

Shropshire Care Limited

Bluebird Care (Shropshire) - Domiciliary Care

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service effective?

Good ●

Is the service caring?

Outstanding ☆

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own houses and flats. It provides a service to older adults, younger disabled adults and children. At this inspection they were providing personal care for 178 people.

Bluebird Care UK is a national franchise. A franchise is when a franchisee (the provider) has bought the right to sell a specific company's (the franchisor's) products in a particular area using the company's name. The franchise operates over two hundred locations across the United Kingdom.

A registered manager was in post and was present throughout this inspection. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

At the last inspection, published in September 2016, the service was rated good. At this inspection we found the service remained overall 'good.'

People received support that was exceptionally kind, caring and empowering. People were supported to maintain lifestyles they chose and to identify and achieve their goals in life. People were encouraged to take part in community and charitable events to build social integration and minimise the risk of isolation and loneliness.

People's privacy and dignity was respected by those providing assistance. People were supported at times of upset and distress.

People continued to remain safe as staff knew how to recognise and respond to concerns of ill-treatment and abuse. The provider followed safe recruitment procedures when employing new staff members. When people needed it, they were safely supported with their medicines by trained and competent staff members.

The provider followed effective infection prevention and control guidance when supporting people in their own homes. The equipment that people used was maintained and kept in safe working order and the provider undertook safety checks with people at their home addresses.

The provider learnt from incidents and accidents and worked with people and families to minimise the risk of reoccurrence if things had gone wrong. The provider worked in an open and transparent way and shared lessons learnt with other organisations to minimise the risk of re-occurrence in other care settings.

People continued to receive care that was effective and personalised to their individual needs and preferences. People were supported by staff members who arrived when expected and who knew them well.

They were assisted by a staff team who were well supported and had the skills and training to effectively assist people.

People were supported to have choice and control over their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible. Staff members were aware of current guidance which informed their practice and people's rights were protected by the staff who supported them.

People, and those close to them, continued to be involved in developing their own care and support plans. When changes occurred in people's personal and medical circumstances, these plans were reviewed to reflect these changes. People and their relatives were encouraged to raise any concerns or complaints. The provider had systems in place to address any issues raised with them.

Bluebird Care (Shropshire) continued to be well-led by a management team that people and staff found approachable and supportive. People were involved in decisions about their care and support and their suggestions were valued by the provider. Staff members felt involved in developing the care and support they provided and felt their opinions and ideas were listened to by the provider and, if appropriate, implemented. The provider had systems in place to monitor the quality of service they provided and where necessary made changes to drive improvements.

Further information is in the detailed findings below.

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 remains Good	Good ●
Is the service effective? The service remains Good	Good ●
Is the service caring? The service was exceptionally caring.	Outstanding ☆
Is the service responsive? The service remains Good	Good ●
Is the service well-led? The service remains Good	Good ●

Bluebird Care (Shropshire) - Domiciliary Care

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection checked whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

The inspection activity started on 4 September 2018 and ended on the 10 September. This inspection included telephone interviews with people who used the service and their relatives. We visited the office location on 5 and 6 September 2018, to review care records, policies and procedures and to meet with staff members. In addition, we undertook a home visit with one person who could not talk with us on the phone.

This was an announced comprehensive inspection completed by one inspector and two experts by experience. An expert-by-experience is a person who had personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service.

The provider was given 48 hours' notice because the location provides a domiciliary care service and we needed to be sure that someone would be in.

The inspection was partly prompted by an incident which had a serious impact on a person using the service and that indicated potential concerns about the management of risk in the service. While we did not look at the circumstances of the specific incident, which was subject to external investigation, we did look at associated risks.

Before our inspection visit, the provider completed a Provider Information Return (PIR). This is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make.

We also reviewed information we held about the service in the form of statutory notifications received from the service and any safeguarding or whistleblowing incidents, which may have occurred. A statutory notification is information about important events, which the provider is required to send us by law.

We asked the local authority and Healthwatch for any information they had which would aid our inspection. We used this information as part of our planning. Local authorities together with other agencies may have responsibility for funding people who used the service and monitoring its quality. Healthwatch is an independent consumer champion, which promotes the views and experiences of people who use health and social care services.

We spoke with 21 people, three relatives, the registered manager, managers assistant, human resources manager, care coordinator and four staff members including two care supervisors. In addition, we met with three new staff members undertaking their in-house induction training with Bluebird Care (Shropshire).

