

Apodi Healthcare Limited

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Inspection report

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Overall summary

In January 2018 we undertook a comprehensive inspection at Apodi Healthcare Limited and found the provider was providing effective, caring, responsive and well-led services, but they needed to make improvements in the provision of safe services. We issued a requirement notice and the provider informed us they would make the required improvements.

We carried out an announced focussed follow up inspection on 24 September 2018 to ask the service the following key question; Are services safe.

We found that this service was providing safe care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

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 service was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

At the last inspection the provider was in breach of regulation 12 Safe Care and Treatment due to a lack of system to identify and act on safety alerts. We also recommended the provider to consider their infection control monitoring systems and their adherence to the Equalities Act (2010) At this inspection we found the necessary improvements had been made.

Apodi Healthcare Limited provide care to patients via NHS services both in the community and hospital

outpatient care. They support patients receiving medicines under specific programmes sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry. The programmes are negotiated directly between NHS providers and the pharmaceutical companies, and the latter offer Apodi Healthcare Limited's services to NHS providers to undertake the monitoring and support of patients on these programmes.

A registered manager was in post. A registered manager is a person who is registered with the Care Quality Commission 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 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

Our key findings were:

- The provider had implemented a system to ensure medicine alerts were shared with staff and acted on where necessary.
- There were new infection control procedures in place and plans to undertake supervision with staff in order to audit their implementation.
- There had been consideration of the Equalities Act (2010) and that staff needed to follow the protocols belonging to the provider's they worked at.

Professor Steve Field CBE FRCP FFPH FRCGP Chief
Inspector of General Practice

Apodi Healthcare Limited

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

Apodi Healthcare Limited provide care to patients via NHS services, both in the community and hospital outpatient care. They support patients receiving medicines under specific programmes sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry. The programmes are negotiated directly between NHS providers and the pharmaceutical companies, and the latter offer Apodi Healthcare Limited's services to NHS providers to undertake the monitoring and support of patients on these programmes. In addition the provider assists NHS services in identifying patients who may be able to take part in the programmes. The prescribing of the medicines under the programmes is undertaken only by NHS services and this is usually by consultants in NHS Acute Hospital Trusts. The provider monitors the patients during initiation and titration (a process of determining the correct dosage for medicines). Patients may continue on the medicines under the care and monitoring of hospital doctors or their GPs.

The programmes the provider were supporting at the time of the inspection were medicines for the treatment of heart failure, prostate cancer and multiple myeloma. In addition the service provided phone support for oncology and rheumatoid arthritis patients.

The clinical staff providing care were all registered nurses who had nurse managers overseeing their work. The nursing staff worked within community and hospital settings and the NHS services prescribed the medicines. Nursing staff from Apodi Healthcare Limited were inducted into the service where they would work in the same way as employed staff. Alongside this there were staff training and checks provided by Apodi Healthcare Limited. Patient monitoring data resulting from tests undertaken by the provider's staff were recorded directly onto the NHS services patient records within the NHS services records. Anonymised data regarding the number of patients receiving the medicines and audits during the period they were initiated onto the medicines, were sent to the pharmaceutical companies. Information was provided to patients to ensure this was understood by those receiving care under the programmes.

The provider had no premises from which they provided care. They had a head office from which the regulated activities were managed and where they locate their patient phone support service.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following question:

- Is it safe?

Are services safe?

Our findings

At our last inspection in January 2018 the provider did not have a system to ensure safety and medicine alerts were received and acted on. The provider did not have a system to audit infection control procedures. We recommended the provider consider infection control audits.

At this inspection we found:

Safety systems and processes

The service had clear systems to keep people safe.

- There were infection control protocols in place and the provider was planning supervision sessions with staff to ascertain that processes were being followed and that their knowledge was up to date.
- We saw that the infection control processes included broad aspects and relevant guidance such as hand hygiene, disposal of clinical waste and action to take in the event of a sharps injury.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The service had reliable systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines.

- The provider had implemented a system to ensure that any relevant medicine alerts were received, reviewed and acted on.
- There was a system of delegation which enabled lead nurses to determine if alerts needed sharing with staff or acting on.
- We saw an example where action had been taken to ensure a medicine included in an alert was not prescribed under the care provided by Apodi Healthcare Limited nurses.
- We saw other examples where information about safety alerts had been shared with staff.
- The provider does not own equipment or prescribe medicines to patients. The medicine alert system was introduced to ensure their staff acted where necessary on alerts within the providers they were employed with.