

Inspection Report Adult Placement Agency

11 May 2023



Southern Health & Social Care Trust APA

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: Responsible Individual: Dr Maria O'Kane	Registered Manager: Ms Angela Murnion Date registered: 4 January 2017
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Ms Angela Murnion	
Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates: The Southern HSC Trust Adult Placement Scheme (APA) 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.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An announced inspection took place on 11 May 2023, from 9.20 am to 2.30 pm conducted by the care inspector. This inspection focused on carer recruitment and induction, adult safeguarding, notifications, complaints, whistleblowing, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), the involvement of those supported and Dysphasia.

Good practice was identified in relation to the involvement of those supported. There were good governance and management arrangements in place. Carers we spoke with demonstrated a desire to provide those supported with high quality, personalised care.

There was a clear leadership and management structure in place which helped to ensure carers were clear about their role and responsibilities.

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 have 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 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 adult placement agencies (APAs) 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 choices and freedoms associated with any person living in their own home. The model "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 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 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.

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The inspection focused on consultation with the those supported, the APA carers and the agency manager to find out their views on the service and reviewing 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 prior to the inspection. Information was provided to APA carers and those supported on how they could give feedback on the quality of service provided and this included questionnaires. A number of questionnaires were returned in which people stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided. Carers' outcomes were consistently good, and their feedback confirmed this.

Carer comments:

- "Happy with the service, the training is good."
- "The process of becoming a carer is very difficult at the start."
- "The management are very approachable and supportive."
- "It was great to be involved with campaigns to recruit other carers."
- "I feel very supported by the agency."
- "I have no issues at all, and no concerns."

Questionnaire comments:

- "The allowance does not cover the cost of having an adult placement."

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 Southern Health & Social Care Trust APA was undertaken on 12 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 reflect information contained within the Department of Health's (DoH) regional policy 'Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership' July 2015 and clearly outlines the procedure for staff in reporting concerns. The organisation has an identified Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC). The Adult Safeguarding Position report for the agency has been formulated and was reviewed.

Discussions with the person in charge demonstrated that they were knowledgeable in matters relating to adult safeguarding, the role of the ASC and the process for reporting adult safeguarding concerns.

It was noted that staff had completed adult safeguarding training during their induction and updates thereafter.

Staff indicated that they had a clear understanding of their responsibility in identifying and reporting any actual or suspected incidences 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 has a system for retaining a record of referrals made to the HSC Trust in relation to adult safeguarding. Records viewed and discussions with the person in charge indicated that no adult safeguarding referrals have been made since the last inspection.

Carers who spoke to us stated that they had no concerns regarding the safety of those supported; they described how they could speak to agency staff if they had any concerns in relation to safety or the care being provided.

Carers were provided with training appropriate to the requirements of their role. Review of the training records identified that all training required was up to date.

None of the people supported currently required the use of specialised mobility equipment. The manager was aware of how to source training should any equipment be required in the future.

The manager and staff demonstrated that they had an understanding that those supported who lack capacity to make decisions about aspects of their care and treatment have rights as outlined in the Mental Capacity Act MCA (2016). The MCA requires that, as far as possible, those supported make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible. (MCA) training had been completed by all carers.

Agency staff had completed DoLS training appropriate to their job roles. Records were available relating to the people supported who are being assessed in relation to DoLS.

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.

5.2.2 Are their robust systems in place for Carer Recruitment?

There were no new carers recruited since the last inspection. The agency does not have a carer recruitment policy. The carer recruitment procedure was revised during the inspection. This will be reviewed in future inspections.

5.2.3 What are the arrangements to involve the people supported?

From reviewing service users' care records and through discussions with carers, it was positive to note that service users have an input into their care plan. They were provided with easy read reports which allowed them to fully participate in all aspects of their care. The service users' care plans contained details about the service users' likes and dislikes and the level of support they require.

The agency had completed an annual review in relation to their practice which incorporated service user and their representatives' feedback.

5.2.4 What are the arrangements for the induction of Carers?

A structured induction programme was not available for newly recruited carers, however, during the inspection a comprehensive structured induction programme was written and this will be reviewed at future inspections.

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 person supported was present, so that daily tasks could be observed and it verified that carers were meeting the required standards.

The manager had ensured that the quality assurance systems in place were effectively and positively impacting the quality of the service received by those supported. The service delivered was regularly reviewed through a range of internal audits and there was an annual satisfaction survey where feedback from people supported and their carers was sought. A review of the feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction. Some of the comments received from the annual survey (Regulation 25.) Were as follows:

Comments of those supported:

- “I love my host family as they treat me as part of the family.”
- “I am excited weekly for the planned visits.”

Comment from a relative:

- “The service is invaluable, a rewarding experience for the whole family”

Comment from Carers:

- “The team are very supportive.”
- “Support from the team is invaluable.”

There is a process for recording complaints in accordance with the agency’s policy and procedures. It was noted that no complaints were received since the last inspection.

5.2.6 What are the arrangements in place for carer training?

Carers consulted with prior to the inspection spoke positively about the variety and level of training they had received to enable them to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of their role. A review of a sample of staff training records concluded that carers had received mandatory and other training relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

6.0 Conclusion

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



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