

Northamptonshire County Council

Specialist Support Services for younger adults with disabilities North

Inspection report

Patrick Road
Corby
NN18 9NT

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Date of inspection visit:
26 September 2018
27 September 2018

Date of publication:
09 November 2018

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

This inspection took place on the 26 and 27 September 2018. This was the first comprehensive inspection of 'Specialist Support Services for younger adults with disabilities North' at their Corby location since the registered provider details changed to Northamptonshire County Council.

This service provides a domiciliary care support service to people living within their own homes in the community in Corby and surrounding area. There were 60 people receiving support with personal care when we inspected.

A registered manager was in post. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) 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.

There were sufficient numbers of staff to provide people with the support that had been agreed with them. Staff recruitment procedures ensured that appropriate checks were completed to ensure only suitable staff worked at the service.

People's needs had been assessed prior to their service being agreed. There were plans of care in place that been developed to guide staff in providing care in partnership with people who used the service. Staff were responsive to people's changing needs. They could demonstrate that they understood what was required of them to provide people with the care they needed to remain living independently at home. Care records contained risk assessments and risk management plans. These provided staff with the guidance and information they needed on how to minimise risks when they provided care and support.

Staff had a good understanding of what safeguarding meant and the procedures for reporting abuse. The staff we spoke with were confident that any concerns they raised would be followed up appropriately by the registered manager or other senior staff.

People were happy with the way that staff provided their care and support. They said they were listened to, their views were acknowledged and acted upon and their care and support was delivered in accordance with their assessed needs and their preferences for how they wished to receive their care. They were supported by staff that had access to the support, supervision, and training they needed to work effectively in their roles. There was good leadership regarding day-to-day and longer-term management of the service.

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 place at the service supported this practice. People's consent was sought before any care was provided and the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 were met.

People benefitted from a service that was appropriately managed so that they received their service in a

timely and reliable way. They received care from staff that were friendly, compassionate, kind and caring. Staff had received the right training to do their job and were knowledgeable about the needs of the people they supported in the community. There were procedures in place to guide staff when supporting people to take their medicines. Staff were trained in infection control, and supplied with appropriate personal protective equipment, such as disposable gloves and aprons, to perform their roles safely.

There was an effective system of quality assurance in place which ensured people consistently received a good standard of care and support. The provider worked in partnership with other stakeholders to ensure that where improvements were needed action was taken. Communication was open and honest, and any improvements identified were worked upon as required.

Arrangements were in place for the service to reflect and learn from complaints and incidents to improve safety across the service.

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.

People benefitted from receiving care from staff that were mindful of their responsibilities to safeguard them from harm.

People received care from staff that had the appropriate training and experience to do their job safely.

Risk assessments were in place to guide staff. These assessments were regularly reviewed so that people continued to receive safe care when their needs changed.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

People received a flexible and reliable service. There were contingency arrangements in place to ensure the continuity of the service when staff were sick or on holiday.

People received personalised care and support. They were provided with the care they needed and this was regularly reviewed to ensure their needs continued to be met.

Depending upon their agreed care plan and assessed needs people were supported to eat and drink enough. People were actively involved in decisions about their care and support needs.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

People received their service from conscientious and compassionate staff.

People's dignity was assured when they received personal care and their privacy was respected.

People benefitted from receiving care from staff that respected their individuality.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

People's needs were regularly reviewed with them so that the agreed service continued to meet their needs and expectations.

People knew how to complain and who to contact. They were assured that appropriate and timely action would be taken if they had to complain about the service.

People's care needs had been assessed prior to an agreed service being provided. Their care plans were person centred to reflect their individuality and their diverse care needs.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

People could rely on their service because it was well managed to ensure that the staff were supported to deliver a reliable and well thought of service.

People's quality of care was monitored by the systems in place and timely action was taken to make improvements when necessary.

There was a culture of openness and transparency; staff were encouraged and supported by the registered manager to consistently provide a good standard of person centred care.

Specialist Support Services for younger adults with disabilities North

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

This announced inspection was carried out by one inspector and took place on 26 and 27 September 2018. A 'expert-by-experience' was also involved in telephoning people at home, with their prior permission, on the 25 September to find out about their experience of using the service. A 'expert-by-experience' is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service.

We gave the provider 48hrs' notice of the inspection. We do this because in some community based domiciliary care agencies the registered manager is often out of the office supporting staff or, in some smaller agencies, providing care. We needed to be sure that someone would be in the service location office when we inspected.

Before our inspection, we reviewed information we held about the provider such as statutory notifications that they had sent us. A statutory notification is information about important events which the provider is required to send us by law. We also contacted the health and social care commissioners who monitor the care of people provided with domiciliary support to check if they had information about the quality of the service.

