

Professional Home Care Limited Caremark (West Oxfordshire & Cherwell)

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Date of inspection visit: 10 March 2016

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Requires Improvement 🗕

Is the service safe?	Requires Improvement	
Is the service effective?	Requires Improvement	
Is the service caring?	Good	
Is the service responsive?	Good	
Is the service well-led?	Requires Improvement	

Summary of findings

Overall summary

We inspected Caremark (West Oxfordshire and Cherwell) on 10 March 2016. This was an announced inspection.

Caremark (West Oxfordshire and Cherwell) provide a domiciliary care service to vulnerable adults to help them to live as independently as they can within their own homes.

We had previously carried out an announced comprehensive inspection of this service on 23 July 2015. A breach of legal requirements was found relating to risk assessments not always being complete or in place. We also identified concerns with people not being informed about late visits or changes in information to their visit schedules. In addition, systems used to monitor the service had not identified our concerns and we made a recommendation to the provider to review their audit systems. After the comprehensive inspection, the provider wrote to us to say what they would do to meet legal requirements in relation risk assessments and address our concerns relating informing people about changes to visit schedule information and monitoring systems. The provider sent us an action plan in October 2015 stating the action they would take to improve the service to the required standard.

We undertook this full comprehensive inspection to check that they had followed their plan and to confirm that they now met the legal requirements. At this inspection we found actions had been completed and improvements made. However, at this inspection we found other concerns. You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for Caremark (West Oxfordshire and Cherwell) on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

People received their medicine as prescribed and staff had been trained to support people with their medicine. However, medicine records did not contain detailed information to protect people from the risk of medicine errors. Records did not always state the medicine, dose or time the medicine should be taken and some records were not accurately maintained.

People were not always protected in relation to the mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005. We identified the service was not following the requirements of the act and mental capacity assessments had not been completed. Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the MCA and applied its principals in their day to day work. However, the registered manager did not have a good understanding of their responsibilities relating to the MCA.

The registered manager monitored the quality of service. Regular audits were conducted with the aim of improving the service. However, audits were not always effective. Audits conducted by the registered manager did not identify the concerns we highlighted during this inspection.

There was a registered manager in post. A registered manager is a person who has 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.

People told us they were safe. Staff understood their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Staff had received regular training to make sure they stayed up to date with recognising and reporting safety concerns. The service had systems in place to notify the appropriate authorities where concerns were identified.

Where risks to people had been identified risk assessments were in place and action had been taken to reduce the risks. Staff were aware of people's needs and followed guidance to keep them safe.

There were sufficient staff to meet people's needs. Staffing levels and visit schedules were maintained. People told us staff were sometimes late but they were usually informed. No one told us they experienced any missed visits. The service had robust recruitment procedures and conducted background checks to ensure staff were suitable for their role.

People told us they were confident they would be listened to and action would be taken if they raised a concern. We saw complaints were dealt with in a compassionate and timely fashion. The service had systems to assess the quality of the service provided.

Staff spoke positively about the support they received from the registered manager. Staff supervision and meetings were scheduled as were annual appraisals. Staff told us the registered manager was approachable and there was a good level of communication within the service.

The service sought people's views and opinions and acted upon them. Regular surveys were conducted and 'Telephone Monitoring Calls' made to allow people to raise issues and concerns.

We identified three breaches of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activity) Regulation 2014. You can see what action we have required the provider to take at the end of this report.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?	Requires Improvement 😑
The service was not always safe.	
Medicine records were not always detailed or accurately maintained to protect people from medicine errors.	
There were sufficient staff deployed to meet people's needs.	
People told us they felt safe. Staff knew how to identify and raise concerns.	
Is the service effective?	Requires Improvement 😑
The service was not always effective.	
People were not always protected in relation to the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Capacity assessments had not been conducted and the registered manager was not fully aware of their responsibilities relating to the Act.	
Staff received support and supervision and had access to further training and development.	
Is the service caring?	Good ●
The service was caring. Staff were kind, compassionate and respectful and treated people and their relatives with dignity and respect.	
Staff gave people the time to express their wishes and respected the decisions they made. People were involved in their care.	
The service promoted people's independence.	
Is the service responsive?	Good ●
The service was responsive. Care plans were personalised and gave clear guidance for staff on how to support people.	
People knew how to raise concerns and were confident action would be taken.	

