

## Better Care at Home

# Better Care at Home East

### Inspection report

17 Harbour Road  
Bournemouth  
BH6 4DD

Tel: 01202259055

Website: [www.bettercareathome.co.uk](http://www.bettercareathome.co.uk)

Date of inspection visit:  
19 November 2020

Date of publication:  
06 January 2021

### Ratings

#### Overall rating for this service

Inspected but not rated

Is the service safe?

**Good** ●

Is the service well-led?

**Good** ●

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

### About the service

Better Care at Home East is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes. Not everyone who used the service received personal care. CQC only inspects where people receive personal care. This is help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. At the time of this inspection the service were supporting 26 people, of which 18 of these were receiving the regulated activity of personal care from the service.

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

People and relatives spoke extremely positively about the service they received. We were given many examples that showed people received quality care and support from kind, caring staff that so often went the extra mile to ensure people were kept safe, were happy and felt well cared for. One person told us, "In my opinion I would give them 10/10 right the way through and my husband says the same."

Staff spoke knowledgeably regarding all aspects regarding safeguarding people. Staff had completed safeguarding training and understood their role in identifying and reporting any concerns of potential abuse or poor practice.

Risks were individually assessed, regularly reviewed, clear and covered all areas of people's health as well as any potential environmental risks. Risks assessments ensured staff were given current guidance and information to enable them to support people safely whilst allowing them to maintain their independence.

People were supported by sufficient numbers of trained, experienced staff to meet people's needs. People received their support from a small, consistent team of skilled staff that knew people well and delivered their care in ways people preferred.

Safe recruitment practices were followed. Appropriate checks were completed to ensure that only suitable staff were employed. There was a strong commitment to developing and supporting staff through regular training, supervisions, observations and appraisals. Staff spoke positively about the training they received which they told us was well delivered and of good quality.

Staff supported people to take medicines safely. Staff were trained in medicines management and knew how to ensure that people received their medicines on time and as they had been prescribed. Clear audit processes were in place to monitor the accuracy of administering and recording medicines and drive a culture of continuous improvement. Effective relationships had been built with healthcare professionals to ensure safe management of medicines for people.

There were robust procedures in place to ensure people were protected from infections that could affect both staff and people using the service. Staff had completed infection prevention and control training and understood the actions needed to minimise the risk of avoidable harm, including the prevention of

avoidable infection. Staff had access to plentiful supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) and followed current national guidance regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

People, relatives and staff consistently spoke of the passion, commitment, kindness and approachability of the manager. People felt the service was extremely well led with a strong commitment to providing the very best person-centred care.

Staff told us, and records showed, there was an open, honest, positive culture with a strong ethos on learning and development. Staff were provided with the training, skills and support to provide the best levels of care to people to enable them to live their lives as independently as possible whilst maintaining a good sense of wellbeing and happiness.

Governance systems and oversight of the service were robust. Issues were identified, analysed and discussed with staff to enable learning to be achieved from incidents. There was an open, supportive culture that empowered staff to put forward their ideas for improvement to enable people to receive quality, individualised care that impacted positively on their lives.

People, relatives and staff consistently spoke of the effective and clear communication systems that the registered manager had implemented throughout the service. One member of staff told us, "Communication here is simply brilliant, everything is instant...we have all the information we need straight away, I can't fault it."

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

Rating at last inspection

This service was registered with us on 17 June 2020 and this is the first inspection.

Why we inspected

This was a focussed inspection conducted in accordance with current CQC inspection guidance.

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 exceptionally well-led

Details are in our Well-Led findings below.

# Better Care at Home East

## Detailed findings

### Background to this inspection

#### The inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

#### Inspection team

The inspection team consisted of one inspector and an Expert by Experience. An Expert by Experience is a person who has personal experience of using or caring for someone who uses this type of care service.

#### Service and service type

Better Care at Home East is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes. The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means they and the nominated individual are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

#### Notice of inspection

We gave the service 24 hours' notice of the inspection visit. This was because we needed to be sure that people were informed that we would be contacting them by telephone, and we needed a manager to be available to facilitate this inspection.

#### What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since it was registered. The provider was not asked to complete a provider information return prior to this inspection. This is information we require providers to send us annually to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We used all of this information to help us plan the inspection.

#### During the inspection

Inspection activity started on 19 November 2020 and ended on 24 November 2020. We visited the office location on 19 November 2020.

We arranged for an Expert by Experience to contact people who used the service by telephone on 20 November 2020, they spoke with nine people who use the service and five relatives of people who use the service.