We looked at the care and support plans for six people including assessments of risk and guidance for the use of medicines. We looked at records of quality checks completed by the registered manager and the provider. In addition, we confirmed the recruitment details of three staff members.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

At the time of our last inspection published in September 2016, the 'Safe' key question was rated as 'Good.' At this inspection we saw people continued to receive safe care and treatment.

This inspection was partly prompted by an incident which had a serious impact on a person using the service and that indicated potential concerns about the management of risk in the service. Bluebird Care (Shropshire) notified us of a specific incident which involved members of their staff and a person they were scheduled to assist. The provider and registered manager assisted with the subsequent investigation, reviewed policies and procedures and took appropriate action regarding the staff members concerned. In addition, they informed all those receiving care and support what action they will take to minimise the risk of re-occurrence and re-iterated to all staff members the action they expect them to take in similar situations. Following this investigation, the registered manager completed a piece of work which they have circulated to other care providers to raise their awareness and to minimise the risk of similar situations occurring with them. The registered manager was open and transparent and took the opportunity from such an incident to review policies and staff practice to ensure people received a safe service from them.

People continued to be protected from the risks of abuse and ill-treatment whilst being supported by Bluebird Care (Shropshire). Everyone we spoke with told us they felt safe and protected by the staff members supporting them. One relative said, "The carers who come treat [relative's name] with the utmost respect so I know they are safe with them all. In fact, I would say they (staff) are marvellous."

Staff members told us they had received training on how to identify and respond to any concerns of abuse or ill-treatment. Information was available to people, relatives and staff members on how to report any concerns that they had to the registered manager or the local authority. We saw that the registered manager had made appropriate notifications to the local authority in order to keep people safe.

People told us they were safely supported to live in their own homes with the assistance of Bluebird Care (Shropshire). This was because risks from equipment used and the environment within which they lived were assessed and actions taken to minimise the potential for harm. When it was needed the provider referred people to other agencies to help keep them safe. For example, information was passed, with the person's permission, to Fire and Rescue agencies for further fire safety assessments and advice.

People told us staff members who assisted them followed infection prevention and control guidance. The provider undertook regular checks to ensure staff followed effective infection prevention and control techniques to keep people safe from transmittable illnesses.

People had personalised emergency plans in place which detailed the assistance that they would need in an emergency. For example, what type of mobility equipment they used.

People and family members told us that they were supported by staff who generally arrived on time and stayed for the agreed period. Some people told us that they were not always told if there was a change to

the staff member supporting them. We spoke with the registered manager and the care coordinator about this. They told us that sometimes, if someone phones in sick or is running late, their priority is to ensure the call is covered. This would sometimes take precedence over phoning the person to tell them there is a change to their agreed rota. However, they were looking at changing this so that the person is kept informed always. People and relative we spoke with told us that during the recent heavy snow they were impressed that the staff had all "pulled together" to ensure people were still supported to remain in their own homes.

The provider followed safe recruitment procedures when employing new staff members. These checks included obtaining references and checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with others. When it was required the provider had systems in place to address any unsafe staff members behaviour including re-training or disciplinary action.

People received their medicines when they needed them and were supported by staff members who were competent to do so. Should errors occur then the provider had systems in place to seek advice from medical professionals and to investigate the error. The provider had appropriate guidelines and policies in place to safely support people with their medicines.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

At the time of our last inspection, published in September 2016, the 'Effective' key question was rated as 'Good.' At this inspection we saw people continued to receive effective care and treatment.

People told us that when they first received care services from Bluebird Care (Shropshire) they had a full assessment of their needs which resulted in a comprehensive care plan. One person said, "When they (staff) came out to do the care plan initially they were friendly and listened to what I wanted. They were very thorough." The care and support plans that we looked at reflected the needs and wishes of people and best practices. For example, we saw plans for nutrition and hydration, skin integrity and mobility which reflected the guidance of healthcare professionals also involved with the person.

We looked at how people were supported to make choices and decisions about their care and support. 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.

People were supported to have choice and control over their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible; the policies and systems at Bluebird Care (Shropshire) supported this practice. When someone could not make decisions for themselves, the provider and staff knew what to do to protect the individual's rights. One person said, "When the carers first started to come they always asked me before they did anything for me but now I know everyone who comes so we just get on with things."

As part of people's care assessment and decision-making process the provider had systems in place to identify and support people's protected characteristics from potential discrimination. Protected characteristics are the nine groups protected under the Equality Act 2010. They include, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, religion etc. One person told us how Bluebird Care (Shropshire) supported them to maintain a lifestyle they had become accustomed to without any judgement which they found empowering and supportive.

