

Abi-Support Ltd

# Abi-Support Ltd

## 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?	Good ●
Is the service responsive?	Good ●
Is the service well-led?	Good ●

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

### About the service

Abi Support Ltd is a domiciliary care agency providing care to people in their own homes in West Berkshire and the surrounding area. At the time of our inspection 16 people were receiving the regulated activity of personal care from the service. Not everyone using the service received personal care. CQC only inspects where people receive personal care, which 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

People were protected from abuse and harm. Staff knew how to report any concerns relating to people's safety and the service had systems to report and investigate concerns. Risk assessments identified how potential risks should be managed to reduce the likelihood of people experiencing harm. Staff understood the risks to people and delivered safe care in accordance with people's support plans. There were sufficient staff deployed to keep people safe and meet their needs. People told us staff were mostly punctual and no one we spoke with had experienced a missed visit. The service aimed to ensure only suitable staff were selected to work with vulnerable people, and checks were carried out to allow safe recruitment decisions to be made.

Each staff member had received an induction and training to enable them to meet people's needs effectively. We saw that supervision meetings were planned, and spot checks were conducted for staff who told us they felt supported by the registered manager to perform their role. People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff provided them with care in the least restrictive way possible and acted in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service promoted this practice.

People's care plans were person-centred and focused on what was important to people. Care plans were regularly reviewed, and people were involved in the reviews.

People, relatives and staff spoke positively of the management; they found them approachable and supportive. Staff were given appropriate responsibility which was continuously monitored and checked by the registered manager. There were systems to monitor, maintain and improve the quality of the service.

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.

At the time of the inspection, the location did not care for or support anyone with a learning disability or an autistic person. However, we assessed the care provision under Right Support, Right Care, Right Culture, as it is registered as a specialist service for this population group.

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 and update

This service was registered with us on 12 June 2021, and this is their first inspection.

#### Why we inspected

This was a planned inspection for a newly registered service.

#### 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

# Abi-Support 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 carried out by one inspector and an Expert 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, which provides personal care to people living in their own homes.

#### Registered Manager

This service is required to have a registered manager. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. 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. At the time of our inspection there was a registered manager in post.

#### 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.

Inspection activity started on 17 November 2022. We visited the location's office on 17 November 2022.

#### What we did before the inspection

The provider was 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. Prior to our inspection, we reviewed information we held about the service. This included any information received and statutory notifications. A notification is

information about important events which the provider is required to send us by law. We took this into account when we inspected the service and made the judgements in this report.

#### During the inspection

We spoke with 2 people, 4 relatives and the registered manager. We reviewed a range of records relating to people's care and the way the service was managed. These included care records for 4 people, staff training records, 3 staff recruitment files, medicine records, quality assurance audits, complaints records, and records relating to the management of the service.

#### After the inspection

Following our visit to the office we continued to gather evidence and we contacted 8 care staff. In addition, we contacted the local authority for their views.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

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

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People were safe. One person said, "Always safe, yes." A relative told us, "Oh yeah, he [person] is safe. They're [staff] all pretty good."
- Staff were trained in safeguarding adults and understood their responsibilities to identify and report any concerns. They were aware that incidents of potential abuse or neglect should be reported to the local authority. One staff member said they would report, "To my direct superior, to the nurse, to the manager, to public safety."
- Systems were in place to safeguard people from harm and abuse. The registered manager told us they would record and investigate all concerns and work with the local authorities.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Risks assessments were in place to help keep people safe. Risk assessments contained guidance for staff to manage the risks. These included risks associated with mobility, falls, eating and drinking and environment. For example, one person was at risk of developing pressure ulcers. Records evidenced staff monitored the person's skin and repositioned them at every visit. The person was also visited regularly by the district nurse who changed dressings and monitored the person's condition.
- Presenting risks were regularly reviewed to ensure people were safely supported. People were usually supported by regular staff who understood their needs and could respond swiftly as and when their needs and risks changed.

Staffing and recruitment

- People and their relatives told us staff were punctual. Support visits were monitored electronically and nobody we spoke with reported a missed visit. One person said, "They [staff] mostly let you know if they're late, they have never missed a visit."
- Staff recruitment checks including criminal checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service were carried out to ensure people were protected from being supported by unsuitable staff.
- There were sufficient numbers of staff available to keep people safe and meet their needs. One member of staff told us, "Yes, we have enough staff."

