

Comfort Zone Care Services Ltd

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## Inspection report

Unit 1, 27 Brunswick Street  
Luton  
LU2 0HF

Tel: 01582933363

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## Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Insufficient evidence to rate

Is the service safe?

**Insufficient evidence to rate**

Is the service effective?

**Insufficient evidence to rate**

Is the service caring?

**Insufficient evidence to rate**

Is the service responsive?

**Insufficient evidence to rate**

Is the service well-led?

**Insufficient evidence to rate**

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

We expect health and social care providers to guarantee people with a learning disability and autistic people respect, equality, dignity, choices and independence and good access to local communities that most people take for granted. 'Right support, right care, right culture' is the guidance CQC follows to make assessments and judgements about services supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people and providers must have regard to it.

### About the service

Comfort Zone Care Services Ltd is a domiciliary care agency providing personal care and support to people in their own homes. They were providing support to 104 people when the inspection started. This included 5 people living in supported living houses. Everyone who received support from Comfort Zone Care Services moved to other care providers on the day of inspection. By the end of the inspection day the service did not provide care and support to anyone.

Not everyone who used the service received personal care. CQC only inspects where people receive personal care. This is help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. Where they do we also consider any wider social care provided.

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

We were unable to gather sufficient evidence to give the service a rating in any of the key questions.

During the inspection everyone who received support moved to other care providers. This meant we could not gather feedback from people or their relatives. We could also not gather feedback from staff.

The registered manager and providers were not present during the inspection due to an ongoing police investigation. We were able to review some care records and staff files, but we could not gather all of the information we required.

We could not fully assess whether people received care which was safe, effective, caring and responsive.

We could not make a judgement about the running and management oversight of the service.

We could not examine whether the provision of care and support to anyone who has a learning disability or is autistic was in line with the expectations of the 'Right support, right care, right culture' guidance.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

### Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was good (published 22 February 2018).

### Why we inspected

The inspection was prompted due to concerns received from the local authority and police about modern day slavery. For example, poor working conditions and exploitation of some care staff recruited from overseas. There is an ongoing police investigation into these concerns.

On the day of the inspection the local authority cancelled their contract with the provider with immediate effect. Everyone who received support from Comfort Zone Care Services began to receive their care and support from other home care agencies. This included people who paid privately for their support.

The overall rating for the service has changed from 'Good' to 'Insufficient evidence to rate' based on the findings of this inspection. You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'All inspection reports and timeline' link for Comfort Zone Care Services on our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk).

### Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about 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?**

Insufficient evidence to rate.

Details are in our safe findings below.

**Insufficient evidence to rate**

### **Is the service effective?**

Insufficient evidence to rate.

Details are in our effective findings below.

**Insufficient evidence to rate**

### **Is the service caring?**

Insufficient evidence to rate.

Details are in our caring findings below.

**Insufficient evidence to rate**

### **Is the service responsive?**

Insufficient evidence to rate.

Details are in our responsive findings below.

**Insufficient evidence to rate**

### **Is the service well-led?**

Insufficient evidence to rate.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

**Insufficient evidence to rate**

# Comfort Zone Care Services Ltd

## **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 Health and Social Care Act 2008.

#### Inspection team

The inspection was undertaken by 2 inspectors.

#### Service and service type

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provided personal care to people living in their own homes.

This service were also providing care and support to people living in a 'supported living' setting, so that they could live as independently as possible. People's care and housing are provided under separate contractual agreements. CQC does not regulate premises used for supported living; this inspection looked at people's personal care and support. Comfort Zone Care Services did not have 'supported living services' added to their service types at the time of inspection, but they had requested the addition.

#### Registered Manager

This provider is required to have a registered manager to oversee the delivery of regulated activities at this location. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Registered managers and providers are legally responsible for how the service is run, for the quality and safety of the care provided and compliance with regulations.

At the time of our inspection there was a registered manager in post.

### Notice of inspection

This inspection was unannounced.

### What we did before the inspection

We attended information sharing meetings with the local authority, police and other professionals. We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR). This is information providers are required to send us annually with key information about their service, what they do well, and improvements they plan to make. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

### During the inspection

We visited the office with police officers and reviewed documentation. This included staff files and care records. We also looked at some documentation relating to management oversight of the service. The registered manager and providers were not able to be present during the office visit.

### Follow up

After the inspection we continued to receive updates from the local authority. We also received updates from the police about the progress of their criminal investigation. The registered manager and provider were not able to participate in the inspection. We have emailed, phoned and written to the provider to advise that an inspection has been undertaken and to request they contact CQC about this.

The Home Office suspended the provider's sponsorship license and will decide in due course whether this will be cancelled or re-instated. The suspension meant no further recruitment from overseas could take place.

We were not able to gather feedback from people who received support, their relatives or staff because everyone moved to new care providers on the day of the inspection.

