

Twelve Trees Limited

Twelve Trees Homecare Limited

Inspection report

Suite 14 Cherry Tree Business Centre
Union Road Nether Edge
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S11 9EF
Tel: 01142 583802
Website: www.twelvetreeshomecare.co.uk

Date of inspection visit: 9 and 11 November 2015
Date of publication: 07/12/2015

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	

Overall summary

The inspection took place on 9 and 11 November 2015 with the provider being given short notice of the visit to the office in line with our current methodology for inspecting domiciliary care agencies. The service was previously inspected on 5 February 2014, when no breaches of legal requirements were identified.

Twelve Trees Homecare Limited is a domiciliary care service. They are registered to provide personal care to people in their own homes. At the time of our inspection the service was supporting people with a variety of care needs including older people, people living with dementia and younger people with a disability. Care and support was co-ordinated from the services office which is based on the outskirts of Sheffield at Nether Edge.

Summary of findings

There is a manager which manages the day to day operations of the service. The manager is currently in the process of registering with the Care Quality Commission. 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.

At the time of our inspection there were approximately 80 people using the service. We spoke on the telephone with 14 people who used the service and their relatives. We asked people about their experiences of using the agency. People we spoke with told us they were entirely happy with the service provided.

People told us they felt safe in their own homes and staff were available to offer support when needed to help them maintain their independence. One person told us, "The staff are very good. They pop in to make sure I am safe; sometimes they will stay for a chat which is nice." A relative we spoke with said, "My relative gets on well with most of the carers but some more than others. Staff know to contact me at any time if there is a problem."

People's needs had been assessed before their care package commenced and they told us they had been involved in formulating and updating their care plans. We found the information contained in the care records we sampled was individualised and clearly identified people's needs and preferences, as well as any risks associated with their care and the environment they lived in.

We found people received a service that was based on their personal needs and wishes. Changes in people's needs were quickly identified and their care package amended to meet their changing circumstances. Where people needed assistance taking their medication this was administered in a timely way by staff who had been trained to carry out this role.

We found the service employed enough staff with the right skills and competencies to meet the needs of the people being supported. This included home support staff who visited people on a regular basis. People who used the service raised no concerns about how the service was staffed. Most people we spoke with confirmed they had the same group of staff most of the time.

People were able to raise any concerns they may have had. We saw the service user guide included 'how to make a complaint.' This was written in a suitable format for people who used the service. One person said, "No complaints, the carers always see if there is anything I need doing and I would recommend them to anyone."

People were encouraged to give their views about the quality of the care provided to help drive up standards. Quality monitoring systems were in place and the manager had overall responsibility to ensure lessons were learned and action was taken to continuously improve the service.

Summary of findings

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 was safe

Staff knew how to recognise and respond to abuse correctly. They had a clear understanding of the procedures in place to safeguard vulnerable people from abuse.

Individual risks had been assessed and identified as part of the support and care planning process.

There was enough qualified, skilled and experienced staff to meet people's needs. We saw when people needed support or assistance from staff there was always a member of staff available to give this support.

Good



Is the service effective?

The service was effective

Staff had a programme of training and were trained to care and support people who used the service safely and to a good standard.

Staff we spoke with had a good understanding of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and how to ensure the rights of people with limited mental capacity to make decisions were respected.

People were supported to access healthcare professionals, such as GPs, and hospital appointments.

Good



Is the service caring?

The service was caring

People told us they were happy with the care and support they received to help them maintain their independence. It was clear from speaking with staff they had a good understanding of people's care and support needs and knew people well.

People were involved in making decisions about their care and staff took account of their individual needs and preferences.

Good



Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive.

People had been encouraged to be involved in planning their care. Care plans were individualised so they reflected each person's needs and preferences. Care records had been reviewed and updated in a timely manner.

There was a system in place to tell people how to make a complaint and how it would be managed. Where concerns had been raised the provider had taken appropriate action to resolve the issues.

Good



Is the service well-led?

The service was well led.

People were not put at risk because systems for monitoring quality were effective. Where improvements were needed, these were addressed and followed up to ensure continuous improvement.

Good



Summary of findings

Staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities and had access to policies and procedures to inform and guide them.

The service worked in partnership with other organisations to ensure people received the care and support they needed.

