

Announced Inspection Report 9 August 2016











Triangle Housing Association

Domiciliary Care Agency/Supported Living Service 4 Baronscourt Close, Carryduff, Belfast Tel No: 02890813628

Inspector: Rhonda Simms

1.0 Summary

An unannounced inspection of Triangle Housing Association took place on 9 August 2016 from 9.30 to 16.30.

The inspection sought to assess progress with any issues raised during and since the last care inspection and to determine if the domiciliary care service/supported living service was delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and if the service was well led.

Is care safe?

During the inspection the inspector found evidence to indicate the delivery of safe care. Examination of the staffing arrangements showed that the agency maintains a provision of appropriately trained and supervised staff who understand the needs of service users. Staff provided feedback that managers are approachable and accessible for consultation at all times.

The arrangements to protect service users include the provision of safeguarding training which reflects the most up to date regional guidance. The arrangements for the provision of care and support include appropriate involvement of service users, the HSC Trust and relatives. The inspector found evidence of positive outcomes for service users through a process of person centred assessment, and review of needs, preferences, and risks.

Is care effective?

During the inspection the agency was found to be competently delivering effective care. The agency has systems in place to ensure an effective response to the assessed needs of service users. Service users and/or their representatives are closely involved in the development of care and support plans which are appropriately reviewed. The agency maintains effective communication with service users, relatives and key stakeholders, particularly the HSC Trust. The quality monitoring arrangements include consultations with service users, their representatives and the HSC Trust, and provide a thorough system of audit and service improvement. The inspector received feedback from service users, representatives and staff, which indicated that service provision had resulted in positive outcomes for service users' lives.

Is care compassionate?

During the inspection the agency was found to be delivering a high standard of person centred compassionate care.

The inspector observed interactions between staff and service users and received feedback from service users, relatives and a community professional which indicated that the human rights, choice and respect of service users are upheld through service delivery. There was evidence which indicated that the views and wishes of service users are consistently sought by staff on a day to day basis, in addition to formal processes such as monthly quality monitoring and the annual service user survey. The agency maintains systems to seek the views of service users' representatives and there was evidence of regular involvement of representatives in the development and review of appropriate care and support plans.

The inspector noted that the provision of a high standard of compassionate care in collaboration with service users has enabled service users to achieve greater independence than previously experienced, and achieve significant individual goals.

The inspector found that service users are involved in the Tenants' Advisory Group, 'Choice Checkers' peer service evaluation role, advocacy groups run by other agencies, and access training through the agency in areas such as safeguarding and self-advocacy. Triangle Housing Association successfully implements systems of service user involvement which result in service user led service improvement.

Is the service well led?

During the inspection competent delivery of a well led service was found. Management and governance systems have been effectively implemented by the agency to ensure that the needs of service users are met and quality improvement systems are maintained. Agency staff are aware of their roles, responsibilities and accountability systems within the organisational structure. It was noted that staff have access to a manager who has knowledge of the needs of service users at all times. The inspector noted evidence of effective team working to the benefit of service users. Constructive working relationships with key stakeholders, including relatives and the HSC Trust, have contributed to positive outcomes achieved with service users.

This inspection was underpinned by the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 and the Domiciliary Care Agencies Minimum Standards.

1.1 Inspection outcome

	Requirements	Recommendations
Total number of requirements and recommendations made at this inspection	0	0

This inspection resulted in no requirements or recommendations being made. Findings of the inspection were discussed with Amanda Crawford, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.

1.2 Actions/enforcement taken following the most recent care inspection

Other than those actions detailed in the QIP there were no further actions required to be taken following the most recent inspection on 19 May 2015.

2.0 Service details

Registered organisation/registered person: Triangle Housing Association Christopher Alexander	Registered manager: Amanda Crawford
Person in charge of the agency at the time of inspection: Amanda Crawford	Date manager registered: Amanda Crawford – 23/01/2014

3.0 Methods/processes

Prior to inspection the following records were analysed:

- Previous inspection report
- Records of notifiable incidents
- Correspondence with RQIA.

