

Hallifax Care Limited

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Inspection report

297a Ditchling Road
Brighton
East Sussex
BN1 6JJ

Tel: 01273542200
Website: www.hallifaxcare.co.uk

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18 December 2018

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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?

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

The inspection took place between 12 and 18 December 2018 and was announced. We gave the provider 48 hours' notice so that people would know we were coming and would be available to meet us and speak with us if they wanted to.

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes. It provides a service to mainly older adults. Hallifax Care Limited provides care and support to people living in Hollingdean, Preston Park and Patcham areas of Brighton. The service was supporting over 130 people at the time of the inspection.

Not everyone using Hallifax Care Limited receives a regulated activity; CQC only inspects the service being received by people provided with 'personal care'; help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. Where they do we also consider any wider social care provided.

CQC previously carried out a comprehensive inspection of this service on 19 and 20 April 2016. The service was rated 'Good' overall and continues to provide a good service to people.

The service continued to be run by a registered manager. 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.

The provider and registered manager had worked together to continuously improve the service since the last inspection. They had continued the links they had with the local community and with professionals to make sure people had the support they needed. This had made a difference to a lot of people. They continued to be good at responding to people's changing needs and working with them creatively to get the right support, this had enabled a lot of people to stay at home where they wanted to be.

Everyone we contacted or spoke with said positive things about the service provided by Hallifax Care Limited. Everyone was complimentary about the staff and management team. People continued to feel safe when staff were in their homes, risks and medicines continued to be well managed. Staff were subject to recruitment checks and were well trained and supervised.

Each person had a care plan detailing their support needs. People's wishes should they become ill were recorded in their care plans. People were involved in any assessments and felt listened to and any concerns and complaints were investigated and responded to. People were supported to make choices and decisions and staff understood their responsibilities about mental capacity and consent.

There were enough staff to cover each call and staff arrived on time and stayed for the allocated time. People told us that the service was reliable. Staff liked working for Hallifax care, some working for the agency

for several years. People told us that staff were very kind, respectful and caring.

Staff worked with people, relatives and other professionals to make sure people had the support they needed. There were links with the community and the local school recently hosted a party for people whom the agency supported to attend.

The service continued to be well led, the registered manager was skilled and experienced in leading the service. People were asked about their views of the service and these were acted on to improve the support people received. The registered manager met with people and observed the staff to make sure people continued to receive good support. The registered manager had notified CQC of incidents and events as required and displayed their rating as required.

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 remains Good	Good ●
Is the service responsive? The service remains Good	Good ●
Is the service well-led? The service remains Good.	Good ●

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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 was planned to check 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.

We undertook an announced comprehensive inspection of Hallifax Care Limited. We gave 48 hours' notice of the inspection so the registered manager had time to ask people if they would like us to visit them or telephone them. The inspection started on 12 December and was completed on 18 December 2018. We made phone calls to seven people on 12 December and met with six people in their homes on 14 December. We met the registered manager, five staff and the provider at the agency office on 18 December 2018 and reviewed care records, policies and procedures.

The inspection team consisted of two inspectors and an Expert by Experience. An Expert by Experience is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service. The inspection was informed by feedback from questionnaires that we sent to people, staff, relatives and health and social care professionals before the inspection.

Before visiting the service, we looked at previous inspection reports and information sent to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) through notifications. Notifications are information we receive when a significant event happens, like a death or a serious injury.

We looked at information sent to us by the registered manager through the Provider Information Return (PIR). The PIR contains 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.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People told us they felt safe when staff were in their homes due to their 'caring attitude' and 'familiar faces'. One person told us "I trust them. They are very caring when they support me."

In response to our survey 100% of people said they felt safe and that they trusted the staff. Staff continued to be trained in how to recognise and respond to abuse. Staff could tell us about different types of abuse and they knew who they could report to. The registered manager was aware of their responsibilities to safeguard people.

Risks to people continued to be assessed and well managed. There was guidance for staff about how to minimise risks to people for example, when they needed support to move or to eat. One person told us "The service gives me the confidence to stay at home. It's reassuring to know that if I felt unwell that someone is there." Environmental risks were identified and referrals made for advice and support when needed including to the local fire service who gave advice about fire prevention.

There were enough staff to cover everyone's calls and staff covered each other's leave so that no calls were missed. Staff told us about the on-call arrangements that they said were reliable so they could always speak to a senior staff member for advice out of hours. People told us that the staff were reliable and arrived on time and stayed for the whole allotted time. People told us that they knew who would be coming to support them and they were informed in advance of any changes or if staff were running late. A relative told us, "The staff are exceptional, my relative has the most wonderful consistent carer, they come like clockwork."

Staff were checked before they started working with people. References were obtained and a police background check carried out. New staff shadowed existing staff and were introduced to people before they started supporting them. The provider told us in the Provider Information Return that since the last inspection the frequency of spot checks had increased to check that people continued to feel safe and comfortable with their support.

