

Key inspection report

DOMICILIARY CARE AGENCY

Fylde Community Link

**19 Church Road
Lytham
Lancashire
FY8 5LH**

Lead Inspector
Mrs Felicity Lacey

Key Unannounced Inspection
21-27 October 2009 09:30

This report is a review of the quality of outcomes that people who use this agency experience. We believe high quality care should:

- Be safe
- Have the right outcomes, including clinical outcomes
- Be a good experience for the people that use it
- Help prevent illness, and promote healthy, independent living
- Be available to those who need it when they need it.

We review the quality of the service against outcomes from the National Minimum Standards (NMS). Those standards are written by the Department of Health for each type of care service.

Copies of the National Minimum Standards – Domiciliary care agency can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or bought from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering from the Stationery Office is also available: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop.

The mission of the Care Quality Commission is to make care better for people by:

- Regulating health and adult social care services to ensure quality and safety standards, drive improvement and stamp out bad practice
- Protecting the rights of people who use services, particularly the most vulnerable and those detained under the Mental Health Act 1983
- Providing accessible, trustworthy information on the quality of care and services so people can make better decisions about their care and so that commissioners and providers of services can improve services.
- Providing independent public accountability on how commissioners and providers of services are improving the quality of care and providing value for money

Reader Information

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SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of service	Fylde Community Link
Address	19 Church Road Lytham Lancashire FY8 5LH
Telephone number	01253 795648
Fax number	
Email address	ceo@fyldecommunitylink.co.uk
Provider Web address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Fylde Community Link Ltd
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Mrs Kay Bishop
Type of registration	Domiciliary Care Agencies

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 9th October 2006

Brief Description of the Service:

The well-established voluntary organisation, Fylde Community Link Ltd (FCL) is the registered provider of this domiciliary care agency.

The agency is registered with the Care Quality Commission to provide domiciliary care to adults with learning disabilities.

There is a range of models of support including; houses where the service users hold tenancies support to individuals who live alone, and support for individuals who live with their relatives. The range of the service includes support with leisure, employment and community activities as well as 24-hour support.

The service operates from an office base central to the Lytham St Annes area. The office is open 9am to 4.15pm Monday to Friday with, an out of hours on-call procedure then providing contact with a senior member of staff.

The agency has contractual arrangements with Lancashire County Council Social Services Directorate, Blackpool Borough Council and private contracts are also established with service users as appropriate.

The staff team are supported by an experienced and established team of managers and an organisation, which has developed a variety of community based services for adults with learning disabilities

SUMMARY

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

The quality rating for this service is 3 stars. This means that the people who use this service experience excellent quality outcomes.

The agency was given short notice of this inspection. Time was spent at the office base examining records, policies and documents. 10 people who use the agency and 19 staff completed questionnaires. 11 people who are supported by the agency, a relative, staff members, the registered manager and the Responsible Individual were spoken with during this inspection. Information was also provided in the Annual Quality Assurance Assessment that is completed by the registered manager.

What the service does well:

Fylde Community Link (FCL) is an agency that provides many opportunities for those people it supports to be involved, active and valued members of their local community. The people spoken with felt that the staff enabled them to live their lives as they wanted and encouraged them to build confidence and try new experiences. The comments received from people who use the agency included:

'I couldn't get by without them. The staff help me with cooking, cleaning and shopping. They are very nice and always pleasant.'

'I am always asked about what help I would like and involved in decisions. I am able to follow my interests and have done things I never dreamed I could do, and the staff have helped me to do this.'

'I enjoy work and going to college. The staff are here if I need any support. I like having my own home. I enjoy new challenges and living with people I get along with.'

'I am very happy. I do most things for myself. The staff are very helpful and I go swimming with them and out for lunch. If I was not happy with anything I would tell the staff and they would sort it out.'

'I think the agency put my mind at rest over things and help me to arrange things. They help me to go on Faith and Light holidays. They are friendly and I thoroughly enjoy their visits.'

Comments from staff included:

'The agency allows the service users to be individuals, to work in the community and have a valued presence.'

'FCL trains its staff very well. I believe FCL to be a caring organisation both to its clients and staff.'

'The agency treats its service users as individuals, supporting them to fulfil their aims and take control of their lives.'

