

Community Caring Limited

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Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Requires Improvement 

Is the service safe?

Inadequate 

Is the service effective?

Requires Improvement 

Is the service caring?

Good 

Is the service responsive?

Requires Improvement 

Is the service well-led?

Requires Improvement 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service: Community Caring is a domiciliary care agency providing personal care and other types of support to people living in their own homes. At the time of the inspection 425 people were supported by the service. Of the 425 people supported by the service, 245 received help with personal care. The Care Quality Commission only regulates personal care.

People's experience of using this service:

The way the service managed and monitored the administration of medication was unsafe. Information on the medication people needed and the guidance given to staff with regards to their administration was inadequate. As a result, some people did not receive the correct amount of medication they needed to keep them safe and well. There were no adequate systems in place to monitor the safety of medication administration in order to protect people from avoidable harm.

Risks to people were not properly assessed and planned for and staff did not have sufficient guidance on how to care for people safely. People's assessments and care plans regarding their care and support needs lacked important information and were not always accurate or kept up to date. This placed people at risk of receiving inappropriate and unsafe care.

The support people received was not always in accordance with what had been planned or agreed. For instance, the timing and duration of some people's visits did not always correspond with their care plans or their agreed timetable of visits. This meant there was a risk that people did not always receive the level of support they needed. Where people needed nutritional support, their dietary records did not always show that they received adequate support to maintain their nutritional well-being.

Where people had communication needs or struggled to understand the care choices available to them staff had little guidance on how to communicate with them effectively. Information about the service was also not always available in a format people could easily understand.

Where people lived with medical conditions that may have impacted on their ability to understand and consent, it was difficult to see if any consideration had been given to the Mental Capacity Act when planning or reviewing their care. We have recommended that the provider reviews the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act to ensure the service complies in full with this legislation.

The systems and governance arrangements in place to monitor the quality and safety of the service were ineffective. They failed to identify the areas for improvement we found at this inspection and failed to mitigate risks to people's health, safety and welfare. We also found that although the management team were clear about their roles and responsibilities they lacked sufficient insight into the delivery of people's care and the issues we identified at this inspection. This meant that the service was not well led.

People's feedback on the service was positive. They told us that staff were kind, caring and patient and

knew them well. Most people said they received support from the same staff team most of the time. This was good practice and enabled people to get to know and build positive relationships with the staff supporting them.

People told us their privacy and dignity were always respected and their independence promoted as much as possible. They told us they knew how to make a complaint but no-one we spoke had any complaints and were happy with the service they received.

Staff were recruited safely and received regular supervision and training. People told us they felt the staff were well trained and had the skills and knowledge to provide the support they needed. Spot checks on the competency of staff however were not always undertaken in accordance with the provider's policy. Throughout the inspection, the management team were open and transparent. It was obvious they were passionate about the service and committed to making any necessary improvements.

As we had serious concerns about the management of medication, we asked the manager to provide CQC with an action plan specifying the immediate action they intended to take to improve the safety of medication administration. The action plan submitted was detailed and reassured us that suitable action would be taken. At our next inspection, we will check that this action plan has been effective.

Rating at last inspection : At the last inspection the rating of the service was good (Report published 07 December 2016). At this inspection, the service has been rated 'Requires Improvement'.

Why we inspected: This was a scheduled inspection based on the previous rating.

Enforcement: Please see the 'action we have told the provider to take' section at the end of the full report.

Follow up: The overall rating for this service is 'Requires improvement'. However, as the rating for 'Safe' is inadequate we will re-inspect within 6 months of the report's publication date to check that significant improvements have been made. We will continue to monitor intelligence we receive about the service until we return to visit.

If we receive any concerning information we may inspect sooner.

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 not safe.

Details are in our Safe findings below.

Inadequate ●

Is the service effective?

The service was not always effective.

Details are in our Effective findings below.

Requires Improvement ●

Is the service caring?

The service was caring.

Details are in our Caring findings below.

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

The service was not always responsive.

Details are in our Responsive findings below.

Requires Improvement ●

Is the service well-led?

The service was not always well-led

Details are in our Well-Led findings below.

Requires Improvement ●

Community Caring 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, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

Inspection team:

This inspection was undertaken by an inspector, an assistant inspector and two Experts by Experience. An Expert by Experience is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of service.

