

Professional Carers Support Service

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Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
Inspection completed on: 22 May 2018

Service provided by:
Professional Carers (Wirral) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2015012481

Care service number:
CS2015336898

About the service

Professional Carers is a family run business, with its headquarters (and main operation) in the north-west of England.

This service was registered with the Care Inspectorate in July 2015 to provide a support service (care at home) to adults and older people with physical and learning disabilities; sensory impairment; mental health problems including dementia, living in their own homes and in the community.

The service is managed from an office base in Kirkliston, on the outskirts of Edinburgh and is currently delivered to clients in South Queensferry, Ratho and Kirkliston. The service has a registered manager, a care coordinator, two senior carers and a team of care workers.

The aims of the service are:

- To support clients to maintain their independence and quality of life.
- To deliver a service of the highest quality that will improve and sustain the client's overall quality of life.
- To respect each client's right to independence, privacy, dignity, fulfilment, and the rights to make informed choices.
- To ensure that each client's needs and values are respected in matters of religion, culture, race or ethnic origin, sexuality and sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, parenthood and disabilities or barriers.
- To identify, train and match carers as closely as possible with the client, in order to meet their needs.
- To work in partnership with clients to develop staff members to become experts in meeting their needs in a manner that the client wants.

What people told us

We received comments about the service from six people who returned a questionnaire to us and we met seven clients and two relatives during the inspection. All of those we heard from were happy overall with the quality of care and support and with their staff.

Comments from **clients** included:

'Ten out of ten. I don't feel rushed.'

'The carers are great. I've met the manager. I usually have the same staff and always someone I've met.'

'I had a different company before and I wasn't happy with them. They didn't listen and sent male carers. With this company I am happier and they know I want to have female carers, especially for personal care.'

'The staff are really good. I like to chat to them.'

'It's going well. No issues.'

'The service helps me to be as independent as possible. My carer supports me well. They are enthusiastic and capable.'

'I have help with meal preparation and medication. Staff know how to support me and know where to get things for me. I know when they come they will help with anything I can't manage. They are very nice girls, I couldn't find any fault with them. They are attentive and always willing to do anything for me. It's usually the same carers I see, any changes/new staff are helpful. Staff have enough time for all of the tasks.'

'My support plan outlines my disabilities and the cause. It also gives an overview of my interests and my preferred name. A big factor is my anxiety about change. I am given a weekly rota so I know who to expect. The daily visits allow me to remain in my own home. The manager is always contactable. I have review meetings regularly.'

Comments from **relatives** included:

'The service is great as I know I can do things while the carers go in to help my relative with personal care and dressing. We are awaiting a review (six months) but health has changed drastically so the care plan needs updated. The staff are great and could not treat clients any better. They have enough time to support and care for clients and I feel they have the right training, but I would like to make a few changes at the review. When I am visiting I talk to the staff, advising of any change if necessary, and they take this on board. There are a lot of staff changes. They are recruiting more staff and training them on the run. I'm very satisfied with the service. I feel safe knowing people are on the look out to see that everything is ok. When I mention I am unhappy with anything regarding staff I contact the office and am advised they will take this up with all staff.'

'My father has had three different care agencies since he required care and Professional Carers are by far the best company he has had. The care they provide is of an extremely high standard. Continuity of care is good and the timings of his visits are consistent. All his carers are polite and helpful and are respectful of maintaining his independence. I believe that Professional Carers provide true person-centred care to my father. I have been particularly impressed recently as the carers have picked up five drug errors in my father's dossette box which, without their diligence, would have gone unnoticed and hence he would have had the wrong medication. The manager has gone out of her way to sort this for him which has not only been important for his care but has supported me and my family as well. It is so important that as a family we can trust my father's carers to provide the best care for him and with Professional Carers this is certainly the case. Since having this company not only has it improved my father's quality of life but that of my family's as well, which I am so grateful for. I would wholeheartedly recommend Professional Carers to anyone requiring a package of care.'

On relative commented that:

- staff need to be reminded not to wear earphones whilst on a visit.
- dividing up the duties where two staff are in attendance would allow one to have more interaction with the client.
- staff might benefit from more understanding of behaviours that can associated with a brain injury.

We discussed these comments with the manager during the inspection.

