

Review of compliance

Allied Healthcare Group Limited

Allied Healthcare - Derby

Region:	East Midlands
Location address:	1st Floor 11 Melbourne Business Court Millenium Way, Pride Park Derby DE24 8LZ
Type of service:	Domicilliary Care Service Nursing agency
Publication date:	July 2011
Overview of the service:	<p>The agency provides personal care or nursing care to adults to enable them to continue to live in the community.</p> <p>They provide support to people who live within the Derby locality and in the towns and villages to the north and west, including Matlock.</p>

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

What we found overall

We found that Allied Healthcare - Derby was not meeting one or more essential standards. Improvements were needed.

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

Why we carried out this review

We carried out this review because concerns were identified in relation to:

- Respecting and involving people who use services
- Care and welfare of people who use services
- Safeguarding people who use services from abuse
- Staffing
- Supporting workers
- Assessing and monitoring the quality of service provision
- Complaints

How we carried out this review

We reviewed all the information we hold about this provider, carried out a visit on 28 and 29 June 2011, observed how people were being cared for, talked with four people who use services, three relatives and talked with two staff. We checked the provider's records, and looked at records of people who use services.

What people told us

People told us they were provided with a good standard of care by well trained, caring and patient staff. A relative commented, "we chose the agency because it was local and they could guarantee us the same person would sit every week. We have recently increased the service to twice a week. We have the same carer on each visit and dad has taken to her very well. She's very good."

They told us that the service was consistent, provided on time and in a way which maintained their dignity. One person told us, "I feel the carers are very good, they will try and make my husband feel comfortable when they help him. They respect that this is our home and always let us know that they have arrived. "

We found when we looked at records that people's complaints and concerns were not always transferred into the complaints recording system and this could mean people did not get a response to their concerns, or they may not be investigated.

What we found about the standards we reviewed and how well Allied Healthcare – Derby was meeting them

Outcome 1: People should be treated with respect, involved in discussions about their care and treatment and able to influence how the service is run

People understand the care, treatment and support choices available to them and their dignity is respected. People cannot be assured that information about them is always maintained in confidence.

Overall, we found that improvements were needed for this essential standard.

Outcome 4: People should get safe and appropriate care that meets their needs and supports their rights

People receive safe, effective care and support that meets their needs and protects their rights.

Overall, we found that Allied Healthcare - Derby was meeting this essential standard.

Outcome 7: People should be protected from abuse and staff should respect their human rights

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

Overall, we found that Allied Healthcare - Derby was meeting this essential standard.

Outcome 13: There should be enough members of staff to keep people safe and meet their health and welfare needs

People have their health and welfare needs met by sufficient numbers of appropriate staff.

Overall, we found that Allied Healthcare - Derby was meeting this essential standard.

Outcome 14: Staff should be properly trained and supervised, and have the chance to develop and improve their skills

People are safe and their health and welfare needs are met by competent staff.

Overall, we found that Allied Healthcare - Derby was meeting this essential standard.

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 benefit from safe, effective care as the risks to their health and welfare are identified and managed well. The monitoring and sustainability of improvements needs to be more robust to ensure positive outcomes for people using the service

Overall, we found that improvements were needed for this essential standard.

Outcome 17: People should have their complaints listened to and acted on properly

People cannot be assured that their comments and complaints will be listened to and acted upon effectively.

Overall, we found that improvements were needed for this essential standard.

Action we have asked the service to take

We have asked the provider to send us a report within 14 days of them receiving this report, setting out the action they will take to improve. We will check to make sure that the improvements have been made.

Other information

This is the first review of compliance under the Health and Social Care Act 2010.

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 1: 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

There are minor concerns with outcome 1: Respecting and involving people who use services

Our findings

What people who use the service experienced and told us
All of the people we spoke with told us the staff were helpful and respectful. They all felt they were treated with dignity, especially when receiving help with personal care. One person told us, “I feel the carers are very good, they will try and make my husband feel comfortable when they help him. They respect that this is our home and always let us know that they have arrived. “

We looked at the handbook which was given to all staff and this stated that staff must provide support which respected people’s dignity and promoted their independence. The staff we spoke with gave good examples which showed how they ensured people were treated with dignity and respect. One staff member told us, “I feel very confident that we provide dignified care and are respectful towards people. I always ask people if I can read their care plan, but I don’t take what’s written down as read, because people can change their mind about how they would like to be helped. I talk to them about their care.”