People's needs were assessed prior to receiving any care to make
sure their needs could be met.

Is the service well-led?	Requires Improvement 😑
The service was not always well led.	
Audits were not always effective and our concerns had not been identified by the registered managers audit processes.	
The service shared learning and looked for continuous improvement.	
There was a whistle blowing policy in place that was available to staff around the service. Staff knew how to raise concerns.	



Caremark (West Oxfordshire & Cherwell)

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 carried out to check that improvements to meet legal requirements had been addressed by the provider following our 23 July 2015 inspection. This was because the service was not meeting some of the legal requirements.

This inspection took place on the 10 March 2016. It was an announced inspection. We told the provider two days before our visit that we would be coming. We did this because the manager is sometimes out of the office supporting staff or visiting people who use the service. We needed to be sure that they would be in. This inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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.

We spoke with 20 people, one relative, five care staff, two directors and the registered manager. We looked at ten people's care records and a range of records relating to the management of the service. The methods we used to gather information included pathway tracking, which captures the experiences of a sample of people by following a person's route through the service and getting their views on it.

Before the inspection we reviewed previous inspection reports and notifications we had received. A notification is information about important events which the provider is required to tell us about in law. In addition we contacted the commissioner of services to obtain their views.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

At our last inspection on 23 July 2015 we asked the provider to take action to make improvements relating to risks to people. Risk assessments were not always in place when risks to people had been identified. Where risk assessments were in place they did not always provide guidance to staff on how the risk was to be reduced. This was a breach of Regulation 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. At this inspection we found actions had been completed and improvements made.

Risks to people were managed and reviewed. Where people were identified as being at risk, assessments were in place and action had been taken to manage the risks. For example, one person was at risk of falls. The risk assessment gave clear guidance to staff on how to support them safely. This included guidance on supporting the person correctly for hoisting procedures and positioning the person in the correct position in bed. Another person was at risk of falls and staff were provided with guidance on how to bath and shower the person. Two staff were identified to support people with transfers using a hoist and further guidance was provided in both picture and written form. Staff we spoke with were aware of and followed this guidance. Staff rotas evidenced two staff were consistently deployed to support this person.

People were at risk of not receiving their medicine as prescribed. Medication administration records (MAR) were not always accurately maintained in a way that assured us people's medicine was administered safely. We looked at four people's medicine records and saw the MAR charts did not contain information about the medicine, the dose or the time it was to be taken. Records did not always clearly indicate when and what dose of medicine had been administered. One MAR chart we saw had been updated with a series of ticks to indicate the medicine had been administered. However, we could not ascertain what medicine, dose and at what time. Where people had more than one medicine, records did not show detailed information relating to each medicine. Again dose, time and the name of the medicines were not included in the MAR. This meant people could be at risk of not receiving their medicine safely. We spoke with the registered manager about our concerns. They said "Since 2012 Oxfordshire County Council have insisted we use their MAR forms which do not include information relating to name, dose or frequency of medication. Previously we used Caremark's own forms which did include this information. I will ensure that we attach the required information to the OCC MAR forms to make them compliant".

These concerns are a breach of Regulation 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2010.

People told us they received their medicines as prescribed. Comments included; "No problem with my medicine at all" and "I'm fine with my medicine. My daughter collects it for me". Records confirmed staff who assisted people with their medicine had been appropriately trained and their competency had been regularly checked. We spoke with staff about medicines. Comments included; "I've had the training and my competency is regularly checked" and "I am trained on medicines, I have no problems with any of that".

People told us they felt safe. Comments included; "Yes I do feel safe", "I am safe, no complaints" and "I am safe, yes. They have done very well and I am happy". One person's relative said, "My father is very happy with the carers".