Professional's comments included:

'I have commissioned the services of Professional Carers for a number of clients in particular for outcome based support that can be used, if needed, on a flexible and self-directed manner by the clients. The feedback I have had has been positive from the informal carers. The support has helped the informal carers to continue to care for their loved ones and to manage the additional personal caring tasks and daily living tasks that they have had to take on, not only in caring for the family member, but also as a result of the change in dynamic of the relationship and additional domestic responsibilities (meal preparation, menu planning). I have had prompt responses, a good level of communication and regular updates on progress from the manager. I find that they are good at communicating with the families and happy to be accommodating and work with them to meet the outcomes or any changes needed. I have not worked with the staff however have found that the manager speaks of matching the carers to the clients/tasks and introducing them prior to a service start. Management are happy to discuss the need for continuity of care. The manager has been available by telephone and email and has always responded in a reasonable timescale.'

Self assessment

We are not requesting self-assessments from providers for this inspection year. Issues relating to quality assurance, acting on feedback from people using the service and the quality of the service's improvement plan are considered throughout the inspection.

The Scottish Government has launched new Health and Social Care Standards. Services should be familiarising themselves with these and working with staff and people experiencing care to raise awareness about the new standards and to explore what they mean in their specific setting. The new Standards are available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00520693.pdf>

We gave advice on the development of the service's business plan, to include more detail about how each of the future objectives will be met and what impact this will have on the quality of care.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

People said the support they received was right for them. People were given clear information about the service and were included in the assessment and decisions about their support. The service allowed time for staff to get to know each person, which helped clients feel valued and in control. Key policies were shared with people, including how to make a complaint. It was clear that clients and the family's views were very important to managers and we saw that they had been encouraged to be involved in the overall development of the service.

People's routines and choices were well-known. We saw how staff took a partnership approach, supporting and encouraging people to do what they could for themselves such as: mobilising as much as possible, getting items ready for their support visit, putting the water on for a bath, peeling their potatoes. We observed warm, respectful and cheerful interactions with clients, where staff took time to ensure people did not feel rushed and had all their needs and requests attended to.

We saw clear, detailed support plans which set out how each person was to be supported. The service maintained good daily records, monitoring records and records of regular review meetings. Clients had personal contact with the manager who spoke with them and visited regularly.

The service was flexible, responding to changes in people's needs. A new electronic system meant improved scheduling and monitoring of support visits and we saw that clients had been given information about this. This system also made communication with staff easier, so that they had the most up-to-date information about people's needs. The service reported that there had been no missed visits, which was confirmed by the clients we met.

Clients were reassured by consistent care from familiar staff, which resulted in:

- medication dispensing errors being noticed, reported and rectified
- increased confidence to mobilise and reduce reliance on a hoist
- a concern about financial harm being successfully resolved, in cooperation with the relevant authorities.

People confirmed that the staff promoted their independence, such as being encouraged to complete their physiotherapy exercises.

People could be reassured that staff were recruited safely, in line with good practice. New staff completed mandatory training, including: dementia awareness, infection control, food hygiene, adult protection, medication and moving and handling. They shadowed experienced staff before working on their own. This helped people feel at ease and allowed for a handover of key information, such as how to meet each person's needs as identified in their care plan. Staff performance was monitored to ensure that their practice met the expected standards.

Staff were enthusiastic about their work and recognised the role they played in the wellbeing of clients. They said they felt well supported and could get hold of managers at any time if they had a question or concern.

- 'All management have a good working relationship with all of the clients and they promote a good sense of staff morale.'

Staff had opportunities to meet with each other and managers to discuss their work and their own learning needs. Around half of the staff held a qualification and most staff had now registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the regulatory body for social service staff. The manager had recently achieved SVQ at level 4. The coordinator and one senior were completing SVQ 3, four carers were undertaking SVQ 2 and one was undertaking an apprenticeship.

What the service could do better

Some care plan details required an update. We also shared information and resources about personal outcomes, which can be found at:

<https://personaloutcomescollaboration.org/using-outcomes-data/>

We provided advice about supporting people to manage their finances, to better protect people and staff.

We suggested that the service tell people about:

- staff training and the qualifications achieved or being working towards
- the results of the next satisfaction survey, showing how the findings will be used for continuous improvement.

We would like to see more regular team meetings for discussion of what works well, good practice developments and the new standards. Staff commented:

- 'I think it would improve the service by asking for staff members' opinions on what the service could do even better.'

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
2 May 2017	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 5 - Very good
20 Jul 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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