

Serve Home Care Ltd.

Serve Homecare

Inspection report

The Old Bank
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21 November 2022

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service	Good ●
Is the service safe?	Good ●
Is the service well-led?	Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Serve Homecare is a domiciliary care agency providing personal care to 63 people in their own homes at the time of the inspection.

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

People and their relatives told us they felt they and their family members were safe and well supported by the service. Individual risks were assessed, and staff were aware of these. Reviews of events and accidents were carried out and any actions needed were completed. Medicines were managed appropriately, and staff knew how to report any concerns about a person's safety or welfare. People told us staff arrived when they should, stayed for the required time and did not miss visits.

Staff received relevant training for their role and people felt they had the right knowledge and skills. Staff felt supported by the management team. People told us staff respected their preferences and choices.

People were asked to give their consent before receiving support and the principles of the Mental Capacity Act were followed. People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service supported this practice

People and their relatives told us staff were kind and caring. Staff enjoyed working for the service and told us the culture was to ensure care was person centred. Care plans included information needed to support people safely and in accordance with their wishes and preferences. These were reviewed regularly.

There were mixed views from people and relatives in relation to if they were asked for their feedback. However, all said the management and staff team were approachable and they would contact them if they had concerns or queries. Staff told us they were asked for their views about the service and felt listened to. There were monitoring processes in place to help ensure a good standard of service. Quality assurance systems identified any areas that may need further development.

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

Rating at last inspection

At the last inspection the service was rated good (published 20 October 2021).

Why we inspected

This inspection was prompted by information we had received about this service.

This was an 'inspection using remote technology'. This means we did not visit the office location and instead used technology such as electronic file sharing to gather information, and video and phone calls to engage with people using the service as part of this performance review and assessment.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our re-inspection programme. If we receive any concerning information we may inspect sooner.

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

Good ●

The service was safe.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Serve Homecare

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

We carried out this performance review and assessment under Section 46 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act). We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements of the regulations associated with the Act and looked at the quality of the service to provide a rating.

Unlike our standard approach to assessing performance, we did not physically visit the office of the location. This is a new approach we have introduced to reviewing and assessing performance of some care at home providers. Instead of visiting the office location we use technology such as electronic file sharing and video or phone calls to engage with people using the service and staff.

Inspection team

The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

Service and service type

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own houses and flats.

This service is required to have a registered manager. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

At the time of our inspection there was a registered manager in post.

Notice of inspection

We gave the service 48 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because we carried out this inspection remotely and we needed to be sure that the provider or registered manager would be in the office to support the inspection.

Inspection activity started on 11 November 2022 and ended on 21 November 2022.

What we did before inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from a health and social care providers. We used this information to plan our inspection. The provider was not asked to complete a Provider Information Return (PIR) prior to this inspection. A PIR is information providers send us to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make.

During the inspection

We spoke with three people and two relatives. We received feedback from a further two relatives about their experience of the care provided to their family members. We received feedback from six members of staff including the registered manager and care workers.

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

This performance review and assessment was carried out without a visit to the location's office. We used technology such as video calls to enable us to engage with people using the service and staff, and electronic file sharing to enable us to review documentation.

After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the provider to validate evidence found.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

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

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. At this inspection the rating has remained the same. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People and their relatives told us they and their family members felt safe receiving support from the service.
- The registered manager knew they must ensure safeguarding incidents were reported when needed.
- Staff were aware what abuse might look like and knew how to report any concerns they had within the service or externally. Staff told us they could raise any concerns with the management team.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- People and their relatives told us staff worked safely.
- People's individual risks were assessed. These were reviewed and updated as needed.
- Staff told us that the management team was regularly checking they were working safely.

Staffing and recruitment

- People and their relatives told us there were enough staff available to meet theirs or their family member's needs. They told us there had not been any missed care visits and did not cut visits short. Visit logs were monitored to help ensure staff provided people's care within agreed timeframes. A staff member said, "I have never heard of any calls that have been missed, I have always heard positive comments from our clients."
- The service had a recruitment process which included checks to help ensure staff were suitable to work in a care setting. Criminal record checks and references were sought before staff started working with people. One staff member said, "I had a telephone interview, then I came into the office for a formal interview with the manager. I felt that the communication throughout the process was excellent, unlike any other company that I had interviews with."

Using medicines safely

- Staff were trained to support people with their medicines safely. The management team ensured staff completed competency assessments.
- Staff supported some people with administering their medicines and just prompted others to take theirs as needed. There was a record of what level of support people needed.
- The management team carried out spot checks and audits to help ensure medicines were managed safely.