People were supported by staff who could explain how they would recognise and report abuse. Staff told us they would report concerns immediately to their manager or senior person on duty. Staff were also aware they could report externally if needed. Comments included; "I have been trained and I've already reported a concern in the past. I would go to my line manager or the CQC (Care Quality Commission)", "I'd report to my supervisor, the manager and CQC" and "Any concerns and I'd report to the manager or the police". The service had systems in place to investigate concerns and report them to the appropriate authorities.

Staff told us there were sufficient staff to support people. Comments included; "I think we are ok at the moment. I do not have to work excessive hours", "I think it's alright though I work as a live in carer so I am not sure. When the second carer comes to help me they are always punctual, I've never had one not turn up" and "We might be short of carers but between us and the office staff, we cover all the work. I know nothing gets missed". Staff were effectively deployed to meet people's needs. The registered manager told us staffing levels were set by the "dependency needs of our clients". Where people needed two staff to support them, records confirmed two staff were consistently deployed.

Records relating to the recruitment of new staff showed relevant checks had been completed before staff worked unsupervised at the service. These included employment references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. These checks identified if prospective staff were of good character and were suitable for their role.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People were not fully protected in line with the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005. The MCA protects the rights of people who may not be able to make particular decisions themselves. We reviewed ten care plans but we did not see any mental capacity assessments, although the service supported some people with complex needs related to dementia, mobility and sensory needs. We saw care plans for individuals who were vulnerable and required a high level of support but with whom no mental capacity assessment had been carried out. This meant we could not be sure if people had capacity to make certain decisions and that their best interests had been considered.

One member of staff told us they worked with a person whose relative had Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA). This meant they made decisions regarding the person's health and welfare. However, we saw that there was no mental capacity assessment in the care plan. We spoke with registered manager about this concern. They said, "The service does not complete mental capacity assessments because we are not qualified to do so". They understood this was a professional responsibility. When we explained they should make an initial assessment and refer the person to their GP or community mental health team they said they would "Take immediate action to resolve the issue". The registered manager and senior management team did not have a full understanding of their responsibilities relating to the MCA 2005. We saw our concerns had not impacted on people's care or well being.

This is a breach of Regulation 11 Health and Social care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

Staff demonstrated an understanding of the MCA and how they applied its principles in their work. Staff comments included; "This is human rights. It is about their safety, best interests and the choices they can make", "It's whether people have capacity to make certain decisions. The person I care for has appointed a relative with LPA for decisions around care" and "This is to protect people who struggle with decisions. I try to help them make decisions by explaining things and making sure they understand".

We asked staff about consent and how they ensured people had agreed to support being provided. One staff member said, "I have good relations with my clients and they know what needs doing. I always ask and explain, I then give them choices". Another staff member said, "I ask politely and always get their permission before I start anything". All the care plans we saw were signed by the person, or their representative evidencing they had consented to the support plan.

At the time of our visit no one was subject to a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) authorisation. These safeguards protect the rights of people by ensuring that if there are any restrictions to their freedom and liberty these have been authorised by the supervisory body.

People told us staff knew their needs and supported them appropriately. Comments included; "Yes they know how to care for me, I've nothing to grumble about", "They are good, most of the carers are wonderful" and "(Staff member) does her job spot on".

People were supported by staff who had the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles and responsibilities. Staff told us they received an induction and completed training when they started working at the service. This training included fire, moving and handling and infection control. Staff comments included; "We can always learn but I feel well trained. I had a period of shadowing and experienced member of staff and I am getting experience and confidence as I progress" and "I get updates with training and I had specific training for one client that was very detailed. I went to the hospital for that training and was signed off by hospital staff". Records confirmed staff shadowed experienced staff before being signed off as competent to work alone.

