Inspection Report

29 August 2024

Dunvale House

Type of service: Domiciliary Care Agency
Address: Duncreggan Road,
Londonderry, BT48 0AA
Telephone number: 028 7137 4130

Information on legislation and standards underpinning inspections can be found on our website https://www.rqia.org.uk/

1.0 Service information

Organisation/Registered Provider: Apex Housing Association **Responsible Individual:** Ms Sheena McCallion	**Registered Manager:** Mr Kelvin Hegarty **Date registered:** 27 June 2022
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mr Kelvin Hegarty	
Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates: Dunvale House is a supported living type domiciliary care agency, which provides care and housing support services for up to 16 service users with enduring mental health issues. The service users have individual rooms and a range of shared facilities which includes a lounge; bathrooms and kitchen. The agency aim is to provide care and support to service users with the overall goal of promoting good mental health and maximising quality of life.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 29 August 2024 between 9.40 a.m. and 2.25 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 and dysphagia management and Covid-19 guidance were also reviewed.

No areas for improvement were identified.

Evidence of good practice was found in relation to care records, staff training and the monitoring of staffs' registration with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC). There were good governance and management arrangements in place.

Dunvale House uses the term tenants 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.

We would like to thank the manager, service users and staff for their support and co-operation throughout the inspection process.

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 staff survey.

4.0 What did people tell us about the service?

During the inspection we spoke with a number of service user and staff members.

The information provided indicated that they had no concerns in relation to the agency.

Comments received included:

Service users' comments:

- "This is a good place to live. Staff are very approachable and they will support you when you need help. I have no suggestions for improvement to the place."
- "Staff are great and if I had a problem I know I could talk to them."
- "We had a big party this year as the service was open for 30 years. The party was great fun."
- "All is good here. I go home every weekend. Staff are friendly and helpful."

Staff comments:

- "I enjoy my role and I am well supported by the manager. Good communication and we have a handover at every shift. Any changes in the service users' mental health is immediately communicated with the relevant professionals."

- "Care and support is of a high standard. We encourage service users to make their own decisions and promote their independence."
- "I have supervision every two months. We have regular staff meetings and the minutes are always available."

No service users returned questionnaires.

A number of staff responded to the electronic survey. The respondents indicated that they were very satisfied that care provided was safe, effective and compassionate and that the service was well led. Written comments included:

- "I really enjoy working in Dunvale, Manager and Deputy Manager very approachable and operate an open door policy, and I feel very comfortable about speaking with them if needed. Very good staff team who work well together in order to support tenants to live together whilst allowing them to be as independent as they can be. Should any of my friends or family in the future require to live in a supported scheme would have no hesitation with recommending Dunvale as a good place to live."

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 6 April 2023 by a care inspector. A Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was issued. This was approved by the care inspector and was validated during this inspection.

Areas for improvement from the last inspection on 6 April 2023		
Action required to ensure compliance with The Domiciliary Care Agencies Minimum Standards (revised) 2021		**Validation of compliance**
Area for improvement 1 **Ref:** Standard 12.6 **Stated:** First time	The registered person shall ensure that a robust system is implemented to include the monitoring of staffs' professional registrations for any staff member supplied by a recruitment agency.	**Met**
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: The returned quality improvement plan and discussion with the manager confirmed that this area for improvement had been addressed. Review of records evidenced that this area for improvement had been addressed.	

5.2 Inspection findings

The agency's provision for the welfare, care and protection of service users was reviewed. The organisation's adult safeguarding policy and 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 safeguarding champion was known to the staff team.

The agency's annual Adult Safeguarding Position report was reviewed and found to be 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. Staff who spoke with the inspector had a clear understanding of their responsibility in identifying and reporting any actual or suspected incidences of abuse and the process for reporting concerns in normal business hours and out of hours. They could also describe their role in relation to reporting poor practice.

The agency retained records of any referrals made to the relevant Health and Social Care (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; they described how they could speak to staff if they had any concerns about safety or the care being provided.

The manager was aware that RQIA must be informed of any safeguarding incident that is reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

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

Care reviews had been undertaken in keeping with the agency's policies and procedures. There was also evidence of regular contact with service users and their representatives, in line with the commissioning Trust's requirements.

All staff had been provided with training in relation to medicines management. The manager advised that no service users required liquid medicine to be administered orally 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 who spoke

with the inspector demonstrated their understanding that service users who lack capacity to make decisions about aspects of their care and treatment have rights as outlined in the MCA.

Staff had completed appropriate 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 service users' care records and through discussions with service users, it was positive to note that service users had been supported to have an input into devising their own plan of care. The service users' care plans contained details about their likes and dislikes and the level of support they may require. Care and support plans are kept under regular review and service users and / or their relatives participate, where appropriate, in the review of the care provided on an annual basis, or when changes occur.

It was also positive to note that the agency had facilitated regular service users' meetings. This supported service users to discuss the provisions of their care and support. Some matters discussed included activities, menu planning, advocacy arrangements and health and safety.

5.2.3 What are the systems in place for identifying service users' Dysphagia needs in partnership with the Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)?

The manager advised that none of the service users had swallowing difficulties or had been assessed by a SALT with recommendations. A review of training records confirmed that staff had completed training in Dysphagia and in relation to how to respond to choking incidents. Staff demonstrated good knowledge of service users' wishes and preferences with regards to nutritional intake.

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; this included administrative staff.

Checks were made to ensure that staff were appropriately registered NISCC; there was a system in place for professional registrations, including staff provided by a recruitment agency, to be monitored by the manager and a record of checks retained. A spot check completed during the inspection indicated that staff were registered appropriately. Staff spoken with confirmed that they were aware of their responsibilities to keep their registrations up to date.

The manager stated that there were no volunteers supporting the agency.

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 structured, three-day induction programme which also included shadowing of a more experienced staff member. Written records were retained by the agency of the person's capability and competency in relation to their job role.

A review of the records relating to staff that were provided from recruitment agencies also identified that they had been recruited, inducted and trained in line with the regulations.

The agency has maintained a record for each member of staff of all training, including induction and professional development activities undertaken; this included staff that were supplied by recruitment agencies. The training information was retained electronically in a well organised manner.

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 reviewed and was satisfactory.

The manager advised that no incidents had occurred that required investigation under the Serious Adverse Incidents (SAI) procedure.

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. It was identified that no complaints had been received since the last inspection.

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. Discussion with staff confirmed that they knew how to receive and respond to complaints sensitively and were aware of their responsibility to report all complaints to the manager or the person in charge.

Our discussion with staff revealed they had a clear view about their role and responsibility to meet service user's individual needs and promote their rights, choices, independence and future outcomes. They identified staff training, policies and procedures, staff support mechanisms and the management team supported them to provide safe, effective and compassionate care in this setting.

6.0 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)/Areas for Improvement

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

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