

Junctions Care Agency Limited

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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

This announced inspection took place on the 9 and 10 August 2016. Junctions Care Agency provides personal care to people who live in their own homes in the community. At the time of our inspection the service was supporting 26 people.

There was a registered manager in post at the time of our inspection. 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 had care plans that were personalised to their individual needs and wishes. Records contained detailed information to assist care workers to provide care and support in an individualised manner that respected each person's individual requirements and promoted treating people with dignity.

Care records contained risk assessments and risk management plans to protect people from identified risks and helped to keep them safe but also enabled positive risk taking. They gave information for staff on the identified risk and informed staff on the measures to take to minimise any risks.

People were supported to take their medicines as prescribed. Records showed that medicines were obtained, stored, administered and disposed of safely. People were supported to maintain good health and had access to healthcare services when needed.

People told us that they felt cared for safely in their own home. Staff understood the need to protect people from harm and knew what action they should take if they had any concerns. Staff understood their role in caring for people with limited or no capacity under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Staffing levels ensured that people received the support they required safely and at the times they needed. The recruitment practice protected people from being cared for by staff that were unsuitable to work in their home.

People received care from staff that were compassionate, friendly and kind and who would go the extra mile to support people and their families. Staff had the skills and knowledge to provide the care and support people needed and were supported by a management team which was receptive to ideas and committed to providing a high standard of care.

There were systems in place to monitor the quality of the service provided. Staff and people were confident that issues would be addressed and that any concerns they had would be listened to.

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.

People told us that they felt safe in their home with the staff that cared for them and staff understood their responsibilities to ensure people were kept safe.

Risk assessments were in place and managed in a way which ensured people received safe support and remained as independent as possible.

Safe recruitment practices were in place and staffing levels ensured that people's care and support needs were safely met.

There were systems in place to manage medicines in a safe way and people were supported to take their prescribed medicines.

Is the service effective?

Good 

The service was effective.

People were actively involved in decisions about their care and support needs. Staff demonstrated their understanding of the Mental Capacity Act, 2005 (MCA).

People received personalised care and support. Staff received training to ensure they had the skills and knowledge to support people appropriately and in the way that they preferred.

People were supported to access relevant health and social care professionals to ensure they received the care and support they needed.

Is the service caring?

Good 

The service was caring.

People were encouraged to make decisions about how their support was provided and their privacy and dignity was protected and promoted.

Staff had a good understanding of people's needs and

preferences.

Staff promoted people's independence to ensure people were as involved and in control of their lives as possible.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

People were listened to, their views were acknowledged and acted upon and care and support was delivered in the way that people chose and preferred.

People using the service and their relatives knew how to raise a concern or make a complaint and were confident any issues would be addressed.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

People and staff were confident in the management team. They were supported and encouraged to provide feedback about the service and it was used to drive continuous improvement.

There were systems in place to monitor the quality and safety of the service and actions were completed in a timely manner.

The manager monitored the quality and culture of the service and strived to lead a service which supported people to live as independent a life as possible.

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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 is 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 announced inspection took place on 9 and 10 August 2016 and was undertaken by one inspector. The provider was given 48 hours' notice because the location provides a domiciliary care service and we needed to be sure a member of staff would be available.

Before the inspection, we asked the provider to complete a Provider Information return (PIR). This is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We reviewed the completed PIR and previous inspection reports before the inspection. We checked the information we held about the service including statutory notifications. A notification is information about important events which the provider is required to send us by law.

We also contacted the health and social commissioners who monitor the care and support of people living in their own home.

During the inspection we spoke with three people who used the service, two relatives, four care staff, a senior carer, the registered manager and the provider.

