Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Care Standards Act 2000

Inspection Report

Abacare (Care Agency) Limited

9 Ash Court
Parc Menai Business Park
Bangor
LL57 4DF

Type of Inspection – Focussed
Date(s) of inspection – 24 June 2014 and 12 August 2014
Date of publication – 19 November 2014

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Summary

About the service
Abacare Ltd is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), to provide domiciliary care for older persons, people with learning disability, people with physical disability, mental health problems, and sensory loss including dual sensory impairment.

The Responsible Individual nominated by the company is Peter Angelides. The registered manager is Rebecca Roberts.

Abacare Ltd main office is located in Bangor. The agency was recently successful in tendering for a large number of care packages in Powys and as a consequence a satellite office has been set up in Newtown. We were told that it is the agency’s intention to register the Newtown office as a branch in due course. In the interim, all main administrative functions of the agency are conducted from the Bangor office.

During the course of this inspection process, and prior to the drafting of this report, the services managed by Abacare Ltd have been transferred to a newly registered agency by the name of Abacaredig Holdings Ltd trading as Abacare. Consequently, Abacare Ltd is no longer operating as a care agency.

What type of inspection was carried out?
This was a focused inspection conducted in response to the receipt of ten separate concerns about the service offered by the agency in Powys. The concerns came about as a result of Abacare successfully tendering for care package contracts with Powys Local Authority. The complaints mainly related to missed or late calls. Due to the nature of some of the concerns, a number were referred to the Local Authority for consideration under the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) procedures.

The services offered by the agency in Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy were unaffected by the issues in Powys.

The inspection looked at the quality of life of service users supported by Abacare and the quality of the agency’s leadership and management.

The information for this report was gathered from the following sources:

- Visits to the agency’s office in Bangor on 24/06/14 and 12/08/14.
- Visits to the Newtown satellite office.
- Discussions with the registered manager of the agency.
- Discussions with the agency’s responsible individual.
- Discussions with other directors of the agency and with the agency’s Business Development Executive.
- Discussions with senior managers from Powys Local Authority’s Social Services Department.
- Concerns received from people who use the service and their relatives/representatives.
- Concerns received from staff employed by the agency
- Concerns received from staff previously employed by the agency
- Concerns received from staff employed by other agencies based in Powys.
- Scrutiny of documentation relating to the functioning of the agency.

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<th>What does the service do well?</th>
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<th>What has improved since the last inspection?</th>
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<th>What needs to be done to improve the service?</th>
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Abacare are one of four providers who were successful in being awarded a contract to provide domiciliary care services in Powys. Following this transfer of the service in Powys there were failures in the care provided with a significant negative impact on the quality of life of service users. These failures have been subsequently considered through Powys County Council’s Adult Safeguarding process. The quality of life of many service users was affected by insufficient staff, without the necessary knowledge and skills to provide the correct care. This resulted in calls being missed and failures in the care provided.

There were no concerns regarding the quality of life of service users in the Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy during this period.

The agency is no longer in operation and all the services have been transferred to another provider. The quality of the services delivered by the new provider will be tested and reported on in due course, in line with CSSIW’s inspection procedures.
Quality of staffing

This inspection focused on quality of life for people using the service and the quality of leadership and management. However, following this transfer of the service in Powys, the quality of life of many service users was affected by insufficient staff, without the necessary knowledge and skills to provide the correct care.

The agency is no longer in operation and all the services have been transferred to another provider. The quality of the services delivered by the new provider will be tested and reported on in due course, in line with CSSIW’s inspection procedures.
### Quality of leadership and management

In April 2014, the agency was responsible for managing approximately 1275 calls to individual service users, by June 2014 this number had increased to 12218 calls. This was the result of the agency taking over a large number of care packages in Powys following a successful tendering exercise. We were told that these care packages were transferred to Abacare, from other service providers, in two phases. The first phase went ahead with minimal disruption to the services provided to people. However, the second phase involved the transfer of a greater number of care packages from a greater number of service providers and it is at this time that problems were encountered.

The management team at the agency told us that during the first phase there had been better sharing of information between the existing service provider, Powys Local Authority and Abacare. However, during the second phase, some of the existing service providers had not shared any information with Abacare about the care packages being transferred. Where information had been shared this was subsequently found to be out of date and incorrect.

To add to the problems, the second phase of the transfer commenced immediately prior to the May Bank Holiday. This caused additional problems with staff who were transferring to Abacare from other employers having booked time off and not having informed Abacare of their intentions.

We were also told that at the point of transfer of care packages in Powys, the agency was working in conjunction with another agency and were sharing the same office space. Abacare had also adopted a similar operational management structure in Powys to that of the other agency. However, it soon became apparent that this arrangement was not working and Abacare moved into a separate office and changed the operational management structure to that already in place in North Wales.

From the documented evidence submitted, we confirmed that the number of missed calls across the agency had reduced from 64 in May 2014 to 9 in August 2014. The 64 missed calls reported in May were in the Powys area. Of the nine missed calls reported in August, only one was in the Powys area.

Managers at the Agency had pulled out all the stops to sort the situation out with staff and management resources being focused on Powys in order to ensure an improvement in the service provided and a reduction in missed or late calls. However, with hindsight, and given the scale of the transfer, the timing and lack of information about individual care packages, Abacare’s management should have considered delaying the transfer or refusing to take on some of the care packages.

As Abacare Ltd is no longer in operation, it is not appropriate or reasonable for CSSIW to pursue this matter further. However, some individuals within Abacare’s management team have transferred into the newly established agency (Abacare Holdings Ltd trading as Abacare). It is therefore expected that the lessons learnt from failings in the transfer process will be applied to the new agency. This will be tested by CSSIW and reported on in due course, in line with CSSIW’s inspection procedures.
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How we inspect and report on services

We conduct two types of inspection; baseline and focussed. Both consider the experience of people using services.

- **Baseline inspections** assess whether the registration of a service is justified and whether the conditions of registration are appropriate. For most services, we carry out these inspections every three years. Exceptions are registered child minders, out of school care, sessional care, crèches and open access provision, which are every four years.

  At these inspections we check whether the service has a clear, effective Statement of Purpose and whether the service delivers on the commitments set out in its Statement of Purpose. In assessing whether registration is justified inspectors check that the service can demonstrate a history of compliance with regulations.

- **Focussed inspections** consider the experience of people using services and we will look at compliance with regulations when poor outcomes for people using services are identified. We carry out these inspections in between baseline inspections. Focussed inspections will always consider the quality of life of people using services and may look at other areas.

Baseline and focussed inspections may be scheduled or carried out in response to concerns.

Inspectors use a variety of methods to gather information during inspections. These may include;

- Talking with people who use services and their representatives
- Talking to staff and the manager
- Looking at documentation
- Observation of staff interactions with people and of the environment
- Comments made within questionnaires returned from people who use services, staff and health and social care professionals

We inspect and report our findings under ‘Quality Themes’. Those relevant to each type of service are referred to within our inspection reports.

Further information about what we do can be found in our leaflet ‘Improving Care and Social Services in Wales’. You can download this from our website, [Improving Care and Social Services in Wales](#) or ask us to send you a copy by telephoning your local CSSIW regional office.