Service and service type: Community Caring is a domiciliary care service providing support and personal care to people in their own homes.

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:

We gave the service 24 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because we needed to be sure that the office would be open and that the manager or other senior person would be in the office to support the inspection.

Inspection site visit activity started on 21 May 2019 and ended on 6 June 2019. We visited the office location on 6 June 2019 to talk to the manager and staff and to review care records and other documentation relating to the delivery of the service.

What we did before the inspection:

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We assessed the 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 contacted the local authority

to gain their feedback on the service. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

We contacted the local authority to gain their feedback on the service and also sought the feedback from three other health and social care professionals involved with the service. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection:

We spoke with eleven people who used the service and two relatives by telephone to gain their feedback on the service. We also spoke with the manager and the senior care co-ordinator (the management team) and three care staff.

We reviewed a range of records. This included six people's care records and a sample of medication records. Three staff recruitment files, records relating to staff training and support and records relating to the management of the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

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

At the last inspection, this key question was rated as good. At this inspection, this key question has deteriorated to inadequate.

This meant that people were not safe and were at risk of avoidable harm.

Using medicines safely

- We found that people did not always receive the correct amount of medication or the medicines they needed as prescribed. For example, one person was prescribed Warfarin, an anti-coagulant medication. Anticoagulants are high risk medicines prescribed to help prevent blood clots. This person received the wrong dose of this medication for 8 days in June. Warfarin when given incorrectly can have dangerous side effects.
- Staff had no guidance or body maps in place to advise them how to apply people's prescribed creams and records showed that creams were not always administered consistently.
- Staff had no guidance on the circumstances in which to administer 'as and when' medications such as Paracetamol or Aspirin. This meant there was a risk that these medicines would not be given when they were needed.
- Some care plans stated staff administered the person's medicines while other records advised they simply prompted them. It was not always clear therefore what support people required.
- The actual time that medicines were administered was not recorded. Medication charts (MARS) just stated morning, lunch, tea or bedtime. This meant it was impossible to tell if time specific medication was given at the right time and if medicines that required a set time period between doses such as paracetamol were given safely.
- Some medication charts were handwritten by staff and did not always provide adequate guidance on what medicines were prescribed, when to give them or the dose to be administered. For example, one person's MAR charts simply stated 'Antibiotics'. It did not give the name of the antibiotic, the dose or frequency of administration. There was no evidence that handwritten entries were double checked to ensure they were correct.
- Staff received training in how to administer medication but their competency to do so was not properly assessed. This meant the provider could not be assured they were safe to do so.

Unsafe management of medicines places people at risk from serious harm. This was a breach of Regulation 12 of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Risks to people were not always adequately assessed and staff lacked guidance on how to mitigate these risks to keep people safe
- For example, where people were at high risk of falls or pressure sores, staff lacked guidance on the level of risk and how to reduce the risk of a fall or pressure sore occurring.

- Where people lived with specific health conditions, such as Parkinson's Disease, Epilepsy and Diabetes detailed risk assessments and guidance were not in place to guide staff on how to provide safe care and support.
- Some people were prescribed high risk medicines. High risk medicines such as Warfarin can have serious side effects such as risk of bleeding and bruising. There was no guidance available to staff on the risks associated with these medicines or how to monitor and manage them.
- Some people lived with allergies to medication, bee stings or certain types of food or ingredients. The risk these allergies posed to people's health and well-being were not assessed and staff had no information on the type of allergy experienced or the action to take if a reaction occurred.
- People told us they always received a courtesy call to advise them if a visit was going to be late and said that staff always turned up to support them. We found however that the time and the length of people's visits was not always in accordance with what had been agreed with the person and social services, as required to keep them safe. For example, one person's lunch and evening visits were often one to two hours early and sometimes lasted only 10 to 15 minutes as opposed to the 30 minutes planned for. This showed that people did not always receive the level of support that had been agreed.

People's support was not always assessed, planned or delivered in a way that mitigated risks to their health and well-being. This was a breach of Regulation 12 of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

Staffing and recruitment

- Staff recruitment was safe. Pre-employment checks were carried out prior to a staff member's employment to ensure they were suitable to work with vulnerable people. For example, a criminal conviction check and previous employer references were obtained.
- Most of the staff we spoke with told us that there were enough staff on duty to undertake people's visits. One staff member told us that at weekends the team was sometimes stretched. We advised the manager of this feedback.
- Records showed some visits were not always completed at the time or duration agreed.