We reviewed two people's risk assessments, medicine administration records, three staff recruitment records and records relating to the management of the service. We spoke with seven staff during the inspection which included, the registered manager, the office manager, the field manager, a senior carer and three care staff.

The registered manager sent us information we requested which included, staff rotas, staff training matrix, Covid-19 policies and processes, infection control policies and their audit, safeguarding policy, moving and handling risk assessments for three people, a general risk assessment for one person, a personal emergency evacuation plan, clinical information proforma's for staff guidance, the accident and emergency protocol, business continuity plan and an example of their at a glance emergency information sheet.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

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

This was the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated as Good. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Every person we spoke with told us they felt safe with the care they received and the staff that supported them. Relatives trusted staff to provide safe care and support to their relatives. One person told us, "Two staff come in the mornings, they do a very good job and I do feel safe." Another person said, "They help me with my shower... I feel very safe, they know what they are doing."
- Staff fully understood their role in protecting people from abuse and had received appropriate training on safeguarding adults.
- The registered manager and care staff had a good knowledge of safeguarding and understood how to raise concerns with the local authority if required.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Individual assessments were carried out to identify any risks to people and to the staff supporting them. This included environmental risks in people's homes and any risks in relation to people's care and support needs. Risks to people were regularly reviewed to ensure people received safe, effective care and support. One person told us, "[Manager] asked lots of questions to find out about my needs and what help I wanted, that's how my care package was arranged."
- Risk assessments detailed the action staff should take to minimise the chance of harm occurring to people or staff. Staff understood the actions they needed to take to minimise the risk of avoidable harm. People had personal emergency evacuation plans completed for them to enable them to be safely supported if they needed to be admitted to hospital.
- There was a contingency plan in place in case of events that affected the service running safely, such as premises problems or adverse weather. The service had purchased two four by four vehicles, to ensure staff would always be able to provide support to people at all times, including in severe winter weather.
- Staff safety had been assessed and measures put in place to mitigate risks. Staff had immediate access to the registered manager, senior staff and care staff colleagues through use of encrypted mobile phone applications and the service's on call system. Staff told us the system was excellent, one member of staff said, "With this system you are never on your own, it's brilliant."

Staffing and recruitment

- Recruitment practices were safe. The relevant checks had been completed before staff worked with people in their homes.
- Support was provided by a consistent, small team of experienced staff who knew people well and knew how they preferred their care and support to be given. One person told us, "They are all so kind, if you want anything, you just tell them. They make sure you are okay and ask what you want." Another person said, "They are kindly, happy girls. I know I could ask them to do anything and they would help me."

- People were supported by enough staff to meet their needs. Staffing arrangements provided the flexibility to meet people's changing needs whilst ensuring consistent care. One person told us, "I just phone up as my needs change and they help me." Another person said, "I could ask to change the time if I needed to, for example if I had an appointment or something."
- Rotas showed suitable times for travelling between visits was included. Staff confirmed they were able to request additional travel time if this wasn't the case. One member of staff told us, "The rotas are brilliant. ..., any changes we know immediately, we get enough travel time and visits are never less than 30 minutes." One person told us, "I've had a certain amount of say in the times they come. If I've needed to go to an appointment, they've come earlier to get me ready in time, they compromise their start time to fit in with me...[Manager] will change the timetable to get it right for me."

#### Using medicines safely

- People received their medicines when they were needed and in ways they preferred. There were systems in place to ensure this was done safely. One person told us, "They put the medicines out and keep an eye on me to make sure I've taken them. They are good with eye drops too. They tick it off to make sure it's all done."
- People had their medicines administered by staff who had completed safe management of medicines training and had their competencies checked regularly. One member of staff told us, "The system works well, we get instant medicine updates, spot checks and observations where we are assessed on each visit to check we are doing it right."
- Where people were prescribed medicines they only needed to take occasionally, there was guidance for staff to follow to ensure those medicines were administered safely.

#### Preventing and controlling infection

- People were protected from the risk of infection because staff were trained in infection control and followed the current national infection prevention and control guidance. Every person we spoke with told us all the care staff wore facemasks, aprons and gloves during each visit.
- One person told us, "They keep their masks on all the time. At the end of the visit, they take off their apron and that goes straight in the rubbish...they change the apron and gloves every time, then they go in the waste bag."
- Staff told us they were supplied with personal protective equipment (PPE) for use to prevent the spread of infections and were clear on their responsibilities with regards to infection prevention and control. The provider held plentiful stocks of all PPE for staff, staff confirmed they had good supplies of PPE at all times. Staff were also supplied with hand sanitiser and hand cream. One member of staff told us, "We have always had enough PPE, all good quality and plenty of it. [Manager] makes sure we are stocked up in our cars and that the clients are also fully stocked up, it's all distributed well."

