

Sterling Care (Liverpool) Ltd

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Inspection report

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Date of inspection visit:
11 February 2022

Date of publication:
31 March 2022

Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Inspected but not rated
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Is the service safe?	Inspected but not rated
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Is the service well-led?	Inspected but not rated
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Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Sterling Care Liverpool is a domiciliary care agency that provides personal care to people in their own homes. At the time of the inspection 25 people were using the service.

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 received information raising concerns about staffing and how people using the service were being kept safe. We contacted the provider and asked for information around their systems and processes. This included policies staffing rota's, assessment of needs, the preferred times of people's calls and their medication needs.

Based on the concerns we received we arranged this targeted inspection of the service to follow up on what the provider had told us they had put in place to mitigate these concerns.

We found people were supported by the correct number of staff, and received their medication and other associated care tasks on time. Staff told us they were happy with their rotas. Prior to our inspection we received concerns around staffing numbers. While we did not see any unsafe practice we did raise some concerns during our inspection due to some rotas being quite full with minimal travel space in-between calls. The registered manager was still in the process of making changes to ensure this was addressed.

The registered manager had completed audits of peoples needs, staffing numbers and recruitment and was open and transparent about remedial action they had needed to take to ensure the service was running safely.

Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was Good (published 11 July 2019).

Why we inspected

We undertook this targeted inspection to follow up on specific concerns which we had received about the service. The inspection was prompted in response to concerns received about staffing levels and rotas. A decision was made for us to inspect and examine those risks.

CQC have introduced targeted inspections to follow up on Warning Notices or to check specific concerns. They do not look at an entire key question, only the part of the key question we are specifically concerned about. Targeted inspections do not change the rating from the previous inspection. This is because they do not assess all areas of a key question.

We found no evidence during this inspection that people were at risk of harm from these concerns.

Please see the safe and well- led section of this full report.

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

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?

Inspected but not rated.

Inspected but not rated

Is the service well-led?

Inspected but not rated

Inspected but not rated

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Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

This was a targeted inspection to check whether the provider had met the requirements of the specific concern we had about staffing levels, medication and governance. We will assess all of the key question at the next comprehensive inspection of the service.

Inspection team

This inspection was undertaken by an inspector.

Service and service type

Sterling Care Liverpool is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. 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.

Notice of inspection

We gave the service 24 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because the service is small and people are often out and we wanted to be sure there would be people at the office to speak with.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return. This is information providers are required to send us with key information about their service, what they do well, and improvements they plan to make. This information helps support our inspections. We used all of this information to plan our inspection. We had requested information from the provider prior to the inspection and this information was used as part of the inspection plan.

During the inspection

We contacted four members of staff and spoke to the registered manager. We viewed staff rotas, medication

records and audits.

After the inspection

We spoke to four people using the service about their experience.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

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

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. We have not changed the rating of this key question as we have only looked at the part of the key question, we had specific concerns about.

The purpose of this inspection was to look at specific concerns around staffing, rotas and medication.

We will assess all the key question at the next comprehensive inspection of the service.

Staffing and recruitment

- Enough staff were available to provide care to meet people's needs safely.
- We received concerns that people were being supported by one staff member when they should be supported by two, and that calls were being missed due to poor staff numbers. We spoke to people who required two staff who told us this does not happen; however, staffing had been an issue in the past. One person's relative said, "Staffing has improved lately. Sometimes we would get asked to help in the call, but not anymore."
- The registered manager was open and honest with us regarding staffing pressures due to sickness. They had contingency plans in place which had been assessed safely.
- We found that some rotas were full, and staff were often working long hours to fit all the calls in. There were at least four occasions where call times were 'crammed' after each other, and staff were traveling further than five minutes.
- Staff told us they felt their rotas were manageable, and further changes had been implemented to ensure travelling time was reduced.
- We did not look at staff recruitment on this targeted inspection. However, on previous inspections no concerns had been identified in this area

Medication

Using medicines safely

- Medication processes and systems were in place and people received their medications safely.
- Where people needed medication as and when required, often referred to as PRN medication, there was a separate plan in place to make sure it was only given when required. Time critical medications were given at the correct times.
- Medication was stored in a designated area of the person's choice.

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 as requires improvement. We have not changed the rating of this key question as we have only looked at the part of the key question we had specific concerns about.

The purpose of this inspection was to check specific concerns we had about the monitoring and provision of staffing, the auditing and quality of care standards and the provider's understanding of duty of candour.

Continuous learning and improving care

- The registered provider was committed to ongoing investment to achieve continual improvement.
- A recent full audit of the service had identified the need for more staff to be recruited and a contingency plan to be in place to ensure people had their call times implemented safely.

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 had audits and checks in place to identify areas for development and improvement, such as some call times, and staff working hours, which had already begun to improve.
- The registered manager was honest with us regarding some of the issues they had faced due to staff sickness and recruitment, however they were working hard to address these issues, and people spoke positively about the service.