

Aspirations Care Limited

Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach)

Inspection report

Office 8, Maylands Business Centre
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Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP2 7ES

Tel: 01442531171

Date of inspection visit:

09 August 2018

13 August 2018

14 August 2018

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Good ●
Is the service safe?	Good ●
Is the service effective?	Good ●
Is the service caring?	Good ●
Is the service responsive?	Good ●
Is the service well-led?	Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

This inspection took place on 9, 13 and 14 August 2018 and was announced. This was the first inspection since Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach) registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 25 January 2017.

At the time of our inspection the provider was registered to provide personal care from Office 8, Maylands Business Centre, Redbourn Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 7ES. However, the provider had moved offices to Office 6, Maylands Business Centre Redbourn. We have asked the registered manager to make an application to CQC to amend their registration accordingly as they had not done this prior to our inspection.

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in [their own houses and flats] [and] [specialist housing]. It provides a service to [older adults], [younger disabled adults], [children].

Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach) provides support to people to access the community to work, follow their interests and achieve their goals. It provides a service to adults with learning and physical disabilities, sensory impairment. At the time of the inspection there were 47 people using the service out of which six people received the regulated activity, personal care.

The service had a registered manager who was also the provider. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

People felt safe, happy and supported by staff from Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach). Staff had received training in how to safeguard people from abuse and knew how to report concerns, both internally and externally.

Safe and effective recruitment practices were followed to help ensure that all staff were suitably qualified and experienced. Arrangements were in place to ensure there were sufficient numbers of staff available to meet people's individual needs.

Plans and guidance had been drawn up to help staff deal with unforeseen events and emergencies.

Trained staff helped people to take their medicines safely when required. Identified and potential risks to people's health and well-being were reviewed and managed effectively.

Staff received training and refresher updates relevant to their roles and had regular supervision meetings to discuss and review their development and performance.

People are supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff support them in the least restrictive way possible; the policies and systems in the service support this practice.

Staff had developed positive and caring relationships with the people they cared for and knew them very well. People were involved in the planning, delivery and reviews of the care and support provided. The confidentiality of information held about their medical and personal histories was securely maintained.

Care was provided in a way that promoted people's dignity and respected their privacy. People received personalised care when required and support that met their needs and took account of their preferences.

Staff were knowledgeable about people's background histories, preferences and people were supported to pursue social interests and take part in meaningful activities relevant to their needs, both at their home and in the wider community.

Complaints were recorded and responded to in line with the service policy.

People, relatives and staff were complimentary about the registered manager and how Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach) was run and operated.

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.

People were kept safe by staff trained to recognise and respond effectively to the risks of abuse.

Safe and effective recruitment practices were followed to help ensure that all staff were fit, able and qualified to do their jobs.

Sufficient numbers of staff were available to meet people's individual support needs.

People were supported to take their medicines safely when required by trained staff.

Is the service effective?

Good 

The service was effective.

People had their capacity assessed and best interest decisions completed to promote their choices.

People's wishes and consent was obtained by staff before care and support was provided.

People were supported by staff that was trained to meet people's needs effectively.

People were provided with support to eat a healthy balanced diet which met their needs.

Is the service caring?

Good 

People, other professionals and a relative told us staff provided support in a kind, compassionate and caring way. One person told us, "I am happy with the care, they [staff] take me out. Staff are nice to me."

Most people supported by Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach) who received a regulated activity were not able to speak with us due to their complex issues. We spoke with one person over the phone and we visited another person at their home. However,

the person declined to talk to the inspector. We Found that staff from Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach) provided support to people that enabled them to pursue their interests and achieve their goals.

Staff confirmed they supported the same people; this gave staff and people the opportunity to develop relationships and staff the opportunity to learn people's likes and dislikes. One relative said, "[Name] has good relationships with staff and they [staff] are kind, caring and respectful." One staff member commented, "I treat people the way I would want to be treated." They went on to tell us that they looked at people's care plans and discussed what the person wanted to do and helped them fulfil their goals. They gave us examples such as: learning to cook, attending football matches, visiting museums and voluntary work.

