

Abacus Care Solutions Ltd

Abacus Care Solutions LTD

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Abacus Care Solutions Ltd is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care and support to people living in their own homes. Not everyone who used the service received personal care. At the time of this inspection 85 people were receiving the regulated activity of personal care from the service. CQC only inspects where people receive personal care. This is help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. Where they do, we also consider any wider social care provided.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

People and their relatives told us they were very happy with the support they received from Abacus Care Solutions Ltd. People told us they were kept informed of any changes and felt involved in their care. Staff knew people well and understood how they preferred their care and support to be delivered.

People had risk assessments completed for them. These were then used to develop person centred care plans which guided staff on how to care for people safely. Care plans were updated to ensure people received effective care and support. Staff received the training they needed to support people safely and liaised with health and social care professionals if they needed further guidance.

People were protected from abuse and avoidable harm. People felt safe with staff, who had the appropriate training and skills to provide care safely and effectively.

Safe recruitment practices were followed, and appropriate checks completed to ensure that only suitable staff were employed. There was an ongoing process of staff recruitment to ensure people were supported safely and effectively. Staff received an appropriate induction and were well supported through a programme of regular supervision and training.

Medicines were managed and administered safely. People were supported to take their medicines safely by staff who had received training to administer medicines.

People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

The service involved people and where appropriate, their families, with their day to day care and support needs. Relatives and people felt listened to, and were consulted about how they preferred to receive their care and support.

People felt the service was well led, friendly, and professional. Staff felt well supported in their roles and appreciated the friendly and supportive approach taken by the management team.

Health and social care professionals and relatives spoke positively of the management and staff team.

There was a range of quality assurance measures and checks in operation. These included the provider issuing a questionnaire to obtain feedback from people and relatives.

There were audits of various aspects of the service, any shortfalls found were addressed which helped ensure people were safe. Audits helped identify any areas for improvement, this learning was shared with staff and ensured a process of continual improvement was followed.

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

Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was good (published 17 July 2018).

Why we inspected

This inspection was prompted by a review of the information we held about this service. As a result we undertook a focused inspection to review the key questions of safe and well-led only.

For those key questions not inspected, we used the ratings awarded at the last inspection to calculate the overall rating.

The overall rating for the service has remained at good based on the findings of this inspection.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service, which will help inform when we next inspect.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

Good ●

The service was safe.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Abacus Care Solutions LTD

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. We checked 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 Health and Social Care Act 2008.

Inspection team

The inspection team consisted of 2 inspectors, and 2 Expert by Experiences, who made telephone calls to people and their relatives. An Expert by Experience is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service.

Service and service type

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes.

Registered manager

This provider is required to have a registered manager to oversee the delivery of regulated activities at this location. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Registered managers and providers are legally responsible for how the service is run, for the quality and safety of the care provided and compliance with regulations.

At the time of our inspection there was a registered manager in post.

Notice of inspection

We gave the service 48 hours' notice of the inspection. This was to ensure the registered manager would be available to support us with the inspection.

Inspection started on 21 April 2023 and ended on 27 April 2023. We visited the office location on 26 and 27 April 2023.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed the information we held about this service during the planning for this inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR). This is information providers are required to send us annually with key information about their service, what they do well, and improvements they plan to make. We used all this information to plan for our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke with 13 people who used the service and 16 relatives, about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with 3 members of staff including the registered manager and received written feedback from a further 9 care staff. We received written feedback from a health and social care professional. We reviewed a range of records. This included 8 people's support and care plans, daily records, and 4 people's medicine administration records.

We also looked at a range of records relating to the management and monitoring of the service. These included, staffing rotas, 4 staff recruitment files, supervision and training records. Spot check observation records, a range of the providers quality assurance records, policies and procedures.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm.

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. The rating for this key question has remained good. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People and relatives told us they felt safe with staff. One person told us, " I am safe, they come at times I know, and they stay with me the whole time. I like them all." Another person told us, "To be quite honest we can't do without them." One relative told us, "So far, they have been brilliant. [Person] likes the carers... They feel safe and settled." Another relative told us [person] is safe with them, and Abacus are much better and have made a positive difference to [person]. [Person] is happy and comfortable with the carers and we feel [person] is safe."
- Staff received safeguarding training and spoke knowledgably about how they would recognise and report signs of abuse. One member of staff told us, "If I felt one of our clients was being abused, I would go straight to the manager or deputy manager and report this incident straight away. I would keep it strictly between me and the managers and personally wouldn't speak to anyone in the same home as the client just in case they may be the abuser."
- The registered manager spoke knowledgably regarding reporting safeguarding concerns correctly to the local authority and had reported concerns as required by the safeguarding team.
- The provider had policies in place that covered safeguarding and whistleblowing. These gave staff clear guidance to follow if they needed to refer any concerns.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management; learning lessons when things go wrong

- Risks to people and the service were assessed and regularly reviewed. Risk assessments were personalised, detailed and gave staff clear guidance on ensuring people were supported safely. Risk assessments covered all areas of potential risk and included, pressure area care, medication risks, mobility and falls risk, moving and handling and well being.
- People received their care and support in accordance with their individual risk plans, this meant risks to people were reduced.
- Staff had received training in how to use specialist equipment safely.
- Risks in people's home environments, such as, security, accessibility, lighting, and infection control were assessed. The registered manager was in the process of completing individual emergency evacuation plans for people. These would be readily accessible for staff to ensure people received the support they needed in the event of a fire or other emergency incident.
- There was a system in place for recording and reviewing accidents and incidents. This meant any emerging themes or trends could be identified and lessons learned. We reviewed a selection of completed incident and accident forms. These were detailed and correctly completed to ensure correct recording of incidents and accidents.

