

Homecare Scotland Care Services Ltd Support Service

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 September 2023

Service provided by:
Homecare Scotland Care Services Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2018013045

Service no:
CS2018363199

About the service

Homecare Scotland Care Services provide care at home for children and adults, including older people, living in their own homes. There are office bases in Forres, Aberdeen and Glasgow dealing with the coordination of services in Moray, Aberdeen City and Glasgow areas respectively. At the time of the inspection they working with 90 people across all the areas.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 - 15 September 2023. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with seven people using the service and two of their family
- Spoke with 12 staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were pleased to be working for the company
- People told us that they liked their carers and were pleased with all that they did
- The managers and leaders were competent and enjoyed working together
- Communication throughout the company and with service users was good.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

Support for people's wellbeing was very good. There were many strengths that contributed to good outcomes for people.

The service users and their families praised the carers. They enjoyed being confident that there was a consistent team of carers who knew their needs and were able to fulfil them. The support was delivered at the same times each day, and people's homes were treated respectfully.

The support workers were kind and caring when they were with people. They gave calm and dignified support for people with a wide range of personal needs. As well as being able to deal with people during their usual routine, the workers were confident and capable when unexpected issues arose. Their ability to recognise when people were not feeling like 'their usual self' showed them to be warm, caring and professional in their approach. People told us that they could rely on the carers.

People were encouraged to do what they could in relation to their own lives and support. The carers asked them about their choices and wishes, for example in what clothes to wear, what they would like to eat, which carers they would like in their team. People were empowered by this, and also by their involvement in the reviews of their support packages. Some people stayed mainly in their homes each day and others were supported in a wide range of activities and lifestyle choices. The service encouraged people to choose how they spent their time and the carers then supported them with their choice.

The support workers were guided by well written and clear support plans. These were written firstly to describe what people could do themselves, and then what they needed support with and this meant people were as independent as possible. Medication was administered and recorded correctly which was important in maintaining people's physical and emotional wellbeing. Where there were difficulties with medical aids this was dealt with immediately in, line with the person wishes, and by involving the health care team. Involvement with the team, such as district nurses and mental health professionals, helped to achieve optimum health for people.

Regular eating and drinking was encouraged, both during the visit and in the times in between visits. Options were given and people were encouraged to eat a varied diet which was enjoyable for them.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

Quality assurance and improvement was led at a very good standard. Strengths which supported this were the specialist teams, the regular audits and regular communication.

Having specialist teams for different essential parts of the service, for example care, recruitment, training, compliance, meant that each team were able to concentrate on delivering to a high standard. The way that the teams worked together was beneficial for people using the service. For example, the recruitment team visited each geographical area, and sometimes individual families. They spent time understanding the nuances of the staffing needs, and then tailored their recruitment to match this. This meant that the care teams had new workers that were highly likely to be successful in working with people. There were similar benefits from all the teams communicating well, for example the care managers receive weekly updates about how far along recruitment is, how many of their staff need to refresh their training, whether incident investigations are outstanding. This meant that information on all aspects of the service were readily to

hand and their time could be spent developing the support workers and overseeing care packages rather than looking for information.

The service used audits well, to understand which standards were high and which needed attention. For example, an audit would indicate how many reviews had been done and which ones were outstanding. This enabled managers to direct review activity where it was most needed and to ensure everyone had a chance to discuss their needs and whether they were being met.

The staff knew their roles and responsibilities and were carrying them out effectively. They felt accountable for their practice which meant people received consistently high standards of care. Team meetings worked well for passing on information to all who required it, and individual sessions gave worker the opportunity to discuss aspects of their practice in detail.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

Staff had the knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people, at a good level.

Throughout the geographical areas of the service, there were a high percentage of trained staff. There was a clear set of courses for basic competence and also or more specialist knowledge. Training opportunities were developed in line with needs, for example a module on hand washing and personal protective equipment in community settings. This meant that people with a variety of needs could be sure that their support workers would understand their needs and be able to support them.

