

Ms Diane Joy Varty

Care4you

## Inspection report

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### Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Good ●
Is the service safe?	Good ●
Is the service effective?	Good ●
Is the service caring?	Outstanding ☆
Is the service responsive?	Good ●
Is the service well-led?	Good ●

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

About the service:

Care4you is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own houses and flats in the community. It provides a service to adults. At the time of the inspection, 31 people were being supported by the service.

Not everyone using a domiciliary care agency receives regulated activity; CQC only inspects the service being received by people provided with 'personal care'; help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. Where they do we also take into account any wider social care provided.

People's experience of using this service:

People, relatives and staff told us the service was exceptionally caring. Feedback from everyone was extremely positive about how the manager and staff supported people in a kind and person-centred way. Everyone said the service was exceptionally good and they said the manager's approach to good-quality care was the main reason for this. One staff member appropriately summed up everyone's views when they said, "I'm not biased, but I think this service has a lot of 'outstanding' features. It is really good!"

People felt safe while being supported by staff. Relatives were confident people would be supported safely, including in managing any known risks. There was evidence people were protected from harm by staff who had been trained, and were confident in recognising and reporting concerns. Potential risks to people's health and wellbeing were assessed and minimised. There were enough staff to ensure people's needs were met safely. People were supported well to manage their medicines because staff had been trained to do so safely. Staff followed effective processes to prevent the spread of infection.

People said their needs had been met by skilled staff. Staff had been appropriately trained, well supported and had information to meet people's assessed needs. Where required, staff supported people to have enough to eat and drink. Staff supported people to access healthcare services when required to help them maintain their health and well-being.

People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible. The policies and systems in the service supported this practice. People were fully involved in making decisions about their care and support. People and their relatives were involved in planning and reviewing care plans. People told us staff who supported them were caring and friendly. Staff respected and promoted people's privacy, dignity and independence.

Information in people's care plans supported staff to provide person-centred care that met people's needs. The manager worked in partnership with other professionals to ensure people received care that met their needs. There was a system to ensure people's suggestions, concerns and complaints were recorded, investigated, and acted upon to reduce the risk of recurrence. Where required, staff supported people well at the end of their lives.

Audits and quality monitoring checks were carried out regularly to continually improve the service. The service had systems to enable people to provide feedback about their experiences of the service. People's experiences of the service were extremely positive, and the manager showed us they worked hard to provide consistently good-quality care.

Rating at last inspection:

The service was rated 'good' when we last inspected it. That report was published in March 2016.

Why we inspected:

This was a planned inspection based on the previous rating.

Follow up:

We will continue to monitor all information we receive about the service and schedule the next inspection accordingly.

## 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.

Details are in our Safe findings below.

Good ●

### Is the service effective?

The service was effective.

Details are in our Effective findings below.

Good ●

### Is the service caring?

The service was exceptionally caring.

Details are in our Caring findings below.

Outstanding ☆

### Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive.

Details are in our Responsive findings below.

Good ●

### Is the service well-led?

The service was well-led.

Details are in our Well-led findings below.

Good ●

# Care4you

## 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. This inspection was planned to check whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

#### Inspection team:

An inspector and an expert by experience carried out the inspection. An expert by experience is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service.

#### Service and service type:

Care4you is a domiciliary care agency. It provides care to people living in their own houses, flats or specialist housing. The service provides personal care and support to adults.

The service is run by an individual and it is therefore not required to have a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. The registered individual is 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 site visit because it is small and the manager is often out of the office supporting staff or providing care. We needed to be sure they would be in to support the inspection.

Inspection activity started on 13 March 2019 and ended on 22 March 2019. We visited the office location on 13 March 2019 to see the manager and office staff; and to review care records and policies and procedures. During this, we spoke with two care staff.

#### What we did:

Before the inspection, we looked at information we held about the service including notifications. A notification is information about events that registered persons are required to tell us about. We used

information the provider sent us in the Provider Information Return (PIR) to plan the inspection. 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.

During the inspection, we looked at various information including:

- Care records for four people.
- Records of accidents and incidents; compliments and complaints; audits; surveys.
- Two staff files to check the provider's staff recruitment, training and supervision processes.
- Some of the provider's policies and procedures.

