

Alban Care Company Ltd

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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

The inspection of the office location took place on 8 August 2017. We contacted people on 9 August 2017 to request feedback about the service they received. Alban Care Co Limited provides personal care and support to people living in their own homes. There were nine people being supported by the service at the time of our inspection.

The service had a registered manager 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 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

This was the first inspection since the service was registered on 8 October 2015. People told us they received care and support that met their individual needs and preferences. People were involved in the development, planning and review of their care and received a service from a small consistent group of care staff. Staff knew people well and treated them with dignity and respect.

Care plans were personalised and contained detailed information to enable staff to support people effectively and safely. Individual risks were assessed and measures put in place to reduce and mitigate risk where possible. Staff knew how to recognise and respond to any allegations of abuse. Medicines were managed safely by staff who had been trained.

People were supported by sufficient numbers of staff and these were recruited through a robust process which helped ensure staff were suited for the roles they performed. Staff received an induction and on-going refresher training and support. Staff had individual supervisions, team meetings and regular contact with office staff to share good practice and discuss any concerns.

People were supported to make their own decisions, and to retain their independence where possible. Their choices and views were respected. Their feedback was obtained through a variety of methods and people's views were taken into consideration.

The provider and registered manager demonstrated they had systems and processes in place to monitor and improve the service to achieve consistently good standards of care and support for everyone who used the service. They were planning to develop the quality assurance of the service as the service was gradually expanding and wanted to assure that the quality and personalised service were maintained

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.

Staff were aware of potential abuse and how to report any concerns.

People were supported by staff who had been recruited through a robust recruitment process.

There were sufficient numbers of staff available to meet people's needs at all times.

People's medicines were managed safely.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

People received support that was effective and met their assessed needs.

Staff received training and support relevant to their roles.

Staff sought people's consent before providing care. Staff were aware of Mental Capacity Assessment principles.

People were supported to eat and drink sufficient amounts to maintain their health and well being.

People were supported to access health care professionals when required.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

People were treated in a kind and caring way.

Staff knew people's individual needs and wishes well and involved them in their care planning.

People's privacy was respected and they were treated with

dignity and respect.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

People were supported to be involved in discussions about their care.

People were asked to give feedback about the service and felt listened to.

There was a complaints process in place and people's concerns were acted upon.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well led.

People and staff felt the service was well managed.

The provider had systems and processes in place to monitor the overall quality and safety of the service.

The management and staff demonstrated an open, transparent and inclusive approach and led by example.

Alban Care Company

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

This inspection was carried out on 8 and 9 August 2017. We visited the office location, on the 8 August 2017, and made phone calls to people who used the service and staff to obtain feedback of their experiences of the service on the 9 August 2017. The inspection was carried out by one inspector. We gave the provider 48 hours' notice that we would be visiting the office to make sure that the appropriate people would be there to assist us with our inspection.

Before the inspection we reviewed information we held about the service including statutory notifications. Statutory notifications include information about important events which the provider is required to send us.

We talked to five people who used the service and two staff members and the registered manager and nominated individual who were both directors.

We looked at documents relating to two people who were being supported and other documents in relation to the safe recruitment of staff and quality assurance systems the provider had in place to monitor the overall safety and quality of the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People told us that they felt safe being cared for by staff from Alban Care Co Ltd. One person told us, "I have no concerns at all about my safety all of the staff are very good." A second person told us "There are no concerns with any aspect of the service the staff arrive when you expect them and everything is fine."

Staff were knowledgeable about the potential risks and signs of abuse and were able to describe how they would report any concerns both within the organisation and to the Care quality Commission if required. Staff had received training in safeguarding and told us they had regular refresher training so that their knowledge was kept up to date. Information about how to report concerns, together with relevant contact numbers, was displayed in the office and the registered manager told us that people had the information in their care file within their home. This meant that both people and the care staff supporting them had regular access to safeguarding information. This showed that the provider had taken the necessary steps to help ensure that people were protected from potential abuse.

People had their individual risks assessed and where a risk had been identified, actions were put in place to mitigate the risks where possible. Detailed guidance was provided to staff to help them manage risks to help keep people safe. These were kept under regular review to take account of people's changing needs and circumstances. Risk assessments were in place for such areas as the environment and people's mobility.

The assessments were detailed and identified potential risks to people's safety and the measures in place to mitigate risk. However these could be further developed to make them more personalised, for example, by providing additional narrative and less tick box responses.

People and staff all told us that there were enough staff available to meet people's needs. Rotas provided confirmed this to be the case. One person told us, "The staff all arrive on time, they are never late and no I have never had a visit missed."

Safe and effective recruitment practices were followed to make sure that all staff were of good character and suitable to work in this type of service. Pre-employment checks including taking up a minimum of two satisfactory references, a disclosure and barring (DBS) check and proof of identity and address had been completed. Application forms were completed and gaps in employment histories explored. This process helped ensure suitable people were employed at the service.

There were appropriate arrangements in place to manage people's medicines safely. Staff had received training in the safe administration of medicines. Only one person was being supported with taking their medicines at the time of our inspection.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People told us that the care and support they received was appropriate to meet their needs. One person told us, "I am sure the service is effective, for me anyway, because they come in and do exactly what I need." Another person said, "Yes they are very good and always check if there is anything else to be done before leaving."