People told us they continued to be supported by staff who had the knowledge and skills to effectively meet their needs. Everyone we spoke with believed that staff members were skilled, knowledgeable and possessed the necessary abilities to effectively support them. One person said, "I get a feeling they are very well trained. I think they are brilliant really." Staff members told us that they believed they were provided with the necessary training opportunities to enable them to support people. We spent some time talking with three staff members who were undertaking a week-long introduction to their role at Bluebird Care (Shropshire). One staff member said, "I have to say I am very impressed with the introduction. We are covering so much and all learning together." In addition to formal training, new staff members worked alongside more experienced carers until they felt confident and competent to work alone.

Staff members new to working in care were supported to achieve the care certificate. The Care Certificate is an agreed set of standards that sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of specific job roles in the health and social care sectors.

Not everyone receiving support from Bluebird Care (Shropshire) were assisted with meals. Those that did, told us they were supported to maintain a healthy diet by staff members who knew their individual likes and preferences. One person said, "I get support with each meal. I choose what I want. I had chicken Kiev and mixed veg today it was lovely. Sometimes I just have a sandwich. I always get a choice." Should staff members identify a concern with someone's eating or drinking then this was passed onto other appropriate healthcare professionals. For example, a referral to the GP or dietician.

People had access to healthcare services when they needed it and staff members communicated with them appropriately to ensure the person received consistent care from all those supporting them. For example, GP's, district nurses and specialists in speech and language. We saw the provider referred people for healthcare assessment promptly if required.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

At the time of our last inspection, published in September 2016, the 'Caring' key question was rated as 'Good.' At this inspection we saw people received exceptionally caring support and therefore, rated this key question as 'Outstanding.'

Everyone we spoke with, without exception, was very complimentary about those supporting them. People and relatives used the following descriptions when referring to staff members, "Very caring," "Extremely helpful," and "Superb." One person said, "They (staff) are lovely and I look forward to them coming." Another person told us "They (staff) will do some extra tidying up and extra little jobs like hanging my clothes up for me. I've been extremely lucky finding them. I have never met anyone I didn't like or get on with since they started to support me."

People told us they received exceptional levels of emotional support. For example, one person said, "I suppose when thinking about it I used to feel useless. I don't anymore. Now I actually think there is someone who really cares about me and what happens to me." One person described their personal circumstances to us and how Bluebird Care (Shropshire) supported them to make the changes in their life that they wanted. They told us, "I know I was in a very dark place. They (staff) helped me. I don't know where I would be without them, but I can guess." This meant that people were being treated in an exceptionally kind and caring way.

People we spoke with described how staff went the extra mile to support them to maintain their individual lifestyles and preferences that mattered to them. One person described their lifestyle as "Unconventional." They said, "I have never felt judged. They (staff) have helped me through so much, I can't describe the help they have given to me." Another person told us about the assistance that they have received from Bluebird Care (Shropshire). They described how the lifestyle they lived was transient and this hampered their efforts to access services. They described how the management team and individual staff members all worked together to achieve a positive outcome for them. This included liaison with statutory services including social services, housing and the benefits agency. This practical assistance resulted in them achieving their own personal goal of having their own accommodation and savings in the bank. They described to us how they are now self-sufficient which has been the first time in over 20 years. This showed that staff were passionate about supporting people to achieve their individual goals.

People told us how those supporting them went beyond the boundaries of the duties within their regular care call. Those we spoke with described many differing examples where staff members supported them emotionally as well as physically. One person said, "They (staff) are brilliant, polite and kind. I have a little dog and they are very kind to her too. I have a list of things I've asked them to do and they always make sure my dog has water and biscuits. It is just these little things that makes me feel that they are carers and not just doing a job." Another person described how their pet had been injured. They went on to say just how upset they were and that they did not feel in a position where the staff members completing their care call could effectively work with them. Instead they described how the staff member looked after their pet and eventually arranged a vet's appointment. They said, "That meant the world to me. I was all over the place."

Anyone else would have turned around and just left. But they (staff member) stayed and looked after me and [pet's name].

