

ROC Support Network Ltd

Reach Out Support Network Limited

Inspection report

Hope House
Burnhope
Newton Aycliffe
County Durham
DL5 7ER

Website: www.reachoutcare.co.uk

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Outstanding 
Is the service safe?	Outstanding 
Is the service effective?	Good 
Is the service caring?	Outstanding 
Is the service responsive?	Outstanding 
Is the service well-led?	Outstanding 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Reach Out Support Network is personal care to young adults and children living in their own homes aged up to 25 years of age. Some of the young people accessing the service are living with learning disabilities, autism and/or complex needs. At the time of the inspection the service was providing personal care to 20 young people under the age of 18 years.

Not everyone who used the service received personal care. CQC only inspects where people receive personal care. This is help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. Where they do we also consider any wider social care provided.

The service has been developed and designed in line with the principles and values that underpin Registering the Right Support and other best practice guidance. This ensures that young people who use the service can live as full a life as possible and achieve the best possible outcomes. The principles reflect the need for young people with learning disabilities and/or autism to live meaningful lives that include control, choice, and independence. Young people using the service receive planned and co-ordinated person-centred support that is appropriate and inclusive for them.

The outcomes for young people using the service reflected the principles and values of Registering the Right Support by promoting choice and control, independence and inclusion. Young people's support focused on them having as many opportunities as possible for them to develop, learn new skills and become independent.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

Without exception each parent spoken with told us they were extremely happy with the care and support they received from the service. Comments included, "Reach Out Support Network makes a huge difference to our lives" and "They are wonderful, we are thankful for the service."

The management team and staff had developed exceptionally strong relationships with each young person, their parents and a range of external professionals. One professional said, "We have an excellent working relationship with this company who have a genuine care for our children and their families."

Safeguarding was at the core of the service's practices and the needs of all young people were paramount. Staff were clear on safeguarding protocols and demonstrated a good knowledge of the actions to be taken to keep young people and their families safe.

There was a proactive approach to assessing, anticipating and managing risk which allowed young people to be safe whilst also enhancing and developing their independence and essential life skills. Care plans were extremely person centred and focused on each young person's abilities and future goals. We were told of many examples of how young people were supported to take positive risks to learn new skills to enhance

their life ambitions.

We saw excellent examples of how the care and support each young person received enriched their life. A range of age appropriate play, social and recreational activities were provided within the wider community, Reach Out Support base and the family home. Staff promoted education and healthy lifestyles through play, healthy eating and cooking activities.

Medicines were managed well, safely administered and recorded accurately. Individualised risk assessments were in place. Robust recruitment and selection procedures ensured suitable staff were employed.

There was an open and transparent culture in relation to any accidents and incidents. These were used by the management team as learning opportunities to lessen risks.

Support staff had exceptional skills and knowledge to deliver individual, person centred care and support. They received excellent support and supervision reflecting on practices.

All young people were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible; the policies and systems in the service support this practice.

All young people's privacy, dignity and independence was a key priority in all areas of their lives. Young people and their parents were involved in planning for the future. The whole staff team worked extremely closely with other services to support each young person on their transition into adulthood and accessing new services.

Parents told us the management team and support staff were exceptionally compassionate and kind. We heard of many excellent examples of how Reach Out Support Network supported the whole family and responded when additional support was required to prevent a crisis arising.

The management team planned and promoted holistic, person-centred, high-quality care resulting in excellent outcomes for people. The values and culture embedded in the service ensured all young people and their families were put at the heart of the care and support they received.

The service was proactive in its response to concerns or complaints and people knew how to feedback their experiences.

Support staff told us they received excellent support from management team and were extremely proud to work for the service. There was a very open and transparent culture where all young people were empowered to be involved in their care and voice their opinions. Without exception, all parents spoken to told us the service was exceptionally well-managed.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk

Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was Outstanding (published 4 April 2017).

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

The service was exceptionally safe.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service effective?

The service was effective.

Details are in our effective findings below.

Good 

Is the service caring?

The service was exceptionally caring.

Details are in our caring findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

The service was exceptionally responsive.

