

North East Care Management Limited

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Management Limited

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Outstanding 

Is the service safe?

Outstanding 

Is the service effective?

Outstanding 

Is the service caring?

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service: The service is a domiciliary care agency, which at the time of our inspection provided personal care to one person living in their own home.

The person's experience of using this service: The person received extremely high-quality, personalised care from an exceptionally well-led service. The registered manager was very passionate about high-quality, person-centred care.

The person was always kept very safe. Robust measures were in place to minimise the risks they faced. Staff recognised risks and abuse and reported any concerns to the registered manager. Safeguarding policies and procedures were in place.

There were more than enough staff employed to manage the service successfully. The recruitment process was robust. Staff benefitted from specific training which was bespoke to suit the person's needs. Staff were extremely competent in their roles.

The person had achieved remarkable and unique positive outcomes through outstanding support from staff. The person had prompt access to ample external professionals whom the staff worked in excellent partnership with.

The person was supported to have maximum choice and control of their life and was supported in the least restrictive way possible. Staff had assisted the person to regain and maintain almost total independence.

Staff demonstrated exceptionally caring and considerate values. The person told us their staff team were brilliant, and they could not wish for a better team of support workers. The staff team were reliable, consistent and greatly committed to caring for the person.

Person-centred care was fully embraced by staff. The person received a tailor-made service which met all their needs and exceeded the expectations of a domiciliary care service.

The quality and safety of the service was strongly monitored through extensive checks and audits. The registered manager achieved consistently high standards through constant enhancement to the service provided.

Rating at last inspection: At our last inspection this service was rated Good (published on 19 August 2016).

Why we inspected: This inspection was part of our scheduled plan of visiting services to check the safety and quality of care people received.

Follow up: We will continue to monitor the service to ensure that people receive safe, compassionate, high

quality care. Further inspections will be planned for future dates in line with our inspection programme.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

The service was exceptionally safe.

Details are in our Safe findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service effective?

The service was exceptionally effective.

Details are in our Effective findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service caring?

The service was exceptionally caring.

Details are in our Caring findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

The service was exceptionally responsive.

Details are in our Responsive findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

The service was exceptionally well-led.

Details are in our Well-led findings below.

Outstanding 

North East Care Management Limited

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection: We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

Inspection team: The inspection was conducted by one inspector.

Service and service type: North East Care Management Limited is a domiciliary care agency. It specialises in providing support to people with acquired brain injuries. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) only inspects the part of the service which provides 'personal care'. Where a person receives personal care such as physical help or any supervision and prompting to carry out daily living tasks themselves, we also consider any wider social care provided.

The provider also offers support to adults and families of children with brain injuries. This includes overseeing private care arrangements, recruiting and training support workers, placing personal assistants and facilitating access to welfare, housing, medical and legal rights. In addition, they offer behavioural and family therapy, other services, advice and guidance. This aspect of the service is not regulated by CQC.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of inspection: This inspection was announced. We gave the provider 48 hours' notice of the inspection to seek permission for us to visit the person being supported. Inspection site visit activity was completed on 29 May 2019.

What we did: Prior to the inspection, we reviewed information we already held about the service. We also

checked records held by Companies House.

We asked the provider for a Provider Information Return (PIR). This is information we require providers to send us at least once annually to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We received this in June 2018.

We visited the registered office of North East Care Management Limited to review records, policies and procedures. We spoke with the registered manager. We reviewed the person's care records, one staff personnel file and records related to the safety and quality of the service. We also visited the person in their own home. After our site visit, we sent an email to two members of staff asking for their views of the service and their employer. Both staff members replied and gave us comprehensive feedback. We also asked two external professionals for their feedback.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that the person was protected from abuse and avoidable harm.