People told us about key events that Bluebird Care (Shropshire) involved them in. These events included "Blue Monday," "Cupcake day" for a dementia charity and "Elf and Safety" Day. Blue Monday is a recognised time of year in January when it is believed people's emotional wellbeing is compromised owing to many social and financial difficulties. One person told us, "I got a bunch of flowers from them (Bluebird Care (Shropshire)). It made me feel so special and was a boost. I felt valued." Staff members we spoke with described the joy they felt when delivering flowers to people as part of their care calls. One staff member said, "Every single call that day left me feeling buzzing. It was fantastic." The registered manager told us that they introduced their "Blue Monday" response as they recognised how this can impact on staff members and those they supported. They wanted people to know just how appreciated they were and to show them that they mattered to them. People who had allergies to flowers were provided with synthetic alternatives so that they did not feel left out. This showed that the registered manager and staff were thinking of and acting on new initiatives to enhance people's quality of life.

One person told us that they had received an invite to the charitable social event arranged by Bluebird Care (Shropshire) to support a national dementia care charity. They told us that they were not able to make it on that particular day. They then went on to say, "Imagine my surprise when the carer then turned up with a cake for me. It was lovely and made me feel part of it. We (person and staff member) chatted for what seemed like ages about it and how the day had gone. It was lovely."

Bluebird Care (Shropshire) took part in The Alzheimer's Society national 'Elf Day'. This is an event that happens annually to raise awareness and funding to help beat dementia. Bluebird Care (Shropshire) takes part in this event annually by dressing as elves and even hold their own 'elf and safety training' sessions for their care staff. One person told us how it made them "chuckle" when a staff member turned up at their home wearing an elf hat. They had a bit of a laugh and a chat about what it meant. They said, "Now I look forward to the next off the wall thing that (staff) will do. It's never dull having them around." In addition, they also hold dementia friend's sessions that are open to the local people within the village and involve the local school children in an elf colouring competition. Dementia friend's sessions were also adapted and delivered to the children at the local school. The registered manager told us helped to raise awareness and increase understanding of such issues throughout the local area.

Staff members based in the office were encouraged by the provider to also reflect a caring and supportive approach to people. One staff member told us that the office location was open and accessible to people and anyone could pop in at any time. It was important to Bluebird Care (Shropshire) that people received a positive and warm welcome whenever they contacted them whether it be by phone or in person. As part of this approach Bluebird (Shropshire) was part of the Safe Places initiative. This is where members of the public (not just those receiving care) who feel vulnerable or who have been victims of a crime can go and seek support. The staff members based in the office would support and listen to the person and if needed assist with phoning the emergency services with them. This demonstrated an exceptional level of caring to people who used the service and others.

People told us that those supporting them did so in a way that was empowering and promoted their independence. One person described how their lifestyle could leave them open to differing form of exploitation. With the help of staff members, they were still able to engage in what they wanted but felt able to talk with staff members who were not judgemental about things that mattered to them. They told us, "This is part of me. I know I can talk with them (staff). They care about me and how I am." They went on to describe how staff may have differing opinions to their own which they valued as having another viewpoint

helped clarify their thinking and maintain their independence. Another person said, "They (staff) always cook my breakfast for me and wash up and clear away. When they help me in the shower they support me to do what I can myself which helps me to keep some independence."

One person described that when they first started to receive care and support from Bluebird Care (Shropshire) they didn't have anything to make a cup of tea or basic cooking appliances. They told us that the office staff gave them a kettle and toaster so that they could have a hot drink and a piece of toast whilst they made alternative arrangements. They went on to say that they appreciated that someone actually showed genuine kindness and regard for their well-being.

All those we spoke with told us they were involved in decisions about their care and support. One person said, "They (staff) are like good friends to me. They do everything that I can't do. They are very very good and I couldn't ask for anything better. They help me undress and assist me to bed. I am their last visit and they always leave late as they do everything I need. I couldn't be in better hands. They are all genuine- it must be their love of doing the job." Those we spoke with gave us examples of how they were involved in their care and support planning and if needed Bluebird Care (Shropshire) coordinated additional support or advocacy. One person told us how they were supported to seek help with a home improvement grants. They told us, "I did it but I wouldn't have if they (Staff) hadn't been there to help me. They put me in touch with the right person to help me."

Everyone we spoke with told us that those supporting them ensured their privacy was maintained and that their dignity was promoted whenever they were supported. One person said, "They always close the front curtains and respect my privacy when helping me get dressed." People were confident that those supporting them did so in a dignified manner which also maintained their privacy.

Everyone we spoke with told us that information confidential to them was kept securely and that staff members maintained confidentiality and professionalism when talking with them. One person said, "Recently one carer was a little late. They said that they had to support someone who had to wait for an ambulance. However, they never say names or places. They are very professional."