Details are in our responsive findings below.

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

The service was exceptionally well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Outstanding 

Reach Out Support Network Limited

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

Inspection team

The inspection team consisted of one inspector and one Expert by Experience. An Expert by Experience is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service.

Service and service type

Reach Out Support Network is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to young people within their own homes.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of inspection

We gave the service 24 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because the service is small and we wanted to be sure there would be staff and parents available to speak with us.

Inspection activity started on 2 October 2019 and ended on 8 October 2019. We visited the office location on 2 October and 8 October to speak with staff, parents and review records. We spoke to more parents by telephone on 3 October.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return. This is information providers are required to send us with key information about their service, what they do well, and improvements they plan to make. This information helps support our inspections. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We met with two parents and spoke on the telephone with a further 12 parents who shared with us their experiences of the care provided. We spoke with seven members of staff including the registered manager, two care coordinators, three support staff and the human resources manager. We also sent out 16 staff questionnaires and received 11 returned fully completed.

We reviewed a range of records. This included two people's care records and multiple medication records. We looked at one staff file in relation to recruitment and staff supervision. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures were reviewed.

After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found. We looked at training data and quality assurance records. We sought and gained feedback from a range of professionals who worked with the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Outstanding. At this inspection this key question has remained Outstanding. This meant people were protected by a strong and distinctive approach to safeguarding, including positive risk-taking to maximise their control over their lives. People were fully involved, and the provider was open and transparent when things went wrong.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Staff demonstrated an excellent understanding of safeguarding and the actions to be taken in the event of any concerns. One said, "If I had any concerns I would raise them immediately and record. I know the signs of abuse to look out for. I have a positive relationship with the children I support and their parents, if any of them had any worries they would let me know. It's about keeping children safe and always acting in their best interests. Both when out all with us and at home."
- Since the last inspection the service had continued to develop their role in working closely with young people, their families and professionals when child protection plans were in place. One relative told us how the staff supported the whole family and they never felt judged.
- Children's voice continued to be at the heart of everything the service did to ensure they were listened to and kept safe. Following Article 12 of the UN Convention on Children's Rights which requires children and young people to have a voice, the service had developed further ways to support young people to express their feelings and emotions. We saw how one young person had been supported to draw their 'House of Worries' encouraging them to share their concerns, good things in their life and their dreams in life.
- Safeguarding and whistleblowing policies and procedures were in place for staff to follow and have confidence in ensuring they kept all young people safe.
- Relatives told us they felt their children were extremely safe with staff. One said, "I have every confidence in [staff], they always ask me if they are unsure of anything."
- Staff worked exceptionally close with a range of external professionals to ensure each young person's objectives were achieved whilst also protecting them from abuse and avoidable harm. One professional told us how the service acted quickly at times of concern in families to prevent a crisis.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management; Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Care plans and risk assessments were highly personalised and provided staff with clear guidance on how they could keep each young person safe whilst also promoting their independence whilst managing health conditions such as epilepsy.
- The service had improved staff training for specific health conditions. For example, staff had undergone intensive training with health professionals to early identify and seek prompt medical treatment for one young person whose health condition frequently required an emergency admission to hospital. Since this training, parents told us staff could now quickly identify symptoms and seek immediate support which had prevented the young person requiring a hospital admission.
- The service worked extremely closely with occupational therapists (OT's) and physiotherapists to ensure when required, each young person was assessed and provided with specialist equipment to live safely in

their own home. Staff received training in the safe use of equipment.

- Where critical incidents occurred, the management team and staff managed these appropriately and sensitively ensuring relevant professionals are notified.
- Accidents and incidents were looked at by the management team. Any lessons to be learned from them were shared with the whole staff team, young people and their parents.
- The provider had contingency plans in place to support people in emergency situations. For example, staffing shortages and adverse weather conditions.

Staffing and recruitment

- There were enough staff employed to consistently meet all young people's care and support needs. Parents told us they had a regular staff team who were always on time and worked flexibly.
- Appropriate recruitment checks were conducted prior to staff starting work at the service, to ensure people were suitable to work with vulnerable children and adults.