Since the inspection the service has not provided care and support to anyone.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

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

At our last inspection we rated this key question Good. At this inspection the rating has changed to 'Insufficient evidence to rate'. This meant we were unable to gather enough evidence to make a judgement.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- We found evidence of some safeguarding systems in place but we did not have access to all relevant information. We could not fully examine if people were safeguarded from abuse and the risk of abuse.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- People's care records contained some information about known risks such as falls and pressure damage. We could not check with people or their relatives whether these were accurate or up to date. We could not make a judgement about how well people's safety was monitored.

Staffing and recruitment

- Recruitment processes were not always robust. For example, we found limited information about some staff employment histories and it was not possible to confirm the authenticity of some references as they were written on Comfort Zone forms. The provider was not able to provide any additional information about this.
- We were not able to access records of call times to examine whether staff were consistent, arrived on time and stayed for the length of time they were supposed to. We were not able to gather feedback from people and their relatives about this.

Using medicines safely

- We were not able to access enough information to make a judgement on whether people received their medicines safely.

Preventing and controlling infection

- We were not able to talk to people, relatives or staff about infection control practice such as whether staff used personal protective equipment (PPE) and washed their hands before supporting people.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- We were not able to gather enough information to assess whether lessons were learned when things went wrong.

# 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 our last inspection we rated this key question Good. At this inspection the rating has changed to 'Insufficient evidence to rate'. This meant we were unable to gather enough evidence to make a judgement.

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

- We could not gather enough information to make a judgement about this.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Records showed staff received an induction and training for their roles but we could not assess the quality of this due to insufficient information being available. We were not able to speak with staff to discuss the quality of the training they received.
- We could not gather feedback from people or their relatives about whether staff were competent and had the skills to perform their roles well.

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

- We were not able to access sufficient information to make a judgement on whether people received appropriate and safe support to eat and drink enough, if support was needed.

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

- Records showed staff liaised with health and social care agencies. We could not make a judgement on the quality or effectiveness of this as we could not speak to people or their relatives for feedback.

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 MCA 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 when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA.

When people receive care and treatment in their own homes an application must be made to the Court of Protection for them to authorise people to be deprived of their liberty.

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA.

- We did not find evidence of MCA assessments being undertaken and best interest decisions being made



when people did not have capacity or had fluctuating capacity. For example, if they had dementia. The registered manager did not have the opportunity to share any further information about this, so we could not make a judgement in this area.

# 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 our last inspection we rated this key question Good. At this inspection the rating has changed to 'Insufficient evidence to rate'. This meant we were unable to gather enough evidence to make a judgement.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity; Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care; Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- We were unable to talk to people or their relatives/representatives during this inspection. We were also unable to talk to staff. We were unable to visit anyone who lived in a supported living setting. This meant we could not gather feedback about people's experiences of care from Comfort Zone Care Services and whether they felt well treated and supported.
- We could not make a judgement on whether people were involved in decisions about their care or felt staff promoted their privacy, dignity and independence.

# Is the service responsive?

## Our findings

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

At our last inspection we rated this key question Good. At this inspection the rating has changed to 'Insufficient evidence to rate'. This meant we were unable to gather enough evidence to make a judgement.

Planning personalised care to ensure people have choice and control and to meet their needs and preferences

- The care records we looked at contained limited information about people's preferences, care routines and personal histories. However, the registered manager did not have the opportunity to share any additional information about this and we could not talk to people, relatives and staff about this. We could not make a judgement in this area due to the lack of information available.

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard. The Accessible Information Standard tells organisations what they have to do to help ensure people with a disability or sensory loss, and in some circumstances, their carers, get information in a way they can understand it. It also says that people should get the support they need in relation to communication.

- We could not make a judgement about this due to insufficient information.

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

- We could not gather enough information to make a judgement about this.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- We found some information showing concerns and complaints were logged and looked into. We could not examine this fully to make any judgement about the quality or effectiveness of these processes.

End of life care and support

- We were not able to access enough information to assess the quality of care and support in this area.

# 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 our last inspection we rated this key question Good. At this inspection the rating has changed to 'Insufficient evidence to rate'. This meant we were unable to gather enough evidence to make a judgement.

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;

- We could not gather sufficient evidence to make a judgement about the management and culture of the service.
- The local authority had significant concerns about how the service was run and cancelled their contract with immediate effect on the day of inspection. Everyone who received support from Comfort Zone Care Services moved to other care agencies arranged by the local authority. This meant we were not able to speak to people or their relatives as part of this inspection.
- A police investigation was prompted due to concerns about poor working conditions and treatment of some staff recruited from overseas. The investigation is ongoing. This meant the registered manager and providers were not present on the day of inspection.

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

- Records showed some audits and quality assurance checks were undertaken. We could not fully examine the effectiveness of these due to not all information being available.
- We could not make a judgement about whether the registered manager and provider met regulatory requirements.

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

- We were not able gather sufficient information to make a judgement in these areas.