'I am very happy working for FCL, I have an excellent manager who is very supportive and a good mentor.'

The agency supports people in a variety of settings and staff offer flexible and responsive support. There were many examples of people being supported to achieve their personal goals and ambitions. The people supported are confident in expressing their views and are fully involved in directing their own care and support. The agency has continued to provide support for people in planning their care, and has promoted person centred planning. Everyone who wants to be involved has the opportunity of presenting their plan, including the use of digital photography and computer graphics. The plans seen were clear and informative and meaningful. The people supported also contribute their experiences and success in group forums, such as the Annual General Meeting.

The health needs of people are understood and staff have training to enable them to understand and support people with a variety of health needs. The focus is on people maintaining their own health as far as possible and providing support where needed.

People supported by Fylde Community Link have access to a wide range of occupations and educational opportunities. Currently people are supported to attend work, including working at Blackpool Zoo, in the local parks and gardens and at a local recycling centre. Some people attend the local college and complete qualifications and courses in the subjects they are interested in, for example catering, arts and crafts and computing. Fylde Community Link also operates it's own business enterprises including a recycling project and gardening scheme. The recycling project was voted 'Best Voluntary Community Project 2009' in The Lancashire Community Recycling Network 'Red Rose' Awards; the people involved in the project enjoyed attending the awards ceremony. There is a full programme of activities offered by Fylde Community Link including a photography club, and arts and crafts.

Staff are well trained and supported in their roles. New staff complete an extensive induction programme and are supported by a mentor during this time. Existing staff continue to attend regular training and all staff are expected to complete National Vocational Qualifications, this is the recommended qualification for people working in social care.

The senior management team are experienced and have regular opportunities to meet. The manager of the agency is seen as approachable and supportive. The people who use the agency are familiar with senior managers and have regular opportunities to talk to them.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The agency has obtained funding for Literacy and Numeracy classes and these have been attended by people using the agency and have been very successful.

There are excellent examples of understanding and promoting equality and diversity by the agency. These include a DVD produced by the Drama group used for staff training. The DVD shows how people would like staff to support them and also how staff should not provide support. This helps staff appreciate and understand the values required to provide good quality support for people. Two people who are supported by the agency work with the Learning Disability Partnership Board, and have attended local schools to talk about how they feel when they are subjected to taunting and ridicule because of their learning disability.

Improvements have been made to support planning with the introduction of daily updates in which staff record the progress made and how the support plan has been followed during their shift. This report ensures that the management of the agency are kept up to date with daily events.

The agency has installed a SMART Board and people can use this to present their support plans in a fun way. The use of the board has also provided opportunities to learn new skills and participation.

Over the past year a new computer system has been introduced which is used for many aspects of agency planning. The system is also used to chart progress of people towards achieving their own goals. The system is used for regular reviews and gives a very clear picture of the areas in which progress is being made and where further support may be needed.

The quality assurance systems in place have continued to develop and improve. The new computer system has been used to document and chart quality outcomes for people supported by the agency. The Quality Manager makes regular visits to the people who are supported. The Quality Group, which is attended by people using the agency, has done some very good work in helping people stay safe. A recent meeting included a presentation called 'Say No To Abuse' which helped people understand what abuse is and what to do to keep themselves and others safe.

The office base of the agency has moved. The new offices provide excellent meeting and training facilities for people who are supported by the agency and staff.

What they could do better:

There were no areas for improvement identified during this inspection.

If you want to know what action the person responsible for this agency is taking following this report, you can contact them using the details on page 4.

The report of this inspection is available from our website www.cqc.org.uk. You can get printed copies from enquiries@cqc.org.uk or by telephoning our order line – 0870 240 7535.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Scoring of Outcomes

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

User Focused Services

The intended outcomes for Standards 1 – 6 are:

1. Current and potential service users and their relatives have access to comprehensive information, so that they can make informed decisions on whether the agency is able to meet their specific care needs.
2. The care needs requirements of service users and their personal or family carers when appropriate, are individually assessed before they are offered a personal domiciliary care service.
3. Service users, their relatives and representatives know that the agency providing their care service has the skills and competence required to meet their care needs.
4. Each service user has a written individual service contract or equivalent for the provision of care, with the agency, except employment agencies solely introducing workers.
5. Service users and their relatives or representatives know that their personal information is handled appropriately and that their personal confidences are respected. In the case of standards 5.2 and 5.3, these do not apply to employment agencies solely introducing workers.
6. Service users receive a flexible, consistent and reliable personal care service. In the case of standards 6.3 and 6.4 these do not apply to employment agencies solely introducing workers.