#### Learning lessons when things go wrong

- There was a system in place for recording accidents and incidents. The provider had started supplying a registered service to people in June 2020 and had not had any incidents or accidents regarding harm to people. The registered manager explained the process that would be implemented to ensure accidents and incidents would be regularly reviewed to check for emerging trends or themes.
- Accidents and incidents would be seen as an opportunity to reflect on practice and continually improve outcomes for people.



# 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.

This was the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated as Outstanding. This meant service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the service culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

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

- Staff consistently told us of the positive, open, honest and supportive management structure that was in place. Everyone we spoke with described how people were very much at the heart of the service and how this culture came from the passion and drive showed by the registered manager and their commitment to provide the very best, person centred care for people. One member of staff said, "I have worked for about 4-5 different care companies...I have found this company gives a much better level of care and training than other places I have worked...I have never met such a dedicated and supportive manager who knows the team so well, they are so dedicated and honest." Another member of staff told us, "With Better Care at Home East I'm part of a professional organisation, that gives absolute top care, ensuring all individuals are treated with dignity and respect...I expect people to be treated like my family and it is so nice to be able to do that, no rushing, none of that whatsoever."
- Staff and healthcare professionals all told us the service was exceptionally well led. One health care professional provided the following written feedback, "I have been so impressed with [Manager] at Better Care at Home East, it was so refreshing to work with an excellent care agency. The [manager] couldn't have been more helpful and supportive to the [person], their family in the safe discharge of the [person]. [Manager] knew her clients' really well and always went above and beyond for them." Another health care professional told us Better Care at Home East delivered a, "High and professional standard of care."
- People and relatives expressed they had full confidence in the management of the service and felt they received an excellent service. Comments from people and relatives included, "[Manager] seems to be running it so well. She's always there to help. You can pick up the phone and talk to her. If you thought something wasn't quite right, she'd sort it out...she likes everything just right", and "I think [manager] does a splendid job. She's keen, dedicated and does good checks" and "[Manager's] easy to get in touch with and inspires confidence."
- Staff benefited from strong leadership and oversight. Staff understood what was expected of them, demonstrated motivation, enthusiasm and felt empowered to put people at the heart of everything they did to ensure people received high quality, person centred care. Without exception staff we spoke with were passionate about providing a high quality, personalised service to people. Staff spoke eagerly about the additional observation system the registered manager had implemented which had a pro-active, beneficial impact on people's health and lives. One member of staff said, "The observations gives us a good indicator of people's general health and what is normal for them. It has provided a level of development and additional skills for the staff which they really enjoy. It's so beneficial for people as it allows us to raise concerns very early on with local health professionals."

- The registered manager told us how the observation system had highlighted a health concern for one person. Staff had acted quickly and escalated the health concerns which resulted in the person being admitted to hospital to receive the appropriate specialist care they needed to maintain their health.

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

- Services that provide health and social care to people are required to inform the Care Quality Commission (CQC), of important events that happen in the service. The registered manager was aware of their responsibilities to report appropriately to CQC about reportable events.
- The duty of candour was understood by the registered manager and their staff. The registered manager promoted a culture of openness and learning, this reflected the requirements of the duty of candour. The duty of candour is a legal obligation to act in an open and transparent way in relation to care and treatment.
- A member of staff told us, "I'm very comfortable to raise any concerns or worries with [manager] who is very approachable as are [management team]...I feel supported, never feel like I'm in the wrong it's all open, honest, a supportive culture. There is a no blame culture, mistakes are discussed and learned about, we can then adapt our care and are made aware of how we can do things differently to keep people safe and cared for well, we are always supported positively, it's very good."

