

Announced Care Inspection Report 15 March 2019



Southern Health & Social Care Trust

Type of Service: Adult Placement Agency
Address: Manse View, 2a Rathfriland Road, Newry, BT34 1HU
Tel No: 028 3025 6780
Inspector: Jim McBride
User consultation officer Clair Mc Connell (UCO)

www.rqia.org.uk

It should be noted that this inspection report should not be regarded as a comprehensive review of all strengths and areas for improvement that exist in the service. The findings reported on are those which came to the attention of RQIA during the course of this inspection. The findings contained within this report do not exempt the service from their responsibility for maintaining compliance with legislation, standards and best practice.

1.0 What we look for



2.0 Profile of service

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust Adult Placement Scheme (Shared Care Scheme) offers long and short term placements to service users with a learning disability who have been assessed and referred by a HSC Trust professional. The scheme is located in the Newry and Mourne, Craigavon and Banbridge localities; operated by Angela Murnion the registered manager.

Shared Care host families (carers) provide weekend or short term planned support in order to provide existing carers with a short break (respite) and to provide individuals with opportunities to have new experiences. Long term placements are provided when an adult requires long term accommodation, similar to a fostering arrangement.

The agency has currently placed 27 adults within placements with 31 Adult Placement Carers.

3.0 Service details

Organisation/Registered Provider: Southern HSC Trust Responsible Individual: Shane Devlin	Registered Manager: Angela Murnion
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Angela Murnion	Date manager registered: Angela Murnion (4 January 2017)

4.0 Inspection summary

An announced inspection took place on 15 March 2019 from 09.30 to 12.30.

This inspection was underpinned by the Adult Placement Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.

The inspection assessed progress with any areas for improvement identified during and since the last care inspection and to determine if the agency was delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and if the service was well led.

Evidence of good practice was found in relation to:

- carer recruitment processes
- induction
- communication and engagement with the service users and other relevant stakeholders
- person centred care
- matching process
- carer training
- carer group meetings
- quality monitoring
- home monitoring visits announced/unannounced
- mechanisms in place to obtain feedback and views from service users

The findings of this report will provide the agency with the necessary information to assist them to fulfil their responsibilities, enhance practice and service users' experience.

4.1 Inspection outcome

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of areas for improvement	0	0

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

Enforcement action did not result from the findings of this inspection.

4.2 Action/enforcement taken following the most recent care inspection dated 15 March 2019

No further actions were required to be taken following the most recent inspection on 15 March 2019.

5.0 How we inspect

Specific methods/processes used in this inspection include the following:

- discussion with the manager and staff
- examination of records
- user consultation officer report (UCO)
- evaluation and feedback

Prior to the inspection a range of information relevant to the service was reviewed. This included the following records:

- the previous inspection report
- any correspondence received by RQIA since the previous inspection
- records of any notifiable events

The following records were examined during the inspection:

- quality monitoring reports
- ten care and support plans
- carers group meetings information
- statement of purpose 2019
- carer induction handbook 2019
- service users handbook 2019
- carer training records including:
 - adult protection
 - medication
 - complaints
 - fire safety
 - restrictive practice

Policies reviewed:

- safeguarding policy (2016) to be reviewed (2019)
- host family recruitment (2018)
- record keeping (2018)
- whistleblowing (2018)
- complaints (2018)
- freedom of information (2018)
- restrictive practice (2018)
- induction (2019)

As part of the inspection the UCO spoke with three carers and three relatives, by telephone, on 20 and 21 March 2019 to obtain their views of the service provided by the Southern Trust's Adult Placement Agency.

During the inspection the inspector spoke with the manager and two social work staff regarding the care and support provided by the agency, carer training and carers' general knowledge in respect of the agency.

Prior to the inspection the manager was also asked to distribute a number of questionnaires to service users/relatives and carers seeking their views on the quality of the service. The responses show clear evidence that people were either satisfied or fully satisfied with the quality of the service highlighting that it is safe, effective, compassionate and well led.