During the inspection the inspector spoke with the service manager, the registered manager, three support staff, five service users, a service user's representative, and one HSC Trust community professional. During the inspection the inspector observed the interactions of staff with service users.

As part of the inspection and at the request of the inspector, questionnaires were distributed for completion by staff; ten were returned. At the request of the inspector, questionnaires were distributed for completion by service users; nine were returned. Issues identified through feedback from questionnaires was discussed with the registered manager to the satisfaction of the inspector.

Feedback received by the inspector during the inspection process is included throughout this report.

The following records were examined during the inspection:

- A range of care and support plans
- HSC Trust assessments of needs and risk assessments
- Care review records
- Recording/evaluation of care used by the agency
- Monthly monitoring reports
- Tenant meeting minutes
- Service user evaluation survey results
- Service user newsletter
- Staff meeting minutes
- Staff training records
- Records relating to staff supervision
- Complaints records
- Incident records
- Records relating to safeguarding of adults
- Induction records
- Staff rota information
- Staff communication records
- Recruitment policy 2013
- A range of policies relating to the management of staff
- Supervision policy 2015
- Induction policy 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy 2013

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- Restrictive practice policy 2016
- Risk Management policy 2015
- Incident policy 2015
- Whistleblowing policy 2015
- Policy relating to management of data 2014
- Complaints policy 2015
- Statement of Purpose 2015
- Service User Guide 2014.

4.0 The inspection

Triangle Housing Association, based at Baronscourt Close, Carryduff, is a supported living type domiciliary care agency which provides twenty four hour care and support in shared accommodation over three sites to nine service users who have a learning disability and complex needs.

4.1 Review of requirements and recommendations from the last care inspection dated 19 May 2015.

Last care inspection	Validation of compliance	
Requirement 1 Ref: Regulation 14 (b) (c)	Where the agency is acting otherwise than as an employment agency, the registered person shall make suitable arrangements to ensure that the agency is conducted, and the prescribed services arranged by	
Stated: Second time	the agency, are provided-	
	(b) so as to safeguard service users against abuse or neglect;(c) so as to promote the independence of service users	
	The registered person must review the proportion of utility costs paid by the agency in relation to each bungalow, taking account the staff presence.	Met
	The inspector noted that the agency had made some progress with working towards compliance with this requirement.	
	RQIA must be advised of progress towards compliance with this requirement.	
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection:	
	The inspector examined evidence to confirm that Triangle Housing Association have reviewed and implemented changes to utility costs incurred by service users, to take into account staff presence and use of utilities.	

4.3 Is care safe?

During the inspection staffing arrangements were reviewed by the inspector. The agency has a recruitment policy in place and a dedicated human resources department oversees the recruitment process, including the completion of appropriate pre-employment checks.

Staff rotas and feedback from staff and service users indicated that sufficient numbers of staff are available to meet the needs of service users at all times. The inspector noted that vacant shifts are usually covered by the current staff team, and occasionally by staff supplied by an employment agency which is also a registered domiciliary care agency. The service manager provided records which showed that when needed, the agency uses a small pool of staff from an employment agency which is also a registered domiciliary care agency. The staffing arrangements maximise the provision of familiar staff to service users.

It was noted that the agency has an induction policy and induction programme which includes an initial two week period of shadowing experienced staff for support workers, and five days of training within the first twelve weeks. The agency has an appropriate induction procedure and support mechanisms in place for staff working on a temporary basis; the inspector reviewed properly completed records. The inspector received positive feedback from staff who have recently completed induction and found that the process prepared them adequately for their roles. The quality of induction training and support provided by the team and manager were positively commented on by staff.

The inspector noted that the agency has recently reviewed the induction procedure to incorporate the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) induction workbook as a key document for use by staff and managers in guiding performance review. The inspector was advised that the majority of support staff are registered with NISCC and that this is now a requirement of employment.

