

Combined Touch Community Interest Company

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Inspection report

14 Horsley Hill Square
South Shields
NE34 7HE

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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

About the service

Combined Touch Community Interest Company is a domiciliary care agency providing personal care and support 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. Where they do, we also consider any wider social care provided. At the time of inspection, six people were receiving personal care.

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

People and relatives spoke positively about the service and felt it was safe and staff were caring. Comments from a person and a relative included, "They really are the loveliest set of girls. I look forward to them coming. They bring a bit of light into my life" and, "As long as [family member] is happy, comfortable, well-fed, hydrated, dressed and safe, that's all we can ask for, and they are."

Staff safeguarded people from abuse. There were systems in place to keep people safe. Risks to people's health, safety and well-being were managed. There were enough staff to meet people's needs and safe recruitment processes were followed. Medicines were safely administered and managed. The provider had a policy in place to record and manage accidents and incidents. The provider and staff protected people from the risk or spread of infection and followed government guidance in relation to COVID-19.

People's needs were assessed before they received support. Staff received regular training and were supported through regular supervisions, spot checks and yearly appraisals. Staff supported people with their nutritional needs and to access a range of health care professionals. People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives, and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible. The policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

Staff were kind and compassionate and supported people in a respectful, dignified manner. Staff encouraged people to maintain their independence where safe and possible to do so and had advocates in place, where required. Staff spoke affectionately about people and were passionate about their roles. One staff member said, "I love my job and I just feel like this is what I'm meant to do. The people are all lovely. I love them all."

People received person-centred care. Care plans detailed how people wanted to be supported by staff with different tasks. The provider had a complaints procedure in place. People and relatives knew how to raise any concerns and felt confident in doing so.

People and relatives were extremely happy with the service and felt it was very well-managed. When asked what the provider could do better a relative said, "I think they've got everything right." The registered manager promoted an open and honest culture and was very approachable. The provider had an effective quality assurance process in place which included regular audits and checks. People and relatives were

regularly consulted about the quality of the service through reviews. Staff were involved in the ongoing development and improvement of the service through meetings and regular communication.

This was an 'inspection using remote technology'. This means we did not visit the office location and instead used technology such as electronic file sharing to gather information, and video and phone calls to engage with people using the service as part of this performance review and assessment.

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 23 April 2020 and this is the first inspection.

Why we inspected

This was a planned inspection to formally rate the service.

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?

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 well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Good ●

Combined Touch Community Interest Company

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

We carried out this performance review and assessment under Section 46 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act). We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements of the regulations associated with the Act and looked at the quality of the service to provide a rating.

Unlike our standard approach to assessing performance, we did not physically visit the office of the location. This is a new approach we have introduced to reviewing and assessing performance of some care at home providers. Instead of visiting the office location we use technology such as electronic file sharing and video or phone calls to engage with people using the service and staff.

Inspection team

The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

Service and service type

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

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 to make arrangements to carry out a virtual inspection and we needed to be sure that the provider or registered manager would be available to support the inspection.

Inspection activity started on 28 April 2022 and ended on 30 May 2022.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed the information we held about 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 sought feedback from the local authority contracts monitoring and safeguarding adults' teams and reviewed the information they provided. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke with one person who used the service and one relative about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with three staff members including the registered manager, trainee manager and a care assistant.

We reviewed a range of records including two people's care records and medicines records. We looked at recruitment records for two members of staff. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures, were also reviewed.

This performance review and assessment was carried out without a visit to the location's office. We used technology such as video/telephone calls and emails to enable us to engage with people using the service and staff, and electronic file sharing to enable us to review documentation.

Following the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found. We reviewed all evidence sent to us electronically by the provider and contacted people and staff.

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 for 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

- Staff protected people from harm. People and relatives felt the service was safe. A relative said, "It took a huge weight off our shoulders when [family member] started receiving care from [registered manager] and the carers. I know they are getting the right care and being kept safe."
- Staff received regular safeguarding training and could tell us what action they would take if they identified any form of abuse.
- Systems were in place to reduce the risk of any potential abuse

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

- The registered manager assessed and managed risks to people's health, safety and wellbeing.
- No accidents or incidents had occurred in the service at the time of inspection. The provider had an accident and incident policy in place for staff to follow should an accident or incident occur.

Staffing and recruitment

- There were enough staff deployed to meet people's needs. Comments from a person and a relative included, "They're always here on time, they help me out a lot" and, "[Registered manager] has the right level of staff for the level of people they support. There's room for them to be flexible which is great."
- Staff were recruited in a safe way. The provider had an effective recruitment and selection policy and procedure in place which included all appropriate checks.

Using medicines safely

- Staff administered and managed people's medicines safely. A system was in place to help ensure medicines were managed well. People and relatives told us there had been no issues with medicines management.
- Medicines were administered by trained and competent staff.
- Regular medicine checks and audits were carried out to identify any errors and take appropriate action.

