

Avalon Group (Social Care)

Avalon Teesside Services

Inspection report

Lysander House
Falcon Court, Preston Farm Business Park
Stockton On Tees
Cleveland
TS18 3TX

Tel: 01642633556
Website: www.avalongroup.org.uk

Date of inspection visit:
17 November 2023
24 November 2023
15 December 2023
22 January 2024

Date of publication:
07 March 2024

Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Avalon Teesside Services is a domiciliary care agency providing personal care and support to people living in their own homes. 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. At the time of inspection 10 people were receiving personal care.

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

Relatives and an advocate were happy with the service and the care people received. They were complimentary about staff calling them "kind," "caring" and "helpful." Comments included, "Staff are very, very caring, and treat [person] like a family member" and, "They are all most attentive. [Person] always smiles and is happy to see them. I would know 100% if my [family member] was not happy."

There were systems in place to keep people safe. Staff safeguarded people from abuse. Risks to people's health, safety and well-being were managed. There were enough staff to meet people's needs and safe recruitment processes were followed. A relative told us, "There are enough staff. In all the years they've helped us, I've never had a problem. I think they must have a very robust interview process, because the staff we've had, are so good." Medicines were safely administered and managed. The provider learned from previous accidents and incidents to reduce future risks. The provider and staff protected people from the risk or spread of infection.

The service was well managed. The provider, registered manager and staff promoted a positive culture in the service. Relatives and an advocate were complimentary about staff and the care people received. The provider had an effective quality assurance process in place which included regular audits and spot checks. People, relatives and staff were regularly consulted about the quality of the service through regular communication, surveys and reviews.

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 good (published 14 August 2018).

Why we inspected

This inspection was prompted by a review of the information we held about this service. As a result, we decided to undertake a focused inspection to review the key questions of safe and well-led only.

For those key questions not inspected, we used the ratings awarded at the last inspection to calculate the overall rating. The overall rating for the service has remained good based on the findings of this inspection. We found no evidence during this inspection that people were at risk of harm. Please see the Safe and Well-

led sections of this full report.

This was an 'inspection using remote technology'. This means we did not visit the office location and instead used technology such as electronic file sharing to gather information, and video and phone calls to engage with people using the service as part of this performance review and assessment.

You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Avalon Teesside Services on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service, which will help inform when we next inspect.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

<p>Is the service safe?</p> <p>The service was safe.</p> <p>Details are in our safe findings below.</p>	<p>Good ●</p>
<p>Is the service well-led?</p> <p>The service was well-led.</p> <p>Details are in our well-led findings below.</p>	<p>Good ●</p>

Avalon Teesside Services

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

We carried out this performance review and assessment under Section 46 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act). We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements of the regulations associated with the Act and looked at the quality of the service to provide a rating.

Unlike our standard approach to assessing performance, we did not physically visit the office of the location. This is a new approach we have introduced to reviewing and assessing performance of some care at home providers. Instead of visiting the office location we use technology such as electronic file sharing and video or phone calls to engage with people using the service and staff.

Inspection team

The inspection was carried out by 1 inspector and 1 Experts by Experience. 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

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

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

We gave the service a short period of notice of the inspection. This was to request information about the service, people and relatives and to make sure the provider or registered manager would be available to support the inspection.

Inspection activity started on 17 November 2023 and ended on 22 January 2024. We spoke with relatives and an advocate on 24 November 2023.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed the information we held about the service. 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 sought feedback from the local authority contracts monitoring and safeguarding adults' teams and reviewed the information they provided. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

Most people were unable to communicate over the telephone, we therefore spoke with 6 relatives and 1 advocate about their views and experience of the care provided to people. We spoke with the registered manager. We sought views from 15 members of staff and received 2 responses.

We reviewed a range of records including 3 people's care and medicines records. We looked at recruitment records for 2 members of staff. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures were also reviewed.

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 this key question has remained good. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Staff protected people from harm. People and their relatives felt the service was safe. Comments from a person and relatives included, "Safe? Yes, very much so" and, "It is very safe. [Person] would ring the manager too if they had any problems."
- Staff understood the whistle blowing procedures and were confident to raise concerns, if needed. A staff member said, "I am very confident when it comes to raising concerns via whistleblowing. There has been no need to whistle blow since I joined Avalon."

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management; Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The provider assessed and managed risks to people's health, safety and wellbeing.
- Individual and environmental risk assessments were put in place and reviewed regularly, to support people to remain safe.
- The provider had effective systems to review incidents, check appropriate action had been taken and identify learning.

Staffing and recruitment

- There were enough staff deployed to meet people's needs.
- Relatives and an advocate told us support is usually provided from a consistent team of staff and they are usually on time. Comments included, "It's more or less the same staff (who provide support). [Person] knows all of them" and, "Yes there's enough staff. It's usually the same team and they arrive on time."
- Staff were recruited in a safe way. The provider had effective recruitment and selection procedures in place which included all appropriate checks.

Using medicines safely

- Medicines were managed safely. The provider has systems in place to help ensure medicines were administered in line with people's needs.
- Medicines were administered by trained and competent staff.
- Regular medicine checks and audits were carried out to identify any errors and take appropriate action.

Preventing and controlling infection

- Staff protected people from the risk of infection.
- Staff followed appropriate infection control measures such as regular hand washing and wearing appropriate PPE when supporting people. A relative told us, "Staff do (wear PPE) when providing personal care. They put used gloves in a disposable bag which goes into the outside bin."

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

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people

- People were at the centre of the service and staff supported them to improve their well-being and achieve positive outcomes.
- The service was well-managed. People and relatives were happy with the service provided. Relatives said, "The best thing is the standard of care" and, "The office is always easy to contact if there's an emergency. They have always been very caring and supportive to us."
- Staff enjoyed working for the service and were passionate about their roles. One staff member said, "I feel supported and listened to at Avalon Teesside. It's good being able to support customers in their daily lives and putting a smile on their faces."

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

- The registered manager understood and acted on the duty of candour, to promote open communication and keep people safe.
- The registered manager submitted statutory notifications, in a timely way, for significant events that occurred, such as safeguarding concerns.
- Quality systems were in place to monitor service delivery and identify improvements.

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

- Feedback from key stakeholders was used to improve the service. People, relatives and staff were asked to share their views of the service via surveys, reviews, meetings and regular communication.
- Relatives felt the manager was approachable and listened to them.
- Staff felt empowered to make suggestions around service improvements and felt listened to. One staff member said, "I feel I am always able to make suggestions or raise issues and I am listened to."
- The provider, manager and staff worked in partnership with other health professionals such as GPs and social workers to achieve positive outcomes for people.