

Elite Social Care Limited

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Inspection report

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Date of inspection visit:
06 March 2019
13 March 2019

Date of publication:
25 April 2019

Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Outstanding 

Is the service safe?

Good 

Is the service effective?

Good 

Is the service caring?

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service:

This service is a domiciliary care agency which provides personal care to people living in their own homes. At the time of our visit 49 people were being supported by Elite Social Care Limited.

People's experience of using this service:

People were overwhelmingly positive about the service they received and said the service was exceptionally caring. People told us staff were very thoughtful and considerate and went above and beyond anything they expected. The relationships between staff and people who received support consistently demonstrated a high regard for people's dignity and respect.

The service was highly effective. We were repeatedly told staff made a difference and promoted a good quality of life for people.

People were actively empowered to take control of their care packages and to lead the lives of their choosing. Care records we looked at contained evidence the person supported had been involved with and were at the centre of developing their care plans.

People's independence was actively promoted giving people greater confidence and boosting self-esteem. People told us staff had enabled them to regain skills they thought they had lost.

The service demonstrated an extremely compassionate awareness and understanding to end of life care. We received feedback from a Macmillan nurse who told us staff and management at Elite Social Care Limited had been exemplar.

The registered provider and management team worked extremely effectively and proactively together. We found they were excellent role models in the provision of high care standards. There was a positive leadership style which focussed upon dignity, independence and empowerment for both people supported by the service and staff.

The service worked in partnership with other organisations to make sure they followed current practice, providing a quality service and the people in their care were safe.

Rating at last inspection:

Good (13th August 2016)

Why we inspected:

This inspection was a scheduled comprehensive inspection based on the previous rating.

Follow up:

The next scheduled inspection will be in keeping with the overall rating. We will continue to monitor information we receive from and about the service. We may inspect sooner if we receive concerning information about the service.

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

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 remained safe

Details are in our Safe findings below.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service remained effective

Details are in our Effective findings below.

Is the service caring?

Outstanding ☆

The service had improved to outstanding

Details are in our Caring findings below.

Is the service responsive?

Outstanding ☆

The service had improved to outstanding

Details are in our Responsive findings below.

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding ☆

The service had improved to outstanding

Details are in our Responsive findings below.

Elite Social Care Limited

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:

One adult social care inspector carried out this inspection.

Service and service type:

This service is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes. Not everyone using this service receives regulated activity; CQC only inspects the service being received by people provided with 'personal care'; help with tasks related to personal hygiene and eating. Where they do we also take into account any wider social care provided.

The registered provider was an individual who managed the service on a day to day basis. Registered providers are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

Notice of inspection:

We gave the service 48 hours' notice of the inspection visit because it is small and the registered provider is often out of the office supporting staff or providing care. We needed to be sure they would be available to speak with us. We also requested to pre-arrange home visits to meet with people who used the service.

Inspection site visit activity started on 06 March 2019 and ended on 06 March 2019. We visited the office location on 06 March 2019 to see the registered provider and the management team; and to review care records, policies and procedures. Additionally, we visited two people, with their permission, at their homes. On the second day on 13 March 2019, we spoke with people supported by the service and staff by telephone.

What we did:

Prior to our inspection we looked at all the information we held about the service. This included notifications we had received from the registered provider, about incidents that affect the health, safety and welfare of people supported by the service and previous inspection reports. We also spoke with the contracts team at the local authority. We received no information of concern.

As part of the inspection we used information the provider sent us in the Provider Information Return. This is information we require providers to send us at least once annually to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We used a planning tool to collate all this evidence and information prior to visiting the service.

During the inspection we spoke with four members of staff and the registered provider. We also spoke with a health professional, four people who were supported by Elite Social Care Limited and two relatives. Following the inspection, we received positive feedback from a relative through our Share Your Experience facility on our website.

To gather information, we looked at a variety of records. This included care records related to three people who used the service. We also looked at other information related to the management of the service. We did this to ensure the management team had oversight of the service and they could respond to any concerns highlighted or lead Elite Social Care Limited in ongoing improvements.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

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

People were safe and protected from avoidable harm. Legal requirements were met.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- People told us risks were managed so that risks to them were reduced and they felt safe.
- There was a comprehensive collection of risk assessments. This was to identify the potential risk of accidents and harm to staff and people in their care. Risk assessments provided clear instructions for staff members when they delivered their support. Where potential risks had been identified action taken by the service had been recorded.
- The service had well-developed business and emergency protocols to ensure delivery of the service in any eventuality. We saw this had been used effectively during extreme weather conditions in 2018. With the use of the service's four-wheel drive vehicles they had been able to reach all the people they supported to provide much needed care and food provisions.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- We spoke with two relatives of people supported by the service. They told us their family members were safe in the care of staff who supported them. Comments received included, "I can go away knowing [relative] is totally safe and well cared for." And, "They keep [relative] safe which gives me peace of mind."
- The registered provider had safeguarding systems in place. Staff understood their responsibilities for keeping people safe and the processes for reporting any concerns they had about people's safety.