The person was involved in developing a comprehensive and innovative approach to safeguarding, including positive risk-taking to maximise their control over their lives.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Staff were highly skilled at recognising risks and signs of abuse. They were confident to report any concerns to the registered manager. Staff told us the registered manager was extremely proactive at reducing the person's risk of harm and exploitation.
- There was a proactive, comprehensive approach to safeguarding which enabled the person to take positive risks and maximise control over their life.
- The person was fully involved in making decisions about their safety. Staff fully understood and respected their wishes.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- There were comprehensive risk assessments in place to keep the person as safe as possible in all aspects of their life. Staff empowered the person to manage their own risks with minimal support from them.
- Staff supported the person to maintain health and safety in their home. Staff were proactive in spotting potential risks and highlighting when a near miss occurred. For example, staff identified problems with electrical wiring and a worn carpet. They liaised promptly with the person's solicitor and helped the person gather quotes to have the repair work carried out, to avoid an accident occurring.
- Staff recognised and respected the person's lifestyle choices. They were totally understanding of the person's needs and took an empowering approach which encouraged the person to challenge themselves and pursue new experiences. Staff had helped the person make specific decisions which had elements of risk. Between them, they used innovative ways to manage the risks which helped the person to remain safe whilst fulfilling a wish. This gave the person complete confidence to take control and achieve a lifetime goal.
- Best practice guidance was embedded into the service to sustain outstanding practices.

Staffing and recruitment

- The person had influenced the outcome of staff interviews by actively taking part in the recruitment process. The registered manager listened to and acted on the person's feedback and preferences before deciding to employ someone new. The person had commented, "I like (name), they get me, and my humour."
- There were more than enough staff in the team to keep the person safe. Effective emergency plans were in place which both staff and the person had confidence in.
- Staff told us they received excellent support from the registered manager and their colleagues to maintain the person's safety.

Using medicines safely

- Staff had worked very closely with medical professionals to support the person to achieve a goal of reducing their need for prescription medicines. The person told us this had an incredible impact on their life. They felt in total control of their own mind, now they did not need to use certain medication.
- Staff were currently supporting the person to take a short course of antibiotics. Medicine administration records were in place and a successful routine was established to remind the person to take them.

Preventing and controlling infection

- Staff promoted independence and an awareness of personal hygiene and infection control. This helped the person successfully identify and reduce any risks themselves.
- Staff gave the person advice about good food hygiene practices. This had given the person increased self-sufficiency in the kitchen.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The registered manager showed high regard to all near misses and concerns raised. They acted in an open and transparent manner to address any issues raised.
- The lack of incidents and the quality of the actions taken to mitigate risks showed that learning from past events had been successful. Reflective practices were initiated with staff and the person, so they could discuss together how things could have been done better.
- The registered manager studied external publications such as national best practice and the CQC reports of other providers. They used this information to share learning with staff to enhance the safety of their service.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that the person's care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence.

The person's outcomes were consistently better than expected compared to similar services. Feedback described the service as exceptional and distinctive.

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law

- Staff had an exceptionally holistic attitude to assessing, planning and delivering support. The person's needs, wishes and choices were continually assessed to ensure the service met their needs.
- Staff looked for and encouraged the safe use of technology, such as mobile phone applications to assist the delivery of high-quality, person-centred support.
- Staff supported the person in line with national best practice guidance and the law which helped the person achieve positive outcomes in all aspects of their life.

Ensuring consent to care and treatment in line with law and guidance

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making particular decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that, as far as possible, people 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.

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA.

- Staff were fully trained in the MCA and confident about applying the principles to the support they delivered. They used creative ways to fully involve the person in decisions about their care, such as including them in training sessions and staff meetings. This ensured that the person's legal and human rights were upheld. Best interest decisions were made in accordance with legislation and the person's wishes.
- Staff assessed the person's capacity to make specific decisions and involved them, even when their brain injury made this challenging. The registered manager told us, "Staff assume capacity at all times, give (person) the skills and knowledge to make choices and (person) does very well." Staff were highly skilled in how they obtained consent. This included involving the person in record keeping so they could be reminded of their decisions and the choices they had made.

Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care

- Staff worked extremely well in collaboration with other professionals involved in the person's complex care provision. This included a solicitor, neuro psychiatrist, plastic surgeon and physiotherapist.
- Staff told us that the registered manager was extremely proactive in contacting other professionals about the person's support needs. The registered manager spoke passionately about the importance of consistent and timely interventions to make sure the person got the support they were entitled to.

Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support

- Staff had developed excellent links with other health and social care professionals to enhance the person's well-being. This had worked exceedingly well. For example, the person no longer used mood enhancing medication. Staff had respected the person's decision, reassured them and continually reinforced a positive mental attitude.
- Staff fully supported the person's current interest in healthy living. Both staff and the person told us about an increase in exercise to reach their goal of getting fitter.
- Care and attention was taken to ensure the person fully understood information given to help them achieve these goals. Due to the person's short-term memory difficulties, staff had to make sure the person was included in written records which helped them to remember the reasons for the choices they had made.

