

Inspection Report

30 June 2023



Causeway Share the Care Scheme

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: Northern Health and Social Care Trust	Registered Manager: Mrs Beverley Spence
Responsible Individual: Ms Jennifer Welsh	Date registered: 24 December 2019
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mrs Beverley Spence	
Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates: Causeway Share the Care Scheme aims to promote the rights of individuals to access respite care in the community. The scheme, through the provision of a range of adult placements, ensures that needs are met. Whilst on placement, individuals have the opportunity to share the family life of the adult placement carer, in a home from home environment. The agency currently has 126 adults within placements supported by 113 Adult Placement Carers.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An announced inspection was conducted by the care inspector on 30 June 2023 between 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m.

This inspection focused on carer recruitment and induction, adult safeguarding, notifications, complaints, whistleblowing, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), service user involvement, monthly quality monitoring and Dysphagia.

Good practice was identified in relation to service user involvement and the arrangements to monitor and maintain quality; this was underpinned by good management and governance arrangements and clear lines of communication between all parties. Staff and adult placement carers who spoke with us demonstrated strong caring values and were familiar with the choices and preferences of service users. It was evident that this resulted in good quality, personalised care.

Causeway Share the Care Scheme uses the term 'people who we support' or 'people supported' to describe the people to whom they provide care and support. For the purposes of the inspection report, the term 'service user' is used, in keeping with the relevant regulations.

The inspector would like to thank the manager, staff, service users 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.

"We Matter" Adult Learning Disability Model for NI 2020 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 seeks to ensure individuals are offered choices and decisions to enable them to develop and to live a safe, active and valued life.

The inspection focused on:

- consultation with service users, 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 a selection of APA carers following the inspection.

Carers' comments:

- "I really enjoy it and have not had any problems in the 19 years of being an adult placement carer."
- "Support from the Share the Care team is very good."
- "I do safeguarding, epilepsy and CPR training through my work and pass the dates and certificates to the team. Home safety and fire training is done through the Scheme."
- "Communication is good with the service user's family."
- "I thoroughly enjoy being a carer and I will carry on doing it for the foreseeable future."

Information was provided to APA carers, service users and service users' relatives on how they could give feedback on the quality of service provided and this included questionnaires.

Nine questionnaires were returned in which people stated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided. No service users returned a questionnaire. Carers' outcomes were consistently good, and their feedback confirmed this.

Carers' comments:

- "To be mindful that some adult placements are coming directly from children's services and it would be better if there was a mechanism process to transfer information to avoid a long assessment process as this had already been completed by children's services."
- "Excellent."
- "I feel the service is very well monitoring and all staff very approachable."
- "Excellent service! Good regular contact and sharing of information."

Service users' relatives' comments:

- "I am really pleased with this service. My relative is treated as one of the carers family and they keep us up to date with everything that takes place e.g. photos of where he has been etc. Absolutely thrilled with it, thank you."

5.0 The inspection

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

The last inspection to Causeway Share the Care Scheme was undertaken on 16 May 2022 by a care inspector; no areas for improvement were identified.

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 had 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 Trust in relation to adult safeguarding.

The agency has provided 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 were investigated and reported to RQIA or other relevant bodies appropriately. It was noted that incidents had been managed in accordance with the agency's policy and procedures.

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 had been 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. Where service users were subject to DoLS, the required documentation was in place and was kept under regular review.

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 AccessNI checks, before a service user was placed with an adult placement carer; however, it was noted that the recruitment process required to be more robust, in particular with regard to employment histories. Discussion with the manager provided assurances that this would be taken forward and the application form would be amended to obtain full employment histories for all newly recruited carers. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

5.2.3 People supported involvement?

RQIA was assured that service users were central in directing their care plans as far as possible. This was confirmed by service users, carers and staff. Easy read reports were provided which allowed service users to fully participate in all aspects of their care. The service users' care plans contained details about their likes and dislikes, the level of support they required and how this should be delivered; annual reviews of care were signed by service users, their family or representative or by an advocate. 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.

There were enough carers to make sure people received the support they needed, including facilitating their chosen activities.

The agency completed an annual quality review which gave service users, families, carers and HSC Trust staff opportunity to comment on the service. The report noted feedback which was positive.

Feedback from service users:

- “This is my home. I love being here.”
- “It is great because it is my sister (daughter of carers) who looks after me.”
- “I love the short break scheme. It takes me out and I enjoy meeting new people and I love the craic and company.”
- “She (the carer) is just brilliant.”
- “I talk to my carer and she listens to me and remembers all of our chats.”
- “I go out for coffee and to the garden centre or the beach. I am living my best life.”
- “I love my time with my carer. I look forward to her coming and feel very safe and secure when I am with her.”

Feedback provided by carers:

- “Our Social Worker goes above and beyond what is expected from her to support us. We appreciate the training and support. We have no difficulty keeping the necessary paperwork and understand the purpose and reason for this.”
- “All is going well and it’s been smooth sailing so far. I have a very supportive relationship with my Social Worker. She is very helpful especially when making appointments as she considers our other commitments.”
- “Our Social Worker has been a tremendous support to us. There is mutual peer support from other carers which is very beneficial.”
- “I was given all the information I needed about the person/s I am matched with.”
- “Full support given.”
- “Named service user is a great girl and a good laugh.”

Feedback provided by HSC Trust:

- “Share the Care service provide an excellent service, they are conscientious to ensure service users and carers are matched accordingly. The service has also delivered emergency bespoke placements at a time of crisis for individuals. It would be great if more carers/placements could be recruited and secured, as there is a great need for this service. The team works well as part of the multi-disciplinary Trust service.”
- “I continue to enjoy being a member of the Share the Care scheme. This past year has seen improvements in staffing levels and this has reduced the pressure on covering large areas.”
- “Our Adult Placements Providers continue to provide a fantastic service, some of which are dealing with service users who have complex and challenging needs. I feel, the scheme is growing from strength to strength, which is only made possible by a passionate staff team as well as a dedicated bunch of volunteers who are caring and genuine in meeting the needs of our service users.”

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.

5.2.5 Are there robust governance processes in place?

There were monitoring arrangements in place in compliance with regulations and draft standards. Records reviewed showed that monitoring visits were undertaken on a regular basis. This was where an agency staff member visited a carer's home when the service user was present, so that daily tasks could be observed in order to verify that carers were meeting the required standards. Reports relating to the agency's monitoring visits were reviewed and found to be robust.

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

5.2.6 What are the arrangements in place for Carer training?

Carers consulted with during the inspection process spoke positively about the variety and level of training 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; however, it was noted that the matrix which recorded the training for all carers had not been updated. Discussion with the manager provided assurances that this would be immediately rectified and any outstanding training would be progressed imminently. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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 had received a number of specific recommendations from Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) in relation to current service users. Records in place were reviewed and were satisfactory. A review of training records confirmed that carers were provided with Dysphagia/swallowing awareness training.

6.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

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



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