Staffing and recruitment

- We saw there were enough staff to support people and staffing levels were flexible should people's needs change.
- Reliability had been a key factor in people rating this service so highly. People told us this was a really important factor to feeling safe. One person told us, "They never let me down. They are here like clockwork come rain or shine. I can count on them."
- The service operated a system where a staff member was 'in reserve' each day to meet any shortfalls to cover staff sickness or emergencies. A member of staff told us, "This system is unique to Elite. It is brilliant. It allows us to organise ourselves, so we know in advance we might be called in; yet this ensures people are cared for with the least disruption. It works wonders."
- Records seen confirmed appropriate recruitment checks had been made to ensure staff were suitable and safe to work with vulnerable people.

Using medicines safely

- People told us they were happy with the support they received with their medicines. Where people were supported, we saw medicines were managed safely and in line with good practice guidance, "Managing medicines for people receiving social care in the community." (National Institute of Clinical Excellence,

2018.)

- Staff told us they had received regular training and competency checks to ensure they had the suitable skills to carry out the task safely. Records seen confirmed this.

Preventing and controlling infection

- The registered provider ensured infection control procedures were followed. Staff received training and regular audits were undertaken to ensure standards were maintained.
- Staff and people they supported were protected from potential infection when delivering personal care. Staff had access to protective personal equipment such as disposable gloves and aprons. Different colour gloves and aprons were available for food handling and for personal care tasks.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- We looked at how accidents and incidents were managed by the service. There had been few accidents. However, where they occurred any accident or 'near miss' was reviewed to see if lessons could be learnt and to reduce the risk of similar incidents.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people's care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence

People's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support; Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care;

- People praised the ways in which the service had improved the quality of their life. We were repeatedly told staff made a difference and promoted a good quality of life for people.
- We were told about one person who suffered from anxiety and had issues with their personal care and health. We visited this person with their permission at their home. The person was happy to see us and wanted to tell us how they had benefitted from the service. They told us, "I feel so good; not so depressed. Staff understand me, they know me well. I have structure. It is them that have made the difference. My life has improved so much."
- The service worked in partnership with other health care professionals such as GPs, Occupational Therapists, Falls Teams, Physiotherapists, Dieticians and Specialist Nurses. This ensured people supported by the service were cared for in a holistic manner and that all their needs were taken care of.

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet

- Some people required support with their meals. Care records showed people's dietary needs were assessed to ensure that enough information was gained so an individual care plan could be designed. Staff recorded what people ate and drank in the daily care logs to enable them to monitor their food and fluid intake.
- There was a strong emphasis placed upon the importance of eating and drinking. Staff had access to healthy food intake information and provided people with support to eat healthy options. One staff member told us, "It is important the person can make an informed decision."
- Staff understood the importance of ensuring people's dietary needs were met. One person told us they had high blood sugar levels and had been required to have medicine to control this twice daily. They told us staff had helped to reduce symptoms related to their health condition through eating more healthily. The person told us, "Staff encourage me with my diet and this controls my diabetes. I shop better, eat better and eat more regularly. They have been brilliant. I feel so much better. I only require medicine once daily now."

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law

- Each person was assessed before the service commenced. This enabled the management team to assess the person's needs and correctly identify any issues that needed to be addressed. We were given examples where referrals had been made so that the person was safely supported. For example, ensuring mobility aids were at the person's home before they were discharged from hospital.
- Consultation had taken place with each person, their relatives and professionals to ensure risks were identified and managed in line with good practice. The registered provider told us, "Every care package is highly individual, tailored for that person. We assess people's needs holistically and write care plans in a way

that encourages them to be empowered and have choices."