Any support people needed with their medicines was recorded. Staff recorded when they had given people medicines and these records were checked by the registered manager. Everyone we spoke with said they were happy with the support they had with medicines.

Staff were given supplies of disposable gloves and aprons to use. Any risks posed to staff for example, if a person's home was remote, were assessed to ensure staff safety. The registered manager tracked any incidents or accidents in case any patterns emerged that could be addressed to prevent further incidents.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Everyone we spoke with told us that the staff were skilled and well trained. One person said, "They are wonderful staff, good at their jobs, they speak with such experience and are reliable."

Staff continued to feel well supported, a staff member told us "The company has really helped me in my first six months of working there. I received great training and felt confident going to clients on my first day alone." A social care professional told us "They respond quickly to any changes in need and flag up these changes in a timely manner. They often seek joint training opportunities with the council to enhance their learning and make great effort to joint work with the council".

Staff were able to tell us about different people's needs and spoke with empathy and understanding. New staff continued to complete induction training and shadowed experienced staff until they felt confident to work on their own. The provider told us in the Provider Information Return that specialist training had been provided to staff so they could meet people's specific health needs.

The registered manager or the provider always met people before they offered them a service. They made sure that they had the right staff with the right skills in the right place to give people the support they wanted. People and loved ones were involved in the assessment which was reviewed over time, the registered manager said, "We don't promise to get it right at once but work closely with people over the first couple of weeks and make changes until we do get it right."

100% of people told us that they thought the staff were competent and said they would recommend the agency to others. People told us that staff continued to support them with their meals and made sure they had enough to drink.

People told us they were supported to make choices and any support they needed to make decisions was recorded. Staff knew about mental capacity and consent and gave examples of how they would support people who might not have capacity. Everyone we spoke with said they were involved in making decisions about their care.

Staff worked closely with health and social care professionals to make sure people had the support they needed. A social care professional told us "They are considerably caring and will often go out of their way to deliver person centred care. Individual carers have received plaudits from Adult Social Care (the local authority team) this year, praising their work and dedication." Another professional told us "The office staff are always responsive to any of my requests for information or updates on care and very willing to act in partnership with us. From my experience with Halifax care I would highly recommend them."

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Staff continued to be caring and respectful. Everyone we spoke with and everyone who completed a survey told us how kind and caring the staff were and confirmed that they were treated with dignity and respect. One person said, "The staff are very good at what they do, and very professional" and "The staff are absolutely excellent, the care is second to none."

A social care professional told us, "They are considerably caring and will often go out of their way to deliver person centred care." Another professional passed on feedback from some of their tenants supported by staff from the service. They told us "(Staff name) appears to give care at a level beyond expectation. Always going out of her way to ensure that the person is well cared for and is very responsive to their needs and wishes as well as treating them with dignity and respect. Many tenants have expressed their positive opinions of her."

People told us they were involved in developing their care plans so they had a say about their care and who might support them. Changes had been made to make sure people continued to be happy with their support. Everyone we spoke with told us that they had support to make decisions and choices about their support which were respected.

People and their relatives told us about how supportive staff had been in maintaining and increasing their independence. This included helping them to prepare meals and helping to provide equipment like special beds and chairs.

A person recently returned home from hospital after a fall which affected their confidence. Staff worked with the person gradually reducing the support as the person's confidence grew. The number and length of calls reduced from three a day to one a day as the person was supported to gain confidence and more independence. Another person was reluctant to take part in rehabilitation with professional whom they did not know after breaking their hip. Staff attended the rehabilitation appointments with the person to give reassurance and encouragement. This led to the person engaging with the specialist support and walking again.

Health and social care professionals told us similar stories about how the staff had supported people to remain at home where they wanted to be rather than go to hospital or into a care home. Feedback we received from professionals about how staff supported people to be independent was positive and complimentary about service including "The carers are in my opinion top rated, very good carers. They make a difference to the lives of the tenants that they have supported and have often gone out of their way to do a lot more than what is expected of them. the care that they have provided is in my opinion respectful, considerate and professional and they have given this with compassion."

Information about the service was provided in a way that was meaningful to people so they could have more control.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

The registered manager and staff continued to work hard to make sure people's support was right for them. They had built on the good service they provided and developed it through continuous improvement to continue to make a real difference to people's lives. One person told us that they loved reading but had failing eyesight which made reading difficult. Staff supported them to access a 'talking books' service. They told us that they could now continue their love of reading and said, "I now have a wonderful box of treasures."

Staff supported a person whose first language was not English by making cards with pictures and words, both in English and in the person's first language. Staff made the cards in their own time. Staff used the cards to help communication which had led to the person feeling more confident and more in control. The person's representative told us "This communication system has enabled (the person) to let carers know how they are feeling and to be heard, despite the language barrier."