The Commission considers Standard 2 the key standard to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

2, 6

People using the service experience **excellent** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

The people who use the agency are fully involved in the preparation and decision to use the service, and this ensures that the support provided meets the needs of the individual.

EVIDENCE:

All people who have a service from by Fylde Community Link Domiciliary Care Agency have been involved in an assessment of their support needs. The range of support provided is reflective of the needs of the people using the agency.

Some people require minimal oversight and others have more extensive support in all areas of daily living. The agency works in partnership with health and social services to provide support which meets the needs of the individual. People supported by the agency felt that the staff worked with them to help achieve independence and to continue to add to their skills and live the life they wished.

There were some comments from staff members who would like more information including how packages of support are costed and how this impacts on the staff support available. The manager is aware of this and there is information available for staff who wish to have a wider understanding of commissioning practices.

The comments from people supported by the agency confirmed they were very satisfied with the support they experienced. Staff provide flexible and responsive support which is agreed with the individual. People shared their experiences including holidays and activities that they have enjoyed and which have been made possible by the attitude and dedication of the agency staff.

People can choose who they wish to be supported by and this is respected. Some people are supported in settings that have 24-hour cover, in these settings people benefit from a stable and consistent staff team. Surveys received confirmed that staff were reliable. People who live alone have the reassurance of a 24-hour on call service.

Personal Care

The intended outcomes for Standard 7 – 10 are:

7. The care needs, wishes, preferences and personal goals for each individual service user are recorded in their personal service user plan, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.
8. Service users feel that they are treated with respect and valued as a person, and their right to privacy is upheld.
9. Service users are assisted to make their own decisions and control their own lives and are supported in maintaining their independence.
10. The agency's policy and procedures on medication and health related activities protect service users and assists them to maintain responsibility for their own medication and to remain in their own home, even if they are unable to administer their medication themselves. In the case of standards 10.8 and 10.9, these do not apply to employment agencies solely introducing workers.

The Commission considers Standards 8 and 10 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

7, 8, 10

People using the service experience **excellent** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

Fylde Community Link provides support based on a through understanding of peoples needs and underpinned by a commitment to enabling people to live the life they choose.

EVIDENCE:

The support plans seen during the visit showed that a range of formats and methods were being used to ensure that people were involved in drawing up their own plan and could present their ideas and views, these include digital photography, video and artwork. Some people have an Essential Lifestyle Plan and others have a Building and Learning Together document. The presentation of the plan reflects the preferences of the individual; some plans were very colourful and creative. If a person does not wish to be involved in the production of a plan or if they wish to have minimal paperwork completed their

views are respected. The plans include consideration of cultural, personal preferences and beliefs, and show a commitment to helping people express their individuality.

People supported by Fylde Community Link have access to a wide range of occupations and educational opportunities. Currently people are supported to attend work, including working at Blackpool Zoo, in the local parks and gardens and at a local recycling centre. Some people attend the local college and complete qualifications and courses in the subjects they are interested in, for example catering, arts and crafts and computing. Fylde Community Link also operates its own business enterprises including a recycling project and gardening scheme. The recycling project was voted 'Best Voluntary Community Project 2009' in The Lancashire Community Recycling Network 'Red Rose' Awards; the people involved in the project enjoyed attending the awards ceremony. There is a full programme of activities offered by Fylde Community Link including a photography club, and arts and crafts. The agency has obtained funding for Literacy and Numeracy classes and these have been attended by people using the agency and have been very successful.

Improvements have been made to support planning with the introduction of daily updates in which staff record the progress made and how the support plan has been followed during their shift. This report ensures that the management of the agency are kept up to date with daily events.

The agency has installed a SMART Board and people can use this to present their support plans in a fun way. The use of the board has also provided opportunities for people to learn new skills and participation.