Using medicines safely; Preventing and controlling infection

- Medicines were managed safely in accordance to national guidance.
- Young people who required support with medicines received this from staff who had received specific training and had their competency assessed regularly.
- The service had continued to develop their working partnership with health professionals to ensure emergency health care and management plans were in place for staff to follow in an emergency. For example, epilepsy and severe asthma.
- Staff understood their responsibilities to control and prevent the spread of infections and had access to personal protective equipment such as disposable gloves and aprons.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people's care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Good. At this inspection this key question has remained Good. This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law

- Young people's support needs were fully assessed before they began to use the service.
- Young people received effective care from an experienced and committed staff team who were specifically matched with each young person and their family.
- Young people and their parents were involved in developing care plans and these detailed each young person's preferences for how they wished to be supported along with their life ambitions.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Young people were supported by a staff team who had the right mix of knowledge, skills and experience to support their individual needs. One staff member said, "It's a very rewarding job, you need to be such a special person to do it."
- Staff received an in-depth induction to their role and regular ongoing training and supervision to keep their knowledge and competency up-to-date. One staff member said, "It's a great place to work, the team are so supportive and knowledgeable and training opportunities we get are of a really high standard. I love working with the young people and seeing them engaging and achieving because of what we do."

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet

- Staff promoted healthy eating and lifestyles through their work with each young person and their family. One parent said, "[Staff] take [young person] out to eat and make sure he has a proper dinner with vegetables and fruit."
- Young people were supported to develop essential life skills around making healthy choices of meals and drinks independently and safely. One parent said, "When [young person] first went with [service] he would only drink milk. Now he drinks water, so his appetite is much better. It's a big improvement."
- The service had strong links with health professionals and staff were aware of people's individual preferences and any cultural needs for eating and drinking.
- Care plans reflected recommendations by dietitians to minimise any risks for young people.

Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care; Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support

- The service worked extremely closely with a wide range of professionals that specialised in the care of young people to ensure they received joined-up care to achieve their best life outcomes.
- Young people and their parents were supported to access healthcare appointments to enhance their health and wellbeing. We heard how the service supported one young person in hospital to remain calm allowing medical staff to provide the emergency medical treatment they required.

Ensuring consent to care and treatment in line with law and guidance

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that, as far as possible, people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.

People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA.

We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA

- The service worked within the framework of The Children's Act 1989 to support each young person to be involved in decisions about their care whilst working in partnership with those who had parental responsibility.
- Staff had understood, the importance of supporting people to make day to day decisions and choices. One parent said, "[Young person's] comprehension is limited but [staff] always offers them choice and encouragement."
- Young people's assessments of their care and support were detailed. Information was regularly reviewed which ensured it remained up-to-date and reflective of their needs.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Outstanding. At this inspection this key question has remained Outstanding. This meant people were truly respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- The service had continued to develop and promote a strong and visible person-centred culture, with all staff continuing to go out of their way to ensure each young person was treated equally and fairly. Parents told us the team was particularly caring and supportive. One said, "[Staff] are really kind – more like a friend or sister. We work so well together, they help me with the other children which is so great."
- Professionals told us how the service supported the whole family to ensure all were supported and relationships maintained during times of crisis. This included providing parents with additional support when their circumstances changed. One said, "The management team respond quickly to any emergencies we have with our families and do everything they can to accommodate any requests from our team, this prevents a crisis situation arising."
- Parents told us how staff supported them to have quality time with other family members knowing their child was safe and well cared for. Comments included, "The service is spot on, it gives me a chance to get on with other things or chill out. It is so good for [young person] and me, it gives me a chance to do other things with my other children" and, "[Staff] really supports me as well as [young person]. [Staff] are a really positive people in our lives."
- Staff demonstrated they were highly motivated and committed to respecting young people's equality, diversity and human rights. Staff talked passionately about how they promoted values of treating others with respect with each young person. They told us how proud they were to work for a service which celebrated each young person's unique differences and empowered them to choose how they wanted to live.
- The service was exceptional at helping young people maintain and develop relationships within their family and with friends. Staff showed us pictures of the work they were doing with one young person to develop and understand the imminent arrival of siblings. Pictures showed the young person practicing how to change a baby's nappy on their Shaun the Sheep toy.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- The promotion of privacy, dignity and independence continued to be at the heart of the service's culture and values. Staff were fully aware of each young person's rights. We saw excellent examples of how staff worked with young people to gain independence. For example, staff were supporting one young person to understand how their body was changing during puberty through pictures and drawings.
- Staff spoke confidently about they support young people who became distressed. They knew the importance of positive praise, adjusting the environment or interacting with the young person in a way to divert them from possible causes of distress. One parents said, "[Staff] are really good if [young person] is