Records of training and staff feedback indicated that staff attend a range of training necessary to meet the needs of service users. There was evidence that staff have attended training additional to that stated in the Minimum Standards, including training specific to the needs of individual service users, and accredited training courses such as QCF and ILM. The inspector was informed that some staff have taken the opportunity to apply for enhanced development training supported by Triangle Housing Association.

The inspector received feedback from staff which indicated that the agency is committed to the ongoing development of staff through the provision of quality training. Staff described training as 'high quality', 'fresh' and 'very good'. Staff commented that training courses are specific to the service and that the focus of update training is changed and updated to reflect current issues. The inspector examined records of competency assessments completed subsequent to key training events to ensure that learning objectives have been met, and to identify future learning needs.

Examination of records indicated that a system to ensure that staff supervision and appraisals are planned and completed in accordance with policy has been maintained. It was noted that the agency maintains robust systems to assess the competency of staff, particularly in relation to administering medication and handling service users' finances. Staff commented positively on the structure of the first medication competency assessment, which is undertaken on a flexible timescale within six months of employment, dependant on the knowledge and skill of the

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individual. Annual finance and medication competency assessment include comprehensive written questions and a series of observations of practice by a manager. Discussions with staff and managers during inspection indicated that a reflective learning environment is promoted within the agency.

Staff described managers as 'supportive', 'approachable', and responsive to queries and concerns. A service manager is available for consultation at all times, backed up by a senior manager who has a working knowledge of the service and service users. An effective on call system ensures that staff can avail of management support twenty four hours a day.

The agency's provision for the welfare, care and protection of service users was examined by the inspector. The inspector viewed a policy maintained by the agency in relation to the safeguarding of adults. The inspector received feedback from staff and examined documentation which indicated that safeguarding training provided by the agency includes the regional guidance 'Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership' July 2015. The training manager for Triangle Housing Association delivers safeguarding training and has been appointed as safeguarding champion. The inspector was informed that safeguarding policy and procedures are due to be adapted subsequent to and in accordance with review of policy by the HSC Trust. Records showed that staff are provided with safeguarding training during induction and at appropriate intervals to ensure best practice thereafter.

The inspector noted that staff were confident regarding their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding issues and clear about lines of accountability. The service manager discussed safeguarding referrals made to the HSC Trust. Clear records were maintained of the circumstances surrounding referral, and subsequent discussions and protection plan with the HSC Trust.

The inspector examined the safety of the agency's arrangements to identify and manage risk to service users. The inspector examined referral and review arrangements with the HSC Trust which include risk assessments and care plans. Agency staff provided feedback which indicated that they had an understanding of the management of risk, and an ability to balance risk with the wishes and human rights of individual service users. It was evident from discussion with staff and review of records in respect of service users, that the agency is open to person centred positive risk taking and is able to work imaginatively and collaboratively with agencies and professionals to maximise independence and manage potential risk to service users.

The inspector noted that the agency has effectively managed risks inherent in complex individual situations and provided a sensitive response which has resulted in improved outcomes for staff and service users. An HSC Trust community professional commented on the ability of the service manager to communicate appropriately in a timely and relevant manner in relation to concerns identified. A service user commented, 'I feel 100% safe'.

The inspector received staff feedback which indicated that staff are aware of their obligations in relation to raising concerns about poor practice, and are confident of an appropriate management response.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

Number of requirements:	0	Number of recommendations:	0
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4.4 Is care effective?

The agency's arrangements for appropriately assessing and meeting the needs of people who use the service were examined during the inspection. The full nature and range of service provision is laid out in the Statement of Purpose (2015) and Service User Guide (2014).

The inspector reviewed a range of service users' care and support plans. The inspector was informed by staff that person centred care plans are developed with service users and/or their representatives in conjunction with relevant assessments provided by the HSC Trust multi-disciplinary team. Examination of a range of care and support indicated that information from HSC Trust assessments is incorporated into care and support plans. A community professional provided positive feedback regarding the effectiveness of staff implementation of training provided by a specialist professional in relation to one service user. Feedback received by the inspector from staff and service users indicated that service users have a genuine influence on the content of their care plans.

