

Inspection Report Adult Placement Agency 4 December 2023



Age NI Shared Lives

Type of Service: Adult Placement Agency
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Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

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1.0 Service information

Organisation/Registered Provider: Age NI	Registered Manager: Ms Alison Milford
Responsible Individual: Ms Linda Robinson	Date registered: 29/12/2022
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mrs Alison Milford	
Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates: Age NI's Shared Lives service plans to provide high quality, personalised, safe care and support to people over 65 years who are in need of support. The service will promote the independence and wellbeing of older people and enable them to remain living in their own communities for longer. The service will offer older people in need, and their carers, more choice in how support is provided. Shared Lives is a regulated model of care which recruits Host Carers to provide support to older people in need by sharing their home, family and community life with them. Currently, Age NI's Shared Lives service will offer day support. Their plan is to develop opportunities for short breaks and adult long term placements in the longer term.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An announced inspection took place on 4 December 2023, at 09.00 am to 11.00 am by the care inspector.

This inspection focused on carer recruitment, induction, training, service user details, carer approval and other relevant documentation.

Good practice was identified in relation to the arrangements to monitor and maintain quality; this was underpinned by good management and governance arrangements and clear lines of communication between all parties. We also noted good practice with carer recruitment, induction and training.

Staff and Adult placement carers who spoke with us demonstrated strong caring values and were familiar with the choices and preferences of service users.

The inspector would like to thank the manager and APA carers for their support and feedback during the inspection.

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.

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 adult placement agencies, we are committed to ensuring that the rights of service users are protected. This means we will seek assurances from providers that they take all reasonable steps to respect the dignity and privacy of service users whilst promoting independence and autonomy to experience the choices and freedoms associated with any person living in their own home.

The inspection focused on:

- Consultation with the APA carers and the agency manager to find out their views on the service.
- Review of a range of relevant documents, policies and procedures relating to the agency's governance and management arrangements.

4.0 What people told us about the service

We spoke with one APA carer during the inspection.

Carers' comments:

- "My induction was comprehensive and helped prepare me for the role."
- "The manager has been very supportive and informative."
- "This service will be very person centred."
- "We received a good explanation of what the scheme aims to achieve."
- "The Shared Lives Tool-Kit was excellent."
- "I'm looking forward to the role."

5.0 The inspection

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

No areas for improvement were issued at the last inspection 23 December 2022 as this was Pre-Registration inspection and all areas were compliant.

5.2 Inspection findings

5.2.1 Are there 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 policy and procedures reflected the Department of Health's (DoH) regional policy 'Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership' July 2015 and clearly outlined the procedure for staff in reporting concerns. The organisation has an identified Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC).

Discussions with the manager demonstrated that they were knowledgeable in matters relating to adult safeguarding, the role of the ASC and the process for reporting adult safeguarding concerns. Carers were required to complete adult safeguarding training during their induction programme and updates thereafter in line with legislation and draft standards.

Staff and carers had a clear understanding of their responsibility in identifying and reporting any actual or suspected incidents of abuse. They could 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 had a system for retaining a record of any referrals made to the HSC Trusts in relation to adult safeguarding.

The agency provides service users with information in relation to keeping themselves safe and the details of the process for reporting any concerns.

There were systems in place to ensure that notifiable events are investigated and reported to RQIA or other relevant bodies appropriately.

The manager and staff demonstrated that they had an understanding that service users who lack capacity to make decisions about aspects of their care and treatment have rights as outlined in the Mental Capacity Act (MCA). The MCA requires that, as far as possible, service users make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed; any decisions made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible. MCA training is completed by all carers as part of their induction programme.

Staff had completed Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) training appropriate to their job roles and carers had been provided with awareness training.

5.2.2 Are their robust systems in place for Carer Recruitment?

Review of a sample of carer recruitment records evidenced that all pre-employment checks were undertaken, including Access NI checks, before a service user will be placed with an Adult placement carer.

5.2.3 People supported involvement?

RQIA was assured that service users will be central in directing their care plans as far as possible. This was confirmed by carers and staff. Care plans and associated risk assessments were noted to be written in a professional and respectful manner which promoted the dignity and confidentiality of the service user and all other relevant parties.

5.2.4 Carer induction in line with regulations?

The manager confirmed that an induction programme was available for newly recruited carers. This document was reviewed and found to comprehensively meet the induction requirements in line with regulations and the draft standards. Individual induction records reviewed were satisfactory.

5.2.5 Are there robust governance processes in place?

There were monitoring arrangements in place in compliance with regulations and draft standards. Documentation reviewed shows that monitoring visits will be undertaken on a regular basis. This is where an agency staff member will visit a carer's home when the service user is present, so that daily tasks can be observed in order to verify that carers are meeting the required standards.

The provider has ensured that the quality assurance systems in place is effective in achieving positive outcomes for service users. There is a system of internal audits and an annual satisfaction survey where feedback from service users, their carers and other stakeholders will be sought. The feedback will be incorporated into the annual quality report.

5.2.6 Are their arrangements in place for carer training?

Carers consulted with during the inspection process spoke positively about the variety and level of training and induction they had received to enable them to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of their role. Carers described training as being of a good standard.

A review of the agency's training records confirmed that carers had received mandatory and other training relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

5.2.7 Is there a system in place for identifying service users' Dysphagia needs in partnership with the Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)?

The manager confirmed that the agency will request specific recommendations from Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) in relation to current service users, if applicable. A review of training records confirmed that carers were provided with Dysphagia/swallowing awareness training.

6.0 Conclusion

This inspection resulted in no areas for improvement being identified. Findings of the inspection were discussed with Mrs Alison Milford, Registered Manager, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.



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