Staff confirmed they promoted people's independence by encouraging people to do as much as they could. One staff member told us about two people who wanted to develop friendships. Staff noted that they both shared an interest in football and suggested they met up and this worked well. We found that the two people attended regular events together. Staff also noted there were other people who expressed an interest in meeting new people and making friends. This resulted in a group forming and meeting every Tuesday. At the time of the inspection there were five members who regularly met weekly and each person selected activities they wanted to do together. Events they have attended as a group included: dinner party, picnics in the park, Badminton, cricket, golf and many other events. This demonstrated that staff listened to what people wanted and supported people with their goals to develop friendships.

People who received a service, and where appropriate their relatives, were involved in the planning and reviews of the care and support they received. One relative said, "We have regular reviews." One staff member commented, "I do the care plan reviews and we ask them [people] who they would like to attend. We also get invited to attend people's reviews in care homes."

Staff we spoke with knew people well and we found that care plans had good guidance for staff about the support people required. Records were stored securely and staff understood the importance of respecting confidential information. They only disclosed it to people such as health and social care professionals on a need to know basis.

Is the service responsive?

Good 

The service was responsive.

People received personalised support that took account of their preferences and personal circumstances.

Detailed guidance made available to staff enabled them to provide person centred care and support.

People were supported to maintain social interests and take part in meaningful activities and hobbies they chose.

People and their relatives were confident to raise concerns which were dealt with promptly.

Is the service well-led?

The service was well led.

Systems were in place to quality assure the services provided, manage risks and drive improvement.

People and staff were very positive about the registered manager and how the home operated.

Staff understood their roles and responsibilities and felt supported by the management team.□

Good ●

Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach)

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

This inspection took place on 9, 13 and 14 August 2018 and was announced. We provided 48 hours' notice of the inspection because the service provides support to people in the community and we needed to be sure staff would be available for us to talk to, and that records would be accessible. The inspection was undertaken by one inspector.

Before the inspection we reviewed information, we held about the service including statutory notifications. Statutory notifications include information about important events which the provider is required to send us. We also reviewed the provider information return (PIR) submitted to us. This is information that the provider is required to send to us, which gives us some key information about the service and tells us what the service does well and any improvements they plan to make

Only one person who used the service was able to speak with us on the telephone, we received feedback from a relative about the service provided. We spoke with five staff members, the care co-ordinator, a senior carer and the registered manager. we received feedback from a social care professional about the care and support a person using the service received.

We looked at the care records for three people who used the service to see if they were reflective of their current needs. We reviewed three staff recruitment files and training records. We also looked at further records relating to the management of the service, including quality audits, feedback from people and their relatives to assess the provider's quality monitoring systems.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

People told us they felt the service they received was safe and met their needs. Staff had access to people's risk assessments and were knowledgeable about how to mitigate risks and help keep people safe. Staff told us they would inform the office about any changes to people's needs. One staff member told us that one person's risk assessments had been recently reviewed due to their changing needs. We saw in people's care plans that risk assessments for people and the environment had been completed. We noted there was clear guidance detailed in care plans for staff on how to support people's needs.

Staff received training to safeguard people from harm. Staff we spoke with were knowledgeable about how to identify any signs of abuse. They knew how to raise concerns, both internally and externally. One member of staff told us, "I would report any concerns to my manager and if I feel it needed to go higher, I would take it higher."

Safe and effective recruitment practices were followed to make sure that all staff were of good character and suitable for the roles they performed. We noted all the necessary pre-employment and identity checks were in place before staff could work. This included verifying references and investigating any employment gaps in staffs work history.

There were enough suitably experienced, skilled and qualified staff available to meet people's individual needs. Staff received their rotas in advance. The care coordinator explained that when circumstances changed staff always received updates. People had been allocated regular staff to promote continuity of care. One relative told us, "[Name] has only got the one carer and it works really well, they have a good relationship." Staff we spoke with confirmed they supported the same people. One staff member commented, "I have the same twelve clients I support."