Care and support plans reviewed by the inspector had a strong person centred focus, were up to date, and clearly detailed service users' needs and how they wished these to be met. Service users, representatives and staff provided feedback to the inspector which indicated that the provision of care and support by the agency had resulted in positive outcomes for service users. The inspector noted that the effective implementation of care and support plans had resulted in the promotion of independence for some service users, and the achievement of new goals for others. A service user provided feedback about their continuing personal development and advocacy on behalf of others, achieved through the provision of consistently effective care from the agency.

Records examined by the inspector indicated that care and support plans are regularly evaluated and reviewed, including involvement as appropriate with service users, representatives and the HSC Trust. Staff described service users as actively involved in the review of care and support plans, which take place on a monthly basis with their key worker, and on at least an annual or when required basis with the HSC Trust. The inspector examined review records which clearly documented the views of service users in detail, and included their signatures. Care and support plans reviewed by the inspector showed evidence of regular updating in accordance with changes in service users' needs or wishes.

The agency has developed and maintained a thorough quality monitoring system to oversee, audit and review the effectiveness and quality of care delivered to service users. Monthly quality monitoring is undertaken by managers who have a good working knowledge of the service.

The quality monitoring system provides a thorough standard of monitoring in accordance with RQIA guidance. Quality monitoring reports included consultation with a range of service users, staff, relatives and HSC Trust professionals, and progress on improvement matters. The inspector noted that quality monitoring reports documented positive feedback regarding the quality of service provision, particularly from service users and relatives.

The agency's systems to promote effective communication between service users, staff and other key stakeholders were assessed during the inspection. Communications systems maintained by the agency provided evidence of effective communication, including a complaints and compliments process, tenant meetings, quality monitoring reports, and monthly care plan reviews between keyworker and service user.

Review of tenant meeting minutes by the inspector showed that standing agenda items including service users' views and staffing arrangements; the views of service users and the agency response were recorded. The inspector noted that a range of information in an appropriate format is displayed in an area where service users can easily access it. A service user highlighted how the Tenants' Advisory Group contributed to the design and content of these information leaflets.

During the inspection the inspector observed staff interactions with service users and noted that service users appeared to enjoy positive relationships with staff. In addition to formal methods, discussion with service users and staff indicated that effective communication happens on a routine daily basis as staff interact with service user and make themselves available for discussion. Discussion with the registered manager, service manager and staff regarding how the agency deals with behaviour which may challenge reflected a high standard of communication skills, referred to by a community professional as a 'skilled approach', which has been effective in producing positive outcomes for service users.

The agency maintains communication systems to ensure that staff receive information relevant to the care and support of service users. Staff described the use of delegation sheets, diary and daily verbal handovers. It was noted that staff meeting minutes recorded the discussion of information regarding service users and a range of relevant issues including: NISCC standards, legislation and standards relating to domiciliary care, and preparation for RQIA inspections. Staff described effective verbal and written communication systems within the staff team and with the service manager. Staff who spoke with the inspector indicated the staff team is supportive to each other and that staff communication is good.

Examination of documentation and discussion with staff indicated that the agency promotes good working relationships with the HSC Trust and refers to or consults with a range of appropriate professionals when relevant. The service manager described how the agency has collaborated effectively with a range of agencies and professionals in relation to managing complex situations involving the well-being and safety of service users.

A service user's representative and a community professional described having effective communication with the service manager in relation to relevant issues. A service users' representative described the service manager as open to suggestions as to how to work effectively with a service user. A community professional noted how the skilled approach of staff in communicating with a service user with complex needs had resulted in significant

The inspector noted that service users are informed of advocacy services and have accessed advocacy appropriate to their individual situations. A service user discussed their role in acting as an advocate for service users across the wider agency through the Tenants' Advisory Group, their role in an advocacy group led by a voluntary agency, and their positive experience contributing to service improvement in health settings.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

improvement in their level of functioning and quality of life.

