

My Care Ladies Limited

My Care Ladies

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Inspected but not rated

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Requires Improvement ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

My Care Ladies is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes. Not everyone who used the service received personal care. CQC only inspects where people receive personal care. This is help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. At the time of this inspection the service were supporting 13 people with personal care.

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

People and relatives spoke extremely positively about the service they received. We have made a recommendation around the management of people's care and support records. Prior to our visit, the registered manager had identified changes were needed in the management of people's care records and was in the process of making the required changes.

Safe recruitment practices were followed. However, we did identify a shortfall in regard to one person's recruitment process. The registered manager took prompt action to ensure this shortfall was corrected. Staff spoke positively about the training they received which they told us was well delivered and of good quality.

We were given many examples that showed people received quality care and support from kind, caring staff that so often went the extra mile to ensure people were kept safe, were happy and felt well cared for.

Staff spoke knowledgeably regarding all aspects regarding safeguarding people. Staff had completed safeguarding training and understood their role in identifying and reporting any concerns of potential abuse or poor practice.

Risks were individually assessed and reviewed. Risk assessments covered all areas of people's health as well as any potential environmental risks. Risk assessments ensured staff were given current guidance and information to enable them to support people safely whilst allowing them to maintain their independence.

People were supported by sufficient numbers of trained, experienced staff to meet people's needs. People received their support from a small, consistent team of skilled staff that knew people well and delivered their care in ways people preferred.

Staff supported people to take medicines safely. Staff were trained in medicines management and knew how to ensure that people received their medicines on time and as they had been prescribed. Effective relationships had been built with healthcare professionals to ensure safe management of medicines for people.

There were robust procedures in place to ensure people were protected from infections that could affect both staff and people using the service. Staff had completed infection prevention and control training and understood the actions needed to minimise the risk of avoidable harm, including the prevention of

avoidable infection. Staff had access to plentiful supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and followed current national guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

People, relatives and staff consistently spoke of the commitment, kindness and approachability of the staff and management team. People felt the service was well led with a strong commitment to providing good person-centred care.

People, relatives, professionals, and staff consistently spoke of the effective and clear communication they had with the service.

Governance systems were in place and any issues were identified, analysed and discussed with staff to enable learning to be achieved from incidents. There was an open, supportive culture that encouraged staff to put forward their ideas for improvement to enable people to receive quality, individualised care that impacted positively on their lives.

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 20 November 2019).

Why we inspected

We received concerns in relation to the management of the service. As a result, we undertook a focused inspection to review the key questions of safe and well-led only.

We reviewed the information we held about the service. No areas of concern were identified in the other key questions. We therefore did not inspect them. Ratings from previous comprehensive inspections for those key questions were used in calculating the overall rating at this inspection.

We found no evidence during this inspection that people were at risk of harm from this concern. Please see the safe and well-led sections of this report. Immediately following the inspection the provider took prompt action to ensure risks for people were mitigated.

You can read the report from our last comprehensive inspection, by selecting the 'all reports' link for My Care Ladies on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our re-inspection programme. If we receive any concerning information we may inspect sooner.

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?

Requires Improvement ●

The service was not always well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

My Care Ladies

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

The inspection team consisted of one inspector 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.

Service and service type

My Care Ladies is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes. The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means they and the nominated individual 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 visit. This was because we needed to be sure that people were informed that we would be contacting them by telephone, and we needed a manager to be available to facilitate this inspection.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since it was registered. The provider was not asked to complete a provider information return prior to this inspection. This is information we require providers to send us annually to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We used all of this information to help us plan the inspection.

During the inspection

Inspection activity started on 10 March 2021 and ended on 12 March 2021. We visited the office location on 10 March 2021.

We spoke with two people who use the service and eight relatives or advocates of people who use the service. We spoke with five staff during the inspection which included, the registered manager, the deputy manager/senior carer and three care staff.

We reviewed three people's care records, risk assessments and medicine administration records, six people's daily records, three staff recruitment records and records relating to the management of the service.

The registered manager sent us information we requested which included, staff rotas, safeguarding policy, recruitment policy, compliments and complaints policy, Hoist and sling check lists, client assessment form and risk assessments covering all areas of risk such as premises risk and fire safety risks.