The people we spoke with told us the staff encouraged them to remain independent

where possible. They told us they would always help them with areas they struggled with. One person told us, "I think they encourage our independence, they told us that that's what they're here to do. I find them very thoughtful. I feel happy that I have got this care as it relieves our daughters and they can work without worry."

Staff we spoke with told us they always tried to encourage people to retain their skills and independence. "I would always ask the client if they would like me to help them so they retain their independence."

One person told us that the staff sometimes let information (including names) about other people they went to "slip out." This concerned us as people's personal information must be kept confidential. We passed this information on to the agency manager for her to take action to address this issue.

Other evidence

The local authority had informed us of their concerns about some aspects of the agency's customer care a few months ago. They told us the agency had supplied action plans stating how they would improve this. The local authority told us they were satisfied that there had been improvements in this area.

The provider told us in their self assessment that they had plans to include questions about dignity and respect in their courtesy calls to customers. This was to make sure the staff were providing care in line with the agency's expectations.

Our judgement

People understand the care, treatment and support choices available to them and their dignity is respected. People cannot be assured that information about them is always maintained in confidence.

Outcome 4: 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 4: Care and welfare of people who use services

Our findings

What people who use the service experienced and told us
All of the people we spoke with had been assessed by their social worker before they received any care to identify what care and support was needed. We saw evidence of this in their records.

We looked at the care plans for the people we spoke with and found these to be up to date and they reflected people’s needs as they expressed them to us. We asked people if they read what staff recorded about their visits and the majority said they did or had done this. They all told us they were happy that what staff had recorded was what had happened.

We found mixed evidence from staff about whether support plans were always available. One staff member told us they were; another said this was not always the case. All of the people we spoke with had a plan of care in their home. Some of the people we spoke with had a dedicated “core” group of staff who always came to them, others did not have this. No-one expressed any dissatisfaction with their current carers. One person commented, “we don’t have specific carers, but it doesn’t bother me at all as they are all so good.” Another said, “we chose the agency because it was local and they could guarantee us the same person would sit every week. We have recently increased the service to twice a week. We have the same carer on each visit and dad has taken to her very well. She’s very good.”

Other evidence

The local authority had informed us of their concerns about some aspects of the agency's service delivery a few months ago. The concerns were about staff and people who use the service not receiving their care rotas in advance. This meant people using the service did not know which person would be coming to them and when, and the staff did not know which calls they were covering. This had led to many missed calls or late calls.

The local authority told us the provider had supplied action plans stating how they would improve this. They told us they were satisfied that there had been improvements in this area.

People we spoke with all told us they received their care rotas a week in advance so they knew which staff were coming to visit them. We had mixed evidence from staff about how far in advance they received their call allocations rota. One person said they usually got this a week in advance, the other said improvements still needed to be made to the system. "There are some problems with the rota, sometimes it is up in the air and rotas can be changed at the last minute. In theory we should know our rota a week in advance, but sometimes I don't know what I'm doing the next day."

The people we spoke with all told us staff were usually very good at timekeeping, and they said they were informed by the agency office staff if the staff were running late. "Nine times out of 10 they are on time, but if they can't get on time they let me know." Two staff and a person using the service told us that the staff were sometimes unavoidably late as their rota did not allow enough travel time between calls.

A person we spoke with had been using the service for a while and they told us the agency had improved significantly and they had not had any recent missed calls. Another person we spoke with said one of their calls had been missed but they had received a written letter of apology and had been offered the opportunity to complain. The others had never experienced a missed call. The staff told us the agency had improved in this area.

Our judgement

People receive safe, effective care and support that meets their needs and protects their rights.

Outcome 7: 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 7: Safeguarding people who use services from abuse

Our findings

What people who use the service experienced and told us

All of the people we spoke with told us they felt safe with the staff delivering their care. A relative commented to us, “I think my mother-in-law is very safe with the carers, and I feel we can trust them with anything. They are very polite. I am upstairs when they arrive and I can hear what they say; they treat her very well and are very good.”