Preventing and controlling infection

- Staff protected people from the risk of infection. Staff followed appropriate infection control measures such as regular hand washing and wearing PPE when supporting people. One staff member told us, "I still wear my mask and if I'm providing personal care I wear my apron and gloves."
- The registered manager carried out regular checks to ensure staff followed the provider's infection prevention and control policies and procedures effectively.

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 received support. This meant the registered manager could make sure staff were able to effectively meet people's care needs.
- People's choices and preferences were included in their assessments and associated care plans. These were regularly reviewed and updated in line with people's changing needs and wishes.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Staff completed regular training to make sure they had the correct skills and knowledge to support people.
- Staff completed a comprehensive induction at the start of their employment.
- Staff were supported in their roles through regular supervisions, spot checks and yearly appraisals. One staff member said, "Most definitely I feel supported. I do get a lot of training to top up my knowledge and I ring [registered manager] if I need any support at all."

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

- Staff supported people to maintain a balanced diet. They prepared meals, snacks and drinks for people when required. A relative told us, "Staff go to different levels in terms of trying to encourage [family member] to eat. They prepare all different meals rather than just putting a sandwich or a cake in front of them."
- Care records detailed any specific dietary needs people had and what support they required from staff.

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

- Staff supported people to maintain their health and access other health care professionals such as GPs, when required. A relative told us, "The carers are very good at picking up on [family member]'s mood changes and, if they are not well, they'll ring us and GP."

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.

- Staff supported people in line with MCA and best practice guidance.
- Staff received regular MCA training and sought consent from people prior to providing support. Care plans contained people's decisions and choices about their care.
- Care plans included contact details and signatures for those appointed with Lasting Power of Attorney for health and wellbeing for people.

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

- Staff were kind and compassionate when supporting people. Comments from a person and a relative included, "I find them excellent, they're all really nice, every care worker. When the carers come on the morning, they help get me ready and then they give me a lift [to an appointment]" and, "[Family member] is happier now. The carers have been lovely. They sit and go through old photographs and memories with them."
- Equality and diversity policies were in place to support staff in making sure people were treated fairly, regardless of their age, sex, race, disability or religious belief.
- Staff spoke about people and relatives affectionately. One staff member said, "The people and their relatives are all lovely. I'm a very caring person, they all get on great with me. [Registered manager] told me they all say they like me, which is always nice to hear."

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

- People and their relatives were involved in making decisions about their care. Care plans detailed how people would like to be supported and staff told us, "I ask [people] what they would like to wear, eat and drink. It's their choice at the end of the day."
- Care plans detailed people's choices and preferences in relation to their care.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- Staff supported people in a respectful, dignified manner. One person said, "They are all very good and so helpful. They always ask if there's anything I need." A staff member told us, "I make sure blinds and doors are shut and if they're comfortable for me to leave the bathroom whilst they are on the toilet or bathing, I will do. It's about them being comfortable and their dignity being kept."
- Staff promoted people's independence. Care plans detailed people's capabilities and what daily tasks they required support with. A staff member told us, "I encourage [person] to do things for themselves when they are having a good day, but I support them when they don't feel up to it."
- People's personal information was stored securely either electronically or in lockable storage that were only accessible to authorised staff.

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

- People received person-centred care which met their needs. Care plans instructed staff how to support people in line with their needs and wishes.
- The registered manager regularly reviewed care plans to ensure they reflected people's needs.

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.

- People had their communication needs assessed as part of their initial assessments and these were regularly reviewed. People were able to communicate their needs and wishes to staff.
- The registered manager ensured people were given information in a way they could understand.

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 were supported to maintain and develop relationships, and to follow their own interests and social activities.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- People and their relatives knew how to raise concerns. Comments from a person and a relative, "I've never had to complain but could ring [registered manager] if I wasn't happy with something" and, "There was one minor issue once. I mentioned it to [registered manager] and it's never happened again."
- The provider had a complaints procedure in place. No other concerns were raised by people or relatives.

End of life care and support

- At the time of the inspection, no one was receiving end of life care. Care records contained details of people's wishes, spiritual faith and what is important to them.
- Staff had completed training in providing end of life care.

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 good. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

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

- People were at the centre of the service and staff supported them to improve their well-being and achieve positive outcomes.
- The service was well-managed. People and relatives were very happy with the service provided. Comments included, "I would recommend them. They are far superior to other companies. You've just got to ring [registered manager] up if you want anything. She is so lovely" and, "They have been brilliant, I can't rate them high enough. It is unbelievable how much [family member] has improved."
- Staff were complimentary about management and felt they were very approachable. One staff member said, "My boss is just lovely, I love her to bits. She's really easy going and nothing is a bother. It's perfect this job with [registered manager]. If there's anything I need, I know I can ring her."

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

- The registered manager fully understood their legal responsibility to be open and honest when something goes wrong. No significant events had taken place that CQC needed to be notified about such as serious injuries.
- The quality assurance systems in place allowed the registered manager to effectively monitor and improve the quality of care people received.

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

- Feedback from key stakeholders was used to improve the service. People and staff were encouraged to share their views through regular communication, reviews and meetings.
- The registered manager and staff worked in partnership with other health professionals such as GPs, district nurses and social workers to achieve positive outcomes for people.