During 21 and 22 March 2019, we spoke with nine people using the service, six relatives, one live-in paid carer not employed by the service and two care staff by telephone.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

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

People were safe and protected from avoidable harm. Legal requirements were met.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People told us they felt safe with how staff supported them. Relatives agreed with this. This included one relative who said, "Sometimes I have to go away for a few days and I trust the staff completely to make sure everything is alright."
- Staff knew how to keep people safe because they had been trained on this. In addition to safeguarding policies, the provider had a whistleblowing policy which supported staff in reporting concerns to other organisations without fear of reprisal. Staff demonstrated they knew how to report concerns and they followed local reporting procedures.
- One staff member told us, "Anything concerning a client, we call the office and it is dealt with."
- The manager appropriately contacted the local authority if they had any safeguarding concerns and records showed they had been proactive in doing so.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Potential risks to people's health and wellbeing had been managed well. These had been assessed so that staff managed risks safely.
- One relative said, "They assess everything very well."
- People's homes had also been assessed to identify and minimise any hazards that could put them, their visitors and staff at risk of harm.
- The manager worked closely with people, relatives and other professionals if people required equipment to help staff provide their care safely. Staff told us they had good training to enable them to use people's equipment safely and effectively to promote people's independence and wellbeing.

Staffing and recruitment

- The service had an ongoing recruitment process to ensure they always had enough staff to support people safely. There were safe staff recruitment procedures to make sure staff employed by the service were suitable. The manager had completed all necessary checks, including criminal records checks.
- Everyone told us there were enough staff and people benefitted from being supported by regular staff. This provided consistency of care. One person said, "We always have the right number of staff and they know what they are doing." Another person said, "I have regular carers and they are always here on time."
- People told us they had not experienced any missed care visits. They were happy with the timeliness of the staff as they were normally supported at their agreed times. People said they received weekly rotas. They said this made them feel safe because they knew who would be supporting them each day.

Using medicines safely

- People and relatives told us staff managed medicines well. One relative said, "[Staff] do sometimes need

to give [person] medication. They have it all written down and then they write in the book when they've given it. They are excellent." Another relative told us, "I have absolute trust that it will all be done properly. We have never had any mishaps."

- Medicines people took had been recorded on a medicine administration record (MAR). This enabled the service to show that people had been given their medicine as prescribed by professionals. Staff checked and took appropriate action to ensure people always had enough quantities of their medicines. One person told us, "If I need my medicines collected (from a pharmacy), they will get it for me because I haven't got anyone else to do it for me."
- Audits of MAR showed no concerns in how people's medicines were managed by staff.

#### Preventing and controlling infection

- People told us they were protected against acquired infections because staff followed good infection prevention procedures. One relative who told us they were very conscious of cross infection in their professional role said, "You can't fault them. They are obviously very well trained and care about what they do."
- Staff told us they were trained in infection prevention and control. They also confirmed they had enough disposable gloves and aprons if they needed to use these when supporting people.

#### Learning lessons when things go wrong

- There were systems to ensure incidents or accidents involving people using the service or staff were managed effectively. Staff knew they needed to inform the manager of any incidents that occurred while supporting people.
- Records showed the manager reviewed this information and took appropriate action to ensure everyone was safe. Relevant learning was shared with staff during supervision and team meetings.
- Measures taken to reduce the risk of recurrence included updating people's risk assessments. Also, where necessary people were referred to other professionals to ensure systems were in place to provide their care safely.



# 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

People's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law; Adapting service, design, decoration to meet people's needs

- There were systems to continually assess people's care and support needs to ensure they received effective care.
- People had detailed care plans which showed how their needs, choices and preferences would be met by staff. These were updated when necessary. One staff member told us they found care plans had enough information about people's needs. They said, "It does make a difference in how we support clients when we know more about them. It's really good."
- People told us their care was planned and adapted to their needs. They said they were asked about their preferred visit times and this was accommodated. One person said, "If they need to change a time (just by a bit), then they always let us know in advance wherever they can. That's not a problem for me as I'm flexible because I'm here most of the time."

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- People told us staff were very skilled and supported them really well. One person said, "[Manager] makes sure that all her [staff] are experienced before they come out to us so that they know what they are doing and what they are expected to do. That's the big difference between this agency and other agencies we've had before."
- Staff were supported to acquire the skills necessary for them to support people effectively. A live-in carer said, "They (staff) are very well trained. They're very professional, very sweet and patient. I've seen a few of them, they're very different, but all good."
- Staff told us of the excellent training they now received. One staff member said, "Training has greatly improved since they moved from packs to [face to face]. It allows for shared learning."
- Staff told us they were supported in their work, including by receiving regular supervision. One staff member said, "We tend to get supervision every month or so. It's quite open and we can have discussions and raise concerns. [Manager] is straight talking and we are able to be like that with her."