Staffing and recruitment

- Recruitment records showed staff were recruited safely. Procedures were in place to ensure the required checks were carried out on staff before they commenced their employment at Abacus Care Solutions Ltd. This included enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for adults. DBS checks provide information including details about convictions and cautions held on the Police National Computer. The information helps employers make safer recruitment decisions. A person told us, "There are plenty of staff to go around."
- There were adequate numbers of staff available to ensure people were cared for safely. People told us they received their care from a regular small team of staff who were on time and knew them well. One person told us, "I have mainly the same group of about 6 staff who come to care for me and that's great." Another person said, "The staff are mainly the same ones on and off and I can truthfully say they are a credit to the company, we know them all now."
- One person told us, "They have never missed a call, they get to me come what may." Another person said, "They are always polite and are lovely people. I have a good moan and they are good listeners. I feel safe with the carers because they are ever so friendly, and I know them all now."
- People and relatives received rotas telling them when their visits were scheduled. One relative told us, "Yes, I receive a rota and they do stick to it." Another relative said, "We do get a rota and it's very helpful." One person told us, "I get a printed rota each week and they do follow the rota."

Preventing and controlling infection

- Staff were trained in infection control and spoke knowledgeably regarding infection control processes and understood how to protect people from the risk of infection.
- One person told us, "They are clean and tidy and always ask if there is anything else that needs doing before they leave."
- Staff had access to and wore personal protective equipment (PPE) such as, disposable gloves, masks and aprons. They had received training in this area. A member of staff told us, "There is always plenty of PPE, we can collect it from the office, everything is there for us."

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.

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. The rating for this key question has remained good. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive, and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people; Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics

- People, relatives and health and social care professionals expressed their confidence in the way the service was managed. One health and social care professional told us, "I have found Abacus Care to provide a responsive service and I can always speak with someone in the team who are up to date with people's plans."
- People and relatives felt involved in their care and were given the opportunity to express their views. One relative told us, "There is nothing they don't do well, and you would go a long way to find any better agency. It is such a relief to know [person] is being looked after and they go over and above. They keep me informed of any problems all the time."
- One person said, "They listen to me which is one of the most important things and I always get to speak to someone when I call." Another person told us, "It's a very good sound service, there is nothing I can think of that they could do any better than they already do at present." A further person commented, "My overall impression is that it is a good service, that does a good and important job to keep us safe and cared for in our own home."
- Staff told us they felt well supported in their roles and expressed confidence in the registered manager and their staff team. Staff said they felt valued, worked well as a team and told us communication was good.
- Comments from staff included: "I feel as though my voice is heard by managers and I am able to ensure our clients are receiving proper care and support", "I do feel appreciated and feel I am making a difference in ensuring my clients receive the best level of care I can provide", "I feel proud to be part of such a professional team and friendly environment. I feel proud to say that I'm a carer" and, "I feel very appreciated. They make me feel acknowledged and listen when I have a concern."
- People and relatives had opportunities to provide feedback through questionnaires, telephone calls, visits to their home and emails. We reviewed a selection of completed quality assurance questionnaires from people and their relatives. These had been positively completed, comments included: "The carers are very polite, caring and have a lovely sense of humour. They do their job respectfully to give me my dignity at my time of life thank you", "I have always received first class care from the Abacus carers. It is always a pleasure when they come in. All the staff are very good and seem well trained", "I have been impressed by their care and concern. I have contacted Abacus and the local management have responded with speed and diligence I am very happy overall with the care provided" and, "I would rate abacus care solutions 5 star plus, office staff are so helpful and nothing is too much trouble I would highly recommend."

Working in partnership with others

- We received positive comments from staff and health and social care professionals, including: "The service is managed well. Care planning documentation is person centred and detailed", "I find [registered manager] responsive and they will contact me with any issues. I work closely with [registered manager]" and, "I have been able to work collaboratively with Abacus Care to problem solve any difficulties. They have proven to be proactive in problem solving and issue to ensure the safety of the client. I have found them to be very professional in their interactions."
- The registered manager had established good working relationships with health and social care professionals and records showed regular conversations and visits were undertaken where appropriate. This helped ensure good outcomes for people.

How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong

- The duty of candour was understood and implemented by the registered manager. The duty of candour is a legal obligation to act in an open and transparent way in relation to treatment and care.
- One relative told us, "It's excellent. I have no complaints at all so in my eyes there is nothing that they need to improve on." One person told us, "There is nothing to improve. I'm very satisfied."
- People and relatives told us they were very satisfied with the service they received from Abacus Care Solutions Ltd. People and relatives told us they would recommend them. Comments included: "I would highly recommend", "Oh, I would definitely recommend them" and, "Of course I would recommend them. I'm getting a very good service, better than decent."
- One person said, "I absolutely do think the company is well managed. I can get them on the phone with any issue and they are ready and willing to help."

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; Continuous learning and improving care

- There was a clear management structure in place. Staff spoke knowledgeably about their roles and responsibilities and showed commitment to ensuring people received the best support and care for their individual health needs. One member of staff told us, "Everyone receiving care from Abacus are being looked after by staff who genuinely care about their well-being. We all take a person-centred approach to each client and do our best to support them in ways that they like, and which make them comfortable."
- The registered manager demonstrated a good understanding of their legal responsibilities for sharing information with CQC. Statutory notifications had been made to CQC as required by the regulations. A notification is the action that a provider is legally bound to take to tell us about any changes to their regulated services or incidents that have taken place.
- There was a schedule of audits in place to ensure the quality of service was maintained and any shortfalls identified and acted upon. The audits covered a range of high-risk areas and included: medicines, daily client records, care and support plans, incident and accidents, complaints, staff training and quality assurance.
- There was a culture of continuous improvement and learning. The registered manager and staff spoke positively about their commitment to learning and making improvements to the service people received.