four people who used the service and one relative. We also spoke with the registered manager, one senior member of staff and four care staff.

We looked at the medicine records for one person who used the service and care files for eight people. We also looked at a range of records relating to how the service was managed; these included ten staff files, training records, quality assurance systems and policies and procedures.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

People who used the service told us they felt safe when staff members were in their home. Comments we received included, "Yes, I feel safe" and "Yes, I do feel safe." One relative we spoke with told us, "I feel my [relative] is safe when staff members are in the house."

All the staff members we spoke with had received training in safeguarding adults and knew their responsibilities. Comments we received included, "If I had any concerns I would call the office during office hours or ring the person on call" and "I would report any concerns straight away." Systems and processes were in place to support staff members to keep people safe.

Risk assessments were in place and accessible to staff members to keep people safe. Recruitment processes were robust and ensured people who used the service were protected from unsuitable staff members. Staff members told us and records showed that adequate staffing levels were in place within the service.

Some people who used the service required support with their medicines. Staff members had received training and their competencies were checked regularly. Medicines were managed safely within the service. Staff members were aware of their responsibilities in relation to infection control. All the staff members we spoke with told us they had access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and adequate supplies of these were available.

All staff had completed training that the provider had deemed necessary to keep people safe. This included areas such as manual handling, first aid, safeguarding, medicines and infection control.

These systems and processes ensured that people were safe whilst receiving support from the service and its staff members.

## Is the service effective?

### Our findings

All the people we spoke with told us that staff members arrived when they should, although some told us they may be a little late. Comments we received included, "They have never missed an appointment. They have been late on a couple of occasions but this has not caused any issues", "Yes they are always on time" and "They have missed calls in the past but not recently."

The registered manager had recently introduced a 'fixed shift pattern' for some staff members in order to provide continuity for people who used the service. We saw feedback in relation to this was positive from both people who used the service and staff members. One staff member we spoke with told us, "The new shift pattern is working really well. We are at everyone's house on time. It is consistency for people." The registered manager told us they were looking to extend this and hopefully the majority of people who used the service would have regular and familiar staff members.

All the people we spoke with told us they felt staff members who supported them were knowledgeable. One relative told us, "They know her really well." Before commencing employment new staff members had to undertake an induction. Any staff members new to care were expected to complete the 'Care Certificate'. The care certificate is considered best practice for staff members new to the care industry. Staff members told us and training records showed that additional training was offered, such as Diploma's in health and social care levels two, three and five. One staff member told us, "The training here is fantastic."

There were arrangements to support people to maintain a good diet if this was part of their care package. One person told us, "They make me lunch and tea. My [relative] buys the food and the staff make it for me." A relative told us, "They make all [relative] meals and feed her as she is unable to feed herself. They know her really well. They will ring me every night and let me chat to her and let me know what she has had to eat."

## Is the service caring?

### Our findings

All the people we spoke with told us that staff members were caring. Comments we received included, "[Name of staff member] is absolutely superb. I am very satisfied and very fortunate to have [name of staff member]" and "She [staff member] is very nice. I am happy and they look after me well." One relative told us, "The staff are absolutely brilliant. They have really supported me to keep her in her own home. They are really kind and work well as a team."

We asked staff members how they gave people choices about the support they received. Comments we received included, "I give them a choice by asking them what they want. If they struggle with anything I will give them the option of my help" and "I ask them what they would like." People were encouraged to remain as independent as possible and were involved in any decision making. One person told us, "He [staff member] helps me with things but still allows me to be as independent as I want to be."

During our visits to people in their own homes we observed staff members respected people's privacy and dignity. They knocked on people's doors and waited for them to answer or used a 'keysafe' system (a system where a key is stored in a secure box outside of the property) if this had been agreed with the person. When using the 'keysafe' system we noted the staff member made the person aware they were entering the home and who they were.

We asked staff members if they would be happy for one of their loved ones to be supported by the service. Comments we received included, "They are doing", "I would, yes. We go the extra mile", "Yes I would. I really would" and "Oh definitely."



## Is the service responsive?

### Our findings

All the people we spoke with told us they had been involved in the development of their care plans and were involved in the review of these. One person told us, "At the beginning we went through the care plan. It did take a bit to get things in the plan." People had access to their care plans in their own homes.

Records we looked at showed that prior to providing support, Choice Care received information from the referring authority so they could assess if people's needs could be met. We looked at the care records for eight people who used the service. The care records contained detailed information to guide staff on the support to be provided, including what people were able to do for themselves and their likes and dislikes. We asked staff how they would know if people's needs had changed. Comments we received included, "I read the system and if something has changed it will be on there", "I would always read the system. It comes up straight away if anything has changed" and "The system we use shows all the other carers notes. I always read the notes before I go as it gives an insight before you go in and you can go in to them confident; which makes the person feel better."

We asked people we visited if they had ever needed to complain about the service. One person told us, "I don't think we have had to, maybe about lateness but I am very satisfied." Other people told us they had not needed to complain. The service had a complaints policy and procedure in place and staff knew how to respond should someone make a complaint to them. Prior to our inspection we had received a complaint about the service. We checked this with the registered manager as part of our inspection and found this had not been documented. It is good practice that complaints are well documented and evidence of actions taken and learning from these. We recommend that the service seek advice and guidance from a reputable source, about the management of and learning from complaints.

## Is the service well-led?

### Our findings

All the people we spoke with knew how to contact a member of the management team in the office should they need to. One person told us, "I have the telephone number and I know the supervisors."

The service had 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.

Staff members we spoke with all told us the registered manager and management team were approachable and fair. Comments we received included, "They are lovely and approachable", "They are all lovely, honestly", "Absolutely amazing and I am not just saying it. They are very approachable and you can ring them or go to them with anything. It is like an extended family and I could not see myself working anywhere else" and "The support I get from management is brilliant." Records showed regular staff meetings were held and staff told us they could make suggestions that would be listened to. One staff member had recently received The Home Care Worker of the Year Award 2017 in recognition of their dedication to improving the quality of life for service users. They were described by the panel of judges as 'inspirational'.

The registered manager had processes and systems in place to monitor and improve the quality of the service. Regular surveys were undertaken to gain the views of people who used the service and their relatives alongside regular quality assurance audits to monitor the service and identify improvements. Policies and procedures were in place within the service, however these had not been reviewed since they were implemented in July 2014. Some of them contained out of date information. We spoke with the registered manager regarding this, who took actions to ensure that these were updated. They informed us reviewed and up to date policies and procedures would be in place in the service as soon as possible.

We saw the service had received numerous thank you cards and compliments from people who used the service and their relatives. Some of the comments we saw included, "We could not have had a more professional caring team, they did everything they could and more to make my mother as comfortable as possible. It was a great help to the family", "With very little exception all the members of your organisation who have visited our home during the past ten months or so, showed us the utmost respect and kindness", "Just to say thank you very much for your care and attention" and "Thank you for looking after me and your company."