Fylde Community Link has continued to develop useful ways of ensuring that staff work in ways, which reflect an understanding of the importance of respect and dignity. There are excellent examples of understanding and promoting equality and diversity by the agency. These include a DVD produced by the Drama group used for staff training. The DVD shows how people would like staff to support them and also how staff should not provide support. This helps staff appreciate and understand the values required to provide good quality support for people. Two people who are supported by the agency to work with the Learning Disability Partnership Board, and have attended local schools to talk about how they feel when they are subjected to taunting and ridicule because of their learning disability.

The health needs of people are understood and staff have training to enable them to understand and support people with a variety of health needs. The focus is on people maintaining their own health as far as possible and providing support where needed. People are supported with medication if required and staff have received training in safe administration practices.

Protection

The intended outcomes for Standards 11 - 16 are:

11. The health, safety and welfare of service users and care and support staff is promoted and protected, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.
12. The risk of accidents and harm happening to Service Users and staff in the provision of the personal care, is minimised, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.
13. The money and property of service users is protected at all times whilst providing the care service, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.
14. Service users are protected from abuse, neglect and self-harm, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.
15. Service users are protected and are safe in their home, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.
16. The health, rights and best interests of service users are safeguarded by maintaining a record of key events and activities undertaken in the home in relation to the provision of personal care, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.

The Commission considers Standards 11, 12 and 14 the key standards to be inspected at least once.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

11, 12, 14

People using the service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

Fylde Community Link helps the people who use their services to understand how to stay safe and this promotes their independence and welfare. Staff understand the policies and procedures in place to ensure that they are able to work in a safe environment and protect the welfare of the people they support.

EVIDENCE:

The agency has systems and procedures in place that ensure that the health and safety of people using the service and staff are promoted. There are designated Health and Safety officers who have training in this role; they then monitor the agency's compliance with health and safety legislation and regulations. Any hazards or risks are reported to the designated health and safety officer. All staff receive health and safety training and updates as part of the agency's induction and training plan.

The agency has a lone working policy. All staff are issued with an emergency card detailing contact numbers. All staff have work mobile phones to ensure they are always able to contact Fylde Community Link in case of emergency. There is a 24 hour on call system in place for staff and people who are supported by the agency.

Risk assessments are completed as part of initial assessments and as risks arise. Staff who complete these risk assessments have received relevant training. Risk assessments cover both the safety of the people being supported and staff. All risk assessments are underpinned by a commitment to promote independence and personal choice.

All staff are made aware of Fylde Community Link safeguarding policies and procedures during induction and on going training. The staff spoken with during the visit to the agency understood their duties and how to respond to an allegation of abuse. The people using the agency are also aware of how to let staff know if they feel they are not being treated properly. People spoken with were very clear about who they would tell. Fylde Community Link has recently produced a useful booklet for people who use the agency called 'Say No to Abuse'. A presentation was also given by the Quality Group which is made up of people who use the agency and was well attended. The information is presented in a clear way and uses words and pictures to demonstrate how to stay safe.

Managers and Staff

The intended outcomes for Standards 17 - 21 are:

17. The well-being, health and security of services users is protected by the agency's policies and procedures on recruitment and selection of staff.
18. Service users benefit from clarity of staff roles and responsibilities, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.
19. Service users know that staff are appropriately trained to meet their personal care needs, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.
20. The personal care of service users is provided by qualified and competent staff, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.
21. Service users know and benefit from having staff who are supervised and whose performance is appraised regularly, except for employment agencies solely introducing workers.

The Commission considers Standards 17, 19 and 21 the key standards to be inspected.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

17,19,21

People using the service experience **excellent** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

Fylde Community Link provides excellent training opportunities for staff and this ensures staff are competent and work in ways that reflect an understanding of good practice.

EVIDENCE:

The staff records looked at during the visit to the agency demonstrated that safe recruitment practices were being followed. The files seen contained evidence of a robust recruitment system. People who use the agency are involved in staff selection. A new member of staff explained how this had been arranged following a formal interview at the company's office. He had attended a meeting at one of the supported living houses where the people who lived there asked some questions and then gave their views. The people spoken with

during the visit who had been involved in recruitment were positive about the experience and enjoyed being involved.

The staff surveys and the staff members spoken with confirmed that regular training opportunities are provided by the agency. New members of staff complete a rigorous and extensive induction and are supported throughout by a mentor. The induction period is flexible and is carried out over a number of months. The induction is set at the pace suitable for the employee; this was confirmed by staff members spoken with during the visit. During the first year of employment staff performance is reviewed at regular periods, and the first nine months of employment is a probationary period.