There were processes in place to monitor incidents and accidents. Staff were familiar with the reporting and recording procedures. Staff understood that reporting was important to ensure that steps would be taken to monitor and reduce identified and potential risks. Staff received training in infection control and were provided with appropriate equipment when providing personal care.

People who used the service were supported to take their medicines safely when required. Staff had been trained in safe administration of medicines and knew how to ensure people received their medicines safely. Staff had their competencies regularly checked and there were regular spot checks completed to ensure best practice. We saw that medicines were regularly audited by the office staff.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

People who used the service and their relatives were positive about the staff that provided care and support. People told us they felt happy with the service they received. One social care professional from a home where a person lived said, "It has been a good service, we see when [name of person] comes back (from activities with Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach) staff); they are always happy."

New staff members were required to complete an induction programme during which they received training relevant to their role and achieved a nationally recognised `Care Certificate`. They worked alongside other experienced colleagues and were not permitted to work unsupervised until they were competent in their duties. Staff received training in areas such as safeguarding, medicines, health and safety and first aid. Staff were also encouraged and supported to obtain Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). One staff member told us, "I have just completed my QCF, we are supported to develop." They went on to tell us that during a supervision they expressed an interest to develop their knowledge in epilepsy and they were sent on a course. They commented, "That was the best training, I now have a much better understanding." Another staff member said, "I am up to date with my training. That is one thing they [Provider] are really good at, if you need training you get an email. They chase you up and its good face to face training which I prefer."

Staff confirmed they received 'one to one' supervision where they had the opportunity to review and discuss their performance. One staff member told us, "I have had supervisions. I feel supported. If I have any questions they [staff] will support me. I have had some personal issues and they [staff] were very good at supporting me, they listened to me and it has worked very well." Staff told us that the registered manager was approachable. They confirmed they had the opportunity to attend meetings and staff we spoke with felt they had a voice and that the registered manager listened to them.

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 Act 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. At the time of our inspection we found that the provider was working within the principles of the MCA where necessary and appropriate to the needs of the people they supported.

Staff confirmed the importance of obtaining people`s consent before they offered any support. One staff member said, "Choice is hugely important. They [people] have human rights and have the right to make their own choices."

Staff helped, supported and encouraged people to eat a healthy balanced diet that met their needs. One staff member commented, "We have some people who want to access the community, go shopping and learn how to cook. Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach) provide the support for people to achieve their goals."

Is the service caring?

Our findings

People, other professionals and a relative told us staff provided support in a kind, compassionate and caring way. One person told us, "I am happy with the care, they [staff] take me out. Staff are nice to me."

Most people supported by Aspirations who received a regulated activity were not able to speak with us due to their complex issues. We spoke with one person over the phone and we visited another person at their home. However, the person declined to talk to the inspector. Aspirations provide support to people that enables them to pursue their interests and achieve their goals.

Staff confirmed they supported the same people; this gave staff and people the opportunity to develop relationships and staff the opportunity to learn people's likes and dislikes. One relative said, "[Name] has good relationships with staff and they [staff] are kind caring and respectful." One staff member commented, "I treat people the way I would want to be treated." They went on to tell us that they looked at people's care plans and discuss what the person wanted to do and we fulfil their goals. They gave examples such as: learning to cook, attending football matches, Museums and voluntary work.

staff confirmed they promoted people's independence by encouraging people to do what they could. One staff member told us about two clients that had wanted to develop friendships. Staff noted that they both shared an interest in football and suggested they meet up and this worked well; they now attend regular events together. Staff also noted there were other people who expressed an interest in meeting new people and making friends. This resulted in the Tuesday group forming. At the time of the inspection there were five members who regularly meet on Tuesdays and each person gets to select activities they would like to do together. Events they have attended as a group include: Dinner party, picnics in the park, Badminton, cricket, golf and many other events. This demonstrated that staff listened to what people wanted and supported people with their goals to develop friendships.