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

- Most people told us they were not supported by staff with their food and drinks as they or their relatives managed this. However, people told us staff always offered to get them drinks or anything they may need to make them comfortable. One person said, "They always ask if they should make a cup of tea for me." Another person said, "The carers always make sure I have plenty of drinks to last me during the day."
- Where people were supported by staff to eat and drink, they were happy with how this had been done. Staff told us it was very important to them to make sure they supported people to eat well, as this promoted people's health and wellbeing.

Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support; Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care

- People told us staff did not routinely support them to attend appointments with health professionals such as GPs, dentists, chiropodist, opticians and hospital consultants because their relatives supported them with this. However, they said staff supported them if urgent healthcare was required. One person said, "I had my cataracts done and they came in four times a day to give me my eye drops. They just arranged it and I don't have to worry with them." Another person said, "I had a hospital visit and the carer said I didn't have to worry because she will take me, stay with me and bring me back. I appreciated that."
- When we telephoned one person for feedback, the manager answered the phone, and told us the person was very unwell and they were waiting for the doctor to arrive. The manager told us it was their general procedure for staff to stay with unwell people until other professionals took over their care to ensure they were safe and supported well. People and staff told us this was one of the things they appreciated about the service provided by Care4you. They said the manager put everyone's needs first and always aimed to provide an excellent service. One staff member said, "That's what sets Care4you apart from other care agencies."

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. People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment with appropriate legal authority.
- We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA and we found they were. Records showed most people had capacity to make decisions and had given consent to their care and support. People told us staff always asked for their consent before providing support. One person said, "They all talk to me whilst they are looking after me and I know what they are doing."
- Relatives told us they supported people with fluctuating capacity to make decisions about their care. No one we spoke with had any issues in relation to how staff promoted people's rights.

## 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

People were truly respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; equality and diversity

- People, relatives and staff were overwhelmingly complimentary about the caring and nurturing nature of the service. People told us they were supported by staff who were extremely caring, kind and very friendly. A lot of people described having lovely chats and banter with their care staff. One person said, "These are a great bunch of girls (staff). They really care about what they do and they always have time for a chat." Another person said, "I love my carers, they are very chatty and we talk about the village. We also have a bit of 'gossip' because I can't get out much, it works really well."
- Other comments about staff included: "I really enjoy my carers coming because they always come in with a smile on their faces"; "The carers are more like friends. They are so kind and helpful, and I can't praise them enough"; "They chat to me and I love them. They chat about all sorts of things"; "They tell me, 'This is Care4you! It means, it is all about what you want'; "I live on my own, but I never feel on my own with them".
- One relative told us, "The carers are all courteous, patient, kind and very friendly."
- Staff told us the manager motivated them to provide care to people in a way that was personal and compassionate. They also said the manager encouraged them to develop caring and respectful relationships with people and their family members. Staff had been introduced to most people to get to know them well, so that it was easier to cover for other staff's leave. One staff member said, "Everyone knows all the carers, which is nice. It's a very personal service and the manager gets involved in supporting people. Everyone knows [the manager] and it says a lot about her. It makes everyone feel a little bit more comfortable." Another member of staff said, "I like Care4you because they have the personal touch. It's about the whole person, including their family members too. Our clients are very happy."
- Everyone's extremely positive comments were summed up by a live-in carer not employed by the provider. They said, "They really do care. An example of some of the things they do well was when carers popped in and brought cards and daffodils on [person]'s birthday."
- People told us that staff normally 'went over and beyond' their expectations when supporting them. Comments about staff's extremely compassionate nature included them helping people with issues and tasks that were not part of their agreed care plans. One person said, "They will sweep the floor or clean the kitchen, and it really does help. I have had four different care companies and these are the best by far." Another person said, "The carers go out of their way for me. They know I am on my own and one of them recently knew I needed something, so she went in her own time, got it for me and brought it in before she started her work. They're so kind!" While another person said, "I ran out of milk one day and the carer needed to get to the next person, but she still ran up to the shop and got my milk for me. I couldn't manage without them." Another person who was very happy with what staff did for them said, "They are so flexible, they even feed the cat. Honest, they will even do that for me and that's not in the care plan!"
- One person told us how much they appreciated the support provided by the manager when they were

unwell. They said, "I had a fall and I managed to phone [manager]. She came straight away and wanted to call the paramedics, but I said 'no' as I thought I was fine. Later in the day I felt terrible, I phoned again and she came straight back and phoned the paramedics. I went to hospital and was there for a month. She visited me in hospital and so did the carers."

