

Inspection Report

25 April 2023



Antrim & Ballyclare Supported Living Services

Type of service: Domiciliary Care 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: Praxis Care Responsible Individual: Mrs Alyson Dunn	Registered Manager: Mrs Aine Martin Date registered: 28 November 2022
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mrs Aine Martin	
Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates: Antrim & Ballyclare Supported Living Services is a domiciliary care agency (supported living type) which provides personal care and support to people living in shared accommodation and their own homes. Under the direction of the manager staff are available to provide support to the service users with tasks of everyday living, and emotional support with the overall goal of promoting health and maximising their quality of life. At the time of the inspection there were 32 individuals in receipt of a service.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 25 April 2023 between 10.00 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.

Antrim & Ballyclare Supported Living Services uses the term 'service users' to describe the people to whom they provide care and support. For the purposes of the inspection report, the term 'service user' is also used, in keeping with the relevant regulations.

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 any previous areas for improvement identified, 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.

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:

- "If you need emotional support, the staff are available. They go out of their way to help meet your needs. My mental health is better since I came here".
- "There's good support and it's nice to have your own space. The staff are good to us and I feel safe here".

Staff comments:

- "It's a lovely relaxed atmosphere to work in. I do get lots of support from my manager"
- "I love my job. It's very rewarding, no two days are the same. We get plenty of training and good support".

Positive comments were also noted in the monthly quality monitoring reports. An example of service users' comments included:

- "I feel the service is well equipped to meet my needs".

Returned questionnaires indicated that service users were satisfied/very satisfied with the care and support provided.

No feedback was received from the electronic survey for staff.

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 11 March 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 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 annual safeguarding position report had been completed and was 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.

The manager advised that no concerns had been raised under the whistleblowing procedures.

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.

Service users said they had no concerns regarding their safety.

RQIA had been notified appropriately of any in keeping with the regulations. Incidents had been managed appropriately.

Staff were provided with training appropriate to the requirements of their role. The manager reported that none of the service users currently required the use of specialised equipment. They were aware of how to source such training should it be required in the future.

All staff had been provided with training in relation to medicines management. 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 (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 had completed appropriate Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) training appropriate to their job roles. The manager reported that none of the service users were subject to DoLS.

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 care records, it was good to note that service users had an input into devising their own plan of care.

The support and recovery plans reflected a very person-centred approach to care delivery. Records contained details about their likes and dislikes and the level of support they may require.

Service users' meetings were held on a regular basis which enabled the service users to discuss the provisions of their care and support. Items discussed included:

- Health and wellbeing checks
- Weekly activities planner
- Tenancy
- Property maintenance
- Covid-19

Service users' consent was sought in relation to whether or not they wanted:

- Their photograph to be used in various organisational documents.
- The staff to contact relevant professionals
- The staff to enter their homes in order to provide personal care and support
- Relevant professionals to access their care records
- Information pertaining to them to be stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Care records were noted to be person-centred and it was evident that key workers were aware of the service users' individual needs. A number of documents were available in easy read format, including information on keeping safe during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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 review of training records confirmed that a number of staff had completed training in dysphagia awareness and how to respond to choking incidents. Whilst none of the service users had swallowing difficulties, the manager confirmed that further dysphagia training would be accessed for all staff, if required in the future.

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); there was a system in place for professional registrations to be monitored by the manager.

There was a number of volunteers working as befrienders. The agency had a policy and procedure for volunteers, which clearly specified their role and responsibilities. The manager confirmed that volunteers did not undertake any personal care duties and that AccessNI checks had been completed.

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, three-day induction programme which also included shadowing of a more experienced staff member.

All registrants must maintain their registration for as long as they are in practice. This includes renewing their registration and completing Post Registration Training and Learning.

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 completed 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 was a system in place which enable staff to access service users' accommodation in the event of an emergency.

7.0 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)/Areas for Improvement

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



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