4.5 Is care compassionate?

The inspection sought to assess the agency's ability to treat service users with dignity and respect, and to fully involve service users/their representatives in decisions affecting their care and support. The inspector found that an ethos of dignity and respect, independence, rights, equality and diversity was reflected throughout staff attitudes and the delivery of the service.

Discussion with staff and observation of their interactions with service users during the inspection showed that staff understand and respect the differing needs and wishes of service users. The inspector observed that the language and behaviour of staff promoted the independence and choice of service users throughout their interactions with service users.

A service user discussed how staff use a particular form of communication with them, in response to their needs and preferred manner. This service user highlighted to the inspector how they had noticed that staff communicate with different service users according to their individual preferences. The service user provided feedback that the individual consideration of personality by staff makes them feel valued and respected, 'even if they are helping me, they make me feel that what we are doing is just normal'.

A service user commented, 'I love it here...the guys at Triangle are brilliant...they bend over backwards...they let you tell it in your own time. The staff listen, they never judge me. It's like a big family...it's the best thing I've ever done'.

The inspector noted that staff have developed knowledge of individual service users through careful observation and interaction over time. This was demonstrated through discussion with staff and examination of records which show detailed identification of changes in service users' needs and preferences. In relation to service users who have recently begun to accept services from the agency, the inspector received information which indicated that staff reflect on information provided from professionals and representatives to inform the provision of care and support. The representative of a service user commented on how they felt their opinions were 'listened to and taken into account', to the benefit and 'smooth transition' for a service user. This representative referred to the service manager as 'very approachable' and 'more than helpful'.

It was evident from discussion with staff, service users and representatives, that the agency promotes the independence, equality and diversity of service users. The inspector noted that service users are encouraged to develop their independence inside and outside of their own homes. Staff have worked with a service user to enable them to independently carry out an activity which previously required them to seek substantial help from professionals.

Some service users have developed the ability to use public transport, shop for goods, and attend college. It was noted that in the area of personal relationships, the agency has imaginatively sought training for staff and service users from specialist organisations. The development of knowledge and skills for both staff and service users has enabled service users to develop further independence and improved their access to rights and experiences.

The registered manager and service manager discussed how the agency supported service users and staff through recent experiences of loss and bereavement. The inspector examined feedback to the agency from a relative which indicated that the agency had provided a high standard of compassionate care and support to a service user and their family which had been deeply appreciated by relatives.

Discussion with service users and observations during the day of inspection indicated that service users are fully involved in day to day decisions and routines. The inspector observed staff using language which encouraged the service user to make their own choices. Staff commented on the person centred approach of 'Active Support' implemented by the agency, '(the service user) very much decides what they want to do'. Staff described a flexible approach to daily activity, which enables service users to participate inclusively in the community and pursue individual interests. On the day of inspection the inspector observed that a number of service users left their own homes with staff to engage in individual activities of their choosing.

Discussions with service users indicated that they expect to be able to make choices in the everyday course of their lives. The inspector spoke with service users who had been enabled by staff to live individual lives and pursue different interests within the local community and with their families. It was noted that staff support has enabled service users to develop and maintain family relationships.

Service users commented:

- 'The staff are great. I want to stay here forever, this is my home.'
- 'The staff are fantastic, my bedroom is brilliant.'

Examination of tenant meeting minutes indicated that the agency seeks to involve service users in making informed decisions regarding a range of issues, such as their environment, and marking significant events. The inspector noted that requests from service users had been responded to, for example, the joint purchase of indoor and outdoor furniture, specific trips and experiences.

The inspector noted that the agency actively promotes service user involvement across the wider agency through the Triangle Housing Association Tenants' Advisory Group. A service user discussed how much they enjoy the group, noting how welcome they feel meeting senior managers including the Chief Executive, and the Board. 'They listen to the TAG, they never judge me'. Minutes of meetings of the Tenants' Advisory Group reflected meaningful inclusion of service users across the wider agency in decision making processes, and responsiveness of senior managers to requests made by service users.