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet

- There was a strong focus on eating and drinking well. The person had recently indicated they would like to improve their diet. Staff supported them to review their shopping list and menu plan. Staff had educated the person on healthy living initiatives such as eating five portions of fruit or vegetables each day. Staff had also shown the person how to look out for bargains to live well, for less money.
- The registered manager had inspired the person to grow their own fruit and vegetables. Staff helped the person prepare an area in their garden to facilitate this. The person told us with pride about growing strawberries and vegetables.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- The staff team were highly skilled, experienced and well trained. They demonstrated excellent knowledge of the person's particular needs and brain injury. An external professional told us, "The skill level in the team is high."
- Staff training was focussed around the person's individual needs. Most of the time, training was carried out in the person's home with them being involved in the course content.
- Staff told us they were very well supported by the registered manager. They attended regular, meaningful supervision and appraisal sessions which checked their competence, identified continual learning needs and explored development areas. A staff member said, "I've worked in a few different domiciliary care companies and I can honestly say that I love this job. The management are great and supportive. The other staff are friendly and supportive."

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.

The person was truly respected and valued as an individual; and empowered as a partner in their care by an exceptional service.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- Staff were highly motivated and enthused by a passionate registered manager to deliver an exceptionally caring and compassionate service.
- Staff demonstrated empathy and a real understanding of the person's needs. Staff had high regard for the person's cultural and social needs and acted in a sensitive and thoughtful manner to ensure their wishes were met. Staff helped the person to explore their options and respected their decisions.
- The person gave us excellent feedback about the staff who supported them. It was apparent from our observations that they had developed a strong bond. Staff were particularly good at asserting professional boundaries whilst maintaining a positive relationship. The registered manager told us, "(Person) has an excellent relationship with staff and great banter. They are always laughing and joking and (person) loves that."

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care

- The registered manager and staff helped the person express their views. Staff constantly asked the person to think about the service they received and how it could be better. The registered manager said, "Staff always speak to me on speakerphone so (person) is always included in the phone calls. They always wanted to be included in everything and we make sure they are part of the team with everything. We never have a conversation about (person's) care without them being present."
- All decision-making centred around the person. Staff provided advice and guidance but ultimately left the decision up to the person. On rare occasions, staff had assessed that the person did not have the capacity to comprehend a situation. In which case, staff valued the person's wishes and made a best interest's decision with family and professionals involved.
- The registered manager proactively advocated on the person's behalf. They made sure the person's rights were always upheld and that their voice was heard. Staff were very aware of the person's risks of exploitation. They put measures in place and took practical action to pre-empt situations and ensure the person was not taken advantage of.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- The person told us they felt fully respected and listened to. They saw themselves as 'the boss' and felt important. They recognised that they had influenced the support they received.
- Promoting independence was thoroughly embedded into the service. Since the last inspection, we saw a massive improvement in the person's independence and reliance on staff to provide support. The registered manager said, "Everything is set up for (person) to give them visual cues, to make them as independent as possible."

- Staff were very good at recognising situations which may cause distress or conflict and would intervene at an early stage to alleviate the situation. This gave the person the confidence to take control of the situation and continue to manage it themselves.
- Staff protected the person's privacy and dignity. We were told of multiple unique examples of how staff had achieved this through sensitive and discreet support.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people's needs.

The service was tailored to meet the needs of the person and delivered to ensure flexibility, choice and continuity of care.

Planning personalised care to meet people's needs, preferences, interests and give them choice and control

