

# Review of compliance

Astra Care Services Limited  
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**Region:**

North West

**Location address:**

Lower Clough Business Centre  
Pendle Street, Barrowford  
Nelson  
Lancashire  
BB9 8PH

**Type of service:**

Domiciliary care service

**Date of Publication:**

February 2012

**Overview of the service:**

Astra Care Services Limited is registered with the Commission to provide personal care. It has been in operation since January 2001, providing services within the boroughs of Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale. This family run service is located in the village of Barrowford near Nelson and is staffed during office hours, with a 24-hour on-call system. The range of support

	offered includes assistance with personal care, domestic help and general support.
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# Summary of our findings for the essential standards of quality and safety

## Our current overall judgement

**Astra Care Services Limited was meeting all the essential standards of quality and safety.**

The summary below describes why we carried out this review, what we found and any action required.

## Why we carried out this review

We carried out this review as part of our routine schedule of planned reviews.

## How we carried out this review

We reviewed all the information we hold about this provider, carried out a visit on 21 December 2011, talked to staff and talked to people who use services.

## What people told us

People using the service told us they were satisfied with the support they received from Astra Care Services; they made the following comments, "We are extremely pleased with Astra, we couldn't ask for a better team". "Very good on the whole". "Astra are good there is always someone who can come to help". "Astra are the best company we have had so far". "We are well pleased with them". "We would recommend Astra to others, no problems whatsoever". "I feel very fortunate to be with Astra, I feel confident with them". "They always do as I ask and they will do extra". "They went out of their way to get here when the weather was bad". A relative said, "The staff are pleasant, lovely when they think things are not right they contact me, I would give them 10 out of 10 for that".

People told us they were involved in planning their care and support, they were enabled to make choices and decisions about matters which affected them.

People considered they were treated with dignity and their privacy was respected. They told us they were encouraged to be as independent as possible.

They told us the care they received was good, that they had care plans which instructed staff on what they needed to when they visited.

People had no concerns about their care and treatment, they said they felt safe with the staff. They said the staff were good, nice and pleasant.

People said they were being consulted about the service and that checks on visits and practices were being carried out.

## **What we found about the standards we reviewed and how well Astra Care Services Limited was meeting them**

### **Outcome 01: People should be treated with respect, involved in discussions about their care and treatment and able to influence how the service is run**

People had opportunities to be involved with decisions about matters affecting them. Their dignity was respected and independence promoted.

### **Outcome 04: People should get safe and appropriate care that meets their needs and supports their rights**

People using the service experienced safe, appropriate support and care in response to their individual needs and preferences.

### **Outcome 07: People should be protected from abuse and staff should respect their human rights**

People using the service were protected from abuse, the risk of abuse and their human rights were respected and upheld.

### **Outcome 12: People should be cared for by staff who are properly qualified and able to do their job**

People using the service were supported by an appropriately recruited, trained and supervised team of staff.

### **Outcome 16: The service should have quality checking systems to manage risks and assure the health, welfare and safety of people who receive care**

People using the service benefited from effective quality monitoring processes, to help ensure they experience safe, appropriate support and care.

## **Other information**

Please see previous reports for more information about previous reviews.

**What we found  
for each essential standard of quality  
and safety we reviewed**

The following pages detail our findings and our regulatory judgement for each essential standard and outcome that we reviewed, linked to specific regulated activities where appropriate.

We will have reached one of the following judgements for each essential standard.

**Compliant** means that people who use services are experiencing the outcomes relating to the essential standard.

A **minor concern** means that people who use services are safe but are not always experiencing the outcomes relating to this essential standard.

A **moderate concern** means that people who use services are safe but are not always experiencing the outcomes relating to this essential standard and there is an impact on their health and wellbeing because of this.

A **major concern** means that people who use services are not experiencing the outcomes relating to this essential standard and are not protected from unsafe or inappropriate care, treatment and support.

Where we identify compliance, no further action is taken. Where we have concerns, the most appropriate action is taken to ensure that the necessary improvements are made. Where there are a number of concerns, we may look at them together to decide the level of action to take.