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 remained the same. This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Staffing and recruitment

- Recruitment practices were safe. However, for one member of staff a recruitment process had not been completed. We discussed our findings with the registered manager. They acted promptly and ensured this process was completed immediately following the inspection. All other relevant checks had been completed before staff worked with people in their homes.
- Support was provided by a consistent, small team of experienced staff who knew people well and knew how they preferred their care and support to be given. One relative told us, "The service has made the biggest difference to us, I can manage now whereas it had got to where I wasn't able to cope before." Another relative told us, "They come in to give me a break and it works very well."
- Staffing arrangements provided the flexibility to meet people's changing needs whilst ensuring consistent care. One person told us, "They are never rushed, but get all the things done and we have good laugh together too."
- Rotas showed enough time for travelling between visits was included. Staff confirmed they had enough time during visits to ensure people were supported well and their care and support needs were met. One member of staff told us, "Oh yes there is enough time travel and for visits, we are not at all rushed. We have just a couple of 15 minute visits, most of others are 30 minutes or 45 minutes." Another member of staff told us, "One lady had come out of hospital and needed extra time and it was sorted out straight away so she got the time she needed."

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Every person and relative we spoke with told us they felt safe with the care they received and the staff that supported them. One person told us, "I feel really safe since I have the same lady most of the time. She knows my routine and though she is polite and professional I felt I have made a friend." One relative told us, "They have gone way beyond what could ever be expected and I trust them and I feel better knowing they pop in so often and look after her so well."
- Staff understood their role in protecting people from abuse and had received appropriate training on safeguarding adults.
- Staff were confident in raising concerns and spoke knowledgeably on how to report potential signs of abuse, both internally and externally to the local authority.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Risks to people were individually assessed and managed. Individual risk assessments detailed the action staff should take to minimise the chance of harm occurring to people or staff.
- Staff understood the actions they needed to take to minimise the risk of avoidable harm.

- Assessments were carried out to identify any risks to people and to the staff supporting them. This included environmental risks in people's homes and any risks in relation to people's care and support needs.

- Staff safety had been assessed and measures put in place to mitigate risks. Staff had immediate access to the registered manager, senior staff and care staff colleagues through use of encrypted mobile phone applications and the service's on call system. Staff told us the system worked well, one member of staff said, "[Registered Manager] is brilliant, always there if we need to ring and check, always helpful."

Using medicines safely

- People received their medicines when they were needed and in ways they preferred. There were systems in place to ensure this was done safely.

- People had their medicines administered by staff who had completed safe management of medicines training and had their competencies checked regularly. One member of staff told us, "I've had all the meds training and we get spot checks all done and observed the shadowing was brilliant." Another member of staff told us, "I administer meds and I have just done my refresher meds training. We get spot checks, I often complete them on the staff, everyone is really good. Any problems we go straight to [Registered Manager] or [Deputy] they always speak to us, advise and listen."

- Where people were prescribed medicines they only needed to take occasionally, there was guidance for staff to follow to ensure those medicines were administered safely.

Preventing and controlling infection

- People were protected from the risk of infection because staff were trained in infection control and followed the current national infection prevention and control guidance. Every person we spoke with told us all the care staff wore facemasks, aprons and gloves during each visit. One person told us, "They always use the correct personal protective equipment, aprons, mask and gloves etc., and the times they come suit us very well."

- Staff told us they were supplied with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for use to prevent the spread of infections and were clear on their responsibilities with regards to infection prevention and control. The provider held plentiful stocks of all PPE for staff, staff confirmed they had good supplies of PPE at all times. One member of staff told us, "There is always enough PPE, I've loads in my car."

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- There was a system in place for recording accidents and incidents. Since the last inspection, two accidents and incidents had occurred, both had been appropriately recorded.

- Accidents and incidents were seen as an opportunity to reflect on practice and any learning was shared with the staff during handovers, supervisions and team meetings.

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 the key question was rated as requires improvement. At this inspection this key question has remained the same. This meant the service management and leadership was inconsistent. Leaders and the culture they created did not assure the delivery of high quality, person-centred care.

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

- People's care and support records did not always fully reflect their care needs. The service used an electronic care planning system. However, the system did not allow staff to record detailed information that would be needed to ensure people received care and support to meet their individual needs.
- The electronic system recorded that a person required transfer by a hoist, however the information recorded was not detailed enough to ensure staff were given full guidance. For example, electronic records did not include where to place sling loops or which coloured loops staff were to use to ensure people were hoisted safely.
- The system did not allow recording of detailed information, for example how people preferred their care delivered. This meant there was a risk staff may not have the correct information they needed to care for people safely and in ways they preferred.
- The registered manager told us they had recently highlighted the shortfalls we found with the electronic recording system. They confirmed their intention was to cease using the electronic system and go back to their previous system of paper files, at both the office and people's homes.
- The registered manager told us detailed paper care and support records were kept in each person's home for staff guidance, but the electronic system had taken preference over these.