The inspector noted that a service user has participated in training provided by Triangle Housing Association, including safeguarding, self-advocacy and health matters. A service user has participated in 'Choice Checker' training, and has interviewed service users from other agency services to obtain their evaluation of services received. The inspector was informed that the format of 'Choice Checker' interviews has been evaluated and reviewed as part of the agency's improvement plan, to enhance the agency's response to service users' views.

The agency maintains a range of quality monitoring systems to evaluate the quality of services provided, including monthly quality monitoring reports which specifically ascertain and include the views of service users and their representatives. The inspector examined the report of the annual service user evaluation survey 2016, which reflected a high level of satisfaction amongst service users regarding the care they receive and the manner in which staff treat them. The inspector was informed that the agency responded to service user feedback in 2015 which directly resulted in changes to the format of the survey in 2016. The agency maintains formal processes to ascertain and respond to the views of relatives, such as monthly quality monitoring, review meetings and a relatives' evening which was held in May 2016.

The inspector was provided with examples of information which has been prepared in a suitable format, subsequent to consultation with the Tenants' Advisory Group. This includes leaflets on how to make a complaint, keeping safe, voting, and care and support. A service user discussion their contribution to the compilation of these leaflets.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

Number of requirements:	0	Number of recommendations:	0

4.6 Is the service well led?

The inspector examined management and governance systems in place to meet the needs of service users. It was noted that robust systems of management and governance established by Triangle Housing Association have been implemented at the agency. The day to day operation of the agency is overseen by a service manager who is supported by the registered manager. The management structure of the agency is clearly defined and was well understood by staff. The inspector received positive feedback from service users and their representatives regarding the skills of the service manager, 'very approachable', 'more than helpful', 'nice and level headed', 'communication is relevant and timely'.

The inspector saw evidence of a systematic approach to reviewing information with the aim of improving safety and quality of life for service users. This includes the agency's governance of risk which includes appropriate policies and procedures, regular audit of adverse incidents including safeguarding incidents and incidents notifiable to RQIA, and service improvement strategies implemented by the senior management team.

The agency operates a robust training system and has an appointed training manager/safeguarding champion who is available for consultation with staff on training and safeguarding issues. It was noted that senior managers available for consultation out of hours have a working knowledge of the service and are respected by staff. Feedback from staff indicated that they are confident that managers would listen and respond to their concerns.

The agency maintains a comprehensive range of policies and procedures which are reviewed at least every three years. Policies and procedures are maintained on an electronic system accessible to all staff, and paper policies are retained in the office used by staff daily. The agency maintains and implements a policy relating to complaints and compliments. The inspector noted that one complaint was received and addressed in accordance with agency procedures during the reporting period of 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

Staff could describe how they would respond to concerns about performance of a colleague and knew how to access the whistleblowing policy. There are effective systems of formal and informal supervision and consultation, both inside and outside of normal working hours. Staff that provided feedback to the inspector were informed of their responsibilities and understood their roles. Written and verbal guides to daily roles and responsibilities were available to staff on a daily basis. It was noted that staff had been provided with specific information regarding the role of RQIA, inspection guidance issued by RQIA to providers, and their role in the event of an RQIA inspection.

The registered person has worked effectively with RQIA and maintained their roles and responsibilities in accordance with legislation.

Feedback provided to the inspector indicated that there are effective collaborative working relationships with key stakeholders, including the HSC Trust and families, which are valued by staff. The inspector received positive feedback from service users' representatives, and noted positive comments recorded in monthly quality monitoring reports from relatives and staff, regarding the ability of the agency staff to work in partnership, particularly with regard to communicating relevant information. It was evident to the inspector that effective partnership working with Trust professionals and relatives has resulted in positive outcomes for service users.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during the inspection.

Number of requirements:	0	Number of recommendations:	0

5.0 Quality improvement plan

There were no issues identified during this inspection, and a QIP is neither required, nor included, as part of this inspection report.

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 registered provider from their responsibility for maintaining compliance with the regulations and standards.





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