

Middlesbrough Borough Council

South Tees Home Support Service

Inspection report

Children with Disabilities
2nd Floor, The Viewley Centre, Hemlington
Middlesbrough
Cleveland
TS8 9JH

Tel: 01642579160

Date of inspection visit:
15 January 2020

Date of publication:
29 January 2020

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

About the service

South Tees Home Support Service is a domiciliary care agency providing support to children and young people living in their family homes. At the time of inspection the service was supporting eight children and young people under the age of 18.

The service has been developed and designed in line with the principles and values that underpin Registering the Right Support and other best practice guidance. This ensures that children and young people who use the service can live as full a life as possible and achieve the best possible outcomes. The principles reflect the need for children and young people with learning disabilities and/or autism to live meaningful lives that include control, choice, and independence. Children and young people using the service receive planned and co-ordinated person-centred support that is appropriate and inclusive for them.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

Staff were consistently kind and caring. One relative said, "The service is brilliant." Professionals working closely with the service gave very positive feedback. One professional told us, "My experience of using their service was excellent. They clearly know the children well that they support and they are very supportive and proactive in helping families avoiding a crisis."

Risks to children and young people were assessed and measures had been identified to reduce those risks identified. Robust recruitment procedures reduced the risk of unsuitable staff being appointed.

Care plans were comprehensive and reviewed regularly. Children and young people had their care and support needs met by sufficient numbers of suitably trained staff. Staff were supported through regular supervision and team meetings.

Children and young people 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. The staff team ensured children and young people's rights were respected.

A range of play, social and recreational activities were provided within the community, the service base and family homes. Staff worked closely with other services to support young people on their transition into adulthood. Relatives knew how to complain if required but told us they had not needed to do so.

Quality assurance systems had been used to identify which aspects of the service worked well and where improvements may be needed.

The service applied the principles and values of Registering the Right Support and other best practice guidance. These ensure that children and young people who use the service can live as full a life as possible

and achieve the best possible outcomes that include control, choice and independence. The outcomes for the children and young people using the service reflected the principles and values of Registering the Right Support by promoting choice and control, independence and inclusion.

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 requires improvement (published 14 February 2019). There was a breach related to the governance of the service. The provider completed an action plan after the last inspection to show what they would do and by when to improve. At this inspection we found improvements had been made and the provider was no longer in breach of regulations.

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.

South Tees Home Support Service

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

This inspection was carried out by one inspector.

Service and service type

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to children and young people living in their family homes.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

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 provider or registered manager would be in the office to support the inspection.

What we did before 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 contacted Healthwatch to gather information. Healthwatch is an independent consumer champion that gathers and represents the views of the public about health and social care services in England. The provider was not asked to complete a provider information return prior to this inspection. This is information we require providers to send us to

give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We took this into account when we inspected the service and made the judgements in this report.

The children and young people using the service were unable to communicate their views with us. We talked with four relatives about their experience of the care provided to their family members.

During the inspection

We spoke with eight staff members including the registered manager, senior resource workers and resource workers. We reviewed a range of records. This included three children and young people's care records. We looked at three staff files in relation to recruitment and staff supervision. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures were reviewed.

After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found.

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

- Children and young people were safeguarded from harm. The policies and procedures in place supported staff to do this. The policies and procedures in place supported staff to do this.
- Staff were trained in safeguarding children and young people. They knew the actions to take if they suspected abuse. They were confident the management team would deal with any concerns appropriately.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Risks to children and young people were assessed and regularly reviewed. Actions were taken to reduce those risks identified. One professional told us, "Risk assessments are updated to reflect change and there are face to face catch ups, daily if needed."
- A range of general risk assessments had been completed for tasks carried out by staff. This included environmental risk assessments for staff working in children and young people's homes.
- Staff could always contact the management team outside of office hours if they needed advice.

Staffing and recruitment

- Safe recruitment practices were followed. A range of checks were made to reduce the risk of unsuitable staff being appointed.
- Staffing levels met the needs of the children and young people supported.
- Staff arrived on time and stayed for the length of their allotted calls. One relative told us, "They turn up when they should. I know them all."

Using medicines safely

- At the time of this inspection the service was not managing or administering medicines as families took responsibility for this.
- Senior staff working at the service had received the appropriate training should medicines need to be administered in an emergency.
- A medicines policy was in place which required updating. The registered manager told us this work would be undertaken.

Preventing and controlling infection

- Children and young people were protected against the spread of infection.
- Staff had training in infection prevention and control. They had access to supplies of protective equipment such as gloves and aprons.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Lessons were learnt from adverse incidents and events. The registered manager gave us examples of how service delivery had changed in response to such.

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 requires improvement. At this inspection this key question has now improved to good. This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

At our last inspection we found training was taking place but that the provider's governance systems were ineffective at monitoring and recording this. This was a breach of Regulation 17 of the Health and Social Care Act (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

Enough improvement had been made at this inspection and the provider was no longer in breach of regulation 17.

- Staff received appropriate training to meet the needs of the children and young people supported.
- The provider had identified a range of mandatory training for staff. Since the last inspection an up to date training matrix was in place. This was reviewed monthly by the management team.
- Staff were able to access a range of developmental training opportunities.
- New staff received a comprehensive induction to the service to ensure they were suited to their roles.
- The management team carried out direct observations of staff to ensure their practice was of a high standard. Staff were competent in their roles.

