Core assurances for housing support services

Experience has taught us that when things go wrong in care services, they often relate to key areas. Theory and inquiries into when care goes wrong has highlighted the areas that are important to monitor because these can be identified as early indicators of concern to people using services (Scottish Government 2014, Hull University 2012, Francis Report 2013, Wardhaugh and Wilding 1993). These are the key areas considered during the registration process, and policies and procedures relating to them must be in place before a service is registered. Because we know, and research tells us, that these key areas are essential to a service being safe, we have called them ‘core assurances’.

This checklist of core assurances highlights what inspectors must look at on inspection. They help guide providers on the areas that are important to people’s safety and wellbeing. The core assurances span the entire framework, covering elements of several different quality indicators. If we have any concerns arising from our assessment of a particular core assurance, we may decide to focus in on a specific quality indicator. For example, the core assurance about infection prevention and control does not necessarily mean that we are evaluating all of quality indicator 1.5, but if we identify concerns, we will look at this quality indicator in more detail. In making our evaluations we will always speak to people who use the service, families, staff, visiting professionals and relevant stakeholders.

**General**

□ A registration certificate is on display (in an office base) and contains accurate information that reflects the service currently being delivered.

□ A valid insurance certificate is on display in an office base (except local authority services).

□ There is a written statement of the aims and objectives that accurately describes the conditions of registration and the service that is offered to people.

**Protection – this relates to both adult and child protection reflecting who the service is supporting.**

□ There is an adult/child protection policy and procedure that evidences how people are kept safe.

□ Staff are trained in adult/child protection and are confident in knowing when and how to make referrals, including notifying the Care Inspectorate.

□ Where required, there is evidence that appropriate adult/child protection referrals have been made and followed up.

**Infection prevention and control**

□ All staff are trained in and can demonstrate they understand and apply the principles of infection prevention and control in line with their role.

□ There is a nominated lead person who has responsibility for infection prevention and control practice.

□ The service has governance and quality assurance processes in place about infection prevention and control.

□ Leaders ensure that staff have access to suitable equipment and appropriate cleaning products. A robust risk assessment is undertaken and approved through local governance when this cannot be implemented.

**Medication system and records**

□ People are protected by safe medication management policies and practices, including the management of naloxone and safe storage of emergency medications.

**Management of people’s finances**

□ People’s personal property and finances are managed and protected in line with legislation.

□ Clear financial policies and procedures for the management of people’s money and possessions are documented and evidenced in practice.

□ Where decisions are being made on behalf of an adult who lacks capacity, legislation principles and good practice guidance are followed*.*

**Accident/incident records**

□ A record of all accidents and incidents occurring in the service is maintained and, where required, notified to the Care Inspectorate and/or the appropriate agency/authority. There are quality assurance processes around accident and incidents and evidence of learning from these.

**Development/Improvement plan**

□ There is an up-to-date development/improvement plan in place that is informed by feedback from staff and people who use the service, and/or their relatives. This plan is actively used to drive improvement in the service.

**Complaints**

□ The complaints and concerns of each person, their family, advocate or representative, and stakeholders are listened to and acted upon and there is an effective appeals procedure.

□ People are made aware promptly of the outcome of any complaints and there are processes in place to implement learning from complaints. A record is made of all complaints, responses and outcomes and details of any formal investigations undertaken.

□ The complaints process is user-friendly and accessible.

**Staff recruitment procedures**

□ Safe and effective recruitment practices are in place to recruit staff in accordance with good practice and national safer recruitment guidance.

**Maintenance records for safety equipment**

□ Staff are trained to use any equipment required by individuals they are supporting.

□ In supported living/communal settings, Staff and people living in the service know what to do in the event of a fire, including information on those who need support to evacuate and how to do this safely.

**Planned care and support**

□ The personal plan is based on an ongoing comprehensive assessment of individual’s needs, strengths and is outcomes-focussed. It is implemented, evaluated and reviewed, reflects the person’s changing needs and outlines the support required to maximise their quality of life in accordance with their wishes.

□ People are actively involved in their personal planning process and support is observed to be person centred and delivered in accordance with each person’s individual plan.

□ Personal plans are accessible to people and the staff providing their support, ensuring their needs and wishes are met.

**Management oversight and governance**

□ There are governance and oversight systems in place to identify risks and ensure appropriate action is taken to improve outcomes for people. These include leaders’ behaviours which create the right environment for safe quality care and support.