We reviewed the care records of four people who used the service and five staff recruitment files. We also reviewed records relating to the management and quality assurance of the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People were supported by staff that knew how to recognise if people were at risk of harm and knew what action to take when people were at risk. People and their relatives told us they felt safe with the care staff. One person said "I feel fine with all the staff that come." A relative said "[My Relative] is in good hands with the carers, [my relative] will soon tell me and them if she doesn't like something." Staff told us that if they had any concern they would report it straight away to a member of the management team. Staff had confidence that management would take the appropriate action. We saw from records that appropriate referrals to the local safeguarding team had been raised by the management team and action taken when necessary. The staff were supported by an up to date safeguarding procedure and undertook regular training in relation to safeguarding.

Peoples' individual plans of care contained risk assessments to reduce and manage the risks to people's safety. For example there were risk assessments in place for where people needed help to mobilise or change position; there was detailed information as to what equipment was needed and how it should be used correctly to mitigate the risk. The management team reviewed the care plans regularly and staff told us that if they had any concerns one of the management team would visit and revise the plans and risk assessments. Where staff had raised concerns around safety appropriate action had been taken; for example where a person was not always at home when the care staff visited the registered manager liaised closely with the on-site warden and the warden would ensure the person received support when they returned. This ensured the person could continue to leave their property when they chose to and there were plans in place to support them when they returned.

Training records confirmed that all staff had received health and safety, manual handling and infection control training. Accidents and incidents were recorded and reviewed to look for any incident trends and to see whether any control measures needed to be put in place to minimise the risks. The provider had other risk assessments in place relating to the environment and ensuring staff's safety. For example, there was a risk assessment in place stating that because of someone's behaviour the visit always needed to be made by staff in pairs. Care staff confirmed this happened in practice.

People told us that they felt there was a sufficient number of staff to meet their needs. The provider only took on new people if they had sufficient resources available to meet the care and support required. People told us that staff were usually on time and they were informed if staff were running late. One person told us "They can't always be exactly on time but always come around the planned time and they stay as long as they should." A relative told us "Staff are usually on time, if they are ever late they always ring." The staff we spoke to said they felt there were enough staff and that they had the time to support the people with their personal care needs; if they needed more time they just contacted the office to let them know. We could see from the staff rota that the needs of people had been taken into account when planning the rota and consideration had been taken of the travel time between calls.

All staff wore uniforms which clearly identified them and had identification badges which assured people as to who was coming into their home. The staff were provided with additional protective clothing such as

disposable aprons and gloves which protected people from any potential infections. One relative told us "The staff wear uniforms, this is very professional, you can see exactly who they are, which is good for people who may have problems with their memory."

People's medicines were safely managed. One relative said "The staff are good with [my relative's] tablets, she always has them she is supposed to; no concerns at all." Detailed care plans and risk assessments were in place when people needed staff support to manage their medicines. Staff told us that they were trained in the administration of medicines and training records confirmed that this was updated on a regular basis. The staff told us if they had any concerns or questions they spoke to the registered manager who responded promptly. The registered manager told us that they monitored the administration of medicines closely; records showed that audits were undertaken and advice sought from the pharmacist.

There were appropriate recruitment practices in place to ensure people were safeguarded against the risk of being cared for by unsuitable staff. Staff had been checked for any criminal convictions and satisfactory employment references had been obtained before they started work.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People received care and support from staff that had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. People told us that they were confident in the staff and felt they were all well trained and understood their responsibilities. One person told us "I think they [staff] are trained enough and know what to do." A relative told us "Any new carer always comes with a more experienced one who shows them what to do; we never have anyone who does not know what they are doing."

The staff spoke positively of the support and training they had been given. One member of staff said "I have worked for other care agencies but never received so much training, it's really good." Another care staff said "We had a new service user who had a catheter in place so the registered manager got us all training straight away on catheter care." All new staff undertook a thorough induction programme which included classroom based training in manual handling, health and safety and safeguarding. Once new staff had completed the first part of their induction they worked alongside more experienced staff before they worked alone. All new staff who had not completed a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) commenced this diploma as part of their induction programme. The registered manager was a qualified NVQ assessor and supported the staff through the qualification.

