

Inspection Report

3 February 2023



Triangle Housing Association

Type of Service: Domiciliary Care Agency
Address: Tower Court, 9 Warden Street, Ballymena,
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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: Alison Simpson
Responsible Individual: Mr Christopher Harold Alexander	Date registered: Acting
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Service Manager	
Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates: Tower Court is a domiciliary care agency, supported living type, which provides 24 hour personal care and housing support to 18 people who have a learning disability and complex needs.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 3 February 2023 between 9.40 a.m. and 1.30 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, Dysphagia management and Covid-19 guidance was also reviewed.

Good practice was identified in relation to service user involvement. 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 questionnaires and an electronic survey.

4.0 What did people tell us about the service?

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

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

Comments received included:

Service users' comments:

- "Love it, no issues. Staff are great."
- "Staff listen."
- "Staff help me with shopping, cleaning and my shower."

- “I like getting out and about.”

Staff comments:

- “Love working here, I feel supported.”
- “Service users have choice.”
- “I can raise concerns.”
- “We are supporting service users to live a good life.”
- “Hard work at times.”
- “We have enough staff.”

No questionnaires were returned.

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

- “I am happy with my project and the people I work with, very supportive team.”

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 13 April 2021 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 person in charge 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 HSC Trust in relation to adult safeguarding. A review of records confirmed that these had been managed appropriately; we discussed with the person in charge the need to ensure that the outcomes of referrals are recorded.

Service users said they had no concerns regarding their safety; they described how they could speak to staff if they had any concerns about safety or the care being provided.

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 Moving and Handling 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. A review of care records identified that moving and handling risk assessments and care plans were up to date.

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.

All staff had been provided with training in relation to medicines management. The person in charge advised that no service users required their medicine to be administered orally with a syringe. They were aware that should this be required, a competency assessment would be undertaken before staff undertook this task. It was positive to note that a process was in place to address medication errors that had occurred in the agency.

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 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 DoLS training appropriate to their job roles. The person in charge reported that none of the service users were subject to DoLS. 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.

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 and through discussions with service users, it was good to note that they had an input into devising their own plan of care. Service users were provided with easy read reports which supported them to fully participate in all aspects of their 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.

It was also good to note that the agency had service users' meetings on a regular basis which enabled the service users to discuss the provisions of their care.

It was important that individuals with learning disabilities are supported to maintain their relationships with family, friends and partners during the Covid-19 pandemic. Service users were provided with information to explain Covid-19 and how they could keep themselves safe and protected from the virus.

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

New standards for modifying food and fluids were introduced in August 2018. This was called the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI). A small 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 staff had completed training in Dysphagia and in relation to how to respond to choking incidents.

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.

Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of service users' wishes, preferences and assessed needs. These were recorded within care plans along with associated SALT dietary requirements. Staff were familiar with how food and fluids should be modified.

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 Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) or any other relevant regulatory body; 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.

The person in charge advised that 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 structured induction programme lasting at least three days, 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 also identified that they had been recruited, inducted and trained in line with the regulations.

The agency has maintained a record for each member of staff of all training, including induction and professional development activities undertaken; this included staff that were supplied by recruitment agencies.

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 (SAIs) or Significant Event Audits (SEAs) procedures.

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. Where complaints were received since the last inspection, these were appropriately managed and were reviewed as part of the agency's quality monitoring process.

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

6.0 Conclusion

This inspection resulted in no areas for improvement being identified. Findings of the inspection were discussed with Alison Simpson, manager and the person in charge, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.



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