- Relatives told us staff were kind enough to check on them too, even if they were not the ones they were providing support to. One relative said, "I'm not so good on my legs and if I am having a bad day, they won't leave till they have made sure I'm ok and done what I need. I'm not even the one they are looking after!"
- A live-in carer said, "If we needed shopping and couldn't get out, then the Care4you carers would just get it for us."
- Some people, relatives and staff told us about 'fish and chips Friday'. This is a special event started by the manager to provide this meal on Fridays for people who wanted it. The manager encouraged staff to make this a social event by sharing the meal with people they were supporting. One staff member told us how much they enjoyed this as 'it puts a smile on people's faces'. They also said, "This puts Care4you on the edge of brilliance. I don't mind paying for the food to share with clients." When we told them this was a lovely gesture, they said, "It's like paying back, you know!"
- One person's live-in carer told us, "They know [person] loves fish and chips and so they go and get this for them. Even sometimes when the carer isn't on duty and she is in the area, she will go and buy the fish and chips and bring it. They are so kind."

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

- People told us they were supported to express their views about their care. They also made decisions and choices about how they wanted to be supported by staff. One person said, "The carers work with me, so I tell them how I want things done and they do it. They are lovely girls."
- Care plans had been developed together with people and where required, their relatives and relevant professionals. One person said, "They come out at regular intervals and talk to us to make sure everything is alright and to check if we need anything else."
- People told us the manager and staff encouraged them to share their experiences of the service to help continually improve it. They said they always felt listened to and their comments valued. One person said, "We have a formal review maybe once a year or a bit more often, but frankly, I can phone the office anytime. They also ask if I would like anything done differently every time they are here." Another person said, "The owner makes contact every few months and goes through the care plan. I get phone calls too asking me if there is anything I'm not happy with, but there isn't though."

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- People told us staff supported them in a respectful manner, and promoted their privacy and dignity. One person said, "They are really respectful and make you feel like a person they care about." Another person said, "I was embarrassed at first because of personal care, but the carers are great. I have a really good relationship with them and I'm now really comfortable with them."
- People really appreciated the staff's support in helping them to remain independent and living in their own homes. They valued the relationships they had developed with staff and trusted they would always put their needs first. One person said, "The carers are very good. They know I want to be independent and they help me to do it. They also help me when I need it." One relative told us, "They understand that I want to keep [person] at home for as long as I possibly can and they are here to help me do that."

## Is the service responsive?

### Our findings

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

People's needs were met through good organisation and delivery.

Planning personalised care to meet people's needs, preferences, interests and give them choice and control

- People spoke positively about how their care and support needs were still being met by the service in a personalised way. People, relatives and staff spoke highly about how the manager promoted a person-centred approach to care, was highly skilled and expected the same of the care staff. People were impressed about the manager and staff's responsiveness in responding to their changing needs. They said staff would support them outside of their agreed times when they needed urgent support. People told us of various examples of this. This included one person who said, "When I [needed urgent personal care], I phoned and they came out within 10 minutes. That makes me feel safe." They went on to tell us this was not the only time the manager or staff came out to support them straight away.
- Other people told us how they appreciated staff's flexibility and willingness to do whatever they needed help with. One person said, "Sometimes we have had to ask for an earlier visit because of hospital appointments and they just sort it out". Others said, "I needed someone at short notice to cover me for six or seven hours. Not only did they find someone, but they found someone that [person] knew"; "I had to go for an injection in the town and I couldn't find anyone to help and the owner took me herself".
- A live-in carer for one person also spoke highly of the staff's kindness and flexible approach. They said, "I've worked with many agency staff and these are excellent. They are very good to work with and they fit around what we are doing. I would say, this is one of the 'tip top' agencies I've ever seen."
- People told us the manager did not mind them cancelling or rearranging care visits to fit in with their other plans. One person said, "I can cancel a visit anytime. [Manager] said to me if I get the chance to go out, then I can cancel the call and go. It's no problem for her."