Comments received from the service users and their carers:

- "My carers are kind and treat me like family."
- "The adults in our care seem happy and content."
- "We do activities together."

The inspector would like to thank the agency staff for their warm welcome and full co-operation throughout the inspection process.

The findings of the inspection were provided to the person in charge at the conclusion of the inspection.

6.0 The inspection

The most recent inspection of the agency was an unannounced care inspection.

6.1 Review of areas for improvement from the last care inspection dated 15 March 2018

There were no areas for improvement made as a result of the last care inspection.

6.2 Inspection findings

6.3 Is care safe?

Avoiding and preventing harm to service users from the care, treatment and support that is intended to help them.

The UCO was advised that training is organised annually by the agency and carers are given a choice of dates and times to attend. All aspects of mandatory training are covered as well as any training specific to the people being supported; examples of training included fire safety, first aid and epilepsy. The carers felt that the training is beneficial, both as a refresher but also as an opportunity to meet other carers.

The inspector reviewed the agency's systems in place to avoid and prevent harm to the service users; this included a review of carer arrangements in place within the agency.

The agency's carer recruitment policy (2019) outlines the process for ensuring that required checks are completed prior to commencement of any placement. The manager stated that they ensure that carer checks are in place. Documentation viewed and discussions with the manager indicated that the agency's recruitment systems is effective for ensuring that carers are not provided with a placement until required checks have been satisfactorily completed.

The agency's induction policy outlines the carer induction programme required within the adult placement regulations.

A record of the induction programme provided to carers is retained; the inspector viewed records of individual induction and noted that they are verified by the manager. Discussions with manager indicated that current carers had the appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil the requirements of their role.

The inspector viewed details of training completed by carers; it was noted that they are required to complete induction training, a range of mandatory training and training specific to the needs of individual service users. Records of carer induction and training viewed were satisfactory. The inspector noted some of the comments made by carers following evaluations of training:

- "Training well delivered."
- "A very good topic."
- "Training was helpful."
- "Of great benefit."
- "A good friendly environment for training."
- "Very interactive and relevant."
- "Meeting with other carers was interesting."

The agency's procedures in relation to safeguarding adults and whistleblowing were reviewed. The 'Safeguarding' procedure provided information and guidance in accordance with the required standards. The procedure has been updated in line with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Northern Ireland (DHSSPSNI) updated adult safeguarding guidance issued in July 2015 ('Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership'). The agency has highlighted the identification and role of an Adult Safeguarding Champion.

The agency maintains a record of referrals made to the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) safeguarding team and other relevant stakeholders relating to alleged or actual incidences of abuse. It was identified that carers are required to complete safeguarding training during their induction programme and a three yearly update.

The inspector reviewed the agency's arrangements for identifying, managing and where possible eliminating unnecessary risk to the service users health, welfare and safety. The agency's protocol for assessment of needs and risk outlines the process for assessing and reviewing risk.

It was identified that the agency receives a range of relevant information and assessments relating to individual service users prior to them receiving care and support. The agency has a range of risk assessments and care plans in place relating to the service users.

The manager described how the service users and /or their representatives are supported to be involved in the development and review of their care plans; records in place show that these are reviewed and updated as required.

Returned questionnaires from the service users indicated that safe care meant:

- Carers are always there to help you
- You feel protected and free from harm
- You can talk to carers if you have concerns.

Returned questionnaires from carers indicated that safe care meant:

- They meet the needs of the adult placed in their home
- They have received all mandatory training
- They have received safeguarding training
- They are aware of your responsibility and the process for reporting any concerning or unsafe practice.

Areas of good practice:

There were examples of good practice identified throughout the inspection in relation to the agency’s carer recruitment processes, training, adult protection, matching process and reviews.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of areas for improvement	0	0

6.4 Is care effective?

The right care, at the right time in the right place with the best outcome.