Staff received training to support them to care for people effectively. Staff told us they had received regular training and updates. A training spread sheet was being developed to keep an on-going record of what training staff had received and when they were due for an update. Training was provided by both the registered manager and external trainers. This included training in moving and handling, safeguarding and administration of medicines.

The registered manager and staff confirmed that they were well supported through regular team meetings and individual supervision. One staff member told us, "We are such a small team and speak regularly, we don't have to wait for our regular supervision, the managers are always available to see us if we need to discuss anything."

People told us that staff obtained their consent before supporting them. Staff members were knowledgeable about mental capacity and how to obtain consent from people.

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.

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA and found that no one who was being supported by the service lacked capacity so no assessments had been completed.

People were supported with shopping, meal preparation and encouraged to drink sufficient amounts to keep them hydrated. Assessments had been undertaken to identify if people were at risk from poor nutrition or hydration. The registered manager told us they if they had any concerns about people's nutritional or fluid intake this was both monitored by staff and referred to the district nurses or GP for further advice.

People had their day to day health needs met in a timely way and they had access to health care and social care professionals when necessary. Staff and the registered manager confirmed that people were supported to maintain their health by supporting them to attend GP or Hospital appointments if required.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People were extremely complimentary in respect of the staff who supported them. One person told us, "They are wonderful each one of them that comes to me. We like to have a chat and it enhances my life as I don't have so many visitors these days." Another person told us, "I do look forward to them coming to see me, I enjoy the company and the staff are lovely and the two managers come to me as well."

Staff spoke kindly about the people they supported one staff member told us, "I love my job; I really miss the people when I am not at work we are like a family. They are such lovely people." Staff demonstrated that they knew people well and supported them in a way that respected people's choices and preferences..

People told us that staff were never rushed and had time to provide a good service as well as having time to sit and chat with them. One person told us, "We often have a cup of tea together, it is lovely for me, we get to talk about all different things, I am so pleased with them."

People`s care and support plans were reviewed regularly to help ensure they continued to meet people's needs as they changed. People told us they were involved in discussions about their care and support and that the managers came to see them regularly to see if they were happy with everything.

Staff respected people's dignity and made sure they supported people in the way they wished whilst respecting their privacy.

Staff had developed positive and caring relationships with people who they clearly knew well. People told us the staff often went over and above the call of duty for example one person told us, "The staff were extremely supportive when [Name's] relative had been poorly last year and they provided us with additional support and reassurance, they were marvellous." This demonstrated that staff treated people kindly and were aware of people's feelings.

People's confidential care records were stored securely to ensure personal and or sensitive information remained private and secure.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People's care plans contained detailed information which enabled staff to provide care that was responsive and flexible to people's changing needs. For example, the registered manager told us, "We were supporting a person who was going off more and more types of food. We monitored this and found they had a swallowing problem. We referred the person to a dietician who supported the person with the introduction of supplementary nutritional shakes. In addition we [registered manager] bought a food blender so that the person could continue to eat a varied diet but that was easier to swallow because the food was blended for them." This demonstrated that the service was responsive to people's changing needs.

In the case of another person who had started to become forgetful, staff brought packed lunches in and sat and ate lunch with them to encourage them to eat and also to help reduce the risk of social isolation. This demonstrated a flexible and responsive approach to people's care and support.

Care plans demonstrated that people were involved in discussions about the care and support they would like to receive from the service. Staff were knowledgeable about people's preferred routines, likes and dislikes, backgrounds and personal circumstances and used this information to provide personalised care and support that met people's individual needs.

People had regular opportunities to discuss their expectations and to provide feedback. The registered manager and provider both visited people regularly to obtain feedback about the service they received from the service.

If people had any complaints they knew how to complain and felt they would be listened to. There was a complaint's policy and procedure in place and a copy of this was in the care file in people's homes. Complaints were managed in accordance with the provider's policies and procedures. There had only been one historic complaint since the service registered and that had been addressed to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint. We noted that many compliments had been received.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

People who used the service were very positive and complimentary about all aspects of the service. One person said, "They are the best care agency I have had, and I have seen a few in my time." Another person told us, "They [staff] go over and beyond, nothing is too much trouble, they are fantastic every one of them, I think it's because it's such a small service they keep an eye on everything."

People knew the registered manager and provider. One person told us, "They come and do a lot of the care themselves and are very fussy about who they employ. That's so important they don't just take anyone you know."

Staff told us they felt that they provided a good quality service to people. The registered manager and provider demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of the people who used the service and the staff and their individual qualities.

Staff told us that there were regular staff meetings held to enable them to discuss any issues arising in the service.

People had completed questionnaires which were distributed annually to people who used the service. We saw that the results from the last survey contained positive feedback from everyone who had used the service.

The registered manager and provider told us had been very careful in the development of the service and told us they would not compromise the quality of the service which was why they were developing in a very structured and managed way.

As the service was gradually expanding they were reviewing the quality assurance systems to make them robust and to provide a consistent structured approach to completing regular audits of the service including the maintaining of records.

Providers of health and social care are required to inform the Care Quality Commission, (CQC), of certain events that happen in or affect the service. The registered manager had informed the CQC of significant events in a timely way which meant we could check that appropriate action had been taken.