We recommend the provider reviews the staffing of the service or the care people require to ensure that the level of support provided meets people's needs.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People we spoke with told us they felt safe with the staff supporting them.
- Staff received safeguarding training and records showed that appropriate action was taken to protect people from the risk of abuse.

Preventing and controlling infection

- Staff had training in infection control to ensure that they knew what precautions to take to prevent the spread of infection.
- Staff had access to personal protective equipment such as disposable gloves and hand sanitizer.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Accident and incidents were documented appropriately and monitored by the manager regularly. The number of accident and incidents occurring was minimal.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

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

At the last inspection, this key question was rated as good. At this inspection, this key question has deteriorated to 'requires improvement'.

The effectiveness of people's care, treatment and support did not always achieve good outcomes or was inconsistent.

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

- People's medicines were not managed in accordance with NICE best practice guidelines or guidelines issued by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.
- People told us that their needs and care were discussed with them prior to care being provided. People's comments included "Yes someone from the office came to talk to me"; "Yes they did and my care plan is updated regularly" and "Yes they did an assessment of (name of person) needs". We found however that people's care plans lacked sufficient detail about their needs and risks in order for staff to ensure all of their needs were met.

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

- We saw that staff sometimes assisted people with the preparation of meals and drinks. Some people also required support to maintain a healthy and balanced diet.
- Some people required their dietary intake to be monitored due to weight loss or the risk of malnutrition. We found however that food and drink records were not always completed or completed in adequate detail for effective monitoring to be undertaken. This meant that it was difficult to tell if people had received sufficient amounts to eat and drink.
- One person's records showed they were involved with the dietician. The dietician had recommended that the person be given two prescribed nutritional drinks per day. The person's food and drink records did not show this advice was consistently followed. For example, on 14, 15, 16, and 17 July 2019, only one instead of two drink was given by staff.

People's support was not delivered in a way that mitigated risks to their health and well-being. This was a breach of Regulation 12 of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

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.

People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment with appropriate legal authority. In care homes, and some hospitals, this is usually through MCA application procedures called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). As domiciliary care services provide support in people's own homes, they have to apply for a DoLS through the Court of Protection with the support of the person's local authority team. This type of DoLS is called a judicial DoLS.

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA, whether any restrictions on people's liberty had been made.

- No-one using the service was subject to a judicial DoLS at the time of our inspection.
- Some people using the service had mental health or medical conditions that may have impacted on their ability to consent or communicate their wishes. Whilst there was no evidence that specific decisions around people care had been made without their consent, we found little evidence that the Mental Capacity Act 2005 had been considered when their care was planned and reviewed.
- For example, one person lived with dementia and had limited communication. We saw the person's care plan had been developed with, and signed off by, the person's relative. Subsequent reviews of the person's care had also been conducted with them as opposed to the person using the service. There was little evidence to show that the person was encouraged or enabled to participate or evidence that they had given permission for their relative to act on their behalf.

We recommend that the provider reviews the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 with regards to the service to ensure it follows its own policy and procedures and the relevant legislation.

- We saw that where people had refused the support offered by staff during a visit the person's choice was respected. This showed that staff were mindful of people's right to consent to the care they received.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- The provider's appraisal and supervision policy stated that spot checks on the competency of staff were undertaken every 6 to 8 weeks. Records showed that these timescales were not always adhered to and some spot checks were significantly late. For example, one staff member's spot check was due in November 2018 but was completed in April 2019.
- Overall however we found that staff received appropriate support and supervision. For example, records showed that staff members received regular face to face supervision with their line manager, and an annual appraisal of their skills and abilities.
- Staff received adequate and appropriate training in range of areas such as safeguarding, first aid, equality and diversity, end of life care, dementia awareness, person centred care and record keeping.
- New staff received induction training and training was regularly refreshed during their employment.
- Staff we spoke with said they felt well trained and supported in their job role.
- Feedback from people using the service and their relatives included "Definitely well trained; "I think they are very well trained but, also, they have the right attitude"; "They are all very well trained" and "Yes, they are always competent and professional when they are here.