The carers and relatives spoken with by the UCO advised that they have regular phone calls and monitoring visits from the agency’s staff to ensure that there are no concerns regarding the placements and discuss any changes to the care and support plan. Confirmation was received that the agency provided a file containing the necessary paperwork including information about the complaints procedure.

Communication was noted to be very good between the relatives, agency and carers; and the carers felt that the staff are approachable should they need to contact them. It was noted that the carers and relatives work together to provide consistency for the people being supported; for example if the relative required additional respite due to ill health.

Examples of some of the comments made by the carers or relatives are listed below:

- “Great support. They’re always on the phone if I need them.”
- “Everything’s going well.”
- “Good support with the matching process and the registration system.”
- “It’s like home from home. XXX loves to go.”
- “They’re amazing people. XXX is just part of the family.”

The agency's arrangements for appropriately responding to and meeting the assessed needs of the service users were reviewed. Details of the nature and range of services provided are outlined within the Statement of Purpose (2019).

The agency's management of records policy details the procedures for the creation, storage, retention and disposal of records. Records viewed during the inspection were noted to be maintained in accordance with legislation, standards and the organisational policy. Carer and service user records viewed by the inspector were noted to be retained securely.

The manager could describe the methods used for assisting the service users to be effectively engaged in the development of their care plans; it was noted that carers are provided with a copy of the care plan and the service users have access to this.

The inspector reviewed the agency's arrangements in place to monitor, audit and review the effectiveness and quality of care delivered to the service users. The agency has a system in place for monitoring the quality of the service provided; it was noted that the process involves seeking information from the service users, families, carers and community care workers.

The inspector has included some of the comments made by the service users, carers and agency staff:

Service users:

- "I'm happy with **** and *****."
- "I like being here with **** and I keep ** company."
- "I like it here and looking at the horses."

Carers:

- "***** is just like part of the family now."
- "I get on well with **** we have a good relationship."
- "I'm satisfied with all the training and support we get."

Agency monitoring staff:

- "***** was very relaxed and happy."
- "***** is happy with the service provided."
- "***** has no areas of concern."
- "***** is happy to continue with the short breaks."

The agency ensures the effectiveness of the care and support by completing regular monitoring visits. Records of monitoring visits were noted to include details of the review of the agency's systems and an improvement plan.

The agency's systems to promote effective communication between the service users, carers and relevant stakeholders were reviewed during the inspection. Discussions with the manager indicated that carers communicate appropriately with the service users and where appropriate their representatives. The agency facilitates a carer forum group, that allows carers to meet and discuss various topics as a group. The inspector has highlighted some of the areas discussed recently:

- home safety
- dementia awareness
- medication
- safeguarding
- record keeping
- RQIA themes

Returned questionnaires from the service users indicated that effective care meant:

- You get the right care, at the right time in the right place.
- The carers know your care needs.
- Your care plan is discussed and agreed with you.
- Your care meets your expectations.

Returned questionnaires from carers indicated that effective care meant:

- They believe that the adult placed has been assessed and are in the right place for their needs to be met?
- They are kept informed of changes to the adult placed care plan
- They have good working relationships with their social worker?

Areas of good practice:

There were examples of good practice identified throughout the inspection in relation to the agency’s auditing arrangements, quality monitoring and communication with the service users and their carers.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of areas for improvement	0	0

6.6 Is care compassionate?

Service users are treated with dignity and respect and should be fully involved in decisions affecting their treatment, care and support.

The UCO was informed by the carers and relatives interviewed that staff from the agency regularly phones or visits to obtain their views of the service being provided. The people supported are also asked for their views to ensure satisfaction with the placement. The carers were very knowledgeable regarding the people being supported, the support they require and the types of activities they like to do; for example day trips, football, shopping or meals out.

Examples of some of the comments made by the carers or relatives are listed below:

- “They’re just part of the family.”
- “Very happy with the service.”
- “Everything’s going well.”

- “Match made in heaven.”