- We saw risk assessments had been formally reviewed regularly to identify if there had been any changes in people's risk and needs.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- The staff we spoke with were very complementary about the training and support they had received which fully equipped them for their role. One member of staff told us, "Best start to a job I have had. Elite is by far the most supportive company I have worked for."
- The registered provider was committed to ensuring people were supported by a highly trained and competent workforce. All the people and relatives we spoke with said staff were extremely knowledgeable. Feedback included, "They are all very capable". And, "Staff are definitely well trained here."
- People's needs were met because staff had training that was designed around each person's needs. As an example, we were told about one person the service supported who had a specialised Catheter which is not commonly used. This required specialised training to manage the care required. The registered provider accessed external training from a bowel and bladder clinic and worked with staff and the family to understand the training and support required for the person. We spoke with a family member of the person supported. They told us, "It's teamwork, I have every confidence in them without a shadow of a doubt. Without this catheter [relative] would have renal failure."

Ensuring consent to care and treatment in line with law and guidance

- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making particular decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that, as far as possible, people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.
- We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA.
- People we spoke with confirmed they were involved in making decisions about their care and their consent had been sought for how care was delivered. People told us they were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible.

Adapting service, design, decoration to meet people's needs

- The service was meeting the Accessible Information Standard. Care plans contained details of people's communication needs and how to meet them. We saw staff were familiar with British Sign Language and Makaton as appropriate to meet people's individual needs. Documents were available in a large print or easy read version.
- The service provided each person they supported with a document that showed photographs of all the management and staff from Elite Social Care Limited. People we spoke with told us this offered them comfort as they knew who would be visiting them, they could show their relatives who their carers were and could put a face to a name if they were phoning the office. One staff member told us, "It's a really good idea. One relative told us they can read the daily notes to see who has been and then can look at the photos and put a face to a name."

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect

People were truly respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity

- There was a strong person-centred vision within the service. Staff were motivated and committed to making a difference
- People were overwhelmingly positive about the service they received and said the service was exceptionally caring. One person told us, "The staff are the best in the world. From day one they put me first." Another person told us, "I couldn't be cared for any better. They treat me as a normal person. They are very good. I wouldn't have anyone else care for me."
- People told us staff were very thoughtful and considerate. People repeatedly told us that sometimes it was the small things and actions that made a difference. One person explained when making the bed in the morning, the carers made sure the bedsheets were flat and when they went to bed at night the covers had been 'turned down' ready for them. They told us, "The carers really are marvellous."
- One person we spoke with told us the service went above and beyond anything they expected. They explained that during the previous week, the call after theirs had been cancelled; the carer asked the person if they would like them to stay and help them with some spring cleaning. The person told us, "Oh I felt good. The sun was shining, the house looked lovely. It totally improved my mood."
- The service operates a robust quality assurance programme that ensures all people who received support saw a member of the management team on a weekly basis. Everyone also received a bi-monthly review with either the quality manager or the registered provider. These reviews didn't just look at the quality of the service but enquired after people's well-being.
- Relatives we spoke with confirmed this very positive view on the caring nature of Elite Social Care Limited. One relative told us, "[The provider] and all the staff are so caring. I can't recommend them highly enough. They don't just provide care for the person; they provide support for the family. They are a Godsend for me."
- Another relative told us after an accident at home they themselves needed care and support. This support was provided initially by another care agency. However, the agency did not understand the care needs of their family member who they lived with and received care and support from Elite Social Care Limited. The relative told us, "Elite were absolutely brilliant. They took over and provided the care and support that both me and my [family member] needed. Because they had been providing support to my [family member] they knew me from the very beginning. They knew my [family member] and knew how to support them emotionally whilst I recovered. My [family member's] care plan wasn't my care plan but together they looked after both of us. I can't thank them enough for their care and support. I would recommend Elite to anybody."

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care

- People were actively empowered to take control of their care packages and to lead the lives of their choosing. Care records we looked at contained evidence the person supported had been involved with and

were at the centre of developing their care plans.