Adapting service, design, decoration to meet people's needs

- This service was designed to be delivered in people's own homes.
- People we spoke with told us that the service and its staff were flexible and accommodated any changes that needed to be made to visits.
- People's comments included "They are very accommodating. If I have any appointments or I'm going out, I just have to let them know"; "I just have to call them and they change my times for me" and "They are very

flexible and accommodating". This was good practice and showed that the service tried to fit the support they provided around people's lives.

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.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has remained the same.

This meant people felt well-supported, cared for and treated with dignity and respect.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; equality and diversity; Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- Everyone we spoke with had nothing but praise for the kindness of staff. They told us the staff team were caring, patient and always tried their best.
- The comments made by people using the service and their relatives included "Yes they look after me very well. They are lovely people and nothing is too much trouble for them"; "They are all very kind and caring and look after me very well. They are all like friends now"; "(Name of staff member) is excellent and very kind and caring. Nothing is too much trouble and "I think they look after (Name of person) very well. They are like friends".
- Everyone we spoke with said that staff members upheld their right to privacy and dignity. One person said "They help me with washing and dressing and get my breakfast for me. They respect my dignity, I never feel uncomfortable with them" and another told us "They help (person) with personal care mainly. They do treat her with respect, and me for that matter. They respect her dignity make sure the door is closed etc."
- Everyone we spoke with told us that they the staff helped them with the things they needed and promoted their independence wherever possible. One person said "They help me with showering and dressing. Also some meals. They are very good with me, they never rush me and let me take my time doing things".

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

- We found that people who were able to express their views verbally were involved in discussions about their care and were asked to provide feedback on the quality of the service they received. The manager told us that people's opinions and satisfaction with the service was sought on a regular basis through telephone interviews and questionnaires.
- For people who had limited ability to communicate verbally, there limited little evidence that the service sought their feedback. This required improvement.
- Everyone we spoke with was happy with the support they received. Comments include "I am very happy with them, up to now"; "I am very happy they are all good" and "I have no problems whatsoever with them, I am very happy with them".

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

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

At this inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has deteriorated to requires improvement.

This meant people's needs were not always met. Regulations may or may not have been met.

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 onwards, all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). The standard was introduced to make sure people are given information in a way they can understand. The standard applies to all people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss and in some circumstances to their carers.

- The service did not comply with the Accessible Information Standard.
- People's communication needs were not always identified and explained in their care plans. This meant people's care plans did not advise staff on the best way to connect, reassure and communicate with them in a way they understood.
- For example, one person had communication difficulties. Their care records showed they sometimes became confused and upset during the delivery of personal care. Despite this, staff had no guidance on how to communicate with the person when they became upset or any guidance on how to alleviate their distress.
- Information about the service was primarily in written format. The service did not utilise pictorial aids or other alternative format to share information with people using the service or to help them communicate with people who were unable to express their needs and wishes verbally.

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

- People's care plans were not always reviewed frequently enough for changes in their care to be picked up and addressed. For example, one person's care plan still referred to them being on insulin medication when this was no longer the case. Another person's care plan stated they had specific equipment in place but we were told this equipment was no longer in use. This meant that care plans were not always accurate or up to date with regards to people's needs and the support they required.
- People's care records contained some information about their choices and likes and dislikes. For example, there was information about what they liked to do during the day and any activities or hobbies they enjoyed. Information about people's nutritional likes and dislikes and religious or cultural needs required improvement.

People's care was not always designed to ensure their needs and preferences were met. This was a breach of Regulation 9 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

- People told us they thought staff knew them well. Their comments included "Yes I think they all understand me very well. The new ones are very quick to learn how I like things doing"; "They know me very well now. What I like and don't like" and "I think (Name of staff) knows me very well now. (Name of Person) is like family to me". This showed that staff members had built up positive relationships with the people they cared for.
- One person told us they did not always have regular carers. We saw that in the month of June, 16 different staff provided their support. We spoke with the manager about this. They told us that this had been addressed and the same staff now supported them as much as possible.
- Most people however told us for that the same staff supported them for the majority of the time. This was good practice. People's comments included "I have the same ones (carers)". "I have the same team, unless they are off for any reason then they send someone else"; "I have the same ones during the week and then regular ones at the weekend" and "Yes we have regular ones most of the time".

