

Homehelpme Care Support Service

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Type of inspection:

Announced (short notice)

Completed on:

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Service provided by:

Home Help Me Care Limited

Service provider number:

SP2017012857

Service no:

CS2017353816

About the service

Homehelpme Care was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 21 August 2017 to provide a care at home service to older people and adults in their own homes and in the wider community.

The service is a private limited company with two owners/directors, one of whom is the registered manager and one the operations manager. Staffing consists of a small team of carers/companions. The service operates mainly in north west Edinburgh from an office base in Cramond.

At the time of inspection the service was supporting 27 people.

The provider states its aims and objectives include:

- For service users to enjoy being in the comfort of their own home and maintaining a sense of identity and independence.
- Providing service users with the tools to continue their daily lives with the privacy and dignity afforded to all and to not feel isolated.
- Ensuring service users needs and values are respected.
- Ensuring staff are qualified, experienced and matched to service users as best as possible.
- Fostering open and honest culture where compliments and complaints can be highlighted by anyone.

What people told us

We received views from 12 people using the service and seven relatives during this inspection. People expressed full satisfaction with the quality of the service. Comments included:

"I have found Homehelpme to be a company that really care. I have 2-3 hours a week. The person who helps me takes me out in the car for shopping and to medical appointments, which is great. It gives me a lot of independence to get out of the house and do things for myself. Staff are friendly and helpful. The help that I get helps me a great deal, I am very pleased, nothing is too much trouble."

"I am very happy with the care and support. My companion does some shopping, makes a light lunch and we go for coffee. I have a very good relationship with my companion."

"So far we have found that the management and care staff are very willing to listen to what is needed and eager to please and help in any way they can. Staff are cheerful, kind and caring. They are confident. As well as being good listeners they are observant, reliable and have good people skills. They always arrive promptly and are completely focussed on the care they are providing."

"When I came out of hospital we told the manager all my health problems. They were taken care of outstandingly well. Five stars. They came daily. I had regular meetings with the care manager to discuss my needs and they were very flexible and supportive. My carer was exceptional. She did everything I couldn't manage to do myself. Without them I would have been dependant on relatives who had already taken time off work to assist. I highly recommend their care to anyone. I totally trust their judgement at all times. Staff are friendly and accommodating. You look forward to their visit. They stay longer and will always complete tasks. The service is simply superb and invaluable."

"It's a 1:1 service and is driven by my relative. She says what they will do on an outing. Given that she can't do things by herself, this gives her the opportunity to do what she wants. They've gone out of their way to

accommodate her wishes and quirks. They provide their own transport. The support plan covers the things my relative might have a problem with, things she likes doing, her state of mind, and so on. It's very comprehensive. The staff are well-trained, sensible and qualified. They chat with my relative to ask how to support her and they check with me if appropriate. Staff don't change often, usually it's the same person. If they're unavailable (for example on holiday), someone who my relative already knows substitutes. I've recommended the service to other people as I think it's great."

"Time was taken to meet with me and discuss my needs and expectations, my likes and dislikes, what I like to watch and what I enjoy doing. It is all very clearly written down. They regularly review my support plan and contact my daughter about any changes. She can also contact them at any time to discuss my needs. The service helps me to be as independent as possible and I've been able to decrease my daily visits. As I have got stronger they allow me to adapt the time spent on certain aspects. They come at the time arranged and if they are held up they contact me. I feel they are very reliable. Staff always have a friendly, pleasant approach. They are interested in what I have been doing with my family and in making sure I am dressed appropriately. I am very confident in staff members' capabilities. They are always professional. They talk about the training days they've attended. I've had no staff changes. There is never any rush and staff are always happy to go the extra bit if required. I am very happy with the service."

"It has been a good company for my relative - entertaining, playing games, cooking lunch. If they have a car they go for runs. I trust the carers to be responsible and friendly. They are polite. I am very impressed by the effort put into giving us the same girls every time."

"I am very happy with the service for my relative. I first contacted them for befriending and gradually they have been doing a bit more, such as shopping, appointments. The manager suggested a professional assessment and made a referral to social work. They are flexible. They provide a lot of emotional support. Staff have been good at discovering when my relative has appointments and making sure she gets to them. They make sure she is eating well, in consultation with me. We are aiming to keep her at home which would be ideal and will maintain her quality of life."