The inspection assessed the agency’s ability to treat the service users with dignity, respect and compassion and to engage the service users in decisions affecting the care they receive. Discussions with the manager and staff indicated that the values such as choice, dignity and respect were embedded in the culture of the agency.

The manager could describe the methods used for assisting the service users to make informed choices and for respecting their views and wishes.

Carers have been provided with training and information in relation to human rights and confidentiality during their induction programme. The agency has provided the service users with information relating to human rights, complaints, advocacy and adult safeguarding.

There are a range of systems in place to promote effective engagement with the service users and where appropriate their representatives in conjunction with the HSCT community keyworker; they include the agency’s quality monitoring processes; complaints process, care review meetings and carers monitoring and training updates. It was identified that the agency’s quality monitoring process assists in the evaluation of the quality of the service provided and in identifying any areas for improvement.

The agency has processes in place to record comments made by the service users. Quality monitoring reports viewed by the inspector provided evidence that the agency endeavours to engage with the service users and carers and where appropriate their representatives in relation to the quality of the service provided.

The inspector observed the agency’s quality audits completed during 2018, in which service users and host families were able to comment on the following areas of service provision:

Service users:

- What do you think about your host family home?
- Who lives at your host family home with you?
- Do you like living with_____?
- What do you like about your host family home?
- What help do you need at your host family home?
- What do you not like about your host family home?
- Are you given choices at your host family home?

Comments received:

- “I get treated well.”
- “I like **** and she like me.”
- “***** gives me my favourite food.”
- “**** and her family are good and look after me well.”
- “I’m made feel part of everything.”
- “**** asks me what I like.”
- “***** and *** are so nice to me.”
- “We go out for drives.”

Host families:

- Support from Social Services
- Training
- Service user reviews
- Service User Information

Comments received:

- “I get good support from my social worker.”
- “Good training and information is relevant.”
- “Staff are approachable and supportive.”
- “We are always updated.”
- “I get good support.”
- “My social worker is easily reached.”

Service users are supported to participate in a six monthly review involving their HSC Trust keyworker and that care and support plans are reviewed six monthly or as required. The inspector noted some of the comments made by service users during their annual review:

- “I like going to ***** It’s great.”
- “I enjoy my respite.”
- “I get on well with **** and ***** and I enjoy my time there.”
- “Good fun and I get to choose what I want to do.”

Returned questionnaires from the service users indicated that compassionate care meant:

- Carers treat you with kindness.
- Carers ensure you are respected and that your privacy choices and dignity is maintained.
- Carers talk to you about your care.
- Carers support you to make decisions about your care.

Returned questionnaires from carers indicated that compassionate care meant:

- They treat adults placed with kindness, dignity and respect.
- Care is delivered by you in a person centred individual manner.
- They communicate with the adult placed about their care and treatment in a manner which is understood.

Areas of good practice

There were examples of good practice identified in relation to the agency’s processes for engaging with the service users, effective communication with carers individually and in groups whilst providing care in an individualised person centred manner.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of areas for improvement	0	0

6.6 Is the service well led?

Effective leadership, management and governance which creates a culture focused on the needs and experience of service users in order to deliver safe, effective and compassionate care.

All of the carers and relatives who spoke with the UCO confirmed that they receive good support from the agency's team of staff. Regular communication was confirmed, either through home visits or phone calls to ensure that there were no concerns regarding the placement. All were aware of whom they should they contact if they had any concerns regarding the placement and were aware of the support available to them.

The agency has systems of management and governance in place to promote the delivery of safe, effective and compassionate care.

The agency has a range of policies and procedures noted to be in accordance with those as required within the regulations. During the inspection the inspector viewed a number of policies; it was identified that those viewed had been reviewed and updated in accordance with timescales.

The agency's systems for auditing and reviewing information with the aim of promoting safety and improving the quality of life for the service users were reviewed. Records viewed and discussions with the manager indicated that the agency's governance arrangements promote the identification and management of risk; these include provision of required policies, audit of complaints, accidents, safeguarding referrals and incidents notifiable to RQIA.