Staff told us they felt well supported and valued in their roles. We saw from staff records that all staff received regular supervision and on-going support. 'Spot checks' were undertaken on a regular basis; these enabled the manager to ensure that all staff were following the agency's procedures correctly and were delivering safe care. One member of staff told us "I had a 'spot check' last week; I didn't know they were coming, it's good and makes sure you are doing everything properly." Staff confirmed that supervision included discussions about their performance and identified further training staff could benefit from. Staff were encouraged to develop their knowledge and understanding and to undertake further qualifications. The management team all regularly worked alongside staff which gave them the insight into any potential difficulties staff faced and how to overcome them.

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 we saw that they were. Staff sought the consent of the individual to complete everyday tasks; they were aware if a person had been assessed as lacking the capacity to give their consent the service ensured that appropriate steps would be taken to legally identify someone to act in their best interests. At the time of our inspection the majority people using the service were able to give their consent and were actively involved in their care plan; where it had been identified that someone lacked capacity appropriate actions had been taken.

People were supported with their meals and drinks when necessary. The care plan detailed what level of

support a person needed with regards to eating or drinking and their likes and dislikes. We saw that the times of the calls to people were flexible to meet people's preferences with when they wanted their evening meal; for example one person liked their evening meal at 7pm so the calls were arranged to facilitate this. A relative told us "I leave notes for them [staff] to say what is for [relative] dinner and they write notes back to me regarding what we have run out of or what they have used the last of – they are very good." Another relative told us "The care staff give me an update of what food to order and I do my relatives shopping on the internet and get it delivered; it works really well for us."

People's healthcare needs were carefully monitored. Records showed that people had access to arrange of health professionals, including the District Nurse, GP and occupational therapist. Most people told us that they or their family arranged appointments with health professionals as and when needed. One relative told us "They [staff] communicate with us really well about how [my relative] is; [my relative] hasn't been of good health lately but the staff team have been great."

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People were supported by staff that they described as warm, friendly and kind; always willing to help people in any way they could. One person said "They are lovely, lovely girls smashing to me." Another said "They could not be better; they never leave without checking if I need anything else." A relative told us "The carers are fantastic, [my relative] isn't the easiest person to care for so I have nothing but admiration for the support and care they give every day."

We saw from records and from what people and staff told us that the provider was committed to providing people with the same care staff who had been able to get to know people well. One person told us "I always have the same three carer's and if one of them is on holiday [the registered manager] will come and see to me; they are so good like that."

People told us that staff had taken time in talking with them about things which were important to them in a respectful way. It was evident that there was a good rapport between staff, the person receiving care, and their relatives. Discussions with staff during the inspection showed that they had a good understanding about individual's care and support needs. It was evident from observing discussions with the registered manager and healthcare professionals that there was a close and good contact with the service to ensure that people's care and support was well coordinated.

Care plans detailed people's preferences and choices about how they wanted their support to be given. Each person had a 'need to know' form which consisted of essential details about the person including health conditions and the care they received to give care staff an overview. People told us that staff took time to listen to them and respected their wishes. People told us that staff respected their dignity when caring for them and never spoke about other people they were supporting. Staff were able to describe what they did to respect people's privacy and dignity; they spoke about keeping people covered up as much as possible when washing them, ensuring the area personal care was being undertaken was not overlooked and asking people how they liked things to be done, explaining continually what they were doing. One person told us "The staff are all respectful; they have got to know me well and we share some jokes and it helps when they are supporting me to get washed; lovely girls [care staff]."

People were able to express their wishes and were involved with their care plans. People told us that the staff supported them in their preferred way which was set out in the care plan. One person said "They always ask me if I need anything else."

Staff told us they tried to keep people as independent as possible and assisted them with care and support rather than doing it for them if they were able. Within people's care plans we saw that they were written in a way to assist with independence.