"I am very happy. The service gives my daughter a break. I had help with a bath which is nice. I usually have the same carers."

"It's a happy experience."

"10 out of 10."

"We didn't know what care would be like but it's lived up to our expectations. We'd recommend the service. Staff call if they are going to be late. We know the managers and speak to them."

"The service is perfect for my family."

"I am happy. I have confidence staff know what they're doing. They do things according to my wishes, so I feel in charge."

"They're excellent. The company is very good at picking staff. They are all lovely and do anything for you. I've had the same carer since the beginning. She's very good at making soup."

We contacted a small number of professionals for their views of the service. Comments included:

"I have arranged a service from this agency twice, both have turned out to be successful in contributing to improved outcomes for the service users, in assistance with personal care and providing companionship. There have been very favourable comments from the respective family members. The operations manager and registered manager demonstrated considerable knowledge of the needs of older people and of community care, and are skilled in person centred working and in business relations with the local authority. The managers have made themselves available, have been approachable and have promptly responded to enquiries and to the needs of the service users and their family member."

"Homehelpme Care has contributed to improved outcomes for service users, including one client who lived with dementia. They were able to offer an Individual Service Fund option of Self Directed Support to provide a respite service. In another case, they provided palliative. I thought they delivered care in a sensitive and dignified manner. I had positive feedback from the clients. I have found both managers approachable, in respect of any queries which I have raised."

Self assessment

We are not asking services to submit a self assessment for this inspection year. We discussed how the service has developed since registration and how they plan to continue to develop the service. We suggested they could look at using the new Health and Social Care Standards to evaluate their service and plan for the future. The new Standards are available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00520693.pdf>

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

People were very happy with Homehelpme Care. People found the service to be individual, reliable and consistent.

Meeting service users and families wishes was paramount. It was clear that people received an individually tailored service. People were fully included in the assessment and decisions about their support. People said they felt in control.

Service users' routines and choices were recorded in their support plan, including any assistance they required with personal care or medication. The plans included enough detail to enable carers to support people in the way they wanted. The service aimed to match carers to service users to maximise people's experience. Staff were familiar with people's support plans and there were very good ways to ensure they had up to date information before each appointment.

The service used an electronic system to make sure appointments were scheduled and completed as planned. Staff schedules were carefully managed to ensure enough travel time. People were generally supported

by two or three different staff, with the back up of the managers, ensuring continuity of care. This also provided an opportunity for the managers to stay in touch with service users. Visits were of a minimum of one hour which ensured that people were enabled to do what they could for themselves, without feeling rushed. Staff said they felt this built and maintained service users' confidence and abilities, contributing to their ability to stay at home for longer. Staff commented:

"Having a full hour in someone's home allows the time to meet the clients individual needs and preferences, engage in meaningful conversation while promoting the individuals independence."

"Our longer visits give us the freedom to be more spontaneous with activities, for example I am able to do the jobs that are important to our clients but would maybe not be possible if we had less time."

We heard people achieved outcomes that were important to them, for example:

- getting to appointments
- taking short or longer walks, local or further afield
- getting out and about, maintaining their activities
- time to chat, discuss, reminisce and share worries or concerns
- enabling family members to have a break
- discreet support to attend family gatherings.

The service was building a wide knowledge of local events and activities and paid particular attention to planning for festive periods so that people could stay connected and avoid isolation.

Staff were able to describe people's goals and gave examples of the steps they took to support people to achieve these:

- taking someone on countryside walks, to places she chooses and loves, which help lift her mood and draw out conversations about wildlife and places visited.
- cooking someone traditional food from scratch as it was important to her to get her fresh meat, fruit and vegetables.
- taking someone to the local supermarket to facilitate their independence.
- fetching fresh rolls on Sunday mornings to ensure someone continued a breakfast tradition they had enjoyed as long as they remember.

Staff were skilled and observant and understood their responsibilities to protect customers from harm. For example, raising concerns with managers when noticing low mood, loneliness or someone not eating properly.

People were encouraged to give feedback on their service at any time, during spot checks and at their six monthly review. The service was flexible, responding promptly to changes in people's needs or wishes and changes were updated in support plans.