Competence when working with people was monitored by the leadership team through spot checks and observation of workers practice. This was recorded to ensure transparency and to be able to refer back to, and look for development. The support workers, as well as the senior workers wrote their comments on the records, ensuring each understood their skills and contributions to care.

The service was committed to supporting staff through Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ). This added professionalism, and acknowledged their skills within their role. SVQs encourage reflection which generally improves practice, so is a valuable tool for developing all staff.

There were a range of learning and reflection opportunities, for example online learning, practical courses, supervision and appraisal sessions, team meetings, short 'Lets Talk About' sessions. This range encouraged a depth and understanding of topics and should lead to a confident and competent workforce.

Although a wide range of training was available which included training for specific conditions, some staff did not feel confident in applying the learning into practice. They said they would benefit from more training in a wide range of areas such as diabetes, dementia, hearing aids, medication and others. This was discussed with the manager who said they would consider why a quarter of staff (who responded) felt that they needed more training. The manager said they would work to support staff to feel more confident. This should give an improved service to people and increase the staff's accountability and professionalism.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

Care and support planning was at a very good standard. The plans were clearly and respectfully written, and focused firstly on strengths and what people can do, and then what they needed support with, and finally what they need to be completely done for them. This encouraged activity and engagement with daily living activities and implied a partnership way of working.

One phrase that was used to describe a particular support need was that carers were there to give 'companionship.' This was a lovely, dignified phrase that indicated the respectful support that carers would give.

The support plans were clear about all care to be given, including what should be done in a 'not emergency, but critical' situation. This type of detail helped service users wishes to be followed, families to be involved and cares to understand their role.

When the carers went in to people's homes they accessed an online app and the tasks which were listed gave enough information to enable staff to undertake what was required. This was a good reminder for regular staff and also a good guide for new staff, to enable correct care to be offered without spending a lot of time reading a whole support plan.

There were regular reviews which involved the service user, and their next of kin along with staff. This inclusive meeting gave the best chance of achieving an up to date, and suitable, set of guidelines for support.

There were occasional small errors in the plans (which did not affect daily care), which we mentioned to the manager who said they would audit the plans and ensure accuracy throughout.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 24 February 2023 (from 26 August 2022), the provider must ensure safe IPC practice is carried out by all staff at all times. To do this the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) Provide development or training for all staff in the safe storage of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- b) Ensure all staff understand why they are washing their hands and wearing gloves and do so appropriately for different tasks.
- c) Check the competency of individuals in infection prevention and control on a regular basis and monitor the actions required for improvement to ensure they are completed.

In order to comply with Regulation 4(1) (d) (Welfare of service users) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This requirement was made on 31 October 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement

The training and understanding of staff was shown in their competency in the area of infection prevention and control. The training (as mentioned in the body of the report) was up to date for staff. The leadership were undertaking regular monitoring of staff competence.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 24 February 2023 (reinstated from 26 August 2022), the provider must ensure all guidance is clear and in line with best practice. To do this the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) Check all audit systems for their effectiveness.
- b) Audit all policies and guidance to ensure they are clear and unambiguous.
- c) Draw up an action plan to make necessary improvements arising from these audits within the next four months.

In order to comply with Regulation 4(1) (a) (Welfare of service users) of the Social care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

This requirement was made on 31 October 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service worked through an action plan and have clear policies which direct the work of the service. They are using effective audit systems in many areas to ensure their practice is at a high standard.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 3

By 24 February 2023 (reinstated from 26 August 2022), the provider must ensure all staff are suitably qualified and competent to meet the needs of the service users they support. To do the the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) Review their systems for development and supervision and ensure they will lead to staff who are fit to meet the needs of the service users.
- b) Develop and begin to implement a tracking system to ensure development and supervision sessions are sufficient, recorded and lead to any necessary improvements.

In order to comply with Regulation 15 (Staffing) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This requirement was made on 31 October 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service has a clear system for supervision and appraisal for all staff, which is being adhered to, and audited to ensure it remains up to date. The staff are working at a competent level and delivering a high standard of care.

Met - within timescales

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 People get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
3.2 Staff have the right knowledge, competence and development to care for and support people	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and personal planning reflects people's outcomes and wishes	5 - Very Good

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