People who received a service, and where appropriate their relatives, were involved in the planning and reviews of the care and support they received. One relative said, "We have regular reviews " one staff member commented, "I do the care plan reviews and we ask them who they would like to attend. We also get invited to attend people's reviews in care homes."

Staff we spoke with knew people well and we found that care plans had good guidance for staff about the support people required. Records were stored securely and staff understood the importance of respecting confidential information. They only disclosed it to people such as health and social care professionals on a need to know basis.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

People received care and support from staff that had guidance about people's health and care needs. Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach) provided support to people who lived in their own home and care home settings. Staff helped people to achieve their goals and interests. This included helping people to do volunteer work, interests such as bowling, shopping and learning new skills such as cooking.

People's identified needs were documented and reviewed to ensure they received appropriate care. For example, guidance on how people required their support and how the person wanted that support. One person said, "I am happy with the care." People and a relative confirmed they had been involved with their care. One relative commented, "Yes we have had reviews about the care. They [staff] listen, they took on board what we said and put this in place." The registered manager told us that there were yearly reviews and three-monthly spot checks where people views were sought to ensure people were happy with the service.

People, relatives and staff from a home a person lived in told us that staff from Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach) arrived on time. One relative told us, "Yes staff turn up on time." We looked at a random selection of call times and found that calls were on time. Staff confirmed they had enough travel time added to their rotas to support time keeping. Where calls had been cancelled we found that the reasons were documented appropriately. The calls and activities were audited regularly to ensure people received the support they wanted.

The registered manager told us that people were encouraged to contact the office if there were any problems. One person said, "They [staff] come on time." The registered manager had completed an activity list that comprised of lots of different activities, their location, opening times and cost to help support people with options about what was available to help support their choice.

There was a complaints procedure in place. Staff told us after each support session an activity sheet was completed and sent to the office to be reviewed. One section on the activity sheet asked what worked well and not so well and the person was encouraged to provide feedback about their experience. This was supported with pictures of three faces ranging from happy to sad to support people's feedback. We noted that complaints received had been appropriately dealt with in line with the provider's complaints policy.

The registered manager sent out annual surveys to ensure people were happy with the service provided. We noted the responses were positive and there were action plans developed to ensure the service improved in the areas where improvements were needed. For example, one question asked: Do clients know how to call Aspirations Hertfordshire (Outreach) in an emergency. Out of the 29 responses four people were not sure. The actions taken by the registered manager was to send letters to all people who used the service detailing how to contact the service and to discuss this with people at their care reviews. A relative we spoke with confirmed they knew how to raise concerns.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Staff and a relative told us that the service was well led and they felt listened to. One staff member said, "I feel supported. We have a good team."

The registered manager was knowledgeable about the people who received support. They ensured that staff had the tools, resources and training necessary to meet people`s needs. One staff member said, "We have a great team." The registered manager was clear about the values and the purpose of the services provided.

There were systems in place to monitor the quality of the service. We saw that the registered manager completed regular audits. There had been an internal audit carried out by the provider in June 2018. Issues found were followed with an action plan to ensure improvements. The registered manager told us they felt supported. They confirmed they had regular contact with the regional manager to discuss any issues and received training and regular supervision.

Staff were positive about the registered manager of the service and felt there was strong leadership. One staff member said, "We have a good team, it's a lot more positive than when I first joined. The culture has changed because of the [registered] manager." The registered manager confirmed that since joining the service the change in culture was something they were proud of. They commented, "Office staff worked hard to change an existing negative culture of staff into a positive, pro-active team. Staff`s moral increased greatly and in turn greater staff retention. Staff were given the opportunity to progress, develop skills and knowledge by additional training. "

Staff comments included, "[registered] manager is approachable, it's a good company to work for." Office staff we spoke with were knowledgeable about the people who used the service and about their needs; they also covered shifts when required and were up to date with their training. There was a clear staff structure in place and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities. There was an out of hour's service operated for people to ensure that people had support when required.