- When assigning staff to care for, or support a person, the service matched the staff's skill sets with the person. This enabled the service to meet the unique requirements of the individual.
- One relative spoke highly of how staff communicated with their [family member]. The relative told us, "To say I am impressed is an understatement. Staff are so accommodating. They know them so well and make every effort to understand their needs and instructions."
- Information was available for people who used the service in different ways such as large print, braille, use of coloured paper or card, different font styles and downloadable to people's computers. They also arranged for information to be read out if the person required this.
- Information was readily available about local advocacy contacts, should someone wish to utilise this service. An advocate is an independent person, who will support people in making decisions, to ensure these are made in their best interests.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- An equality, diversity and human rights approach to supporting people's privacy and dignity was well embedded in the service. The results of last quarterly Client Survey conducted by the provider noted 100% that everyone felt their equality, diversity and human rights were respected.
- People's independence was actively promoted giving people greater confidence and boosting self-esteem. People expressed how their independence had been promoted by the input of the staff to the extent they had regained skills they thought they had lost. One person told us, "I can't believe how different my life is. I am spoilt."
- The relationships between staff and people who received support consistently demonstrated a high regard for people's dignity and respect. One relative we spoke with explained their family member was given as much independence as possible. They told us, "When they are out at a social event, the staff respect my [family member's] wishes. Staff get involved if my [family member] wants them to or the staff give them space so that [family member] can socialise without someone watching them."
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force in May 2018 and was designed to modernise laws that protect the personal information of individuals. During the inspection we noted details were provided within the service guide of how information would be collected and how it was used. We saw people's confidentiality was respected and people's care records were kept securely.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people's needs

Services were tailored to meet the needs of individuals and delivered to ensure flexibility, choice and continuity of care.

End of life care and support

- The service demonstrated an extremely compassionate awareness and understanding for people being supported at the end of their lives. The registered provider told us the service was committed to ensuring people who received palliative care were in full control of their choices of care. They explained a manager was allocated to support the staff and the family and was available twenty-four hours a day. The service also offered to relatives a free laying out service day or night for the deceased person. This involves washing, dressing and preparing their loved one before they leave their home.
- The service worked closely with Macmillan Cancer Support, district nurses, and the GP. We spoke with a Macmillan nurse who had been involved in one person's care. They told us the staff and management at Elite Social Care Limited had been, "Exemplar." They explained the communication and working together had been excellent and the care was, "Above anything expected."
- There were many examples, where at no cost, the registered provider and care staff went above and beyond to meet the person's last wishes. For example, one person dearly wished to attend a relative's wedding but was concerned they might not make it or look unwell on the day due to deterioration of their health. The person was supported to source and select an outfit for the day. On the wedding day staff helped the person to dress and style their hair. The registered provider told us, "On the day the client's elderly mother was so amazed, [the person] looked fabulous."
- We were also told of an example where, as a person's health deteriorated, staff member's shift patterns were reorganised. This was in respect of the person's wish for only specific staff to visit. After the person passed, two of their closest carers visited to ensure the body was laid out as the person had requested. This involved washing, dressing and preparing the person to leave their home.
- Following the inspection, we received positive feedback from a relative through our Share Your Experience facility on our website, 'Elite Social care provided amazing care for my elderly mother. The entire team were helpful, caring and considerate. They treated my mum as they would their own - with care, consideration, dignity and good humour. [The registered provider] was always available for me to talk to at any time of day or night. He supported me through the loss of mum and attended her funeral. His leadership of his team was exemplary and professional. Him and his team not only cared for mum but me as well - always there with support, help and a cup of tea!!'

Planning personalised care to meet people's needs, preferences, interests and give them choice and control

- There was a strong, visible and person-centred culture that was built on positive relationships with people. Staff knew people well and used this knowledge about the individual to involve them, their family, friends and others in their care and support plans, so they felt consulted, listened to and valued.
- The care files we saw were person centred and individualised documents. They contained detailed information, providing staff with clear guidance about people's specific needs and how these were to be

best met.

- The service had produced its own community booklet for people they support. The booklet contained contact information for social groups and advice support groups. The registered provider told us, "We pick up on people's interests This brings enjoyment and excitement to those that are socially isolated. We support them to find activities that have a real benefit and enrich people's lives." One relative told us their family member had a busy social life, "They have things planned most days, they have independence, confidence and self-esteem. It is lovely and reassuring to see them so happy."
- People were empowered to have as much control and independence as possible. Care records we saw highlighted the positive impact this service has had on each person.
- The dreams and goals for one person were to be employed and live on their own. The service had supported the person with life skills such as cooking, handling money and using public transport. This had taken years to develop, however the person was able now to safely manage and organise their own life independently. The person has secured voluntary work and was being supported to meet with appropriate housing departments to live independently. A relative told us, "Elite have worked so hard for [family member]. None of this would have been possible without their constant support and mentoring. Anything is possible."

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- There were processes in place to ensure all complaints would be dealt with appropriately. The registered provider told us they used issues, complaints or concerns as a positive experience and learning opportunity to improve the service.
- Everyone we spoke with told us they were aware of the complaints procedure and how to complain but had never made any complaints, as they had never had any reason to do so. They said however, should they have any reason to complain they believed they would be acted upon swiftly and managed appropriately.

