

Review of compliance

Mrs Angela Elizabeth Gifford Able Community Care	
Region:	East
Location address:	The Old Parish Rooms Whitlingham Lane, Trowse Norwich Norfolk NR14 8TZ
Type of service:	Domiciliary care service
Date of Publication:	September 2011
Overview of the service:	Able community care is an agency that operates nationally and supplies both self-employed and employed carers to people who need help and support for the registered activity 'Personal care' in their own homes.

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

Our current overall judgement

Able Community Care 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 9 September 2011, checked the provider's records, talked to staff and talked to people who use services.

What people told us

We spoke with one person who uses the service. The person said that they are very happy with the service they receive. They explained that they did not have any problems with their allocated carer. They added that the carer was always coming on time and always met their needs.

We also checked surveys that the agency conducted this year and some comments from people who use the service included: "I am very happy with the service, carers always meet my needs." "I am completely satisfied with the service." One comment stated that "Photos of carers are appalling", but the manager explained that this was responded to by including new photos of the carer. One comment stated: "Care could not be better."

What we found about the standards we reviewed and how well Able Community Care was meeting them

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

People who use the service are treated with respect, they are appropriately assessed and their care is discussed with them and their representatives.

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

People who use the service are protected from abuse by the appropriate implementation of safeguarding procedure and by the agency's general protection procedures.

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

People who use the service are supported and helped by staff that are competent and motivated to perform their duties.

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 who use the service are provided with service that is monitored and assessed to ensure that it is effective and responsive to the needs and wishes of people using the service.

Other information

Please see previous reports for more information about previous reviews.

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**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 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

A person who uses the service told us that they were always respected when carers attended to them. They added that staff were coming at the agreed time and that they knew all the needs of the person receiving the service.

Other evidence

The manager explained the case of a person who uses the service and whose needs have dramatically changed in a short period of time. The family and the person stated to the agency that hand rails were necessary to ensure the safety of the person. The care worker who first found out alerted the office. The internal assessor carried out an assessment and arranged an occupational therapist's assessment. The whole process, in spite of complex issues regarding the installation of the rails, was completed within only two months to the satisfaction of the person and their family.

We checked electronic records of several people who use the service and concluded that all necessary information was appropriately recorded and kept up to date.

The manager explained that regional Business Development Workers, practically regional care coordinators, were closely monitoring the needs of people who use the service, not only during regular planned reviews, but also based on consultation with people who use the service, making sure they are involved in their care planning. In addition, the manager stated that she regularly checked with people who use the services that they were satisfied with the service, again ensuring that people's voice, wishes and preferences were respected all the time.

Our judgement

People who use the service are treated with respect, they are appropriately assessed and their care is discussed with them and their representatives.

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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

A person whose conversation with the manager was observed and listened to stated that they did not have any problems with carers and that they felt safe and protected. The questionnaires checked during the site visit also contained records of people's comments which confirmed that they trusted the agency to protect them.

Other evidence

The manager reported one safeguarding issue related to the administration of medication, which had been dealt with by the agency since October 2010. The safeguarding authority referred the reported case back to the agency. The management structure of the agency investigated the case and came to a decision that ensured the full protection of people who use the service even though the safeguarding team concluded the case with no action.

The manager explained the recruitment process that included full checks of all new care workers that enhanced protection of people who use the service.

The role of regional senior staff that included regular and irregular assessments of risk for all people who use the service also contributed to appropriate protection of people who use the service.

Our judgement

People who use the service are protected from abuse by the appropriate implementation of safeguarding procedure and by the agency's general protection

procedures.

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Outcome 14: Supporting staff

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 staff

Our findings

What people who use the service experienced and told us

People who commented on care workers, both on the phone and in their questionnaires stated that their carers were very good and that they knew their jobs. They stated that carers knew the needs of people who use the service.

Other evidence

The manager reported to us that all care workers were spot checked at their places of work by the regional senior staff, to ensure that people are treated according to their plans of care. This method also helped staff to keep up to date with their needs in terms of their training.

The manager explained that self employed staff were responsible for finding training for themselves, and to enrol in and attend the training. The agency expected them to have proof of their training, but was not directly involved in organising their training. The staff that worked with people funded by social services were sent to training organised by social services. This training was paid for by the agency.

The Business Development Workers regionally were also providing training and assessing carers competency at the places of work.

Care workers working closer to the office, in Norfolk and Suffolk, benefited from the local connection of the office with local social services and access to local training.

Assessments of competency performed by care managers were used to offer support and supervision to staff. They also carried out yearly appraisals.

Our judgement

People who use the service are supported and helped by staff that are competent and motivated to perform their duties.

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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 who use the service did not make direct comments to us, the regulator, on quality review and monitoring that the agency organised and carried out, but their views were collected through surveys conducted annually, usually in January each year.

Other evidence

The manager showed us the questionnaires conducted in the last two years. We collected comments from people who use the service to summarise their experience in this report. These comments were mostly very positive showing satisfaction with the service. Where comments indicated a need for action, as we saw in one example, the agency responded by acting upon them. The mentioned example related to a comment criticising the quality of staff photos which were presented to people who use the service as part of the induction of new care workers to people. The agency acted by implementing a rule ensuring that photos were updated each year.

Comments from these surveys were published on the agency website, demonstrating the transparency of the agency's work. These comments also demonstrated the consistency of the service that the agency offered, showing that the same carers worked with the same people, in several cases for more than eight years.

The agency kept people informed about developments within the agency by publishing a bimonthly gazette. They also relied on web information and encouraged families of people using the service to use electronic means of communication.

They also reviewed their policies and procedures to ensure they comply with new regulations.

Our judgement

People who use the service are provided with service that is monitored and assessed to ensure that it is effective and responsive to the needs and wishes of people using the service.

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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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