There remained strong links with the local and wider community. The yearly homemade jam and cake sale held at the agency office continued with the proceeds donated to local charities. This event was popular and well known locally with people, their relatives and neighbours getting involved and taking part. Staff made cakes and jams and supported people to attend, not only to buy cakes and jams but to meet new people. The provider said it was important to help increase people's social circles and friendships.

Since the last inspection the provider had developed a link with the nearby secondary school. They worked with the school to arrange a Christmas dinner and party for local older people. Staff coordinated every detail including the transport arrangements with one staff member on each mini bus so people were picked up by a familiar face. Staff stayed with people to support them while at the party and returned them home safely. People's call times were adjusted and staff gave up their time so that everyone who wanted to could attend.

One person had not been out very much and lacked confidence but wanted to attend the party. Staff arranged to see the person an hour earlier to support them to get ready and go to the party. We saw photographs of the person smiling while talking to a group of children who were listening intently. Another person attended who would have been on their own over Christmas, we saw photographs of them smiling and laughing. Staff told us "The children really engaged with people and loved hearing their stories. The atmosphere was lovely, it was really special." The school children entertained people by playing instruments and singing and all ate Christmas dinner together. The provider said they planned to work with the school again next year and increase the numbers of invitees.

The provider or the registered manager met with people before they offered a service to make sure they could provide the service people wanted. The provider said, "We only provide care if we can do it well." Each person had a care plan detailing their needs and preferences that they had been involved in writing. Cultural needs were recorded and staff told us in detail how they met people's cultural needs. Care plans were reviewed regularly when people were asked for their views about the support. 100% of people who returned our survey said they had been involved in developing their care plan.

Staff had worked with Brighton and Hove City council on a pilot scheme that trained staff to be able to arrange and issue basic equipment to people. This had helped to reduce risks to people and prevent admissions to hospital as the equipment could be provided more quickly. Staff had arranged for one person to have a special bed and provided a second staff member to enable the person to stay at home. The local authority trusted the staff's assessment and advice and agreed to the support.

People's needs and wishes should they become ill were recorded for staff to follow. People's wishes about the support they wanted at the end of their lives was discussed and recorded. The provider said they matched the right staff in each situation to make sure they had the skills and experience to support people. Staff were trained and worked closely with family members, loved ones and community nurses to give people the support they needed. Staff attended funerals and were supported through bereavement by the provider as some staff had been supporting people for several years. The provider told us that bereaved relatives kept in touch and visited the office to have a coffee and chat with the staff there. The provider saw this as an important role for the service and staff to offer.

People knew that their complaints would be listened to, acted on and resolved. In response to our survey 100% of people, relatives and professionals agreed that complaints would be listened to and responded to well. The registered manager kept a record of any complaints, the investigation and resolution. Complaints were tracked as part of the registered manager's monthly audits so that any patterns could be picked up and addressed.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

The service continued to be well led. The provider and the registered manager worked together to make sure the service ran smoothly and continued to improve. The Provider Information Return was well completed and gave details of the provider's plans to improve including the future use of technology to monitor the reliability of the service. 100% of staff who returned our survey agreed that the managers were approachable, listened to their views and were there when they needed support. The provider was passionate about supporting staff and said, "The staff are what makes Hallifax Care great."

The registered manager was an experienced, qualified and skilled manager who had worked for Hallifax care for several years. Staff said they felt supported and involved. The culture was one of empowering people to continue to live as independently as possible and everyone worked together to achieve this. There continued to be strong links with community partners including GP's and district nurses so that people had the right support and the equipment they needed.

A social care professional told us that the registered manager attended the Homecare forum meetings to share best practice and to network with other managers. The provider continued to link in with other local agencies to share learning and development opportunities and to learn from each other. Another social care professional told us, "They are well led, the management team have a regular dialogue with (the local authority) about training opportunities, professionals' meetings, and ways to improve the knowledge of their staff."

Various audits and checks were carried out to make sure people had the support they needed. The registered manager checked to make sure that there were no late or missed calls to people. Spot checks had increased, carried out by a 'work place supervisor' who was on hand to give staff support and guidance. All aspects of the service were monitored and a monthly report produced to give oversight of things like complaints, training, incidents and staffing. From this, the provider picked up on any patterns or trends and took the required action. The service continued to be effective and reliable.

People and their loved one's views were sought and acted on so that changes were made to improve the service. Call times had been changed, reduced or increased based on people's feedback.

Services that provide health and social care to people are required to inform the Care Quality Commission, (CQC), of important events that happen in the service. CQC check that appropriate action had been taken. The manager understood their legal obligations. They had correctly let us know of any significant incidents.

It is a legal requirement that a provider's latest CQC inspection report rating is displayed at the service where a rating has been given. This is so that people, visitors and those seeking information about the service can be kept informed of our judgments. We found the provider had displayed their rating in the office and on their website.