People had been given reliable contact numbers for the managers. Key policies were shared with people, including how to make a complaint. It was clear that people's views were very important and the service demonstrated how it listened to comments and requests.

The service was planning its next newsletter and agreed to take the opportunity to advise people about the new Health and Social Care Standards.

We advised the service to keep separate records of six monthly review meetings and suggested more clearly identifying personal outcomes in people's support plans.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 - excellent

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Everyone spoke very highly of their carers. People said they were treated well and felt valued, in keeping with the principles of new standards.

Staff were highly motivated to deliver a quality service. They said they felt very well supported, were in regular dialogue with the managers and could contact them at any time. Staff morale and job satisfaction was high. Only one member of staff had chosen to leave the service. Staff took the time to engage with the inspection process and provided examples of the ways in which their work contributed to people's quality of life and how much they enjoyed their role.

Staff worked with a small group of colleagues supporting a cluster of service users, determined by their need/requirements. We saw how staff worked to service users' strengths, supporting and encouraging people to do what they could for themselves. We saw care being provided in a calm, unhurried manner with warmth and understanding.

Safe recruitment procedures were followed to employ staff who were safe to work with vulnerable people. Managers were careful to select staff who could demonstrate values which matched the company ethos, with an emphasis on experience and life skills. Contracts were terminated where staff did not meet the expected standards.

Induction was thorough, with a range of training to prepare new staff for their role, opportunities to work alongside experienced staff before working alone and assessment of their progress. The service monitored staff performance and made use of probationary periods to establish whether each staff member was meeting their standards. This was followed by spot checks to observe practice and quarterly supervision/performance review meetings.

A training matrix recorded the completed training. The service made sure staff refreshed their knowledge in key areas and were made aware of good practice developments. For example, team members read a selection of reports about other care at home services in order to research what makes them good (or poor) and

they discussed this at one of the regular team meetings. We saw records indicating team meetings allowed time for meaningful discussion about practice and sharing of ideas. Managers had recently introduced a drop-in coffee morning where staff could pop in for a coffee and catch up.

Staff said they were encouraged to help and support their colleagues with any challenges. Some had been given the delegated duties, such as planning and delivering training which was more practical and geared to the demands of their role.

All staff were registered (or in the process of registering) with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the regulatory body for social service workers. The service was supporting four members of staff to achieve an SVQ (to meet the qualification criteria for SSSC registration). Three more staff would commence SVQ early in 2019.

The manager acknowledged that food hygiene training was outstanding for staff and she was prioritising this.

The service could look at offering more opportunities for people to be involved in the selection of staff, from commenting on advertisements and job descriptions to interviewing and inducting staff.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

It was clear that people knew the managers well and had confidence in them. People said that the managers were approachable, that they would be confident raising any issue with them and they felt they would be listened to.

The managers ensured a customer focus and demonstrated the company's values to embed these within care practice. Staff valued the fact that the managers provided direct support when covering for absence. They felt this meant they were in close touch with service user's needs and the demands on staff.

The service had a culture of continuous improvement, with very good quality assurance processes. There were systems to monitor appointments, record keeping, staff training, accidents, incidents and concerns or complaints. Managers used the systems well to make sure people experienced reliability and continuity of care.

Staff said that communication with managers was good, with a willingness to listen to opinions and suggestions and to take action where required. Staff were supportive of their managers and said they worked hard.

The service carried out its first satisfaction survey in April 2018 and had shared the findings with people. We noted that satisfaction levels were high.

The organisation regularly reviewed and updated policies and staff were advised of updates.

The service was working to a strategic plan. The service demonstrated that it is growing at a gradual pace and continues to do so, to ensure quality is maintained.

The service should develop guidelines on staff involvement with service users day to day finances, to include support with online shopping. We made suggestions about the recording of expenditure, receipts and audits to protect service users and staff.

We suggested it would be beneficial to provide clear information to people and families at the start of the service about what would happen when the service could no longer meet their needs. This could include how this assessment is made, notice periods and what support would be offered to find alternative provision.

We also suggested that the service could look at offering more opportunities for people to be involved in service development. For example, telling people about the quality assurance processes and asking for suggestions.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

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

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

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

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Complaints

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

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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