Twelve Trees Homecare Limited

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 was planned to check 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 took place on 9 and 11 November 2015 and was announced. The provider was given 48 hours' notice because the location provides we needed to be sure that someone would be in when we visited people in their own home. We also needed to ensure the manager was available at the office for us to speak with her. The inspection team consisted of an adult social care inspector.

Prior to the inspection visit we gathered information from a number of sources. We also looked at the information received about the service from notifications sent to the Care Quality Commission by the manager.

We did not ask the provider to send us a provider information return (PIR). This is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make.

At the office we spoke with the provider and the manager, the assistant manager, a senior co-ordinator, two senior support workers and four home support staff who worked with people who used the service in the community. We telephoned ten people who used the service and five relatives/carers.

We looked at documentation relating to six people who used the service, staff and the management of the service. This took place in the office. The manager and people we spoke with told us the care plans were also stored in people's home. These were copies of the files held at the office.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People told us they felt safe in their own homes and staff were available to offer support when needed to help them maintain their independence. One person said, “The staff know the key code to gain access and they always lock the door and make sure I am safe before they leave.” Another person said, “They help me to get into bed at night and they always do this in a safe way they make sure I am comfortable before leaving.”

We spoke with staff about their understanding of protecting adults from abuse. They told us they had undertaken safeguarding training and would know what to do if they witnessed bad practice or other incidents that they felt should be reported. They said they would report anything straight away to the team leaders or the manager. Staff had a good understanding about the whistle blowing procedures and felt that their identity would be kept safe when using the procedures. We saw staff had received training in this subject.

The manager told us that they had policies and procedures to manage risks. Staff understood the importance of balancing safety while supporting people to make choices, so that they had control of their lives. For example, one person we spoke with said, “The cares help me to stay safe but understand I want to do as much as possible for myself.” They went on to say, “I am coping myself and wash and shower myself, get my own meals, I do my meds (medicines) in the box from the chemist but the carers help me with this.”

The assistant manager showed us examples of environmental risk assessments which were undertaken prior to the service commencing. For example, risks associated with pets in people’s homes were considered to ensure staff were protected. There were also risks associated with safe entry to people’s property. Moving and handling risk assessments were seen on the records held at the office.

We found that the recruitment of staff was robust and thorough. This ensured only suitable people with the right skills were employed by the service. The manager was fully aware of her accountability if a member of staff was not performing appropriately. We checked six staff files and

found appropriate checks had been undertaken before staff began working for the service. These included two written references, (one being from their previous employer), and a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The Disclosure and Barring Service carry out a criminal record and barring check on individuals who intend to work with children and vulnerable adults, to help employers make safer recruitment decisions. Staff told us face to face interviews had also taken place.

The senior co-ordinator told us staff were employed to work in geographical areas. This meant that staff lived close to people they were supporting. We were shown rotas which confirmed there were sufficient suitably skilled staff to support people in their own homes.

People were asked if they got their calls/visits when they were supposed to or within an acceptable time frame, and also if they had experienced missed calls. Without exception people told us that they had not experienced missed calls and staff always turned up on time or a few minutes late. One Relative we spoke with said, “The care is excellent, it is very reassuring knowing that staff are here when they are supposed to be. If they are running late they always let me know.”

The service had a comprehensive medicines management policy which enabled staff to be aware of their responsibilities in relation to supporting people with medicines. All staff received medicines management training which was refreshed regularly. We checked the medication administration records (MAR) belonging to six people. They were completed correctly and the assistant manager told us the records were checked periodically as part of the care plan auditing procedures. One person we contacted told us they were able to manage their medication independently and only needed support to make sure their medicines were ordered and collected from their GP. They said, “I take my own medication, I know what the tablets are for and I do not need any support with them.” Another person said, “They (staff) just prompt me to take my medication but I can do it myself.” A relative we spoke with told us the staff always acted professionally when supporting their family member with their medication.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People were supported to live their lives in the way that they chose. One person we spoke with told us that they liked their independence and wanted to remain in their own home for as long as they could. People were supported to have their needs assessed. This ensured their wishes and preferences were respected.