More information about each of the outcomes can be found in the *Guidance about compliance: Essential standards of quality and safety*

## Outcome 01: Respecting and involving people who use services

### What the outcome says

This is what people who use services should expect.

People who use services:

- \* Understand the care, treatment and support choices available to them.
- \* Can express their views, so far as they are able to do so, and are involved in making decisions about their care, treatment and support.
- \* Have their privacy, dignity and independence respected.
- \* Have their views and experiences taken into account in the way the service is provided and delivered.

### What we found

#### Our judgement

The provider is compliant with Outcome 01: Respecting and involving people who use services

#### Our findings

##### What people who use the service experienced and told us

People using Astra Care Services had opportunities to express their views and opinions about their care and support. This included being involved in making decisions about their individual care needs and choices. Also, by being involved in the way the service was provided as part of consultation surveys.

We spoke with people who told us they had been involved in their initial assessment. One relative said, "The assessment was very thorough, they sat down and asked lots of relevant questions I was very impressed, with the questioning and the checks they carried out, they wrote everything down and asked my relative for her point of view".

People using the service were also aware of their care plans. They said, "They went through the care plan with us we signed in agreement with it". "The care plan was recently updated we were fully involved, they talk to us about any changes". "They went through the care plan with us, everything is in there".

People spoken with told us they had been provided with information about the agency, which made them aware of the services provided and gave contact details should they need to get in touch with staff. "We absolutely have all the written information we need including the relevant contact numbers". "I have a pack of information, with numbers

and lots of details about things".

We asked people about their dignity and privacy they said, "They definitely respect privacy, even when they don't need to they close the curtains they think about things like that all the time". "They definitely treat me with respect they are friendly we get on wonderfully". "They are very good with privacy they don't take over, by any means they are very helpful, very good at what they do".

People using the service were supported and encouraged to be as independent as possible, they told us, "They let me be independent, I do feel in control". "They ask what I would like in particular, they keep me involved". "They always ask her what she wants". "If you can do things for yourself they encourage you to do things".

Most people spoken with considered the agency was good with time keeping and continuity. "They are very obliging they will stay longer if they need to". "Time keeping is good, they always explain who will be coming if it's different". "They are not always on time, but never extremely late, they always ring and say if they are delayed". "I get a rota every week so I know who is coming". "She has the same team of care staff which is good for continuity".

### **Other evidence**

We found the care assessment processes involved finding out about peoples' individual background and life experiences which helped promote dignity and respect.

Care workers spoken with told us how they encouraged people to be independent during their daily work practice and that they always involved people in making decisions. One said, "We always ask and give choices". They explained how the agency involved people with defining their care plans and reviews. They told us how they promoted privacy and dignity in response to peoples individual needs, character and circumstances. They said, "Everyone is different but we get to know them". "We treat people how we would wish to be treated".

The quality assurance systems provided people using the service and their relatives, with an opportunity to complete satisfaction surveys about their experiences with Astra Care Services.

### **Our judgement**

People had opportunities to be involved with decisions about matters affecting them. Their dignity was respected and independence promoted.



## Outcome 04:

### Care and welfare of people who use services

#### What the outcome says

This is what people who use services should expect.

People who use services:

\* Experience effective, safe and appropriate care, treatment and support that meets their needs and protects their rights.

#### What we found

##### Our judgement

The provider is compliant with Outcome 04: Care and welfare of people who use services

##### Our findings

###### What people who use the service experienced and told us

People spoken with during the inspection indicated they were satisfied with the care and support they received from Astra Care Services. They said, "They care for me very well". "They know him well, exactly what his needs are and how to react to them". "They are very good with care they seem to be spot on". "I really think they are good carers". "Everything that needs doing gets done". "They are very considerate regarding the care delivery".

People using the service, had their individual needs and preferences planned for in a person centred way. We asked people about care plans and they said, "I have a care plan, they read through it with me it contains what's needed and they always ask if there is anything else I want doing". "The care plan has all the details as needed". "The care plan was devised with us, it sets things out well". "The care plan is in place, it was recently updated we were involved, they talk to us about any changes". "The care plan includes procedures for each time they visit".