All training is recorded and monitored by the company training manager. Over 80% of staff have achieved a National Vocational Qualification in Health and Social Care, this is the recommended qualification for people working in this sector.

The amount of training and information provided for staff was commented upon by some staff as especially when staff are new this can be very intensive and overwhelming. This was discussed with the manager who explained that all staff receive regular formal support and the opportunity to discuss their training needs and any concerns. All key information is available to staff members for reference and staff are encouraged to share their knowledge and expertise. New members of staff spoken with felt that they had been encouraged to ask questions and to raise any issues with the staff they worked with or their mentor.

All staff have regular supervision and an annual appraisal. All project leaders and managers have been trained in supervision and appraisal skills. The staff spoken with and those who completed surveys felt that they were very well supported in their job roles. The atmosphere of the agency is inclusive and encouraging. Managers are in regular contact with the people supported by the agency and staff members.

Organisation and Running of the Business

The intended outcomes for Standards 22 – 27 are:

22. Service users receive a consistent, well managed and planned service.
23. The continuity of the service provided to service users is safeguarded by the accounting and financial procedures of the agency.
24. The rights and best interests of service users are safeguarded by the agency keeping accurate and up-to-date records.
25. The service user's rights, health, and best interests are safeguarded by robust policies and procedures which are consistently implemented and constantly monitored by the agency.
26. Service users and their relatives or representatives are confident that their complaints will be listened to, taken seriously and acted upon.
27. The service is run in the best interests of its service users.

The Commission considers Standards 22 and 26 the key standards to be inspected at least once.

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

22, 26, 27

People using the service experience **excellent** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

The people who use Fylde Community Link benefit from a well managed and responsive service.

EVIDENCE:

The offices of Fylde Community Link are purposely adapted providing excellent facilities for staff and people who use the agency. There are ample private rooms. There is a large training room and a computer room that is fitted with a range of equipment that can be used by people supported by the agency. The management structure reflects the size of the agency. There are clear lines of accountability within the organisation. There has been significant investment in technology and a new computerised system has been introduced which is being used for management and accountability purposes, including to chart the progress of individual people who use the agency towards their agreed goals, for staff rotas and internal communication.

There is a clear and effective complaint procedure in place that is pictorial and designed to enable people using the agency and their relatives to easily forward any concern. The experience of people who use the agency was that if they had any concerns these were listened to and sorted out by the staff members or a manager. People were clear who to go to and were confident that their best interests were at the heart of the agency. Complaints and compliments are recorded and monitored. The Care Quality Commission has not received any concerns about this agency.

Fylde Community Link continues to have excellent quality monitoring systems in place. These have been enhanced by the new computer system that can demonstrate in graphic form the progress made by people supported by the agency. There is a regular survey, and the results of this are published. There is a Quality Manager who visits people supported by the agency on a regular basis and who carries out quality monitoring visits. The people who use the agency can be involved in the Quality Group which meets on a monthly basis, this group is made up of people who use this agency and other services provided by Fylde Community Link. Staff support and assist people to express their opinions. All decisions are reached collectively and action points agreed. The agency also holds Investors in People quality assurance award.

The agency has an Annual General meeting which provides an opportunity for people and staff to celebrate the successes and achievements of the past year, and to be informed of future developments. People spoken with during the visits had attended this meeting and some had presented items about their personal achievements and activities, they had clearly enjoyed being part of the agency and felt that their contribution was valued.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Domiciliary Care have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable) **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls) **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion
 "N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

User Focused Services	
Standard No	Score
1	X
2	3
3	X
4	X
5	X
6	4

Managers and Staff	
Standard No	Score
17	4
18	X
19	4
20	4
21	3

Personal Care	
Standard No	Score
7	4
8	4
9	X
10	4

Organisation And Running Of The Business	
Standard No	Score
22	4
23	X
24	X
25	X
26	3
27	4

Protection	
Standard No	Score
11	3
12	3
13	X
14	4
15	X
16	X

No

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations



Care Quality Commission

North West Region

Citygate

Gallowgate

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE1 4PA

National Enquiry Line:

Telephone: 03000 616161

Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

Web: www.cqc.org.uk

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