Staff told us, and records confirmed they had effective support. Staff received regular supervision. Supervision is a one to one meeting with their line manager. Supervisions and appraisals were scheduled throughout the year. Staff were able to raise issues and make suggestions at supervision meetings. For example, one member of staff had requested further training and we saw this training had been completed. One member of staff told us they had completed level 2 in care. Another spoke about requesting further training as part of their career development. They said, "I get regular supervision and I find them useful. I want to get on so I have asked for training in dementia care and I am being supported with this".

Staff were also supported through spot checks. Senior staff observed staff whilst they were supporting people. This included medicine practice, moving and handling timekeeping and delivery of service. Observations were recorded and fedback to staff to allow them to learn and improve their practice. Observations were also fed into staff supervisions.

Most people did not need support with eating and drinking. However, some people needed support with preparing meals. People either bought their own food or families or live in carers went shopping for them. For example, one person had requested support with meal preparation. The person's food preferences were highlighted for staff and we noted the person did not have any special dietary needs. Daily notes evidenced this person was supported in line with their wishes. One member of staff said, "I do help some people but it is more about preparation than anything else. The care plans provide me with the information I need".

People received effective care. For example, one person was at risk of developing pressure ulcers. Detailed guidance was provided to staff on how to support this person. This included monitoring the person's skin at every visit and recording and reporting any 'redness, soreness or swelling to the skin'. Daily notes evidenced this guidance was being followed and the person did not have a pressure ulcer.

People were supported to maintain good health. Various professionals were involved in assessing, planning and evaluating people's care and treatment. These included people's GPs and district nurses. Details of referrals to healthcare professionals and any advice or guidance they provided was recorded in people's care plans.

Our findings

People told us they benefitted from caring relationships with the staff. Comments included; "I have very good relationships with both of my carers", "The staff are really good, they are lovely people", "Oh yes, the staff are gems" and "The staff are my friends. These girls are really good".

Staff spoke with us about positive relationships at the service. Comments included; "I love it here. I am happy with all my clients as they are lovely", "I am so happy with all my clients and I believe they are happy with me. They all love to sing so we sing songs together", "I like my job. Every day is different and the clients are great" and "I like this work and I love working with people".

People's dignity and privacy were respected. When staff spoke about people to us or amongst themselves they were respectful and they displayed genuine affection. Language used in care plans was respectful. One person we spoke with told us how staff were polite and respectful. They said when staff visited them they "Always greet me so nicely".

We asked staff how they promoted, dignity and respect. Comments included; "When I shower anyone I keep it as private as I can and I make sure I cover them with towels as it can be embarrassing for them", I cover them up and I close doors and curtains. I am discrete and I don't share things routinely with the family. I keep it private" and "I cover people as best I can, close doors and curtains and I don't make a big deal out of personal care. It works and protects their dignity".

The service ensured people's care plans and other personal information were kept confidential. People's information was stored securely at the office and we were told copies of care plans were held in people's homes in a location of their choice. Where office staff moved away from their desks we saw computer screens were turned off to maintain information security.

People's independence was promoted. For example, one person was supported to take a shower and the care plan highlighted how they were to be supported, including encouraging the person to do what they could themselves. We spoke to a member of staff who supported this person. They said "It is the main point of our work to keep their independence. I try to make it easier for them and enable them to maintain their level of ability. One client I look after will often grab the flannel and try to wash themselves so I let them as far as they can".

People were involved in their care. We saw people were involved in reviews of their care and had signed reviews and changes to their support plans. People were also informed about which staff were visiting them and when. Visiting schedules were provided to people and gave information about dates and times of the visit. Where there were changes to visit schedules, people were informed. For example, people told us if staff were running late for a visit they were called by the office to inform them. One person said "My carer is not always on time but they ring to warn me of the delay". People were also informed of what support would be provided. For example, one person's schedule stated 'to have a full body wash, clean my teeth and brush my hair'. This person's aspiration was to 'live in my home with dignity and respect'. This meant people's needs

had been discussed and agreed.