The agency's complaints policy outlines the process for effectively handling complaints; discussions with the manager indicated a clear understanding of the actions required in the event of a complaint being received.

The agency retains a record of all complaints or compliments received. It was noted from discussions with the manager and records viewed that the agency has received no complaints since the previous inspection.

The agency has developed a carer newsletter that is provided to carers and also facilitates carer meetings. Some of the areas discussed include:

- training
- complaints
- service evaluation
- RQIA inspections
- training for carers
- service evaluation
- host families
- met the team
- what is APA?

Records viewed and discussions with the manager indicated that the agency has in place effective management and governance systems to monitor and improve quality.

The agency's quality annual review has been completed. The inspector has highlighted some of the comments from carers, service users and staff:

- “Host families were very appreciative of the support that *****and the Adult Placement Team were providing to them and thought that the training they received was very comprehensive.”
- “Staff are most definitely fully committed to the development and expansion of the service as they see how valuable it is proving through offering carers a break.”
- “I have been very impressed with the quality of the assessments carried out by the team and the reports have enabled me and the Assessment Panel to make very informed discussions on the suitability of prospective host families.”
- “I cannot speak highly enough of the support they receive from the Adult Placement Team and how pressure in its many forms is alleviated through the provision of a short break for carers.”
- “I have carried out numerous audits on the service and I am very satisfied that assessments, record keeping, staff supervision and training records reflect the confidence Trust staff and Non-Trust Stakeholders have in the Adult Placement Team and the service it provides.”
- “Two service users were consulted as part of my appraisal of the service. It was very obvious from speaking to both of them how much they looked forward to going on the breaks. They talked about all of the activities they were involved in and how much they felt part of the family home.”
- “A service user commented on the positive experience that short breaks with the host family gave.”

The organisational and management structure of the agency is outlined in the agency's statement of purpose. The registered person has worked effectively with RQIA to operate and lead the organisation in maintaining compliance with regulations. There was evidence of ongoing, effective collaborative working relationships with relevant stakeholders, including other HSCT representatives.”

The agency's statement of purpose and information handbook was noted to have been reviewed and updated in (2019). The manager had a clear understanding of both her and the carer's roles and responsibilities.

The registered person has shown an understanding of regulatory matters and led the organisation in maintaining compliance with Regulations.

On the date of inspection the RQIA certificate was noted to be displayed appropriately and was reflective of the service provided.

The inspector noted that the agency collects equality information in relation to the people supported, during the referral process. The data is used effectively and with the individual people supported involvement when an individual person centred care and support plan is developed. The manager was able to discuss the ways in which the agency's development and training enables them to engage with a diverse range of service users.

Discussions with the manager highlighted evidence that supports people's equal opportunities, regardless of their abilities, their background or their lifestyle. Some of the areas of equality awareness identified during the inspection include:

- effective communication

- people supported involvement
- the matching process
- safeguarding
- advocacy
- equal care and support
- individual person centred care
- individual risk assessment
- disability awareness

The agency’s commitment to equality and individual person centred care is an area of positive practice and is to be commended.

Returned questionnaires from the people supported indicated that well led care meant:

- You are always informed about your carer
- You feel the service is good
- Your views are sought about your care and the quality of the service
- You know how to make a complaint.

Returned questionnaires from carers indicated that well led care meant:

- There is a culture of carer involvement in the running of the service
- There is a culture of continuous quality improvement and all carers are encouraged to bring forward new ideas and innovations
- Social workers and agency staff are approachable and open to whistleblowing or raising concerns.

Areas of good practice:

There were examples of good practice identified throughout the inspection in relation to the agency’s governance arrangements whilst focussing on best outcomes for service users.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of areas for improvement	0	0

7.0 Quality improvement plan

There were no areas for improvement identified during this inspection, and a QIP is not required or included, as part of this inspection report.



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