

Nyadowa Services Limited

Earls Farmhouse

Inspection report

Earls Farm
Earls Lane, South Mimms
Potters Bar
EN6 3LT

Tel: 01707659099

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14 April 2022
22 April 2022

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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?	Requires Improvement ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Earls Farmhouse is a domiciliary care agency providing personal care to people living in their own homes. The service provides care visits or live in care for people. The service was supporting seven people with personal care at the time of this inspection.

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

People and relatives were positive about the support they or their family member received at the service. One person said, "I am so happy with everything about the service. [Staff] go out of their way to make sure I am well looked after."

Staff were trained in safeguarding and knew how to keep people safe from abuse. Risk assessments were in place to guide staff how to support people safely in all aspects of their support needs. There were enough staff to support people safely and people's care visits happened on time and lasted the correct duration. People were supported safely with their medicines. Staff were trained in infection prevention and control (IPC) and had access to adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE).

People's needs were assessed before they used the service to ensure staff could meet their preferences. Staff had training and supervision to help them be effective in their job roles. People were supported in line with their dietary needs if this was needed. Staff supported people to access health professional support if this was needed. 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.

People received kind and compassionate care from staff who had gotten to know them well as individuals. Staff encouraged people to make choices about their support and promoted their independence if this was people's choice. Staff respected people's privacy and dignity.

The registered manager focused on people's preferences to help ensure they received personalised care. Staff communicated well with people and supported them to stay in contact with their family and friends. There was a complaints policy in place and people knew how to raise concerns. Plans were in place to support people at the end of their life.

The registered manager was aware of short falls at the service regarding some of the systems they used. They were also in the process of setting up systems to improve the governance of the service. There was a positive culture at the service and staff were dedicated and passionate about supporting people. People and their relatives were supported to feedback about the service. The staff team worked well with other professionals to support good outcomes for people.

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

Rating at last inspection

This service was registered with us on 15 January 2021 and this is the first inspection.

Why we inspected

This inspection was prompted by a review of the information we held about this service.

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?

The service was safe.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Good ●

Is the service effective?

The service was effective.

Details are in our effective findings below.

Good ●

Is the service caring?

The service was caring.

Details are in our caring findings below.

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive.

Details are in our responsive findings below.

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

The service was not always well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Requires Improvement ●

Earls Farmhouse

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

This inspection was completed by one inspector.

Service and service type

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

Registered Manager

This service is required to have a registered manager. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. 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.

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 because it is a small service and we needed to be sure that the provider or registered manager would be in the office to support the inspection.

Inspection activity started on 13 April 2022 and ended on 22 April 2022. We visited the location's office on 14 April 2022.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service. 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 our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke with three people who used the service and four relatives about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with three members of staff including care workers and the registered manager.

We reviewed a range of records. This included three people's care records and numerous medication records. We looked at two staff files in relation to recruitment and staff supervision. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures were reviewed.

After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found. We looked at training data and quality assurance records.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

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

This is the first inspection of this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People and their relatives told us they/ their family member felt safe being supported by the service. One person said, "[Staff] make me feel very safe. I have every confidence in them." A relative told us, "[Family member] feels very safe and has definitely been so much happier since they started using the service."
- Staff had training in safeguarding and knew how to report concerns to outside organisations such as the local authority safeguarding team or CQC. The registered manager raised safeguarding concerns appropriately.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- The registered manager assessed risks to people in areas of their support such as supporting them to move around their home or eating and drinking. Risk assessments guided staff how to help mitigate risks to people as far as possible.
- However, risk assessments would have benefitted from more specific detail to guide staff in some areas of people's support. The registered manager acknowledged this and assured us that these would continue to be updated.
- Staff were knowledgeable about risk assessments and updated them if people's need changed. One person told us, "[Staff] always ask to make sure that I still feel safe and if there any changes that need to be made, they are made. It is excellent."

Staffing and recruitment

- There were enough staff to support people safely. People had their care visits on time and staff stayed for the full duration of the visit. One person said, "[Staff] are always on time but if they are a couple of minutes late, they always let me know. I was looking for consistency and this is what I get." A relative told us, "[Staff] are always on time and always let us know when they arrive and when they leave. They always let me know how [family member] is as well which is really reassuring."
- People were supported by consistent staff who had gotten to know them well. One person said, "I see the same staff member all the time and this is great because they know how I like things and just get on with helping me how I like to be helped."
- The registered manager completed recruitment checks on staff to ensure they were safe to work with people using the service, in line with legislation.

Using medicines safely

- People were supported safely with their medicines. Staff were trained to administer medicines to people in their preferred way and the registered manager checked staff competency to do this.

- People who were prescribed 'as and when required' medicines had protocols in place to guide staff when these medicines should be administered. One person told us, "The staff sort all my medicines out for me, so I do not have to worry about it anymore."
- The registered manager completed checks to make sure medicines were being administered correctly.