upset. They can bring them round. They have a great relationship and listen which is a great help for us."

- Young people were exceptionally well supported by staff to develop their emotional resilience and self-esteem by achieving greater independence and new skills. For example, within the learning skills room the service had developed a range of accessible information in a range of pictorial, written and electronic formats for young people to learn essential life skills such as money management, safe use of the internet, kitchen safety and stranger danger.

- The service continued to celebrate each young person's achievements and staff told us how they were "Genuinely proud of people's achievements." One parent said, "[Young person] would only use their wheelchair. Now, [young person] walks all over and hardly ever uses the chair. It's really helped them to be healthier and independent, that is down to how [staff] support and praise [young person]."

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people's needs.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Outstanding. At this inspection this key question has remained Outstanding. This meant services were tailored to meet the needs of individuals and delivered to ensure flexibility, choice and continuity of care.

Planning personalised care to ensure people have choice and control and to meet their needs and preferences

- Exceptional person-centred care continued to be delivered in every aspect of the service and was reflected in each young person's individual care and support plan. Young people's voice had been further developed since the last inspection and shone through all aspects of the values of the service.
- Without exception, every parent and professional spoken with told us how exceptionally responsive staff and the management team acted to prevent crisis situations arising. One parent said, "Without this service I would not be able to keep my daughter at home with me as my health is very poor, for that we are extremely grateful."
- Staff had exceptional knowledge of each young person allowing them to deliver true person-centred care which was evidenced through photos, young people's comments and parental feedback.
- Each young person was supported by the service to relax, achieve their goals, have fun and reduce any distress. It was clear staff were extremely dedicated and passionate about each young person they supported. One parent said, "[Staff] is really caring. [Young person] adores her. [Staff] gets Kinetic sand and play dough and does 'hand over hand' with [young person]."
- The management team was extremely flexible and responsive to each young person's changing needs. An effective out-of-hours service was operated 24/7 ensuring any concerns were addressed immediately or young people were referred to the relevant professionals when required. Parents told us how they could call the management team at any time to seek advice and reassurance when they needed it. Parents told us, "[Service] makes a huge difference to our lives" and, "[Service] is a godsend."

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 onwards all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). The standard was introduced to make sure people are given information in a way they can understand. The standard applies to all people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss and in some circumstances to their carers.

- There was an exceptionally strong focus on treating each young person with equality. Bespoke techniques had been introduced since the last inspection to involve and empower those with communication difficulties to ensure their voices were heard and valued. The service had taken innovative steps, over and above complying with the accessible information standard. For example, a large pictorial and numerical keyboard had been purchased to support young people to use with the computer.

Supporting people to develop and maintain relationships to avoid social isolation; support to follow interests and to take part in activities that are socially and culturally relevant to them

- Through exceptional, person centred care planning, staff explored with each young person their interests, life ambitions promoting an exceptional sense of wellbeing and self-esteem through achieving goals. Staff gave us many examples of how their support had made a positive impact on young people's lives. For example, one young person has been supported to gain confidence with their speech and is now able to go up to the counter in McDonalds and order their own meals after years of not being confident enough to speak in public.
- Young people were provided with a range of age appropriate, social activities to support them to live their life to their full potential, make new friends and prevent social isolation. We saw how the service had arranged a trip for one young person to go to the seaside where a specialised beach accessible wheelchair was hired allowing this young person to go into the sea and paddle for their first time.
- The management team and staff continually raised funds to enhance the opportunities provided to young people and their families. The service was fundraising to purchase their own wheelchair accessible transport. We were told this was to support one young person to continue to access the service and enjoy outings to the community without barriers due to their disability and current difficulties accessing transport.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- The management team created an extremely open and honest culture, where complaints and concerns were welcomed and learned from. Young people were encouraged to speak out about the service in a range of formats including pictures, meetings with the manager and age appropriate feedback surveys.
- Parents were extremely complimentary about the management team and staff. Parents told us they would not hesitate to contact the management team if they had any concerns. One said, "The manager is very approachable and helpful – she is on the ball."