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

Service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the service culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

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

- The management team were excellent role models in the provision of high care standards. We found there was a positive leadership style which focussed upon dignity, independence and empowerment for both people supported by the service and staff. A health professional we spoke with told us the team were well led and appeared highly motivated to care to the best of their ability.
- Staff told us the positive leadership style resulted in high staff morale and low staff turnover. One staff member told us, "Working for Elite is amazing. I have never had a boss like it; support wise, genuinely outstanding. I love my job, we are there for the people we support and if I can help them be the best they can, to be happy and smile; then I know I have done my job."
- The management team were hands on, visible, available for support and led their staff team by example. The registered provider told us every day a manager works 'in the field' to ensure quality is maintained. People who used the service confirmed this was the case. One person supported by the service told us, "There is nothing [the registered provider] will not do himself. He leads by example." A relative told us, "[The registered provider] is a lovely man, perfect for the job he does." Another relative told us, "I respect everything they do. They get the best for us."
- The management team were aware of their regulatory responsibilities to report certain incidents and events to the Care Quality Commission. We received notifications as appropriate.
- Ratings from the previous inspection were displayed at the service.

Planning and promoting person-centred, high-quality care and support with openness; and how the provider understands and acts on their duty of candour responsibility

- There was a well understood, articulated person-centred culture that resulted in people's experience of receiving care consistently exceeding their expectations.
- One relative told us, "The whole team are very friendly and very open. We can talk to them and them to us, for us to get the best for [relative]. I can't recommend them highly enough."
- We saw the management team were passionate about improving people's wellbeing and this was reflected in everything they did. They demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of the needs and the well-being of people they supported and strived to give them the best possible care and support. One person who used the service told us, "They know me so well and through their care and support I can't believe how different my life is."

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

- The registered provider told us, "Elite embrace the values of respect, caring and the rights of the staff as well as the people they support. We understand the importance of a balanced work and home life, ensuring staff are not disturbed in their home time. We operate a 'reserve system' to cover staff shortfalls or to cover emergencies. We believe if we can offer support for staff to have quality time and family time then when they are at work they are engaged and empowered to work together and provide the best possible care for the people we support."
- Staff told us they felt exceptionally supported by the registered manager and management team. One member of staff told us, "I would never work anywhere else, I wouldn't get what I get here. I feel supported, involved and valued."
- The registered manager continued to actively seek and act upon the views of people they supported. The service had sought the views of people they support through satisfaction surveys. The last quarterly Client Survey conducted by the provider gave a 100% satisfaction rating for the service, with everyone recording they would recommend the service to other people.
- People's wishes were continually respected, and care was re-arranged around people's preferences and requirements. People told us they were encouraged to comment on care plans and feedback to the management team through regular review meetings. People also told us they could simply speak with the staff or management team if there was anything they wished to discuss or change.

Continuous learning and improving care

- The management team completed a range of quality audits to ensure they provided an efficient service. These for example included, medication, care records and spot checks. When concerns were identified, staff were consulted with and action taken. This meant improvements could be made to continue to evolve and provide a good service for people.
- There was a strong emphasis on continuous improvement. The views and experiences of people who used the service and relatives were at the core of service development. There was a tangible desire to continuously drive standards in people's care. The provider had introduced bi-monthly health and well-being reviews. The quality assurance manager explained these reviews highlight where the service can focus to make a difference; real improvement to someone's well-being.
- For example, the bi-monthly review for one person had highlighted they 'wanted to chat more.' The quality manager explained, "We are visitors in people's homes. Sometimes we can be the only person they see in a day. It can be vital for people to have conversation and banter to overcome isolation." The management team and staff worked together cohesively to make this a reality for the person. The office manager maintained a system which recorded what actions had been taken in response and monitored if there had been a positive impact on the person. We saw the person now rated the service as outstanding. This rating had been maintained for over a year demonstrating where improvements were made for the benefit of people supported by the service; the improvements were sustained.

Working in partnership with others

- The service worked in partnership with other organisations to make sure they followed current practice, providing a quality service and the people in their care were safe. We saw the registered provider had liaised with health care professionals and specialist teams to ensure timely referrals were made and where necessary additional support had been sought. This ensured a multi-disciplinary approach had been taken to support care provision for people in their care.
- A health professional told us the service worked exceptionally well with them to ensure people's needs were met. They told us communication with the registered provider and staff at Elite Social Care Limited was excellent.