Preventing and controlling infection

- People and relatives told us staff kept their homes clean if this was part of their support. One relative told us "Staff go above and beyond. When they have spare time, they help [family member] clean their house and equipment they use even when they do not have to."
- Staff had training in how to use PPE and confirmed that there was plentiful stock of this.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Lessons were shared with the staff team when an incident or accident occurred. Staff members shared any concerns they had with the registered manager to help ensure risk assessments and care plans were updated to reflect people's changing needs.

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.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

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

- People's needs were assessed before they started using the service. Assessments focused on people's preferences as well as their essential care needs. One relative said, "[Registered manager] was very thorough with the assessment. They took account of [family member's] preferences and tried to match the staff support to this. I am not used to services going the extra mile like this."
- The registered manager made changes to care plans and risk assessments and put more support in place for people if their needs changed.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Staff had training in areas such as moving and handling and safeguarding. The registered manager completed supervisions and observations with staff to check that training had given them the skills they needed to support people. One person told us, "[Staff] are well trained and make me feel safe. I hope nothing ever changes."
- News staff completed an induction period before they started supporting people. This included meeting people they would be supporting to make sure people were happy to be supported by the staff member. One person said, "I like things a certain way and [registered manager] made sure [staff] knew this from the beginning."

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

- People were supported to eat and drink in line with their dietary requirements if necessary. One relative told us, "It is a weight off my mind that staff know how to cook meals that [family member] likes. [Staff] always encourage them to eat and drink well."
- Staff encouraged people to eat and drink regularly. If people needed more support in this area the registered manager made referrals to relevant professionals.

Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support; Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care

- Staff knew people well and understood when they needed support from external professionals such as GP's. The registered manager ensured health support was sought in a timely manner and updated people and their relatives about the support that was being put in place.
- The registered manager worked with external health professionals to help ensure good outcomes for people. One relative said, "The difference in [family member's] health has been great since [registered manager] worked with health professionals. This has been great to see."
- People and relatives were positive about the way staff supported people to live healthy lifestyles. One

relative told us, "I can see the improvement in [family member] and they are eating and drinking so much more with the help of staff. We are even thinking about going on holiday again because of this."

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 MCA 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 when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA. When people receive care and treatment in their own homes an application must be made to the Court of Protection for them to authorise people to be deprived of their liberty.

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA, whether appropriate legal authorisations were in place when needed to deprive a person of their liberty, and whether any conditions relating to those authorisations were being met.

- People had capacity assessments in place if these were necessary. Staff had training in the MCA and knew how to support people in line with these principles.
- Staff always asked for consent before they supported people. One person said, "[Staff] always let me know what they are doing and ask if there is anything I am not happy with. They completely respect my capacity."

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.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. This meant people were supported and treated with dignity and respect; and involved as partners in their care.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- People and relatives were very positive about the kind and caring nature of staff. People's comments included, "Staff are absolutely wonderful. I cannot believe I have been able to find such a great service. Staff have a massive knock on to my wellbeing for the rest of the day. They are so helpful and are excellent at what they do. I cannot praise them enough." and, "I am a talker and staff always take the time to talk to me. They are different from other care companies. They really care and go the extra mile."
- Relatives comments included, "[Staff] go above and beyond and really do care. Finding this service has been like finding a pot of gold" and, "The staff are wonderful and have a deep respect for [family member]. Staff treat them like a member of their own family."
- Staff knew people well as individuals and supported them according to their preferences regarding their care and support.

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

- People were supported to make choices about their day to day care. One person said, "[Staff] offer me lots of choices and always try to meet my preferences."
- The registered manager ensured people and relatives were involved in creating support plans. One person told us, "When I started at the service me and my son went through the care plan with [registered manager] to make sure things were the way I wanted. Being offered choice is something that has been good since the beginning."

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- People were supported to be independent if this was their choice. One person said, "It was much easier for me to be [supported with personal care] in a certain way and [staff] support me like this so I can still do things for myself." A relative told us, "[Family member] has a very strong personality and staff support them to keep their independence which is very important to them."
- Staff had a good understanding of how to protect people's privacy and dignity and gave examples of how they did this in practice. For example, leaving people to complete aspects of their care themselves if they chose to do this.
- People's support plans guided staff regarding how to support people to stay independent.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

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

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated good. This meant people's needs were met through good organisation and delivery.