Some people we spoke with told us care workers were involved with food preparation while other people did not require any assistance. We found that where staff were involved in preparing and serving food people were happy with how this took place. We also saw staff had completed basic food hygiene training as part of their induction to the agency and this had been updated periodically. The senior co-ordinator told us that some people had a hot meal delivered by their home support staff. The meal was prepared by the cook at the care home which was owned by the provider. Staff re-heat the meal in the person's microwave to the desired temperature.

Staff at the office told us how they worked with other external agencies such as GPs and district nurses to make sure people who were at risk of poor nutrition or dehydration were being supported appropriately. Daily records were completed which stated what the person had eaten and drunk each day and staff we spoke with described how they would raise issues with healthcare professionals or the person's family if they needed to.

Staff had the skills and competencies to ensure people lived their lives as they wanted. Staff were motivated and demonstrated good knowledge of the people they were supporting. People we spoke with confirmed their care needs were met and they felt staff received the training they needed. One relative we spoke with said, "Staff help my family member to retain their independence. They are efficient, courteous and kind. It's an excellent service."

Records we looked at confirmed staff were trained to a good standard. The senior co-ordinator told us that they were completing a nationally recognised care certificate at level three. Senior support staff and support staff were also encouraged to obtain appropriate qualifications. The manager told us all staff completed a comprehensive induction which included, care principles, service specific training such as dementia care, equality and diversity, expectations of the service and how to deal with accidents

and emergencies. Staff were expected to work alongside more experienced staff until they were deemed to be competent. The manager told us that the timescale to reach the expected standard would be different for individuals.

The manager told us all new staff employed would be registered to complete the 'Care Certificate' which replaced the 'Common Induction Standards' in April 2015. The 'Care Certificate' looks to improve the consistency and portability of the fundamental skills, knowledge, values and behaviours of staff, and to help raise the status and profile of staff working in care settings.

The manager told us that weekly meetings gave the senior support workers an opportunity to talk about the events that had taken place over the previous week-end. We sat in on the handover which took place during this inspection. It was clear that the staff worked closely as a team to ensure people received the care that met their assessed needs.

Staff we spoke with told us that they had worked for the agency for a good period of time. They said they enjoyed supporting people in their own homes. They received guidance and support from the managers and other support workers. Staff told us they worked in small teams and found managers and co-ordinators were available whenever they needed to contact them. One staff member said, "We all work to the same set of values which means there is a strong feeling of belonging to a team. Our managers are really supportive."

We looked at formal supervisions which were undertaken at the office. They were completed to a good standard. Observations of work practice also takes place in people's own homes. We saw copies of these spot checks on the staff files we looked at.

We spoke to the manager about gaining consent to care and treatment. She told us that staff had received training in the Mental Capacity Act 2005. However, she said that most people they supported had some capacity to say how they wanted their care delivered in their own homes. Where people received support who had limited capacity we found they were living with a spouse who shared caring responsibilities with the care workers and other relatives. Therefore the agency did not need to use the guidance and principles of the act. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) sets out what must be done to make sure that the human

Is the service effective?

rights of people who may lack mental capacity to make decisions are protected, including balancing autonomy and protection in relation to consent or refusal of care or treatment.

The staff we spoke with during our inspection had a working knowledge of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in

protecting people and the importance of involving people in making decisions. They told us they had training in enabling people to communicate their wishes. The training records we saw confirmed this.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Staff working with people in their own homes ensured that they empowered them to live how they wanted to. We spoke with people who used the service and they told us the care and support provided was consistently good. People we spoke with were generally happy with their care and they felt staff were respectful. One person said, “Yes very much so and with bed bathing they are very gentle. They wash the top half and cover the bottom half with a towel.” Other comments included. “Yes definitely respect my relative and ask their views and they give them options and treat them very well.” “They are very respectful and check if the water is too hot or too cold and check if I have been creamed properly.” One relative we spoke with on the telephone said, “My relative has been receiving support for twelve months now and they are reliable and always ask what my relative’s needs. They involve him in everything they do.” They went on to say, “The manager came and asked us what help we needed and then developed the support based on what we had said.”

Staff were able to describe in detail how they supported people who used the service. Staff gave examples of how they approached people and how they carried out their care so that they were respectful and maintained the person’s dignity.