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- The provider had a system to manage people's concerns and complaints. They had not been any recorded complaints since 2016. People told us they hardly complained because the service was very good and they were happy. One person said, "I've never had any complaints, but if I did, I would pick up the phone straight away and talk to [manager] and she would just deal with it."
- People told us there was very little room for improvement because everything was 'so good'.
- The manager used care reviews and visits to people's homes to check staff practice and ask for people's feedback about the service. These regular visits to people meant they could deal with any issues quickly.

End of life care and support

- The service did not support many people at the end of their lives. However, they did so if people chose to remain in their homes and they did not require specialist care. People did not see end of life planning as part of the provider's role. They told us their relatives would support them to make decisions about how they wanted to be supported at the end of their lives.
- The manager and staff always spoke passionately about people they supported. They said although this

aspect of their role was sometimes challenging, they were always happy to provide this support to ensure people remained comfortable and in familiar surroundings.

# 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

The service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

Planning and promoting person-centred, high-quality care and support; and how the provider understands and acts on duty of candour responsibility

- The manager promoted a positive, open and inclusive culture within the service. Their strong values that promoted person-centred and high-quality care were shared with the staff by way of role modelling and during team meetings. Staff told us the care the manager showed towards them made them want to do the same for people they supported. Staff said they felt "like a family" working towards one purpose, that is, of making sure people using the service got "the best care they could".
- Everyone told us how passionate the manager and staff were about providing very good care and support for people. People's comments showed an exceptionally caring and responsive service. One person who had worked in care services in the past said, "I know what I wanted and I've certainly got what I wanted with this company." About the manager, one relative said, "She used to be a nurse and she knows how she would want care. That's how she delivers it to other people. Absolutely fantastic!"
- The manager carried out regular audits. This meant they could regularly identify areas of the service that required improvement, and make those improvements in a timely way. There had been checks of people's care records, staff records, incidents and accident records to ensure these contained up to date and relevant information.
- There was evidence that any learning from shortfalls identified during audits was used to continually improve the service. The manager told us they would be working towards further developing their quality monitoring processes. This included improving the robustness of their emergency plan, and ensuring they kept up to date with regulatory requirements.

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

- The manager and staff understood their roles and responsibilities. Staff told us they enjoyed their job and they found the service good. One staff member said, "Having worked for other care agencies, they are way more on the ball here. I didn't feel valued before, but it's nice to be included in team discussions here. There is a strong social element to our team meetings." They also said, "Staff's views matter here, not just clients'. It's nice to see the professionalism. Things are done properly without the need to chase. I'm less stressed!"
- Staff also told us they had appropriate support to carry out their roles well and they knew the standards expected of them. One staff member said, "We have a good team here and everybody helps each other. If you have a problem, [manager] will sort it. She is professional, approachable, on the ball and easy going."
- The manager was supported by some senior staff in assessing staff's competency, supervision and providing practical support.
- The manager was happy about the positive impact her and her team of staff had on the lives of people

they supported. Since our last inspection, they had worked hard to further improve the service. We found evidence of their effort because people and relatives' comments about the service were overwhelmingly positive.

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

- People, relatives and staff said communication with the office staff and the manager was very good. People told us about regular care or quality monitoring visits by the manager, where they spoke with people to get their feedback. One person said, "Not long ago the owner came and provided care herself and while she was here chatting, she asked me about all the carers we have. She was making sure everything was fine and working well." Another person said, "She always says 'anything at all you just phone me'."
- The manager had a system to get regular feedback from people by way of care reviews, telephone monitoring, visits to assess staff competency, and surveys. Also, people were extremely happy to just telephone the manager because they felt they would always get the help they needed. Everyone had no doubts about the manager's approachability and openness. One person said, "That's what sets her apart from others."
- The service chose not to have commissioning arrangements with the local authority. They received their referrals through personal recommendations and the manager was happy to grow the service at this pace. The manager told us their main aim was to make sure they provided the best care they could for the people they supported.

Working in partnership with others

- The service worked in partnership with health and social care professionals who were involved in people's care. This ensured people consistently received the care and support they required and expected. Our regular information sharing meetings with the local authority did not highlight any concerns about the service.