

Inspection Report

21 May 2024



Triangle Housing Association

Type of service: Domiciliary Care Agency
Address: 122 Cushendall Road, Ballymena, BT43 6HB
Telephone number: 028 2563 0414

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Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

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1.0 Service information

Organisation/Registered Provider: Triangle Housing Association	Registered Manager: Mrs Margaret Josephine Elliott
Responsible Individual: Mr Christopher Harold Alexander	Date registered: 21 August 2015
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mrs Margaret Josephine Elliott	
Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates: Triangle Housing Association is a domiciliary care agency supported living type which provides 24 hour care and housing support to four service users with a range of complex needs including autism. The care is commissioned by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT).	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 21 May 2024 between 10.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. The inspection was conducted by a care inspector.

The inspection examined the agency's governance and management arrangements, reviewing areas such as staff recruitment, professional registrations, staff induction and training and adult safeguarding. The reporting and recording of accidents and incidents, complaints, whistleblowing, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), service user involvement, restrictive practices and Dysphagia management was also reviewed.

Area for improvement identified related to staff training.

Good practice was identified in relation to service user involvement, the monitoring of staffs' registration with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), adult safeguarding and staff induction. There were good governance and management arrangements in place.

3.0 How we inspect

RQIA's inspections form part of our ongoing assessment of the quality of services. Our reports reflect how they were performing at the time of our inspection, highlighting both good practice and any areas for improvement. It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure

compliance with legislation, standards and best practice, and to address any deficits identified during our inspections.

In preparation for this inspection, a range of information about the service was reviewed. This included registration information, and any other written or verbal information received from service users, relatives, staff or the Commissioning Trust.

As a public-sector body, RQIA has a duty to respect, protect and fulfil the rights that people have under the Human Rights Act 1998 when carrying out our functions. In our inspections of domiciliary care agencies, we are committed to ensuring that the rights of people who receive services are protected. This means we will seek assurances from providers that they take all reasonable steps to promote people's rights. Users of domiciliary care services have the right to expect their dignity and privacy to be respected and to have their independence and autonomy promoted. They should also experience the individual choices and freedoms associated with any person living in their own home.

Having reviewed the model "We Matter" Adult Learning Disability Model for NI 2020, the Vision states, 'We want individuals with a learning disability to be respected and empowered to lead a full and healthy life in their community'.

RQIA shares this vision and want to review the support individuals are offered to make choices and decisions in their life that enable them to develop and to live a safe, active and valued life. RQIA will review how service users who have a learning disability are respected and empowered to lead a full and healthy life in the community and are supported to make choices and decisions that enables them to develop and live safe, active and valued lives.

Information was provided to service users, relatives, staff and other stakeholders on how they could provide feedback on the quality of services. This included easy read questionnaires and an electronic staff survey.

4.0 What did people tell us about the service?

During the inspection we spoke with a number of staff members.

The information provided indicated that there were no concerns in relation to the agency.

Comments received included:

Staff comments:

- "The service is compassionately led, and choice is given to the service users. The family is involved in the care planning. The manager is approachable, and I can speak to her if there are any concerns. I have worked here of a number of years and really enjoy it; it is rewarding work."
- "I am up to date with all my mandatory training, and I am aware to keep my NISCC registration up to date. The service is well led by the manager. The manager has an open door policy and is very approachable. I enjoy working with the service users."

Returned questionnaires indicated that the respondents were very satisfied with the care and support provided.

A number of staff responded to the electronic survey. The respondents indicated that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' that care provided was safe, effective and compassionate and that the service was well led. Written comments included:

- "...The relationships management have developed with families and careers have proved therapeutic and have added to the positivity that is evident in the project. It's an open and honest communication"

5.0 The inspection

5.1 What has this service done to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since the last inspection?

The last care inspection of the agency was undertaken on 2 May 2023 by a care inspector. No areas for improvement were identified.

5.2 Inspection findings

5.2.1 What are the systems in place for identifying and addressing risks?

The agency's provision for the welfare, care and protection of service users was reviewed. The organisation's adult safeguarding policy and procedures were reflective of the Department of Health's (DoH) regional policy and clearly outlined the procedure for staff in reporting concerns. The organisation had an identified Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC). The agency's annual Adult Safeguarding Position report was reviewed and found to be satisfactory.

Discussions with the manager established that they were knowledgeable in matters relating to adult safeguarding, the role of the ASC and the process for reporting and managing adult safeguarding concerns.

Staff were required to complete adult safeguarding training during induction and every two years thereafter. Staff who spoke with the inspector had a clear understanding of their responsibility in identifying and reporting any actual or suspected incidences of abuse and the process for reporting concerns in normal business hours and out of hours. They could also describe their role in relation to reporting poor practice and their understanding of the agency's policy and procedure with regard to whistleblowing.

The agency retained records of any referrals made to the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust in relation to adult safeguarding. A review of records confirmed that these had been managed appropriately.

RQIA had been notified appropriately of any incidents that had been reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) in keeping with the regulations. Incidents had been managed appropriately.

Staff were provided with training appropriate to the requirements of their role. Where service users required the use of specialised equipment to assist them with moving, this was included within the agency's mandatory training programme.

Care reviews had been undertaken in keeping with the agency's policies and procedures. There was also evidence of regular contact with service users and their representatives, in line with the commissioning trust's requirements.