###### Other evidence

Care records seen showed information had been obtained from other agencies, as appropriate, such as Social Services. Records of assessments showed people had been involved with this process.

Risks to peoples' wellbeing and safety were being identified and managed taking account of enabling their choices and their right to take risks. Peoples' individual circumstances were being monitored and their risk assessments and care plans

reviewed and updated in response to their changing needs. We suggested consideration be given to more in-depth health screening assessments in line with recognised good practice.

Care plans seen were written in a person centred way and included details of how peoples' individual needs and preference were to be met.

Care workers spoken with were aware of the importance of individual care plans. They said, "We have to read it, particularly if it's a new client to us". All indicated an awareness of the emergency procedures, in particular reporting matters to the management team as needed.

### **Our judgement**

People using the service experienced safe, appropriate support and care in response to their individual needs and preferences.

## Outcome 07: Safeguarding people who use services from abuse

### What the outcome says

This is what people who use services should expect.

People who use services:

\* Are protected from abuse, or the risk of abuse, and their human rights are respected and upheld.

### What we found

#### Our judgement

The provider is compliant with Outcome 07: Safeguarding people who use services from abuse

#### Our findings

##### What people who use the service experienced and told us

People spoken with during the inspection had no concerns about the care and support provided by Astra Care Services. They told us, "They are not sharp or off hand they are very good". "They are not abusive in any way". "No inappropriate treatment, definitely not!". "No one has ever shouted or been off hand, no ill treatment at all". "I feel safe with them". "They are very considerate regarding care delivery, not abusive in any way". "There is never any mistreatment". "I would report them if needed to the office but I can't see it happening". "I would contact the agency if I had any concerns and would go higher if needed".

##### Other evidence

Information we hold about Astra Care Services, tells us they have effective processes in place to ensure allegations, incidents and suspicions of abuse are appropriately dealt with.

Staff spoken with during the site visit had a good understanding and awareness of safeguarding matters, including how to report any concerns. They were confident that any concerns would be dealt with straight away.

Records showed arrangements had been made for staff to receive training in safeguarding, abuse and protection. Policies and procedures were available in respect of safeguarding and restraint.

The 'staff handbook' included a summary of the 'whistle blowing' (reporting bad

practice) procedure and the services' disciplinary and grievance procedures.

**Our judgement**

People using the service were protected from abuse, the risk of abuse and their human rights were respected and upheld.

## Outcome 12: Requirements relating to workers

### What the outcome says

This is what people who use services should expect.

People who use services:

\* Are safe and their health and welfare needs are met by staff who are fit, appropriately qualified and are physically and mentally able to do their job.

### What we found

#### Our judgement

The provider is compliant with Outcome 12: Requirements relating to workers

#### Our findings

##### What people who use the service experienced and told us

People spoken with during the inspection made positive comments about the staff providing care and support they said, "They are quite good we are happy with them". "They are friendly we get on wonderfully". "They learn very quickly and they are all competent". "They are a good team". "My main carer is absolutely fine". "I liked it when it was the same person, but they have all been very nice". "We really like the staff they are very pleasant". "If we don't feel at ease with any of the carers we can always change them".

We discussed with the office manager ways of enabling people using the service to take part in staff recruitment, which should be pursued to increase their involvement in this process.

##### Other evidence

Staff spoken with told us they had been interviewed for their positions and that references had been sought and checks carried out. Staff recruitment files seen showed appropriate clearance checks and interviews had been carried out.

Records and discussion showed staff training was ongoing. Staff spoken with indicated they had received training and training updates. One staff said, "Training is good, I have never learned so much". Systems were in place for staff to receive an annual appraisal and regular individual and group supervision. Team meetings were being held and staff had a handbook outlining the agencies policies and procedures.

We spoke with the agencies' training manager who explained the processes in place to provide induction training for new employees. The ongoing training and development programme also included train the trainer updates and the introduction of competence based assessments.

**Our judgement**

People using the service were supported by an appropriately recruited, trained and supervised team of staff.