We recommend the provider ensures people's care and support records provide clear guidance for staff to care and support people safely.

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

- People, relatives, staff and health professionals consistently told us of the positive, open, honest and supportive management structure that was in place. Everyone we spoke with described how people were very much at the heart of the service and how this culture was led from the supportive and caring nature of the registered manager and their staff team.
- Comments from people and relatives about the service they received included, "I don't know how I managed before they came and quite frankly, I don't know how I would manage without them now." And, "[Registered Manager] is quick to call the GP or paramedic if it's needed and the district nurse has reduced her visits from weekly to monthly as the carers know how to give the treatment and [person] is improving so much."
- A member of staff told us about working for My Care Ladies, "I love it, I wish I had done it years ago... I feel

very well supported, I feel like I can talk to any one if I have any issues, it's relaxed and everyone is very helpful."

- Healthcare professionals all told us the service was well led. One health care professional provided the following written feedback, "They provided excellent service to a client and completely turned around her home situation and care." They had provided the following written feedback direct to the registered manager, "Since My Care Ladies have returned to provide care, [person] now presents as a new woman, actively engaging in conversation, clean and happy. It's great to see the enthusiasm and positivity from yourself and the other carers within My Care Ladies and your determination to maximise [person's] health & wellbeing. It's genuinely a joy to be able to observe and feedback when such positive care is being provided."
- The registered manager was fully involved in the day to day running of the service. They provided a hands-on approach and regularly stepped in to cover shifts and provide care and support to people. This enabled them to speak with people and relatives regularly and obtain their feedback and views on the service provided. The registered manager told us, "I'm really proud of all my staff, they all go above and beyond... I cannot speak more highly of my staff they are all amazing."

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

- 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. The registered manager was aware of their responsibilities to report appropriately to CQC.
- The duty of candour was understood by the registered manager and their staff. The registered manager promoted a culture of openness and learning, this reflected the requirements of the duty of candour. The duty of candour is a legal obligation to act in an open and transparent way in relation to care and treatment.

Continuous learning and improving care

- Staff were supported to develop new skills and knowledge. The registered manager and staff team had a commitment to learning and ensuring they were able to provide good quality care and support for people.
- Regular spot checks were carried out on staff to ensure they were working to the standards and values of the service and were following correct policies and procedures.
- The registered manager discussed the different processes that were in place to ensure people received a consistent level of service that met their needs. They had developed audits and quality assurance systems to ensure any shortfalls would be identified and action taken to rectify weaknesses.

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

- People, relatives and staff felt the service kept them fully involved in all aspects of the service and the care and support that was provided.
- One relative told us, "[Registered Manager] is so approachable, I have a mobile number and they told us we can ring at any time, 24/7." One person said, "I would recommend them to anyone, they have made such a difference to me."
- People were encouraged to express their views and suggestions about the service via face to face meetings with staff, the management team and reviews of their care. This information was used to improve the service and to highlight good practice.
- People and staff felt valued and confident their views would be listened to and acted upon.
- Staff had a good understanding of equality issues. Staff spent a whole day during their staff induction process discussing and receiving training on equality and diversity.

Working in partnership with others

- The service had established close and effective working relationships with health and social care professionals. This enabled the service to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people they supported.
- Health professionals provided extremely positive feedback regarding their involvement with the service. One health professional told us, "My clients and their families have been very satisfied with the care they have received from My Care Ladies (MCL). The family members have felt supported, as well as the clients... Something I have particularly noticed with MCL, is how well they get to know the individual and the genuine care and concern they have for each client... Carers show kindness and sensitivity. I have been very impressed by the service MCL provide and their dedication to the clients they support."
- The registered manager kept up to date with learning and innovation to ensure they delivered good quality care. They received guidance and advice from local forums where they were given opportunities to share best practice. They had signed up for a range of updates from local authorities and CQC to enable them to keep up to date with national and local information.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic the management team completed medicine deliveries for a local pharmacist free of charge. The pharmacist had a lot of elderly clients that were unable to collect their prescriptions. This greatly helped these people at that challenging time and was much appreciated by all.