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

- We received overwhelming positive feedback from staff, relatives and people regarding the registered managers style of managing the service and how they supported people and staff. The manager was described as, supportive, amazing, open, honest, helpful, responsive, approachable, flexible, appreciative and brilliant. A staff member told us, "We focus a lot on rehabilitating people back to their independence...[manager] is really hands on with equipment training, she is brilliant, almost instinctive with her knowledge... she is extremely proactive and really involved with the carers and clients, she gets down and helps out with actual shifts, it's a failsafe system." And "[Manager] support is amazing, absolutely amazing I have never met anyone like [manager] before, I will work above and beyond to help her out because I feel appreciated and valued." Another member of staff told us, "This is the best company I've ever worked for within care. I have never seen the amount of care and support given as much as [manager] does...she checks we are all ok and makes sure we are all there for everyone, it's an amazing company to work for...[manager] is brilliant."
- The registered manager had implemented the use of two electronic systems to ensure staff were able to share best practice and keep instantly updated with people's support and care needs. The systems were encrypted to ensure people's information was kept confidential and were constantly monitored throughout the day to ensure all staff were immediately updated of any changes to people's needs. The system sent immediate red alerts to the registered manager if any aspect of people's care needs had not been fulfilled. The registered manager would then contact the staff member and check that all care had been completed to ensure people's ongoing safety.
- Staff found the electronic systems to be extremely effective, helpful and easy to use. One member of staff told us, "It's much easier with the use of technology, any changes are communicated immediately which allows us to be updated instantly" and "The [system] it's fantastic, we get immediate help through it and can leave detailed notes and all important information and everyone can access it right away." A further member of staff said, "I really like the [system], it's almost failsafe and so descriptive it really reduces risk of errors, it's a 100%."
- People, relatives and staff spoke extremely positively about the excellent levels of communication within the service. Staff told us communication throughout the service was clear, instant and effective. Staff felt the electronic systems had particularly helped reduce the feeling of isolation during the challenges of

working throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. A member of staff said, "The [system] has helped with removing the feeling of isolation, it's been brilliant."

- The registered manager was fully involved in the day to day running of the service. They provided a hands-on approach and regularly stepped in to cover shifts and provide care and support to people, this enabled them to speak with people and relatives regularly and obtain their feedback and views on the service provided. They led by example, providing constant support and training for all staff. The registered manager had a clear vision for the service and told us they wanted the service to provide the very best level of care to people to ensure they received a bespoke, person centred service that provided exceptional care. The registered manager said, "I am proud of all my staff, they are all massively committed, caring and conscientious...it's all about the people, they [the staff] all work really hard to look after everyone so well."
- The registered manager understood the requirement to notify CQC of significant incidents and events.

#### Continuous learning and improving care

- The service had been shortlisted in two categories as a finalist for the Great British Care Awards due to be made in December 2020. The registered manager had been shortlisted for The Care Employer Award and a member of staff had been shortlisted for the Home Care Worker Award. A care member of staff told us, "I love it all...I'm really proud to work for Better Care at Home East."
- The registered manager and staff team had a strong commitment to learning and a strong ethos of continual improvement to ensure people received the highest quality of service. Regular unannounced spot checks were carried out on staff to ensure they were working to the standards and values of the service and were following correct policies and procedures.
- In addition to ensuring staff provided a quality service to people, the registered manager used the unannounced spot checks and observations of staff to thank them individually for their work and bring them a much appreciated drink and Danish pastry.
- The registered manager discussed the different processes that were in place to ensure people received a continual high level of service. There was a range of audits and quality assurance systems in place which would ensure any shortfalls would be quickly identified and action taken to rectify weaknesses. The audits provided an effective method of monitoring the quality of service provided to people.

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

- People and relatives told us they were able to contact the registered manager easily and at times that suited them. One person told us, "They are always in touch, reporting details...they're always so cheerful" another person told us, "I feel I can phone [manager] anytime."
- People were encouraged to express their views and suggestions about the service via face to face meetings with staff, the management team and reviews of their care. This information was used to improve the service and to highlight good practice.
- The service had received many positive comments from on line review's comments included, "They are not just carers; they are an extended family who truly do care...we thank you for your constant care and love."
- People and staff felt valued and confident their views would be listened to and acted upon.
- Staff had a good understanding of equality issues. They valued people as individuals and staff took pride in their achievements.

#### Working in partnership with others

- The service had established close and effective working relationships with health and social care professionals. This enabled the service to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people they supported.
- Health professionals provided extremely positive feedback regarding their involvement with the service.

One health professional told us, "I've been really impressed, they all know their people so well. They have been really flexible making sure people get all the help they need. The [manager] has been just brilliant, she couldn't have been more helpful."

- The registered manager kept up to date with learning and innovation to ensure they delivered high quality care. They received guidance and advice from local forums where they were given opportunities to share best practice. They had signed up for a range of updates from local authorities and CQC to enable them to keep up to date with national and local information.