## Outcome 16: Assessing and monitoring the quality of service provision

### What the outcome says

This is what people who use services should expect.

People who use services:

\* Benefit from safe quality care, treatment and support, due to effective decision making and the management of risks to their health, welfare and safety.

### What we found

#### Our judgement

The provider is compliant with Outcome 16: Assessing and monitoring the quality of service provision

#### Our findings

##### What people who use the service experienced and told us

People using Astra Care Services benefited from an ongoing monitoring of the service, to help ensure they receive effective support and care. They said, "They have been to check things from the office a couple of times". "The managers sometimes telephone to see if things are okay". "Senior staff come around, they check the paperwork they watch what's happening they do on the spot checks".

People spoken with during the site visit, told us how they were involved with decisions which affected them personally, both on an informal daily basis and as part of the care/support review process.

People had also been consulted on their experience of the service through annual satisfaction surveys. They told us, "I have completed a few surveys about things". "We had a questionnaire my niece and I filled it in". "We have had a few surveys I get my husband to answer the questions".

##### Other evidence

There were various processes in place for assessing and monitoring the quality of service. An evaluation had been completed on all the essential standards of quality and safety.

Systems were in place to consult with people using the service by telephone and during visits. Planned and reactionary spot checks were being carried out. Computerised systems enabled the timing of visits to be monitored. Checklists were used to ensure

appropriate practices, procedures and records were maintained.

Satisfactions surveys had recently been sent out to all people using the service, results were due to be collated and included within future planning. Consideration was being given to establishing a customer focus group.

Staff had previously been enabled to complete quality assurance surveys and a suggestions box was available at the agency office. Staff spoken with said they liked working for the agency and indicated the managers were supportive and approachable.

We spoke with the customer care/quality liaison manager who explained the action taken to consult with people and respond to any concerns or complaints.

**Our judgement**

People using the service benefited from effective quality monitoring processes, to help ensure they experience safe, appropriate support and care.



# What is a review of compliance?

By law, providers of certain adult social care and health care services have a legal responsibility to make sure they are meeting essential standards of quality and safety. These are the standards everyone should be able to expect when they receive care.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has written guidance about what people who use services should experience when providers are meeting essential standards, called *Guidance about compliance: Essential standards of quality and safety*.

CQC licenses services if they meet essential standards and will constantly monitor whether they continue to do so. We formally review services when we receive information that is of concern and as a result decide we need to check whether a service is still meeting one or more of the essential standards. We also formally review them at least every two years to check whether a service is meeting all of the essential standards in each of their locations. Our reviews include checking all available information and intelligence we hold about a provider. We may seek further information by contacting people who use services, public representative groups and organisations such as other regulators. We may also ask for further information from the provider and carry out a visit with direct observations of care.

When making our judgements about whether services are meeting essential standards, we decide whether we need to take further regulatory action. This might include discussions with the provider about how they could improve. We only use this approach where issues can be resolved quickly, easily and where there is no immediate risk of serious harm to people.

Where we have concerns that providers are not meeting essential standards, or where we judge that they are not going to keep meeting them, we may also set improvement actions or compliance actions, or take enforcement action:

**Improvement actions:** These are actions a provider should take so that they **maintain** continuous compliance with essential standards. Where a provider is complying with essential standards, but we are concerned that they will not be able to maintain this, we ask them to send us a report describing the improvements they will make to enable them to do so.

**Compliance actions:** These are actions a provider must take so that they **achieve** compliance with the essential standards. Where a provider is not meeting the essential standards but people are not at immediate risk of serious harm, we ask them to send us a report that says what they will do to make sure they comply. We monitor the implementation of action plans in these reports and, if necessary, take further action to make sure that essential standards are met.

**Enforcement action:** These are actions we take using the criminal and/or civil procedures in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and relevant regulations. These enforcement powers are set out in the law and mean that we can take swift, targeted action where services are failing people.

## Information for the reader

<b>Document purpose</b>	Review of compliance report
<b>Author</b>	Care Quality Commission
<b>Audience</b>	The general public
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