The registered manager had completed 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. The provider returned the PIR and we took this into account when we made judgements in this report.

During this inspection we visited the agency office in Corby. We met and spoke with the registered manager. We also spoke with five staff involved in providing care and support. We looked at the care records for six

people that used the service. With their prior agreement we visited three people at home and spoke with eight people on the telephone to find out about their experience of using the service. We also looked at records related to the quality monitoring of the service and the daily management of the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People were protected from harm arising from poor practice or ill treatment. They were safeguarded by staff recruitment policies and procedures against the risk of being cared for by unsuitable staff. One person said, "I feel safe in their [staff] hands; they [staff] know what they're doing. Can't fault them [staff]." Another person said they felt safe because they 'knew who [staff] was coming' to support them at home.

There were enough staff employed by the service to cover the care required, and all staff had undergone a disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and references were obtained before starting employment. The Disclosure and Barring Service carry out criminal record and barring checks on individuals who intend to work with vulnerable adults, to help employers make safer recruitment decisions.

Staff understood the roles of appropriate authorities that have a duty to respond to allegations of abuse and protect people, such as the Local Authority's Safeguarding Adults' team. There were clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place for staff to follow if they were concerned about people's safety. Discussions with staff demonstrated that they knew how to put safeguarding procedures into practice and staff described how they would report concerns if they suspected or witnessed abuse.

Staff received induction training, including 'shadowing' a more experienced staff member by accompanying them on home visits, prior to taking up their duties and working alone.

People's assessed needs were safely met. Risks to people had been assessed; care plans included a comprehensive assessment of their needs, including details of any associated risks to their safety that their assessment had highlighted. Whenever things went wrong the registered manager reviewed the circumstances and made improvements where necessary so that people were kept safe.

Care plans had been reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that risk assessments were updated regularly. Care plans were individualised and the content agreed with each person. They provided staff with a description of any risks they needed to be aware of when providing care and support; there was clear guidance for staff on how to manage risk, such as the risk of a person falling or neglecting to eat or drink enough.

There were policies and procedures in place to safely support people to manage their own medicines when this was an agreed part of their care plan. Care plans and risk assessments were in place when people needed staff support to manage their medicines.

Staff were provided with disposable gloves and aprons when supporting people with toileting and bathing. Staff said they received the equipment and training they needed to maintain good hygiene when handling food or drink and when assisting people with personal care.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People's care and support was delivered in line with current legislation, standards and evidence-based guidance to achieve effective outcomes. Their support needs were thoroughly assessed prior to taking up the service to ensure their needs could be fully met. The assessment established, for example, people's physical needs, capabilities, and ensured that any cultural factors were considered regarding people's choices for how they preferred their care to be provided. People were actively involved in decisions about their care and support needs.

Staff had the appropriate knowledge they needed to do their job and work with people with a diverse range of needs. Staff knew what was expected of them. They had a good understanding of people's needs and people received appropriate and timely care to enable them to remain living at home. New staff had received a comprehensive induction training that prepared them for their duties. This included, for example, practical moving and handling skills, safeguarding procedures, and daily record keeping in people's homes. New staff also 'shadowed' a more experienced staff member by accompanying them on home visits, prior to taking up their duties and working alone.

People received individualised care from staff that had acquired the experiential skills as well as the training they needed to care for people in a person-centred way. Staff said they had refresher training which kept their skills and knowledge up to date and in line with best practice. People's needs were met by staff that were effectively supervised and had their job performance regularly appraised.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making 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 decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible. We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA and saw that this was the case.

People's capacity to consent to their care and support had been assessed by the provider, and relatives and other relevant professionals were involved where appropriate. Staff had received training and the guidance they needed to support people that may lack capacity to make some decisions whilst being supported to live in their own home in the community.

Staff sought people's consent daily when supporting them with their personal care needs. Care plans contained assessments of people's capacity to make decisions and consent to their care. The staff we spoke with understood the importance to always respect people's wishes for how they preferred to receive their care. Choices were promoted because staff engaged with the people they supported at home.

Staff took appropriate action in response to any deterioration in people's health. We saw there was guidance and information for staff in people's care plans that related to any healthcare needs that had to be considered when they received support.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People's dignity and right to privacy was protected by staff. Staff were mindful that they were working in people's home by invitation and they were respectful of that. Staff were kind, compassionate, and respectful towards people. One person said, "They [staff] are so friendly and always cheer me up; they [staff] help me do things and that makes me feel better."