Planning personalised care to ensure people have choice and control and to meet their needs and preferences; Supporting people to develop and maintain relationships to avoid social isolation; support to follow interests and to take part in activities that are socially and culturally relevant to them

- People received personalised care that met their needs and preferences. Personal preferences were a focus of people's support from the time they started using the service. One relative said, "[Family member] has started talking and smiling again since using the service. This is something we did not think would happen again and we are so grateful."
- The registered manager ensured people had care from the same staff to promote consistency and meet people's preferences. One relative told us, "There is such great continuity with the staff team so there is never an unfamiliar face. This means so much to [family member]." One person said, "It is so brilliant at this service. I do not cry anymore, and I am so happy to see the staff. This is coming from the heart and it is unbelievable how much better I feel since they started helping me."
- Information about people's life history and preferred social pastimes were included in their support plans. This helped staff speak to people and involve them in discussions and pastimes that were relevant to them. One relative said, "We needed someone to cheer [family member] up. [Staff] make sure they take time to chat with them in the garden and just brighten up their day. They never feel alone, and this has given me such peace of mind."
- The registered manager and staff team encouraged people's relatives and friends to be involved in discussions about how the service was working. They shared information with relatives about changes to people's needs or how their family member had been during a care visit.
- The staff team knew people well as individuals. However, not all of the information staff knew about people's likes and dislikes were recorded in support plans to support new staff members. The registered manager acknowledged this and assured us these would continue to be updated.

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). The AIS tells organisations what they have to do to help ensure people with a disability or sensory loss, and in some circumstances, their carers, get information in a way they can understand it. It also says that people should get the support they need in relation to communication.

- Staff understood how to support people in line with the AIS. They explained to us how they communicated with people in different ways. One relative said, "The way staff communicate with [family member] has made it easier for us to speak with them too. [Family member] laughs so much now and it is all thanks to the staff team."
- The registered manager had plans in place to provide information such as policies and care plans in

accessible formats for people, should this be needed.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- There was a complaints policy in place at the service, though no complaints had been made. People and relatives knew how to raise concerns. One relative said, "I have no concerns but [registered manager] is so responsive, I am sure if I did, they would be sorted out quickly."

End of life care and support

- People had been supported to put plans in place for the end of their life if they had chosen to do this.
- The registered manager planned to link with external organisations for support when people needed support at this time of their lives.

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.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated requires improvement. This meant the service management and leadership was inconsistent. Leaders and the culture they created did not always support the delivery of high-quality, person-centred care.

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

- The registered manager used various systems to monitor the quality of the service in relation to care visits happening on time and for the correct duration. However, this system was not working effectively and there were numerous errors relating to staff signing in and out for visits and the length of visits being recorded incorrectly. People told us they had not missed or late visits. However, this system was not reliable in identifying whether this would have happened or not.
- The registered manager was open and honest about the service being small and most of the information about managing the service being 'in their head'. They told us they still needed to develop systems for monitoring aspects of the service such as ensuring risk assessments and care plans were updated regularly and formalising systems for staff supervision and collecting feedback from people, relatives and the staff team.
- Whilst risk assessments and care plans contained guidance and detail about how to support people, some aspects of them lacked detail. Only a small number of staff worked at the service and they knew people well. However, if a new staff member were to support people at short notice there may not be enough detail to guide the staff member appropriately.
- The registered manager listened to our feedback and assured us that they would be taking steps to improve the service in these areas. They also explained that they would keep the number of people using the service low until systems had been improved.
- Staff members had a good understanding of all aspects of their job role. They were also keen to continue learning new skills to help support people to achieve good outcomes.

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

- There was a very positive culture at the service. People were extremely positive about the support they received. People's comments included, "The service is exactly what I am looking for. [Staff] are friendly and meet my high standard. They are superb" and "I am delighted with the service. My favourite thing is the way [staff] speak to me and just make me feel like I am not alone."
- Relatives comments were also very positive. They included, "[Staff] are professional and compassionate and have taken the time to get to know [family member] so well. I cannot fault them and cannot thank them enough" and "[Staff] are kind caring and warm and have been like a godsend to [family member]. They feel so much better since they have started using the service and it is such a massive weight off my mind."

- Staff spoke passionately about the way they supported people and were dedicated to working their hardest to give people good quality care. They were clear about how to involve people and their relatives in discussions about support to empower them to make their own decisions.
- The registered manager was open and honest with people when things went wrong. They submitted notifications to CQC in line with legal requirements.

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

- People and their relatives were supported to feed back about their care informally on a regular basis. One person said, "[Registered manager] always asks if there is anything that can be done better. When you e-mail them, they get back almost immediately." A relative told us, "Everything has been great so far and I get so much information about how [family member] has been."
- Staff told us they had the opportunity to discuss their job roles with the registered manager.
- The registered manager told us they were working on formalising ways for people and the staff team to feedback about the service on a more formal basis. This included the use of structured meetings so that feedback could be recorded accurately.

Continuous learning and improving care

- The registered manager was keen to put improvements in place. They had recently attended training courses to gain new skills and learn how to make changes to the service in line with best practice guidance.
- The registered manager showed us an improvement plan with plans to address shortfalls with the service. This gave us assurances measures would be put in place to continually improve the service.

Working in partnership with others

- The registered manager and staff team worked well with other professionals to help achieve good outcomes for people. People's health had improved as a result of the multi-disciplinary approach taken by the registered manager.