



Inspection Report on

1st Grade Care (Neath Branch)

**Office 3
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Neath
SA11 1NB**

Date Inspection Completed

14/07/2023

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About 1st Grade Care (Neath Branch)

Type of care provided	Domiciliary Support Service
Registered Provider	1st Grade Care Ltd
Registered places	0
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	This is the first inspection under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	The service provides an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It anticipates, identifies and meets the Welsh language and cultural needs of people who use, or may use, the service.

Summary

1st Grade Care has been operating in the Neath region since 21 April 2023. The management team are working together to develop the service and support a new staff team. The proposed Responsible Individual (RI) is waiting to be approved by Care Inspectorate Wales but they are registered with the workforce regulator.

We found poor monitoring and scheduling of care calls which compromised some people's care, well-being, and safety. The service provider assured us that this would be addressed. We issued a priority action notice and expect the service provider to take immediate action.

Most systems and processes are at an early stage of being implemented and embedded in the service. Additional internal auditing systems need to be developed to ensure patterns and trends are identified and acted upon. People can be assured that they will be consulted about their personal plan and what's important to them. Personal plans enable care workers to support people to achieve their personal outcomes. Daily care records require improvement to ensure the support provided is accurately recorded.

Care workers are benefiting from regular spot checks which helps them to reflect on their practice and self-development. Care workers receive training for their role, but this is insufficient and further training areas are required. The RI regularly visits the service and the quality assurance systems are due to commence to monitor the overall performance of the service. The manager felt well supported in their role. The RI and the manager are committed to developing the service and make improvements.

Well-being

People are supported to have choice and control. People are given information about what they can expect from the service and how they can raise a concern. People are included in the development of their personal plans and reviews are scheduled to give opportunities to feedback on the care they receive. Personal plans enable care workers to support people to achieve their personal outcomes. In the near future the RI intends to consult with people when they visit the service to seek their views to review the quality of care and inform future improvements. People told us that care workers are kind and caring, but sometimes do not actively talk to them which makes them feel uncomfortable. The manager has been made aware of this feedback and is addressing with care workers.

There are systems in place to promote people's safety but further improvement is needed. The service consistently assesses people's needs before agreeing to provide care and support, this ensures the service is suitable for them. Most people receive medication at the right time. Medication needs to be regularly audited to ensure the safe management and identify improvements needed. The service provider assured us that the management of calls will improve as a matter of priority to protect people from harm. Care workers receive safeguarding training and understand how to raise concerns.

People can be assured that the management team is committed to improve the quality of care and support. The proposed RI is working with the manager to develop the service and address any issues that require improvement. The RI regularly visits the service to keep well informed. Some additional quality assurance auditing systems need to be produced which will help to evaluate the quality and safety of the service. Recruitment processes are in place to keep people safe from harm. Care workers receive regular support through spot checks and future supervision sessions are scheduled, this gives an opportunity for formal support and to discuss their personal development. Care workers told us that the manager and office staff are approachable and supportive. Although care worker receive training, this is inadequate as further training is required to understand the needs of people they are expected to support. They told us they are always available and will respond when needed.

Care and Support

People are consistently involved in their assessment before the commencement of the service to confirm they are able to meet the person's needs and preferences. During the inspection, people were given an information pack which informs them about what they can expect from the service and how to raise a concern. Personal plans are developed with the person which is important to inform care workers how best to support the individual and achieve positive outcomes. People are given the opportunity to receive a copy of their personal plan. We found daily care notes are inconsistent and unsatisfactory. Care records need to improve to detail for example, people's general presentation, well-being, support offered/accepted, and their nutritional and fluid intake when appropriate. This will ensure any changes are noted for prompt action to be taken. While no immediate action is required, this is an area for improvement and we expect the provider to take action. People's reviews are scheduled to give the opportunity to seek their views and make their preferences known.

The majority of people receive medication when needed. The medication policy is in place for care workers to follow. Care workers are trained to administer medication and their competency is assessed. Records show that medication is mostly being administered when required but we noted some staff signatures were missing. There needs to be regular auditing arrangements in place to monitor the management of medication and to ensure any issues are promptly identified and acted upon. The manager assured us that they are introducing the audits.

People cannot be assured that calls are well scheduled and monitored. Care workers told us that generally they receive enough travel time between calls and this is calculated by the office when care workers are walkers or drivers. We found a mixed experience for people, as some calls are late and we found instances when there has been a considerable period of time between the evening and morning call. This significantly compromised people's care, well-being, and safety. We found there is inadequate oversight and auditing of calls during office hours, often not identifying when there are late calls, leaving people at risk of harm. As this is a new service the manager and office staff have spent their time visiting people in their homes and supporting the new care workers, and not being consistently present at the office to monitor the calls as required. During the inspection, the service provider recognised the importance to act when late/missed calls are identified and gave assurance that a person will be appointed to monitor the calls on a daily basis, as a matter of priority. The RI will undertake regular audits to assess and monitor improvement in the management of calls. This is placing people's health and well-being at risk and we have therefore issued a priority action notice. The provider must take immediate action to address this issue.

Leadership and Management

The 1st Grade Care Service has been operating in the Neath region since 21 April 2023. The proposed RI is waiting to be approved by CIW but they are registered with the workforce regulator. Most systems and processes are at an early stage of being implemented and embedded in the service. We found that the management team are working to develop the service and support a new staff team. The RI regularly visits to keep well informed and support the office team. The RI is due to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the service. The office staff are starting to visit people to seek their views and they intend to formally consult with people in the coming months, to assess their experience of using the service. The RI needs to introduce internal auditing arrangements to ensure all key areas are regularly assessed and evaluated for example, accident/incidents, safeguarding's, management of calls, care planning and medication. This is an area for improvement and we expect the provider to take action. During the inspection visits, we found the provider to be very responsive and open to making changes to improve the service. The manager receives regular support from the RI, which they valued.

People receive a service where care workers feel well supported in their roles. There are safe recruitment processes in place which are followed to ensure people are protected from harm. Most care workers have received calls being observed by the office staff to ensure their practice is monitored and the opportunity to identify further support. Supervision meetings and staff team meetings are scheduled for care workers which is important to enable them the opportunity to share their views and discuss their personal development. Care workers told us that the manager and office staff are approachable and supportive. They felt they can raise any issues and confident that these would be acted upon. Following a care workers probationary period ending, the service provider confirmed that care workers will be given the option of zero hours contracts or alternative contractual arrangements which is regularly reviewed. This will help retain care workers to provide continuity of care for people.

Care workers receive an induction which consists of mostly online training, with practical moving and handling and medication training. However, care workers are expected to understand and support people with specific needs and conditions for which they are not receiving some core training areas. Most people told us that care workers are kind and caring but would benefit from additional training. A few people and their families told us that some care workers do not actively talk to them which makes them feel uncomfortable. We are aware that the manager is addressing this through training. While no immediate action is required, this is an area for improvement and we expect the provider to take action.

Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people’s well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
21	Failure to provide adequate oversight and management of calls to protect people from harm.	New

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
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8	The service provider to have systems and processes in place to effectively monitor, analyse and evaluate the quality and safety of the service.	New
59	To maintain accurate and up to date care records to protect the people they support	New
36	Staff to receive additional core training to understand the needs and specific conditions of people they support	New

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