UKHCA Briefing

CQC Domiciliary Care Agency
Themed Inspections Report

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Disclaimer

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this briefing, it is a summary, rather than a definitive statement of the law; advice should be taken before action is implemented or refrained from in specific cases. No responsibility can be accepted for action taken or refrained from solely by reference to the contents of this briefing.
CQC Domiciliary Care Agency Themed Inspection Report

Introduction

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) announced in November 2011 that it would carry out a themed inspection programme of 250 regulated domiciliary care agencies from April 2012, and reported on 13th February 2013 (the CQC Report).

The CQC Report demonstrates the characteristics of high-quality services that comply with regulations issued under the Health and Social Care Act 2008. It also highlights areas for continuous improvement within the homecare sector.

As the professional association for more than 2,000 domiciliary care providers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Kingdom Homecare Association (UKHCA) strives to promote good practice in the homecare sector and provide domiciliary care organisations with the support they need to provide high quality services.

UKHCA has issued a series of recommendations and prompts which offer an immediate way for homecare providers to check how their own organisation has considered and responded to the findings of the CQC report. The recommendations are contained in this Briefing and aimed at individual homecare organisations. Although UKHCA is a member organisation, this Briefing is not limited to members and is publically available at: www.ukhca.co.uk/downloads.aspx?ID=375

UKHCA’s objective in issuing recommendations and prompts is to assist homecare organisations continue to maintain and improve their services, and to give both providers and stakeholders confidence that the services that are provided are the best they can be.

What can you do with this advice?

We strongly advise senior managers of homecare organisations in England to read and discuss the Care Quality Commission’s report on the themed inspection of domiciliary care agencies. The full report is available from http://www.cqc.org.uk/public/reports-surveys-and-reviews/themed-inspections/review-home-care-agencies
In addition to reviewing the CQC Report, your organisation should review each of the recommendations and prompts below and assess whether you have already taken suitable action. When considering each, you may wish to consider how your service is able to provide evidence that this is the case.

**We suggest that you consider two or more prompts under each recommendation, so you can obtain the maximum benefit from this Briefing.**

Domiciliary care agencies vary in their size, make up and services. Not all recommendations and prompts will be relevant to each service. UKHCA suggests that providers use their judgement to decide which recommendations and prompts they need to use to assess their own services.

In addition, some of the prompts listed below may inspire you to plan particular activities over the coming months, in response to the CQC Report.

**Recommendations**

**Late or missed calls**

- Consider auditing the number of missed or late visits (and the reasons for these) occurring over a minimum period of four weeks and review your practice to reduce them.

- Assess the potential benefits of introducing electronic call monitoring, if you do not have it already, and make a decision as to its implementation.

- Contact your local authority commissioners to discuss the reasons for late and missed calls and try to find solutions for shortfalls in service levels influenced by commissioning practice. Report the results of these approaches to UKHCA for monitoring purposes.

**Identified careworkers**

- Ensure that each careworker is introduced to the service user before the first occasion they provide personal care. Where this is not possible, provide the service user (or their primary carer) with appropriate information about the worker who will visit, with as much notice as possible.
Consider reviewing your scheduling procedures to ensure reasonable continuity of careworker, wherever possible.

Look at the practicality of developing small teams of workers who are familiar with each individual service user, to reduce the risk of them receiving a careworker with whom they are unfamiliar.

Check your arrangements to ensure that services operating outside office hours and at weekends are consistent with the levels of service operated during weekdays.

Review your procedures for out-of-hours services to ensure a robust system is in place to identify and respond to missed or late calls.

**Supporting staff**

Assess the induction training that you provide for newly recruited members of staff to ensure that it complies with Skills for Care’s Common Induction Standards.

Audit the training records of all new recruits over a 6 month period to ensure that they have received your agreed induction training.

Examine your recruitment procedures to ensure that you assess the empathy, communication skills and cultural sensitivity of prospective recruits are in keeping with your service users’ needs.

Review your policy and procedure for staff supervision and appraisal.

Consider auditing the records of your staff over a 6-12 month period to verify that supervision and appraisal of staff has taken place according to your policy and decide what action to take if this is found not to be the case.

Establish whether staff have opportunities for peer support.

Ensure that staff have appropriate access to training beyond induction, suitable to their service users’ needs (for example, dementia and end of life care).
Care and welfare

- Check and review your policy and procedure for assessing and recording the preferences and choices of service users (and their family carers) in their care plans.

- Make sure staff responsible for the assessment and planning of care have reviewed and understood your policies and procedures for assessing and recording the preferences and choices of service users and family carers.

- Consider reviewing a selection of service users’ records and care plans with the person who uses the service, and their family carers (with the users’ consent), to verify that their preferences and choices have been reflected to their satisfaction.

Safeguarding and safety

- Review (and amend where necessary) your safeguarding policy and procedure to ensure that it is compatible with each of the local authority procedures in the areas where you provide services.

- Look at the training resources available to your careworkers, supervisors and managers to enable them to identify and report concerns about safeguarding and whistleblowing, ensuring that it is suitable for their level of responsibility.

- Consider reviewing the training records of all members of staff to ensure that they have received safeguarding training (including refresher training) appropriate to their job role.

- Check your complaints resolution procedure to ensure it is accessible and that processes are recorded and outcomes lead to services improvement.

- Audit your complaints records over the previous 3-12 months to ensure that all complaints have been responded to according to your policy and procedure.

- Consider producing a written assessment of the complaints received over the previous 12 months, which will include a record of the actions you have learned as a result of feedback from people who use services and their family carers.
**What can you do with the results of using this advice?**

UKHCA suggests that homecare organisations which have used UKHCA’s recommendations and prompts to assess their services and foster continuous improvement may wish to make the results available to their commissioners and stakeholders.

The CQC Report is likely to generate public interest, and having your results available may help reassure service users, their families and those you contract with, and generate confidence in your service and staff.

**Alternative Formats**

This Briefing is published in pdf format and also available as a Microsoft Word document at [www.ukhca.co.uk/downloads.aspx?ID=375](http://www.ukhca.co.uk/downloads.aspx?ID=375) to assist homecare organisations that would like to use our recommendations and prompts to promote their continuous improvement.

**Feedback**

We hope you find this Briefing helpful. If you would like to comment on your experience of using it, please email policy@ukhca.co.uk

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