- Staff encouraged the person to take the lead role in developing a plan of personalised support which met their individual needs and aspirations. Staff listened to the person's opinions and their input into the support plan was valued by staff. A staff member said, "It's essential that we know what (person) enjoys and what fulfils them."
- Staff frequently discussed with the person how their support could be provided. We saw this had been very successful when planning a holiday and composing a risk assessment. The person had been empowered to take control of making the arrangements and was given the autonomy and independence to try new experiences.
- The person told us staff had an excellent understanding of their needs, and always came up with ideas for new hobbies or activities to try. Staff had considered the person's age, character, gender and social interests. They used imaginative methods to make sure the person could do everything they wanted to do. Staff had responded extremely well to an activity the person was keen to try. We heard how staff had gone above and beyond the expectations of a domiciliary care provider to make sure the person's wishes were fulfilled.
- Staff urged the person to try a range of pursuits, education and work-related activities to lead a fulfilling life. The person had enjoyed most things but had decided against pursuing employment. The person had attended a staff first aid training session and had achieved the accreditation. The person told us they had a busy social life filled with activities and hobbies such as bowling, snooker, karaoke, walking and meeting up with family and friends. The registered manager said, "Staff help (person) stay safe online and access applications on their mobile phone. Chatting to people online has really opened up their world."
- The person told us they would like to be able to run fast, like they could before their accident. On hearing this, staff spoke to the person about putting a 'couch to 5K' application on their mobile phone to try and gradually build up to running again.
- Staff supported the person to make links within their community. Staff told us the person had developed a good relationship with their neighbours; who would help the person in an emergency. The person was also well known and had made friends in the local pubs and shops. This had made the person feel confident and safe in the community and lowered their risk of exploitation and social isolation.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- The registered manager had a formal process in place to record feedback from the person and their family about the quality of the service. This feedback was always positive. The registered manager said, "We are always trying to do things better and we always ask (person), what can we do to make anything better."
- The person told us they were always asked at team meetings about the quality of their support.
- There had been no complaints made about the service. There was a complaints process in place and the

person and their family knew how to complain.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-Led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture.

Service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the service culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

Planning and promoting person-centred, high-quality care and support with openness; and how the provider understands and acts on their duty of candour responsibility

- The registered manager had fostered a culture which always had the person at the heart of the service. The vision and values of the provider were embedded into the support the person received. This included, working in partnership with the person and being committed to promoting choice, independence and dignity.
- Staff demonstrated a passion and commitment to the person and they displayed strong person-centred values. They strived to provide continuous high-quality care, which was achieved. A staff member said, "(Registered manager) will often say that people's needs don't stop after office hours. It is so very true."
- Staff were highly motivated and told us that the leadership of the service was exceptional. The staff were led by a registered manager who set very high standards. A staff member said, "This is by far the best company I have worked for."
- Staff told us the registered manager was committed to ensuring staff were happy at work. A staff member said, "(Registered manager) goes above and beyond for both her clients and staff."
- The registered manager was open and honest in their approach to reporting any concerns. They acted in a transparent manner when advocating on behalf of the person to uphold their rights.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements

- There was strong, clear leadership at the service. The registered manager was very experienced, highly skilled and aware of their legal responsibilities and duty of care towards the person. They were extremely confident to involve or challenge other professionals to ensure the person received high quality care and support. An external professional told us, "(Registered manager) refers appropriately, with a comprehensive clinical assessment and her judgement as to the nature and severity of problems is sound. The standard of documentation is well above average."
- The policies and procedures in place incorporated best practice guidance. This helped the staff focus on the high standards expected of them.
- The registered manager monitored quality and compliance with regulations through regular team meetings and internal audits.
- There was a solid structure of governance embedded into the service. Safety and quality audits were carried out. The registered manager had a 'hands on' approach to their involvement of the service. Audits were thorough, and any issues raised were addressed immediately.
- The registered manager evaluated audits, analysed them to pinpoint areas for improvement and took proactive action to advance the service.

Engaging and involving the person using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics

- The person was fully involved in the support they received and empowered to have their opinions heard. There was a consistent approach to engaging with the person. The registered manager told us, "We always ask (person) how we can improve, what else could we do, what are we not doing that they would like us to do. For example, one day their solicitor went to visit them, and they wanted to play a trick on her and have a toy mouse on a string. The staff helped them to set it up. (Person) thought it was hilarious."
- The registered manager sought out and welcomed feedback from those involved in providing wider care and support.
- Staff told us they felt listened to and respected in their roles. One staff member said, "Morale is great, I feel valued."

Continuous learning and improving care

- The service demonstrated outstanding characteristics which have been maintained over a long period of time. Staff have learned from past events, near misses and incidents which have occurred in other services. This had enabled them to adapt their practices to continually improve the service they deliver.
- There was great focus on understanding the person's views of how the service could be improved. Staff always endeavoured to meet and exceed the person's expectations.

Working in partnership with others

- The registered manager had forged and maintained immensely positive relationships with other external professionals. This helped to improve the outcomes which the person strived to achieve.
- Staff worked in collaboration and as partners with other external professionals to provide the person with a joined-up approach. This active engagement continued to provide the person with prompt interventions from others to maximise the support they received.