People we spoke with also told us they would feel able to raise concerns about any inappropriate treatment. “The carers are great, they treat us well. I have never seen them behave badly, if they did I would definitely say something and I feel the agency would deal with it.”

Staff we spoke with told us they were very confident that people received safe care. “I feel that people are safe with us. There have been missed calls, but these are very rare now. It always surprises me that any calls were missed as I have never met a carer who works here who wouldn't try and go to the call. I have never seen anyone behaving appropriately towards service users. If I did I would report it.”

We looked at the policy on safeguarding and found this provided guidance for staff about their responsibility to record, report and to protect evidence. It covered the

signs of abuse. All of the staff who worked for the agency had undertaken safeguarding training and those we spoke with confirmed this. They understood their responsibility to record and report safeguarding concerns.

Other evidence

We know of a safeguarding issue which has not yet been concluded. We looked at the records of the incident and found these to be clear, detailed and comprehensive. Safeguarding procedures had been followed and actions had been taken by the agency to protect vulnerable people.

Our judgement

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

Outcome 13: Staffing

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 sufficient numbers of appropriate staff.

What we found

Our judgement

The provider is compliant with outcome 13: Staffing

Our findings

What people who use the service experienced and told us
All of the people we spoke with told us there were enough staff to provide their care and no-one said there had been any staffing shortages. One person had been using the service for some time and they said the staffing situation had improved as there had been a major staff recruitment drive. “They seem to have an excess of staff at the moment.”

We saw clear evidence in the agency office that a large number of extra staff had been recently recruited, many of these were waiting for pre employment documents being returned before starting work.

People who use the service told us the staff stayed for the correct amount of time and they told us they never felt rushed by staff. The staff we spoke with confirmed that they were not placed under any pressure to finish calls early or to rush in their duties. “I never feel rushed complete things on time and I think there are enough staff to cover shifts we need to do.”

Our judgement
People have their health and welfare needs met by sufficient numbers of appropriate staff.

Outcome 14: Supporting 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 competent staff.

What we found

Our judgement

The provider is compliant with outcome 14: Supporting workers

Our findings

What people who use the service experienced and told us

Most of the people we spoke with felt the staff were well trained and competent. “The staff are certainly well trained. If we ask about anything they also have an answer or they will find it out for us. They are very helpful.”

One person told us that their needs were very extensive and they felt it took some time for new staff to become fully familiar with how to assist. “The carers I have had for over a month are adequately trained but I have yet to be fully convinced that the newest staff know everything they need to know about me. The agency try and put them on with experienced staff and I've seen people shadowing and learning how to do the job.”

We saw evidence that the manager tried hard to make sure that new staff had an appropriate amount of “shadowing” experience before working independently. This involves staff watching experienced staff providing care. The manager and staff we spoke with said this could be available for as long as needed. “I shadowed a more experienced worker for awhile. You can do this for as long as you want. I did three shifts in different areas, with different clients and carers. I did an induction to work in Allied and also training on medication, first aid, and a core induction about the philosophy of care. I also did moving and handling and several computer training courses. It was about a month before I felt able to work alone.”

We saw evidence that the staff who work at the service were regularly supervised, appraised and that their work was directly observed to make sure it was in line with the expectations of the agency manager. Staff we spoke with told us they found these supervisions helpful.

We looked at the staff training records and we found that all staff had to complete all compulsory training, and make sure this was kept up to date or the computerised system would not allow them to be put on the client rota. This means they could not work until the training was completed and up to date. This is an effective safeguard for the people who use the service.

The staff we spoke with told us they felt the quality of the training and support they received was good. "The organisation gives us very good training and they don't let us get behind on it. They provide us with lots of equipment, particularly personal protection equipment and there is always someone to talk to."

Our judgement

People are safe and their health and welfare needs are met by competent 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

There are minor concerns with outcome 16: Assessing and monitoring the quality of service provision

Our findings

What people who use the service experienced and told us
Two of the four people we spoke with said the agency staff had asked them for their views on the care being provided. One person said, “the agency do spot checks sometimes they ask me for my opinions on the care. They know if everything is not right because I tell them. “No-one said they had been asked to complete a quality assurance questionnaire about the service.