Using medicines safely

- People received their medicines as prescribed. One person told us, "They [staff] always make sure I take my medication at the right time, and they give me a drink."
- Staff told us, and records confirmed staff had been trained in administering medicines safely. Spot checks were conducted to ensure staff followed safe practice.

- Medicine records were accurate, consistently maintained and up to date.

#### Preventing and controlling infection

- We were assured that the provider's infection prevention and control policy was up to date.
- We were assured that the provider was accessing testing for staff.
- We were assured that the provider was using PPE effectively and safely.
- People told us staff wore PPE. One person said, "Yes, they [staff] always wear PPE. They brought a box with them so there is always plenty."

#### Learning lessons when things go wrong

- There was a system in place to report incidents and record actions taken as a result. Staff knew how to report incidents and there was a good out of hours system in place to support them.
- The management team were open and honest when things went wrong and promoted a learning culture within the service.



# 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.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. This meant 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

- People's needs were assessed prior to commencing their care in order to ensure their care needs could be met in line with current guidance and best practice. These included people's preferences relating to their care and communication needs and included hospital care plans and discharge reports where appropriate. A relative commented about the assessment process. They said, "They know her [person's] conditions and look after her."
- The provider considered people's protected characteristics under the Equality Act to make sure that if the person had any specific needs these were met. For example, relating to their religion, culture or sexuality.
- People's risk assessments and care plans considered all aspects of their lives.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Most people told us staff were well trained. One relative said, "They all understand his [person's] care, yes."
- People were supported by staff who had the skills and knowledge to meet their needs.
- New staff completed an induction that was linked to the Care Certificate. The Care Certificate is a set of standards that social care and health workers adhere to in their daily working life. Staff were supported through spot checks, and we saw supervision meetings were scheduled.
- Staff received ongoing training relevant to their roles, and specific to people's needs. We asked staff if their training gave them confidence in their role. One staff member said, "Yes, I am confident in my work."

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

- People were supported to maintain a healthy diet.
- People's care plans contained information about their dietary needs and preferences. Staff told us that they supported people with their meals and drinks during support visits to ensure people had a balanced diet.
- Care plans contained details about how to support people at mealtimes.

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

- The registered manager and staff were knowledgeable and well informed about people's health and wellbeing. They communicated with each other reporting any changes or issues.
- The registered manager told us they worked with external agencies and would make referrals as and when necessary.

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 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.

- One relative told us how staff respected their [person's] decisions. They said, "[Person] can be grumpy, but the staff try to encourage him."
- Staff received training in relation to the MCA and had a good understanding of its principles. People were supported wherever possible to make their own decisions. One staff member explained how the MCA affected their work. They said, "We [staff] always work in the best interest of the client [person]."
- People were encouraged to express their wishes and preferences, and the service would adapt their approach to meet people's needs. Relevant consent was gained from people and was recorded in their care plans.

# 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.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. 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

- People and their relatives told us how the staff were caring and supportive. They said; "They [staff] are all so kind and caring. We have a bit of a laugh", "Oh yes, definitely very kind" and "I think they [staff] are all very kind and friendly. They are all so humorous and smile a lot."
- Staff knew how people wanted to be supported and were aware of what was important to them. Care staff spoke with us about their professional relationships with people. One staff member said, "I promote the well-being of the person I assist by always addressing them with serenity, with a smile, helping them listen to music or their favourite program on television."

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

- Care plans were developed with people and their relatives, where appropriate. Relevant health and social care professionals and the staff team who knew people well also contributed to care plans.
- The registered manager met with people and their relatives on support visits and sought their feedback. We saw that people and their relatives were regularly asked for their views of the service. One person said, "I have given feedback on the phone in the past."

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- Staff ensured people were fully involved with their care, promoting dignity and respect. One relative told us, "They are very kind and caring yes, and definitely respectful."
- People were treated with respect and their dignity was preserved. Staff told us they would ensure doors and curtains were closed when carrying out personal care.
- Staff promoted people's independence. One staff member told us, "I try to encourage them [people] to do what they can."
- The provider followed data protection law. Information about people was kept securely so confidentiality was maintained.