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law

- Children and young people's needs and wishes were assessed and recorded. Care plans covered a range of areas important to the individual child or young person. Families were fully involved in the planning of care. One relative told us, "They come out to review the care plan every year. I'm involved."
- Staff were aware of and delivered care in line with the legislation relevant to their role including the Children's Act 1989.

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet

- Staff supported some children and young people with their nutrition and hydration. However, families took overall responsibility for this area of the children and young people's lives.
- Staff supported some families to administer nutrition to children and young people through tubes. Where children and young people had needs in this area staff had been trained to manage these and worked alongside relatives to do so safely.
- Staff received training in food safety measures.

Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care; Supporting people to live

healthier lives, access healthcare services and support

- Families took primary responsibility for the health needs of the children and young people supported.
- Where needed the service had liaised with a range of professionals such as speech and language and occupational therapists when working with families.

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.

- The service only supported children and young people under the age of 18. Consent was obtained from parents or those holding parental responsibility for children and young people supported. This was clearly recorded in care plans.
- The service worked within the framework of The Children's Act 1989 to support each young person to be involved in decisions about their care whilst working in partnership with those who had parental responsibility.

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

- Children and young people were supported by a caring, dedicated staff team. One relative told us, "I couldn't do without them."
- Close, professional relationships had been developed between children and young people, relatives and staff. A relative told us "You can tell they [staff] really like [Name]. When they've been away they tell him they've missed him."
- A professional who worked closely with the service described to us how staff delivered a nurturing service. Another professional said, "From first-hand experience I am happy to say that the dedicated staff within the Home Support service provide a high level of care with compassion and dignity at its core."
- A range of compliments had been received by the service for the quality of the care it had provided.

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

- The service was child rather than needs focused. Staff supported children and young people to make their own choices where they could. One relative told us staff take "[Name of child] wherever he wants to go."

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- Staff were aware of the importance of respecting the rights of children and young people. Staff maintained each child's privacy and dignity. Relatives confirmed this.
- Staff spoke about the children and young people they were supporting in a very respectful way. One relative told us "They [staff] are respectful and really helpful."
- One professional told us, "The aim if possible is to let children and family lead with what works, they try not to take over and affect anyone independence."

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

- Children and young people received personalised care, responsive to their needs.
- Staff met children and young people and their families before providing support. Detailed care plans were developed collaboratively with children and young people, their families and other professionals.
- The service was flexible in meeting children and young people's needs. One relative told us, "100 percent, every time I need help they help out."
- One professional told us, "The overall service is very responsive to family's needs and are always able and willing to adapt the services they provide in order to cater to each individual."

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.

- Staff understood the communication needs of the children and young people they were supporting. One professional said "They [staff] clearly know the children well that they support."
- Some information was available in easy read and pictorial formats including the guide to the service and information on bullying for children.
- The registered manager was aware of AIS requirements. They told us additional information in other formats would be provided on a bespoke basis to individuals if required.

Supporting people to develop and maintain relationships to avoid social isolation; support to follow interests and to take part in activities that are socially and culturally relevant to them

- The service provided social calls to some children and young people where they were able to access the activities they enjoyed.
- Children and young people attended groups and clubs as well as taking part in activities of their choice such as visiting local parks and cafes. Staff supported them in socialising with their peers. For example, at a 'Fun Club' held during school holidays at the service base.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- The provider had a system in place to manage complaints. However, no complaints had been received.
- Relatives knew how to formally complain but had not needed to as if they raised any concerns they were acted on.

End of life care and support

- The service did not provide end of life care. The registered manager told us should this be needed families would be signposted to appropriate services.

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 requires improvement. At this inspection this key question has now improved to good. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements

At the last inspection we found the provider did not have systems in place to assess, monitor and improve the quality and safety of the service. This was a breach of Regulation 17 of the Health and Social Care Act (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

Enough improvement had been made at this inspection and the provider was no longer in breach of regulation 17.

- A range of audits were carried out to assess and monitor the quality of the service. However, there was no defined schedule of provider level audits. We discussed this with the provider and registered manager who told us provider audits would be scheduled to take place on a quarterly basis in future.
- Where issues had been identified within the auditing process action plans were in place to address these.
- Staff at all levels of the service understood their roles and responsibilities.
- Notifications about incidents that affected children and young people's safety or welfare had not been required. However, the registered manager was aware of their responsibilities in this area.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people; 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 culture of the service was open and positive. Staff told us morale was good and the registered manager was very supportive. They felt listened to and could speak up if they had any concerns. Team meetings were held regularly.
- One professional told us, "There is a really good ethos within the team and the manager, and this filters through to the staff."
- The registered manager and provider were open about some challenges the service had previously faced and told us about the actions they had taken to address these.
- The registered manager did not document non-formal complaints and their outcomes at the time of inspection. We discussed this with them and they told us they would start to do so.
- Relatives told us communication with the service was good.

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

- Feedback was sought from children and young people, relatives and the public about the quality of the service.
- The service had participated in an annual 'Big Event' held in Middlesbrough. Children, young people and their families had been invited to take part in activities. Whilst doing so they had opportunities to talk about the support and services available to them and how these could be improved. This resulted in some changes to service provision including outings to places children said they would like to visit and the creation of a girl's group for teenagers.
- Staff development days had taken place to improve staff knowledge and practice.
- The provider and registered manager were keen for the service to develop and improve and shared their plans in this area.

Working in partnership with others

- The service worked in partnership with a range of other agencies and professionals.
- Very positive feedback was received from other professionals. One professional said, "Home Support are a very effective and well thought of service provider – they work closely with families to ensure that their needs are met and I have received a lot of positive feedback regarding the support they provide."