We spoke with the manager about this and she told us the questionnaires had been sent out and were in the process of being collated. We were uncertain about why the people we spoke with had not received a questionnaire and have asked the manager to look into this.

We saw evidence of recent, thorough internal quality audits and we looked at the action plan the manager had drawn up in response. The audit had picked up on areas of concern raised by the local authority and our evidence shows that the manager had been putting the action plan into effect with good results.

The staff we spoke with told us they thought the organisation was quite thorough and that the manager wanted the service to improve. “We have monthly staff meetings, pretty regular and we get information without payslip to update us about

issues at the branch. I think the agency is pretty good at making sure people can do their job. The majority of the managers are very good especially with concerns.”

Other evidence

The local authority had informed us of their concerns about the agency and the quality of the service a few months ago. They told us the provider had supplied action plans stating how they would improve this. The local authority told us they were satisfied that there had been improvements in this area. Our evidence indicates that the necessary improvements had been made in most areas but action was needed to ensure this was sustained (see outcomes 1 and 17.)

Our judgement

People benefit from safe, effective care as the risks to their health and welfare are identified and managed well. The monitoring and sustainability of improvements needs to be more robust to ensure positive outcomes for people using the service

Outcome 17: Complaints

What the outcome says

This is what people should expect.

People who use services or others acting on their behalf:

- Are sure that their comments and complaints are listened to and acted on effectively.
- Know that they will not be discriminated against for making a complaint.

What we found

Our judgement

There are moderate concerns with outcome 17: Complaints

Our findings

What people who use the service experienced and told us
None of the people we spoke with had ever made a complaint about the care provided by the agency, but they all said they would do if they needed to. They all had confidence that the manager would respond appropriately to concerns. "I am very satisfied, but if I was at all unhappy I would definitely raise it with the agency and I would ask for a different carer to be provided. I have no concerns at all and I can't think of how the service could be better. It is working for us."

We looked at the records of complaint and at the on call book. We found that there were records of complaint in the on call log book which had not been transferred into the complaints record system and had not been investigated. This meant the complaints record was not accurate, up to date and reflective of concerns, investigation and actions taken.

The staff we spoke with understood their responsibility to report and record concerns and they told us they had confidence that the manager would respond.

Other evidence
The local authority had informed us of their concerns about the failure of the agency to respond to people making complaints a few months ago. They told us the

provider had supplied action plans stating how they would improve this. The local authority told us they were satisfied that there had been improvements in this area. Our evidence showed that the agency staff may still not be capturing and responding to concerns appropriately.

Our judgement

People cannot be assured that their comments and complaints will be listened to and acted upon effectively.

Action we have asked the provider to take

Compliance actions

The table below shows the essential standards of quality and safety that **are not being met**. Action must be taken to achieve compliance.

Regulated activity	Regulation	Outcome
Personal care Treatment of disease, disorder or injury Nursing care	17	1 – Respecting and involving people who use services
	How the regulation is not being met: People understand the care, treatment and support choices available to them and their dignity is respected. People cannot be assured that information about them is always maintained in confidence.	
Personal care Treatment of disease, disorder or injury Nursing care	10	16 – Assessing and monitoring the quality of service provision
	How the regulation is not being met: People benefit from safe, effective care as the risks to their health and welfare are identified and managed well. The monitoring and sustainability of improvements needs to be more robust to ensure positive outcomes for people using the service.	
Personal care Treatment of disease, disorder or injury Nursing care	19	17 – Complaints
	How the regulation is not being met: People cannot be assured that their comments and complaints will be listened to and acted upon effectively.	

The provider must send CQC a report that says what action they are going to take to achieve compliance with these essential standards.

This report is requested under regulation 10(3) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2010.

The provider's report should be sent to us within 14 days of this report being received.

Where a provider has already sent us a report about any of the above compliance actions, they do not need to include them in any new report sent to us after this review of compliance.

CQC should be informed in writing when these compliance actions are complete.

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

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