

Review of compliance

Carelink Health Care Professionals Limited
Care Link Healthcare Professionals Ltd

Region:	East Midlands
Location address:	2 Beaver Close Whetstone Leicester LE8 6ZX
Type of service:	Domiciliary care service
Date of Publication:	August 2012
Overview of the service:	Carelink is a domiciliary agency providing the following regulated activity: Nursing Personal care

Summary of our findings for the essential standards of quality and safety

Our current overall judgement

Care Link Healthcare Professionals Ltd was meeting all the essential standards of quality and safety inspected.

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 and carried out a visit on 28 June 2012.

What people told us

People told us they were satisfied with the care the agency provided and the expertise of the staff. One person said, "If I'm unwell I tell the nurses and they tell me what to do. They're very knowledgeable and can give me advice when I need it." A relative told us, "The service is very good and I am satisfied with everything the agency does. The staff are brilliant at moving and handling. I learn myself from watching them."

People said they were involved in making decision about their care and support. One person told us, "The staff talk to me while they're providing care and ask me how I want things done." People also said the staff were courteous and caring. A relative told us, "The staff are very respectful and they never order my relative about or try and take over." Another relative said, "The staff are always punctual and polite."

People told us they would speak out if they weren't happy with the service. One person said, "I've never, ever had a complaint about this agency. But if I did I would phone the office." A relative told us, "If there any issues or anything to discuss I am on the phone to XXXX (one of the owner's). I always speak to her personally as she is very good and very approachable and she knows my relative well."

People said they were happy with the staff team. One told us, "The staff are on time and in and out and get the job done, but they don't rush me. They are so good and caring." Another said, "The staff know exactly what they are doing. I trust them completely."

People told us the providers contacted them regularly to get their views on the service. One person said, "They phone me up to make sure I'm ok and happy with the carers." A relative told us, "The people who run the agency are very involved and they make sure everything is going smoothly. They keep an eye on things and I have total confidence in

them."

What we found about the standards we reviewed and how well Care Link Healthcare Professionals Ltd 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's views and experiences were taken into account in the way the service was provided and delivered in relation to their care.

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

People experienced care, treatment and support that met their needs and protected their rights.

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

People were protected from the risk of abuse, because the provider had taken reasonable steps to identify the possibility of abuse and prevent abuse from happening.

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

People were cared for, or supported by, suitably qualified, skilled and experienced 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

The provider had an effective system to regularly assess and monitor the quality of service that people receive.

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.

Where we judge that a provider is non-compliant with a standard, we make a judgement about whether the impact on people who use the service (or others) is minor, moderate or major:

A minor impact means that people who use the service experienced poor care that had an impact on their health, safety or welfare or there was a risk of this happening. The impact was not significant and the matter could be managed or resolved quickly.

A moderate impact means that people who use the service experienced poor care that had a significant effect on their health, safety or welfare or there was a risk of this happening. The matter may need to be resolved quickly.

A major impact means that people who use the service experienced poor care that had a serious current or long term impact on their health, safety and welfare, or there was a risk of this happening. The matter needs to be resolved quickly.

Where we identify compliance, no further action is taken. Where we have concerns, the most appropriate action is taken to ensure that the necessary changes are made.

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 said they were involved in making decision about their care and support. One person told us, "The staff talk to me while they're providing care and ask me how I want things done." People also said the staff were courteous and caring. A relative told us, "The staff are very respectful and they never order my relative about or try and take over." Another relative said, "The staff are always punctual and polite."

Other evidence

The two nurses who run the agency carry out assessments to ensure people's needs are acknowledged and met. Potential service users are visited in their own homes and their relatives involved where appropriate. One of the owners told us, "We are a small agency so we (the owners) get to know all our clients from day one. We do a few shifts for new clients which is part of our assessment process. Working directly with them gives us a good understanding of their needs and helps us decide which staff would be most suitable for them."

The agency employs both nurses and carers so are able to cater for a variety of needs. A nurse employed by the agency told us, "We are matched to the clients on our personalities as well as our skills. Some clients like carers who are more outgoing, others prefer a quieter carer. The owners match people perfectly."

Care plans showed that people were involved in decisions about their care and treated with respect. For example one stated, 'Before carrying out procedures carers say who

they are and explain the task they are going to carry out and gain consent.' Another, for a nursing procedure, stated 'obtain verbal consent' before proceeding. Care plans also showed staff were encouraged to use their interpersonal skills to care for people effectively, for example, 'talk to XXXX whilst attending her and make her feel at ease by continuously reassuring her'.

Our judgement

People's views and experiences were taken into account in the way the service was provided and delivered in relation to their care.

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 told us they were satisfied with the care the agency provided and the expertise of the staff. One person said, "If I'm unwell I tell the nurses and they tell me what to do. They're very knowledgeable and can give me advice when I need it." A relative told us, "The service is very good and I am satisfied with everything the agency does. The staff are brilliant at moving and handling. I learn myself from watching them."

Other evidence

The owners wrote the care plans and updated them routinely every six months or whenever needs changed. This always involved a visit to the person using the service. The owners said staff notified them if a person's needs changed. Small changes to care plans could be made by the nurses and carers, but the owners were always involved if any substantial changes were necessary.

Staff told us care plans were detailed and up to date. A nurse said, "The owners make sure we have all the information we need to look after the clients properly." She added, "Every client is an individual with different needs so the training we get is specific to the person in question. XXXX (one of the owners) does the assessments and care plans so she can then train us because she knows the client. That's the beauty of this being a small agency."

