

Mrs Victoria Burston

Comfort Home Care

Inspection report

Sunningmead Community Centre
Lazenby Road
Tiverton
Devon
EX16 4AL

Date of inspection visit:
17 February 2021

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12 March 2021

Tel: 01884251555

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Inspected but not rated

Is the service safe?

Inspected but not rated

Summary of findings

Overall summary

Comfort Home Care is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own houses and flats in the community. Not everyone using Comfort Home Care receives a regulated activity, CQC only inspects the service being received by people provided with 'personal care', help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. Where they do, we also take into account any wider social care provided. At the time of our inspection 70 people were being supported with personal care by this service.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

We had received concerns that staff were not always following good infection control practices. This included not wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) in line with current guidance.

People and relatives told us; staff always wore the correct PPE during their visits. Comments included, "Very clean and sanitary, sticking by government rules especially with regards to PPE. Always go above and beyond." Everyone we spoke with praised the care staff and the care they received.

Staff had received infection control training and had access to PPE. They were regularly tested in line with the government's current testing program.

The registered manager had needed to implement the provider's covid-19 contingency plan, which had caused some disruption to the service people received. Some people had found these slight changes upsetting. The registered manager had written to people to reassure them.

The provider's infection prevention and control policy was up to date and staff had access to regular testing.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk

Rating at last inspection: The last rating for this service was Good (published 23 February 2018).

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 infection control risks. A decision was made for us to inspect and examine those risks.

CQC have introduced targeted inspections 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 section of this full report.

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

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?

At our last inspection we rated this key question Good. We have not reviewed the rating at this inspection. This is because we only looked at the parts of this key question we had specific concerns about.

Inspected but not rated

Comfort Home Care

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

Inspection team

This inspection was undertaken by one inspector.

Service and service type

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own houses and flats.

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

This inspection was announced before our visit. We visited the office location on 17 February 2021. We gave the service 48 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because it is a small service and we needed to be sure that the provider or registered manager would be in the office to support the inspection. Inspection activity started on 17 February 2021 and ended on 28 February 2021.

What we did before 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.

The provider was not asked to complete a provider information return prior to this inspection. This is information we require providers to send us to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We took this into account when we inspected the service and made the judgements in this report. 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. This included the providers covid-19 contingency business plan, crisis policy and infection control policy.

We also asked the provider to send people and their families our poster explaining about the inspection with our contact details. This was so we could receive their feedback about the service. We received feedback from one person and three relatives.

We also asked the registered manager to send an email to all of their staff giving them our contact details and asking them to share their views about the service. We received verbal and written feedback from seven staff.

During the inspection

We spent time with the provider, registered manager and deputy manager at the office location. We reviewed a variety of records relating to the management of the service.

We continued to gather evidence through telephone calls up to the 28 February 2021. We contacted and spoke with 10 people and two relatives to seek their experiences of using the service.

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 explore the specific concerns we had about Comfort Home Care. We will assess all of the key question at the next comprehensive inspection of the service.

Preventing and controlling infection

- We had received concerns that staff were not always following good infection control practices. This included not wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) in line with current guidance.
- People and relatives told us staff always wore the correct PPE during their visits. Comments included, "Very clean and sanitary, sticking by government rules especially with regards to PPE. Always go above and beyond", "They work extremely hard, very caring individuals, more than just satisfied, I regard them as friends. No concerns about them wearing PPE", "I couldn't do without them, the girls are brilliant and always wear their PPE's" and "They wear face masks the whole time, disposable gloves and apron are discarded within our rubbish bin when they have finished. Our regular carers are also vaccinated."
- Staff said they had not seen colleagues not following government guidance with regards to wearing the correct PPE. Comments included, "Everyone I have seen is wearing their PPE correctly" and "I've never seen any carer not wear the correct PPE when I've been working with them."
- The provider had a sufficient supply of PPE to meet their current need. Staff confirmed they had access at the provider's office to the PPE they required. One staff member said, "PPE's are held in the office, we can access them easily and record what we take. There are always masks, gloves and aprons. (The provider) has even got gauntlets and full body suits." Another said, "I feel Comfort Home Care have kept us informed and supported us and the clients as much as they could have throughout the pandemic."
- The registered manager ensured regular communications were in place to update care staff about changes in infection control guidance.
- Staff were regularly tested in line with the government's current testing program.
- Staff had received training in infection control. Additional IPC training was booked with the local authority.
- Senior staff completed spot checks of staff while working which included checks on infection control practices.
- Some people and staff told us it had been a difficult time with regards to visits being rescheduled, requests to undertake additional shifts both at short notice and visits shortened. The provider had a covid-19 contingency plan which had been shared with people using the service. This included a plan of action the provider would undertake in the event of staff absenteeism. For example, the possibility of cancellation of all non-essential care provision, reduced visit times, frequency and the need to limit care staff working in pairs. This had needed to be actioned in recent months due to staff absences. Risk assessments had been completed to assess potential risks of these changes.
- Some people had found these changes upsetting. The registered manager had written to people to

reassure them and give them a covid-19 update. The registered manager apologised for the disruption of having slightly irregular visits caused by staffing issues caused by the pandemic. They assured people they were doing all they could to ensure people received their care and thanked them for their patience. Senior staff were also regularly ringing people to review their needs and to answer any questions or address any concerns.

- The provider's infection prevention and control policy was up to date.