There was information available for people about the advocacy service. The manager told us that they were aware of an advocacy service, who they would seek advice from or encourage people to contact if they needed an advocate.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

The registered manager completed detailed assessments of people's care needs before they received a personal care service. The assessment involved relatives and other health professionals who may be involved in the person's life. People were able to discuss their daily routines, when they liked to rise or retire to bed. This information was then used to develop an individual care plan for people. If the service was unable to meet those requirements then the service was not offered. This ensured that people's needs were consistently and effectively met.

The care plans contained information about people's life history, their likes and dislikes, the important people in their lives and any hobbies they had. They detailed the specific needs of people and in what way and when they wanted support. All of the care staff we spoke with confirmed that the care plans contained enough details to enable them to support people in the way in which they preferred. The service was in the process of developing more person centred care plans which would enhance the information the care staff already knew about people.

People's care plans were regularly updated and reviewed and for those people who had a lot of other health professionals involved we saw that the information in their care plans was detailed and up to date after each appointment. People told us they had involvement in their care plan and relatives were also fully involved where the person had given permission.

Detailed daily records were kept and people confirmed with us that staff always read and completed the record to ensure everyone was kept up to date and informed of any changes. This not only ensured consistency in the care being provided but also helped when staff had identified someone's health was deteriorating.

None of the people we spoke to had needed to raise a complaint about the service but said that if they needed to they would ring the office. A relative told us that in the past they had raised a complaint and were happy in the way the manager had responded to their complaint. The relative said they had received an apology and explanation as to what had happened and said since they had made their complaint they had had no further issues. One relative commented "It was just at the start of the service there were a couple of issues, but once I raised them they were sorted straight away; you can't get better than that." There was information available to people about how to make a complaint and an up to date policy in place to support the process.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Everyone we spoke with was full of praise about the provider and the management of it, all the people and relatives that we spoke to reported a high level of satisfaction with the service. People benefited from receiving care from a team of people who were committed to providing the best possible care and support they could, which was consistent and could be relied upon.

The culture within the service focused upon supporting people's well-being and enabled people to live as independently as possible. All of the staff we spoke with were committed to providing a high standard of personalised care and support. Staff were focussed on the outcomes for the people that used the service and staff worked well as a team to ensure that each person's needs were met. One of the care staff gave an example of how they and another colleague updated each other because they worked opposite days but cared for the same people; they said "We telephone each other and just make sure any changes are handed over; we write it all down but it is important to have that good relationship with your team members."

The provider and registered manager had systems in place to monitor the quality of the service and audits were undertaken by the registered manager on a regular basis. The registered manager was in the process of creating new quality monitoring systems to enable the monitoring of the quality of the service to be collated on a more structured basis.

Staff felt listened to and were in regular contact with the management. All staff told us how responsive and supportive the registered manager was; that she always returned any calls from staff and encouraged them to ask for advice and support if they were unsure of how to respond to a situation. The management were receptive to their ideas and suggestions and made the appropriate changes when necessary. For example, the staff team suggested a change to the structure of the rota, the registered manager was happy for the staff to take the lead and it went on a trial period and now staff are working with it. One care staff said "The manager is really open to idea's, she listens to what we have to say and if it relates to someone's care then she will come out and assess it herself."

Records relating to the day-to-day management of the agency were up-to-date and accurate. Care records accurately reflected the level of care received by people. Records relating to staff recruitment and training were fit for purpose. Training records showed that new staff had completed their induction and staff that had been employed for twelve months or more were scheduled to attend 'refresher' training. Staff were encouraged to gain further qualifications and specialised training was provided.

There were policies and procedures in place which covered all aspects relevant to operating a personal care service which included safeguarding, whistleblowing and recruitment procedures. Staff had access to the policies and procedures whenever they were required and were expected to read and understand them as part of their role.

The management and staff strived to provide people with the care and support they needed to live their lives as they chose. Management were committed to providing well trained and motivated staff.