End of life care and support

- End of life care was not currently being delivered by the service. However, staff were able to clearly talk about compassionate end of life care, good practice and guidance they would follow to respect all young people's religious beliefs and preferences. When required, young people and their families would be supported to make decisions about their preferences for end of life care.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-Led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as Outstanding. At this inspection this key question has remained Outstanding. This meant service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the service culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people

- The provider continued to deliver a service led by an exceptionally strong management team who all shared a vision of a highly successful and inclusive service. The management team were ambitious, realistic and promoted high quality, safe, person-centred care which achieved outstanding outcomes for each young person and their family.
- The values of the service continued to be promoted in every aspect of the service ensuring each young person was at the heart of the support they received. Staff and managers spoke passionately about their continued commitment to developing the services values of integrity, rights of children and young people, education and personal development, listening and communicating, diversity and equality.
- The service had again achieved the award of 'Investing in Children' because of their continued commitment, engagement, review and development of a service in meeting the individual needs and human rights of children and young people. The registered manager told us how proud they were to have achieved this award again and told us it demonstrated their commitment to ongoing development of the service.
- Staff told us they were extremely proud to work for the service and spoke of the excellent support they received from the management team. They worked together to promote a service that was flexible and could be relied upon to achieve the very best outcomes for each individual young person and their family. One said, "It is a really lovely company to work for, I receive a great deal of job satisfaction working here, helping to develop young people's lives and hopefully making a massive difference for the best."

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong.

- The management team consistently reviewed the service to ensure it was providing a high-quality service to meet each young person's life ambitions and outcomes. Good governance was fully embedded into every aspect of the service.
- One professional said, "The management team works hard to ensure that each young person with disabilities has continuity of care. Staff are introduced to the parents and young person before any service commences to ensure they are all compatible."
- The service continually adapted and developed in line with the principles and values that underpin Registering the Right Support and other best practice guidance. Records showed staff listened to young people, acted and very significant outcomes were achieved, for example gaining confidence in speech and

socialising more. These outcomes had improved young people's quality of life and developed their aspirations. Parents confirmed the impact of increased confidence and self-esteem had on their child's life. One said, "They encourage [young person] to put their own coat and shoes so [young person] is now more independent."

- Young people's views had continued to shape the development of the service since the last inspection. For example, a new 'teenagers' den' was being built because of direct feedback from young people wanting a safe place to arrange to meet up and socialise with their friends and make new friends.
- The principles of the duty of candour were embedded all the providers practices. The registered manager was open and honest in response to any complaints and worked in partnership with other agencies to reflect on incidents and learn lessons.

Continuous learning and improving care

- There was a well-developed culture of questioning practices, reflection, learning and improving care services supported by leadership development. The staff team was high performing with shared goals, visions and values. Feedback from parents and professionals was that the service provided was consistently of high-quality. Comments included, "I can't say a bad word about them. It is really well managed" and "We won't be leaving them for quite some time – they are brilliant."
- The management team spent time with young people and their families who used the service to ensure staff were providing care and support that continued to meet the service values. This allowed them to gain people's trust, views and involve them in any changes being made to the service.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics; Working in partnership with others

- Since the last inspection the management team had continued to develop and work exceptionally close with a wide range of professionals to ensure all young people's needs were consistently met to the highest of standards.
- There continued to be an exceptionally positive culture of engaging with young people, parents and staff to achieve goals and outcomes. One parent said, "They do a fantastic job helping families that need support."