The majority of staff had been provided with training in relation to medicines management/competency. One new staff member had a date identified to complete this training. The manager advised that no service users required their medicine to be administered with a syringe. The manager was aware that should this be required, a competency assessment would be undertaken before staff undertook this task.

The Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) (MCA) (2016) provides a legal framework for making decisions on behalf of service users who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The MCA requires that, as far as possible, service users make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When service users lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible. Staff who spoke with the inspector demonstrated their understanding that service users who lack capacity to make decisions about aspects of their care and treatment have rights as outlined in the MCA.

Staff had completed appropriate Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) training appropriate to their job roles. There were arrangements in place to ensure that service users who required high levels of supervision or monitoring and restriction had had their capacity considered and, where appropriate, assessed. Where a service user was experiencing a deprivation of liberty, the care records contained details of assessments completed and agreed outcomes developed in conjunction with the HSC Trust representative.

There was a system in place for notifying RQIA if the agency was managing individual service users' monies in accordance with the guidance.

5.2.2 What are the arrangements for promoting service user involvement?

From reviewing service users' care records, it was good to note that service users and family had an input into devising their own plan of care. The service users' care plans contained details about their likes and dislikes and the level of support they may require. Care and support plans are kept under regular review and service users and /or their relatives participate, where appropriate, in the review of the care provided on an annual basis, or when changes occur.

5.2.3 What are the systems in place for identifying service users' Dysphagia needs in partnership with the Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)?

A number of service users were assessed by SALT with recommendations provided and some required their food and fluids to be of a specific consistency. A review of training records confirmed that the majority of staff had completed training in Dysphagia

and in relation to how to respond to choking incidents. Two new staff members had a date identified to complete this training.

Discussions with staff and review of service users' care records reflected the multi-disciplinary input and the collaborative working undertaken to ensure service users' health and social care needs were met within the agency. There was evidence that staff made referrals to the multi-disciplinary team and these interventions were proactive, timely and appropriate. Staff also implemented the specific recommendations of the SALT to ensure the care received in the setting was safe and effective.

5.2.4 What systems are in place for staff recruitment and are they robust?

A review of the agency's staff recruitment records confirmed that all pre-employment checks, including criminal record checks (AccessNI), were completed and verified before staff members commenced employment and had direct engagement with service users. Checks were made to ensure that staff were appropriately registered with the NISCC; there was a system in place for professional registrations to be monitored by the manager. Staff spoken with confirmed that they were aware of their responsibilities to keep their registrations up to date.

There were no volunteers working in the agency.

5.2.5 What are the arrangements for staff induction and are they in accordance with NISCC Induction Standards for social care staff?

There was evidence that all newly appointed staff had completed a structured orientation and induction, having regard to NISCC's Induction Standards for new workers in social care, to ensure they were competent to carry out the duties of their job in line with the agency's policies and procedures. There was a robust, structured induction programme which also included shadowing of a more experienced staff member. Written records were retained by the agency of the person's capability and competency in relation to their job role.

A review of the records relating to staff that were provided from recruitment agencies identified that they had been recruited and inducted in line with the regulations. However, the review of two staff profiles identified that they had not completed medication management training in keeping with the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations and Standards. An area for improvement has been identified.

The agency has maintained a record for each member of staff of all training, including induction and professional development activities undertaken.

5.2.6 What are the arrangements to ensure robust managerial oversight and governance?

There were monitoring arrangements in place in compliance with Regulations and Standards. A review of the reports of the agency's quality monitoring established that there was engagement with service users, service users' relatives, staff and HSC Trust representatives.

The reports included details of a review of service user care records; accident/incidents; safeguarding matters; staff recruitment and training, and staffing arrangements.

The Annual Quality Report was reviewed and was satisfactory.

No incidents had occurred that required investigation under the Serious Adverse Incidents (SAI) procedure.

The agency's registration certificate was up to date and displayed appropriately along with current certificates of public and employers' liability insurance.

There was a system in place to ensure that complaints were managed in accordance with the agency's policy and procedure. No complaints were received since the last inspection.

There is a system in place whereby staff can access a service user's home as required. Service users/family have consented to staff holding keys to their homes.

6.0 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)/Areas for Improvement

An area for improvement has identified where action is required to ensure compliance with The Domiciliary Care Agencies Minimum Standards (revised) 2021

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of Areas for Improvement	0	1

The area for improvement and details of the QIP were discussed with Mrs Margaret Josephine Elliott, Registered Manager, as part of the inspection process. The timescales for completion commence from the date of inspection.

Quality Improvement Plan	
Action required to ensure compliance with The Domiciliary Care Agencies Minimum Standards (revised) 2021	
Area for improvement 1 Ref: Standard 12.3 Stated: First time To be completed by: Immediate from the date of inspection and ongoing	The registered person shall ensure mandatory training requirements are met. This relates to staff supplied by recruitment agencies. Ref: 5.2.5
	Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: Meeting was held with the recruitment agency to discuss mandatory training requirements relevant to meet standard 12.3 before shifts are confirmed with the recruitment agency. A check list has been developed to check profile when received to confirm that all training requirements have been met for standard 12.3

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The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Gasworks
Belfast
BT7 2JA