The manager told us that staff belonged to a small team which was led by the senior support worker. This meant that staff and people who used the service could build up relationships. The manager told us that they endeavoured to ensure only a small number of care workers were involved in individual care packages. This ensured consistency when delivering care. The people we spoke with confirmed this arrangement.

People told us they were involved in developing their care plans. The care plans described how people wanted to receive their support and told us who were important to them and things they liked to do. For example, watching their favourite television programmes.

Senior support workers and co-ordinators carried out observations of staff working with people in their own homes. Some were unannounced and focused on the person’s experience. They judged how staff maintained people’s dignity and respected people’s wishes. Staff received feedback which identified any areas for development. We looked at a number of completed observation forms and saw staff were performing in a way that the provider expected.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

We found people who used the service received personalised care and support. They were involved in planning the support they needed. We looked at six care plans for people which were stored in the office. It was clear that the plans were person centred and reviewed as the support needs changed.

People we spoke with told us they knew what was written about them by care workers and staff always discussed how they could support them better. The plans also told us about the important people in their lives and who staff should contact in case of an emergency. People told us they were encouraged by care workers to remain as independent as possible. One person said, "I like to do things for myself but I know I need help in the morning to help me get dressed. The staff are very kind and patient." Another person said, "I was fully involved in drawing up care plan and they listened to what I wanted and the carers are always checking that I am ok when delivering care and if need anything else."

People were provided with information about the service, this is called a 'Service User Guide.' The guide informs people of their rights, what they can expect from the service and how to raise concerns.

The manager told us there was a comprehensive complaints' policy and procedure, this was explained to everyone who received a service. It was written in plain English and gave timescales for the service to respond to any concerns raised. We were told that only one formal complaint had been received and the assistant manager showed us the documentation in relation to this. The manager told us some minor issues were dealt with by the appropriate staff straight away. The manager told us that she met regularly with the assistant manager and co-ordinators to learn from any concerns raised to ensure they delivered a good quality service. We were shown a compliments file which showed a large number of people had expressed their thanks to the care team.

People we spoke with did not raise any complaints or concerns about the care and support they received. Relatives we spoke with told us they had no concerns but would discuss with the staff or manager if they needed to raise any issues. One person we spoke with said, "A while ago we had a problem with different staff turning up but that was quickly resolved."

Staff told us if they received any concerns about the services they would share the information with their line managers. They told us they had regular contact with their manager both formally at staff meeting and informally when their manager carried out observations of practice in people's homes.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People consistently told us they could get in touch with the office and that staff were easy to get on with. Most people could recall having face to face meeting when their care package was set up. Conversations with people who used the service gave a favourable impression of the manner and professionalism of the office staff and managers.

We found a positive culture which centered on the needs of people who used the services. People we spoke with told us they were very satisfied with the service they received. Comments included, “Staff are very good, they go the extra mile to make sure I have everything I need before they leave.” And “I have my favourite staff but they are all very nice.”

Twelve Trees Homecare Limited had a clear set of principles and values. These included choice, involvement, dignity, respect, equality and independence for people. We spoke with several staff during our inspection and they answered our queries in an open and helpful manner. They said the values of the service were clear and they demonstrated an excellent understanding of those values.

Staff told us that they felt part of a team which encouraged involvement in developing an excellent service. They told us that they attended staff meetings and training sessions which gave them opportunity to raise any concerns and share knowledge.

There were effective and robust systems in place to monitor and improve the quality of the service provided. The manager told us that records were kept which showed staff attendance at visits. These records meant managers were able to confirm people received their calls at the time they requested and for the length of the time they were assessed to need.

Senior support staff and co-ordinators conducted observations of care workers to check if they were delivering the care and support that met people’s needs and the quality of care provided. We looked at a number of records completed following those checks. The records showed staff were assessed on how they delivered their support, health and safety, maintaining privacy and being respectful. Staff received feedback following the observations which included things they did well and areas for improvement.

People who used the service were formally asked their views by completing quality assurance surveys. People’s answers indicated they were happy with the service provided rating the agency as very good. People said they would recommend the agency to other people. All respondents said they knew who to tell if they had a reason to make a complaint and they all responded they felt safe. The manager told us that most of the people who used the service had been recommended by friends and neighbours. People we spoke with said they would not want to change the provider as it was reliable, professional and staff were kind and compassionate.