One of the owners, in conjunction with a social worker employed by the agency, was in the process of re-writing care plans to make them more person-centred. This will help to ensure that people receive individualised care that promotes independence and choice. For example two people who use the service had previous occupations that impacted on their present daily lives and on how they liked things done. Being made aware of this

helped staff to provide care in a way that was acceptable to the people using the service.

Some of the people who use the service suffer from dementia-type illness and records showed this resulted in challenging behaviour at times. The provider may find it useful to note that care plans were not always in place for this. Appropriate care plans should be put in place if any instances of challenging behaviour are likely so staff know what action to take and how best to defuse any challenging situations.

Our judgement

People experienced care, treatment and support that met their needs and protected their rights.

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 told us they would speak out if they weren't happy with the service. One person said, "I've never, ever had a complaint about this agency. But if I did I would phone the office." A relative told us, "If there any issues or anything to discuss I am on the phone to XXXX (one of the owner's). I always speak to her personally as she is very good and very approachable and she knows my relative well."

Other evidence

The agency's complaints procedure was in their 'Service User Guide' and 'Statement of Purpose'. The owners said the people who use the service and their representatives were encouraged to call the agency directly if they had any concerns. One of the owners said, "As we are a small agency we are involved with all our clients and can usually deal with concerns straight away." The people who use the service could raise concerns by phone or by email if they preferred.

Information about safeguarding (how the agency protects people from abuse) was in the 'Statement of Purpose'. Staff were trained in this as part of their induction and then did further training which they were tested on to help ensure they understood their responsibilities. The owners had been trained in the Mental Capacity Act/Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and in discussion knew how to apply this to the work they did.

The staff we talked to said they'd been trained in safeguarding and knew what to do if they had concerns about the welfare of any of the people who use the service. We talked to them about safeguarding. One staff member told us, "Safeguarding is very important and if we are worried about one of the clients we call the office and report it." Another said, "The owners are knowledgeable and experienced. If ever I phone the

office because I am worried about a client I always get excellent advice and support."

Our judgement

People were protected from the risk of abuse, because the provider had taken reasonable steps to identify the possibility of abuse and prevent abuse from happening.

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 told us they were happy with the staff team. One said, "The staff are on time and in and out and get the job done, but they don't rush me. They are so good and caring." Another told us, "The staff know exactly what they are doing. I trust them completely."

Relatives told us the staff got on well with the people who use the service and, where applicable, their relatives. One relative said, "The staff are very good and one in particular is excellent and she is our main carer. She is very bubbly and has become part of our family."

Other evidence

The staff files we checked all contained two references and an enhanced CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check. This helps to ensure they are safe to work with the people who use the service. Staff files were well-organised and showed that staff had had regular supervisors and appraisals. The owners told us they regularly worked alongside their staff and as such were able to observe their practice and check if it was of a good standard.

The agency mainly employed experienced nurses and carers, all of whom had a four day induction and on-going training. This included the basic skills staff needed to work in the domiciliary care sector, as well as additional courses including dementia and end of life care. A member of staff told us, "All the staff have training before they start – the nurses and the carers. We also have training specifically for the people we care for as all their needs are different. I get all the training I need to keep myself up to date."

We talked to staff about their work at Carelink. All said they liked working for the agency and felt well-supported by the owners. One told us, "The owners and the staff are on the same wavelength and we understand each other. That makes it easier when we are discussing clients." Some of the staff had specialisms which were matched with particular people who use the service. These included epilepsy, learning disabilities, mental health, and different neurological conditions.

Our judgement

People were cared for, or supported by, suitably qualified, skilled and experienced 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 told us the providers contacted them regularly to get their views on the service. One person said, "They phone me up to make sure I'm ok and happy with the carers." A relative told us, "The people who run the agency are very involved and they make sure everything is going smoothly. They keep an eye on things and I have total confidence in them."

Other evidence

The owners told us they kept in touch with all the people who use the service by phone and email. When each care package commenced they said they were directly involved in delivering it, and later, when an established team of carers was in place, they continued to oversee the care provided through visits and spots checks. This enabled changes to be made to the service along with people's wishes, For example, some of the people who use the service have asked for specific carers to be sent and the agency has accommodated this.

The agency also had a formal process for seeking the views and opinions of the people who use the service. This was based on the use of questionnaires which were sent out to the people who use the service and / or their family members. The results of surveys were reviewed on a formal basis with a view to continually improving the quality of the service. The owners might find it useful to note that the questionnaires would benefit from being more easy to read and user-friendly.

Staff told us they thought the agency was well run because the owners were closely involved in the care of all the people who use the service. One staff member said, "The owners are always at the end of the phone. They are personally involved with all the

clients and know them well. It's nice to have an employer who knows how the clients want to be looked after." Another staff member told us, "Carelink is unique because of the way the owners run it. They are expert, qualified and always on call."

Our judgement

The provider had an effective system to regularly assess and monitor the quality of service that people receive.

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.

Where we judge that providers are not meeting essential standards, we may set compliance actions or take enforcement action:

Compliance actions: These are actions a provider must take so that they **achieve** compliance with the essential standards. 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

Document purpose	Review of compliance report
Author	Care Quality Commission
Audience	The general public
Further copies from	03000 616161 / www.cqc.org.uk
Copyright	Copyright © (2010) Care Quality Commission (CQC). This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part, free of charge, in any format or medium provided that it is not used for commercial gain. This consent is subject to the material being reproduced accurately and on proviso that it is not used in a derogatory manner or misleading context. The material should be acknowledged as CQC copyright, with the title and date of publication of the document specified.

Care Quality Commission

Website	www.cqc.org.uk
Telephone	03000 616161
Email address	enquiries@cqc.org.uk
Postal address	Care Quality Commission Citygate Gallowgate Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4PA