People's care was recorded in daily notes maintained by staff. Daily notes recorded what support was provided and events noted during the visit. These provided a descriptive picture of the visit. For example, one visit record noted after the person had been supported the staff member 'chatted with them' for five minutes

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People's needs were assessed prior to accessing the service to ensure their needs could be met. People had been involved in their assessment. Care records contained details of people's personal histories, likes, dislikes and preferences and included people's preferred names, interests, hobbies and religious needs. Staff were aware of this information. For example, one person had described how they would like to be supported. They had stated 'Please observe my skin integrity carefully and report any signs of redness'. Another person had stated 'I want to live at home with my family around me. I love my cat and enjoy a good chat with friends'.

People's care records contained detailed information about their health and social care needs. They reflected how each person wished to receive their care and gave guidance to staff on how best to support people. For example, one person had difficulty hearing. The care plan guided staff to 'talk into the person's right ear' as this would enable the person to hear staff. Another person used a walking frame to mobilise independently. The care plan highlighted the person was 'stable' and they had no illness that affected their mobility. Staff were guided to promote this person's mobility by ensuring they maintained a trip free environment for the person. Staff we spoke with were aware of this guidance.

The service responded to people's changing needs. Where it was identified a person's needs had changed, a review of care was conducted and the support plan amended to meet the person's current needs. People could also request changes to their care. We saw people had contacted the service and requested revised visit times, changes to the schedule and, on occasion, changes to the staff visiting them. During our inspection one person called the service to arrange an alternative visit as they had a hospital appointment. The staff member taking the call was polite and changed the visit for the person.

People received personalised care. One person had a live-in carer. The care plan contained a clear, detailed summary of how to meet the person's needs relating to skin integrity. The plan stated 'I have my legs creamed with (a topical ointment) to stop my skin becoming dry'. The plan detailed when this ointment was to be applied and a body map was used to guide staff as to where the ointment was required. Daily notes evidenced the plan was being followed and the person supported appropriately.

People were supported by staff who understood, and were committed to delivering, personalised care. Staff explained to us how they tailored people's care to suit their personal preferences. Staff comments included; "People have their preferences, it's individual and they have their own ways. The secret is to work their way", "I work to their preferences. You can tell if things are not right and they will soon let you know. It's their personal choice" and "Everyone is different so they have their own choices about how things get done. It's individual". One person had stated in their care plan 'offer me a drink before administering my medicine'. Daily notes evidenced this person received support in line with their personal preference.

People knew how to raise concerns and were confident action would be taken. Everyone we spoke with knew how to raise a concern and told us they had details of how to complain held in the 'service user guide' given to people when they joined the service. We looked at complaints and saw there had been one

complaint in 2016. This had been dealt with compassionately in line with the provider's policy.

The service sought people's opinions. Regular 'Telephone Monitoring' calls were made to allow people to raise issues about the service. Details of the calls were recorded. The majority of recorded calls were complimentary. For example, one person had requested a change to their visit times. This request was actioned and their visit times were rescheduled.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

The registered manager monitored the quality of service provided. Regular audits were conducted to monitor and assess procedures and systems. Audits covered all aspects of care. Audit results were analysed and resulted in identified actions to improve the service. For example, one audit identified a member of staff was overdue a supervision meeting. Action was taken and we saw the member of staff had a supervision meeting. Care plans were also audited and the results were analysed to look for patterns and trends. Where actions were identified action was taken and improvements made. For example, where log sheets were not consistently signed we saw the registered manager had spoken to the staff concerned and the situation rectified.

However, audits were not always effective. At our last inspection on 23 July 2015 we made the recommendation that 'the service reviews its audit systems to ensure they capture relevant information to allow the service to be improved'. At this inspection we found audits had not identified our concerns relating to medicine records and capacity assessments under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Once we had highlighted these concerns to the registered manager we saw they took immediate action to plan how they would resolve our concerns.