One person concluded their conversation with us by saying, "The carers seem genuinely interested in the people they visit." People were confident that they were supported by an extremely kind and compassionate staff team who valued them as individuals.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

At the time of our last inspection, published in September 2016, the 'Responsive' key question was rated as 'Good.' At this inspection we saw people continued to receive care and treatment that was responsive to their individual needs and preferences.

People, and their family members, were still involved in the development of their care and support plans. The plans that we saw were comprehensive and provided staff members with the information they needed to support people. Regular reviews took place with people and if needed family members. One person said, "The initial assessment was helpful and we were quite satisfied. They originally showered [relative's name] but now they are not well enough so they changed the plan to now help with a full body wash instead. Someone came out and did a re-assessment to make sure this was safe and met their needs. They then wrote this up in the care plan."

People told us the care and support people received reflected their personal needs and wishes. Staff we spoke with could tell us about those they supported which included personal histories and things that were important to people. One person said, "[Relative's name] lives with dementia. (Staff member's name) knows what they like and will always talk with them about their hobbies. It is this bond they have which makes it so special."

People had individual assessments regarding their communication and information needs. People told us that the staff members supporting them knew how best to talk with them and to pass information which they may need. For example, all those we spoke with told us that they had access to their care plans and if they wished could read them at any time they wanted. At this inspection the provider was working to introduce and follow the Accessible Information Standards. The Accessible Information Standards aims to make sure people with a disability or sensory loss are given information they can understand, and the communication support they need. However, those we spoke with believed they were provided with the information they required in a way that met their needs.

People, and relatives, we spoke with knew how to raise a complaint or a concern. However, no one we spoke with told us that they had needed to do so. The provider had systems in place to record and investigate any complaints.

When people approached the end of their lives Bluebird Care (Shropshire) had systems in place to identify their individual wishes and preferences. The management team worked alongside other healthcare professionals to achieve the best outcomes for people including district nurses and specialise palliative care teams if needed. One staff member told us, "This is the time we need to get it right not just for the person but also for the family." The management team assessed people's needs and wishes as part of their care planning process to support people at such times.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

At the time of our last inspection, published in September 2016, the 'Well-led' key question was rated as 'Good.' At this inspection we saw that the service continued to be well-led.

People and relatives, we spoke with told us they knew who the registered manager was and that they saw and had regular contact with them. In addition, people had contact with other members of the management team on a regular basis. People we spoke with told us they found all staff members and the management team approachable and friendly.

People told us they were kept up to date with changes in Bluebird Care (Shropshire) either through contact with the management team or through one of the regular newsletters sent out to them. We saw copies of these newsletters which covered items that people may find interesting including profiles of people using their services and their memories of key events throughout their lives so far.

People, and those close to them, were encouraged to provide feedback on the care they or their family members received at Bluebird Care (Shropshire). They received feedback on the results of these surveys and any changes made.

We asked staff about the values they followed when assisting those receiving care and support from Bluebird Care (Shropshire). One staff member said, "I just love working with and supporting people in their own homes. To try and keep them happy and independent for as long as they can." People and relatives told us they believed staff members, the registered manager and the provider demonstrated these values when supporting them. Staff members told us that they received regular positive feedback from the management team which they found valuing and motivating. One staff member told us they had received a recognition bonus for their work over the last year. They said, "I knew about the rewards but it is such a nice surprise to get one. I love working here."

Staff members understood the policies and procedures that informed their practice including the whistleblowing policy. They were confident they would be supported by the provider should they ever need to raise such a concern.

The registered manager and the provider undertook regular checks to drive quality. These included regular spot checks on staff members providing care. One staff member told us how that they recently had a spot check. Following this they received positive feedback on the work they had completed. They said, "I felt really good and it gave me a bit of a high knowing I was doing a good job." People told us they had the opportunity to comment on individual staff members approach as part of these spot checks. One person said, "I never have any issues but it is good to have the checks in place just in case I did."

A registered manager was in post and was present throughout this inspection. They understood the requirements of registration with the Care Quality Commission and had appropriately submitted notifications to us. The provider is legally obliged to send us notifications of incidents, events or changes

that happen to the service within a required timescale.

We saw the last rated inspection was displayed for people at the providers office and also on their website in accordance with the law.

The registered manager and provider had established good links with the local community within which people lived. The registered manager told us this helped to promote a positive image of care and support. For example, when buying flowers for people as part of their "Blue Monday" initiative, they rotated the florists they used in order to support local businesses.