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- People told us they were happy with the support provided and had no complaints. People told us they knew who to talk to if they had concerns.
- We saw that any complaints received were thoroughly investigated and responded to appropriately by the manager.

End of life care and support

- No-one whose care file we looked at was on end of life care at the time of the inspection.
- Staff received training in how to provide people with support at the end of their life.

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 the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection, this key question has deteriorated to requires improvement.

Service management and leadership was inconsistent. Leaders and the culture they created did not always support the delivery of high quality, person-centred care. Some regulations may or may not have been met.

Continuous learning and improving care;

- The systems in place to monitor the delivery of care were not robust. This meant the concerns we identified during our inspection had not been identified and addressed.
- For example, the administration of medication was not monitored effectively to ensure people's medicines given correctly and in a safe way. This meant that the concerns we identified during this inspection were not picked up by the manager or provider. This placed people at risk of avoidable harm.
- People's care plan and risk management information did not ensure people received safe and appropriate care. There were no adequate systems in place to check the quality and accuracy of this information which meant that any gaps or inaccuracies were not picked up and addressed.
- The provider's electronic call monitoring system was not adequately monitored. This meant that issues relating to people's visits not occurring at the right time or duration were not identified or investigated. There were also significant gaps in the provider's electronic monitoring data as a result of staff failing to log in and out of calls appropriately. This made it difficult for the manager to keep track of the delivery of people's care and location of staff in the course of their duties. We spoke with the manager about this. They told us they had taken action to address this but at the time of our visit it was too early to tell if this action was effective.
- Other aspects of service delivery also required improvement. For instance, people's care reviews were not always robust, spot checks on the competency of staff were not always done on time and the provider's policies and procedures were not always followed.

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

- The manager and senior care co-ordinator were clear about their roles within the service but did not demonstrate sufficient oversight of the quality and safety of service. For example, they did not demonstrate that they were aware of the issues we found during our inspection.
- At this inspection the number of people using the service had substantially grown since the last inspection. It was clear that this had an impact on the reliability of the governance arrangements in place to effectively monitor the quality and safety.
- At the end of our visit, we asked the manager to provide an action plan on the immediate action they intended to take to ensure medication management was made safe. A detailed action plan was submitted.

The governance arrangements in place were ineffective in identifying and driving up improvements to the service and mitigating risk. This was a breach of Regulation 17 (Good Governance) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities).

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

- From our discussions with the manager and senior care co-ordinator they were open and transparent. It was clear that they were passionate about committed to providing a good service.
- CQC had been notified of significant events occurring at the service as required.
- The manager had referred people appropriately to the Local Authority and CQC where they had concerns about their welfare or safety.
- Notifiable accidents and injuries were reported appropriately to CQC and the Health and Safety Executive.
- Complaints, safeguarding and accident and incidents were properly investigated and responded to. Where improvements were required appropriate action had been taken.
- The manager had ensured the latest CQC rating of the service was displayed and the provider's website also displayed this information.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people

- There were concerns about some aspects of service delivery that impacted on the ability of the service to provide good outcomes for people. For example, a lack of adequate risk management and people's visits not taking place as planned.
- Staff we spoke with were positive about the service and felt able to express their views. Staff meetings took place to discuss issues associated with the service
- The people we spoke with and their relatives were positive about the service. They told us they were happy with the service and felt it was well-led. People's comments included the service was "Friendly and efficient" and "We could not do without them now". Their feedback indicated the service had a positive and open culture.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics; Working in partnership with others

- People's health and welfare needs were met by a range of health and social professionals such as social workers, dieticians, tissue viability teams, as and when required.
- We asked for feedback from some of the health and social care professionals involved with the service. One health and social care professional told us "I have always found the management team at Community Caring to be forward thinking, willing to be open, flexible and adaptable to change.

This section is primarily information for the provider

Action we have told the provider to take

The table below shows where regulations were not being met and we have asked the provider to send us a report that says what action they are going to take. We will check that this action is taken by the provider.

Regulated activity	Regulation
Personal care	Regulation 9 HSCA RA Regulations 2014 Person-centred care People's care was not always designed to ensure their needs and preferences were met.
Regulated activity	Regulation
Personal care	Regulation 17 HSCA RA Regulations 2014 Good governance The governance arrangements in place were ineffective in identifying and driving up improvements to the service and mitigating risk.