This is a breach of Regulation 17 Health and Social care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

Some people knew the registered manager but some told us they did not. A newsletter had been sent to all people and staff which contained a photograph of the registered manager and their contact details. Some people also told us they had difficulty contacting the office. Comments included; "I don't think the office phone is always manned", "I can't fault the staff but the office is not great" and "The office is useless". During our inspection the office was constantly manned by three staff and we saw they were very busy with phone calls.

Staff told us they had confidence in the service and felt it was well managed. Comments included; "The manager is fantastic and I have every confidence. She is supportive and I'm comfortable with her", "The manager is fine, helpful and supportive. If I need anything I can ring and get lots of support" and "She is a helpful and supportive manager. A very nice person".

The service had a positive culture that was open and honest. Throughout our visit management and staff were keen to demonstrate their practices and gave unlimited access to documents and records. Both of the directors, the registered manager and staff spoke openly and honestly about the service and the challenges they faced. Staff told us about the positive culture at the service. One staff member said "If anything goes wrong we just try to put it right". Another said "This service is open and honest. You can speak to anyone here and you will get the truth".

Accidents and incidents were recorded and investigated. The results of investigations were analysed by the registered manager to look for patterns and trends. For example, one recorded incident stated how a member of staff entered a person's home and smelt gas. They discovered a gas ring was on but unlit. Staff

took appropriate action which included calling the GP, fire service and gas engineer. The incident was also reported to Oxfordshire County Council Commissioners of services who were reviewing the incident.

Staff told us that learning from accidents and incidents was shared through staff meetings and briefings. One member of staff said "We get updates with any changes or problems, usually a phone call or text. We also get newsletters with information and we have staff meetings. Another said "All of us get messages about things we need to know. We get learning from the district nurse as well".

The service had systems to monitor the quality of service. For example, an electronic phone system was used to monitor late visits. Where a member of staff was late an alert was raised in the office allowing office staff to respond, call the person to inform them and resolve the issue. People told us they were informed if staff were going to be late. One person said "They are often late but I do get a call to tell me". Another person said "They are not always on time but they ring to warn me of the delay". Nearly every one we spoke with told us they experienced some late visits. The system also monitored missed visits. We saw three missed visits recorded for 2016 and where visits were missed the circumstances were investigated and recorded. For example, one person had called to cancel a visit. However, the message was 'unclear' and the wrong visit was cancelled. We saw the service had apologised to the person who did not suffer from the missed visit. We spoke with the registered manager about late and missed visits who told us they were working to improve the situation and that monitoring showed late visits had slowly improved.

An annual survey was conducted by an outside provider on behalf of the service. People, their relatives and staff were able to contribute to the survey and rate the service. The results were analysed and feedback to people through a newsletter. The analysis produced mixed results and the service had an action plan to address any concerns raised by people.

There was a whistle blowing policy in place that was available to staff across the service. The policy contained the contact details of relevant authorities for staff to call if they had concerns. Staff were aware of the whistle blowing policy and said that they would have no hesitation in using it if they saw or suspected anything inappropriate was happening.

Services that provide health and social care to people are required to inform the Care Quality Commission, (the CQC), of important events that happen in the service. The registered manager was aware of their responsibilities and had systems in place to report appropriately to CQC about reportable events.

This section is primarily information for the provider

Action we have told the provider to take

The table below shows where regulations were not being met and we have asked the provider to send us a report that says what action they are going to take. We did not take formal enforcement action at this stage. We will check that this action is taken by the provider.

Regulated activity	Regulation
Personal care	Regulation 11 HSCA RA Regulations 2014 Need for consent
	Mental capacity assessments had not been carried out in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Regulation 11(3) of the Health and Social care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.
Regulated activity	Regulation
Personal care	Regulation 12 HSCA RA Regulations 2014 Safe care and treatment Medicine records were not always accurately maintained to ensure people received their medicine as prescribed. Regulation 12(2)(g) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.
Regulated activity	Regulation
Personal care	Regulation 17 HSCA RA Regulations 2014 Good governance
	Audits were not always effective and did not identify our highlighted concerns. Regulation 17(1) of the Health and Social care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.