People said their personal care support was discreetly managed by staff. People said they were treated as individuals that have feelings, especially regarding having anxieties about needing practical help in their own home or support to help them manage their daily lives. They said they felt that they were treated in a dignified way.

People said that the staff were familiar with their routines and preferences for the way they liked to have their care provided. They were asked to share information that was relevant to how they preferred their care to be provided. If a person's ability to share their views had been compromised then significant others, such as family members, were consulted.

People received care from staff that were mindful of the sensitive nature of their work. Staff were mindful of maintaining confidentiality and policies and procedures reflected this with, for example, care records being securely stored in the agency office and information being shared on a 'need to know' basis only and with people's consent.

Staff were aware of their responsibilities related to preserving people's personal information and their legal duty to protect personal information they encountered during their work. This assured people that their information was held in accordance with the data protection act. Information held electronically was password protected and written documentation was stored securely. This included information as to how data held about them was stored and used.

People had agreed to the package of care and support to be provided. People received a package of information about their service and what to expect from staff. This information was provided verbally and in writing.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People's plans of care were reflective of their ongoing care and support needs. They received the care and support they needed, including when their needs changed and their care was adapted accordingly.

Where practicable scheduled support visits were organised to fit in with people's daily routines. Where it was not always feasible to accommodate people's time related preferences they were offered alternative timings, but the service was usually very flexible.

The staff team looked at ways to make sure people had access to the information they needed in a way they could understand it, to comply with the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). This is a framework put in place from August 2016. It makes it a legal requirement for all providers of NHS and publicly funded care to ensure people with a disability or sensory loss can access and understand information they are given. The registered manager confirmed that Information would be made available as necessary in appropriate formats to support people's different communication needs, for example, in Braille, large print, audio recording or pictorial based information.

People, or their representatives, were provided with the verbal and written information they needed about what do, and who they could speak with, if they had a complaint. One person said, "I know who to complain to. They [staff] told me all that. If I'm not happy I just say. They [staff] listen. They [staff] would get things sorted."

There were timescales in place for complaints to be dealt with in a timely way. There were no complaints being dealt with when we inspected. The registered manager said that if any complaints were made, then the complaints policy would be followed and the information would be recorded in detail, an investigation would take place, and a response given promptly.

Staff were aware of the potential impact of people's cultural needs and explained if they were to support anyone who had different cultural needs that this would be detailed and explained in the care plans. At the time of the inspection there was no one who had any specific cultural needs, or end of life care needs, that had to be considered by staff.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People were assured of receiving a domiciliary care service that was competently managed on a daily and longer-term basis. The registered manager had the knowledge and experience necessary to motivate staff to do a good job. The people we spoke with were pleased with the quality of their care and how their service was managed on a day-to-day basis. We saw that staffing levels were maintained and that staff were appropriately deployed to ensure that people's needs were consistently met by realistic scheduling of visits.

People said they were supported to remain independent and felt involved in their care. Their care records accurately reflected their needs and the service that had been agreed with them. Care plans had been regularly reviewed as necessary to include pertinent details related to changing needs. Care records that were kept in people's homes accurately reflected the daily care they had received.

People were assured that the quality of the service provided was appropriately monitored and improvements made when required. People's entitlement to a quality service was monitored by the audits regularly carried out by senior staff. These audits included analysing satisfaction surveys and collating feedback from individuals to use as guidelines for improving the service where necessary.

Records relating to staff recruitment and training were appropriately maintained. They reflected the training staff had already received and training that was planned.

Staff were provided with the information they needed about the whistleblowing procedure if they needed to raise concerns with appropriate outside regulatory agencies, such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The registered manager was aware of their responsibility to report incidents, such as alleged abuse or serious injuries to the CQC.

Staff understood their responsibilities and received regular training updates to keep up to date with current good practice guidelines. They received support through regular contact with the registered manager and had formal 'one- to-one' supervision meetings where their ability to do their job was measured. The staff felt able to voice any concerns or issues and felt their opinions were listened to.

The registered manager was readily approachable and sought to promote a culture of openness within the developing staff team. Staff meetings took place to inform staff of any changes and for staff to contribute their views on how the service was being run. Policies and procedures to guide staff were in place and had been regularly reviewed and updated when required.

Systems were in place to report and investigate any accidents or incidents to minimise the risk of such events happening again. The service worked cooperatively with outside agencies. This included a range of health and social care professionals.

It is a legal requirement that a provider's latest CQC inspection report rating is displayed at the service where a rating has been given. This is so that people, visitors and those seeking information about the service can

be informed of our judgments. The register manager knew that the rating arising from this inspection had to be prominently displayed, including on the website for the service.