# Is the service responsive?

## Our findings

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

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. 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

- People had individualised care plans that supported a person-centred approach. We saw there was clear guidance on how to meet people's individual needs. People's care files included information about their personal histories, what was important to them and how they wished to be supported. For example, one person had described how they wanted to brush their own teeth and what support they needed to do this.
- Care plans reflected people's health and social care needs and demonstrated that other health and social care professionals were involved in people's care.
- People's care plans were personalised and regularly reviewed. This allowed staff to provide personalised care.
- During our inspection, we heard a person call the service to ask for an adjustment to their visit time for the next day as they had an appointment. The registered manager responded and altered the visit rota to facilitate this request.

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.

- People's individual communication needs had been assessed and recorded. Staff were provided with guidance on how to promote effective communication.
- Staff were knowledgeable about people's communication support needs and people were given information in accessible ways. One staff member told us, "I clean [person's] glasses for them and make sure they are close by."
- Care plans were depicted with picture references to enable people to have a better understanding of their care plans.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- People and their relatives told us they knew how to complain. One relative said, "I think they would always listen to our concerns and take any action is needed".
- The complaints policy was up to date and available to all people and their relatives. Complaints were dealt with compassionately, in line with the policy.
- Systems were in place to record and investigate any complaints.

#### End-of-life care and support

- At the time of the inspection no one was being supported with end of life and palliative care needs. The service worked in partnership with GPs, district nurses and other healthcare professionals to support people to have a dignified, pain free death.
- The provider had systems and procedures in place to identify people's wishes and choices regarding their end-of-life care.
- The registered manager told us they would respond to any requests or advance wishes.

# 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.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated 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 and their relatives told us they were happy with the service and support provided. Their comments included; "This has been our first experience so far. We have nothing to compare it to, but I would personally say that it is a good service. You hear rumours about other agencies, but I find this one to be brilliant. They [staff] come and do everything that they need to do", "I'm most pleased with everything that they [staff] do" and "It's such a good service, nothing can be improved. They're very, very good."
- The registered manager demonstrated they worked closely with staff and external professionals to offer a good service and to review practices to drive improvements. They took part in the inspection in a way that demonstrated their commitment to learn and improve the service.
- Staff felt the management team were supportive, fair and understanding. Staff told us, "Management is great, I'm supported" and "The support is great, if there is any issue, I can contact them [registered manager] and they will help me."

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 registered manager was responsive to issues and concerns and understood their responsibility to be open and honest if things went wrong.
- The registered manager and provider understood the 'Duty of Candour.' This regulation sets out specific requirements that providers must follow when things go wrong with care and treatment. These include informing people and their relatives about the incident, providing reasonable support, providing truthful information and an apology when things go wrong.

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

- There was a range of checks and audits to monitor the quality and safety of the service and to help drive improvements. These included checks on risks to people, care plan reviews, spot checks and regular quality visits to people's homes. Action was taken to address any identified issues. For example, one audit identified an issue relating to a person's medicine. A review was conducted, including the re-ordering of medicine and action taken that resolved the issue.
- Leadership at the service had a clear vision of how they wanted the service to run and put people at the centre of what they did.
- The registered manager had a good understanding of notifications and when to notify CQC. A notification

is information about important events which the provider is required to send us by law.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics

- People and their relatives were encouraged to express their opinions either in person or via the telephone. We saw the services first survey was planned to be distributed to people and their relatives later this year.
- Staff had a clear understanding of their roles and their day to day work which focused on the people they supported. One member of staff said, "The service is well managed, they are always reachable if there is an emergency, I have a telephone number where I can ask for information about my work, they are understanding and friendly." Another staff member said, "I am involved, informed and listened to because living at home with my client [person] I know her needs very well and I can have a say because my job is to take care of my client."
- The provider had an equality and diversity policy which stated their commitment to equal opportunities and diversity. Staff knew how to support people without breaching their rights.

Continuous learning and improving care; Working in partnership with others

- The management team worked with healthcare services, safeguarding teams, and local authority commissioners. This enabled people to access the right support when they needed it and we saw working collaboratively had provided staff with up to date professional guidance.
- Staff had access to further training.