Preventing and controlling infection

- People were protected from the risk of infection because staff had been trained in infection control. The

provider ensured they followed current national infection prevention and control guidance. People told us that staff used their personal protective equipment (PPE) and washed their hands when they arrived.

- Staff told us they had access to a regular supply of PPE. They were clear on what was needed to promote good infection prevention and control. The management team carried out spot checks to ensure staff were using PPE correctly.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The provider had systems in place to help ensure learning from events, incidents or accidents.
- The learning from these events was shared with staff during training and meetings. One staff member said, "[Information is shared] via email, the group chat, QCS app, there is certain information shared with us on the group chat, and we are informed of certain information that is relevant for us to carry out our 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 our last inspection we rated this key question good. At this inspection the rating has remained the same. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

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

- People and relatives said the registered manager and the management team were approachable, friendly and accommodating. They told us staff were kind and helpful.
- Feedback about the culture and approach of the service was positive. A person told us, "It is good care, they will do anything for me, very helpful." A relative told us, "I feel the company is well run and provides a personal touch. The carers have sometimes got some issues through to [person] where we have failed."
- Another relative said, "I give them five stars, right skills, they're respectful, just as you'd want a carer to be. I can't get over how comfortable [person] looks, they even do their pillows nicely." They went on to tell us about other things staff had done that was considerate, helpful and made a difference to their family member.
- Some people felt that some staff needed more life skills, to be aware of things such as how water bowls can damage a polished table and general tidying up. One person said, "Some are more experienced than others." The registered manager told us they had developed a task tick list. They said, "This is to help prevent the little things ending up as big things and will make them second nature." We viewed a sample of spot check records which showed what staff were observed doing and their skills.
- Staff told us the service had a person-centred approach and they enjoyed working for them. A staff member told us, "Serve Homecare support all staff, they listen to us, they have regular rounds for us, with correct travel time, we are not rushed, pressured, or bullied to work more, it is a positive atmosphere which helps staff to remain positive. During the hot weather, office staff reminded us to drink and remain hydrated, they tell us to be careful in poor weather conditions, they have organised an office party for us to all attend for team bonding, this truly is a care company that care about staff with a flexible understanding approach."

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; Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements

- The registered manager understood their responsibilities in relation to the duty of candour. Staff told us they were encouraged to speak up if there were any issues and the management team welcomed their feedback. One staff member said, "Serve Homecare make sure they are in daily communication with staff, you are not left or isolated, you feel as a part of a team, yes members of the management team do carry out spot checks on a regular basis, this is to ensure we are using correct PPE on the field, and also we are wearing uniform and have our ID badges with us."
- A member of the management team carried out spot checks on visits to ensure the staff member was

working well and obtain feedback from people. This was done in way that was nonintrusive, so it did not impact on people, their routines and homes.

- The registered manager provided guidance and support for staff. Staff told us that they found the management team approachable and knowledgeable.
- There were audits across all key areas of the service. For example, COVID-19, staff competency, care plans and medicines. This information was added onto an action plan to give an overview of performance and any areas that needed addressing.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics

- People and their relatives gave mixed views about how the service formally engaged with them. However, all said the management and staff team were approachable and they would contact them if they had concerns or queries.
- The registered manager told us that a six-monthly survey, which would enable people to share feedback anonymously, had just been developed. This was due to go out to people and their relatives.
- People's feedback was sought through quality assurance calls or visits with the management team. One relative told us, "[Team leader] rings to see how things are."
- Staff were positive about the service and the management team. They said they were asked for their views about the service and felt listened to. One staff member said, "I have never felt so supported within a job role, we are communicated with on a daily basis, even welfare checks when we are unwell, we are not pressured into working on days off, we have fair rest time, management listen to us and value our opinions, our team leader comes out on a regular basis to support spot checks."

Continuous learning and improving care

- The management team reviewed events and shared any learning with the staff team. For example, reminders following feedback about household tasks to help embed practice.
- The management team were looking for ways to further improve the service. They were developing a quality assurance system. This was to ensure feedback was collated so any actions could be developed.

Working in partnership with others

- The management and staff team worked with other professionals to ensure support and the right care for people. This included district nurses and physiotherapists. They recently requested support from a nursing professional to ensure a person receiving pressure relieving care was supported correctly. Staff supported people to follow exercise regimes set up by health care professionals.
- The provider was linked in with a local care providers association. Staff were accessing training available and this included becoming champions in key roles. Such as Dementia care.