

Better Home Care Services Limited

Lifted

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service effective?

Good ●

Is the service caring?

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Lifted is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes. It provides a service to younger disabled adults and older people, some living with dementia. 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. Where they do we also consider any wider social care provided.

At the time of the inspection the provider was supporting 17 people across London and Essex, with 13 people receiving personal care.

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

People and their relatives were positive about the caring and compassionate attitude of the whole staff team. One person said, "My carer is amazing and I can't praise them enough. They are a great person to have in the care industry and they have given me great support."

Lifted is a tech enabled domiciliary care agency and they have developed their own app which monitors care visits and enables people and their relatives to get real time updates on the care and support provided. It operated a paper free office where files are digital and stored online, which is secure and encrypted.

Relatives were confident that the provider was keeping their family members safe. Relatives told us the provider's app gave them reassurances that care visits had been completed and they could check up to date wellness information about the most recent visit.

People and their relatives felt the service was personal and the provider listened to them about their care and support needs. We received positive feedback about how accommodating and flexible the service was.

People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible. The policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

People and their relatives were positive about the management of the service and felt any issues would be listened to and dealt with appropriately. Feedback confirmed people and their relatives felt comfortable approaching the management team if they had any concerns.

People were supported by a motivated staff team who felt valued and appreciated by the provider. Staff spoke positively about the support they received and the working environment which they felt promoted people's and their own health and wellbeing.

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

Rating at last inspection

The service was registered with us on 14 November 2018 and this is the first inspection.

Why we inspected

This was a planned inspection based on the registration date of the service.

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?

The service was safe.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Good ●

Is the service effective?

The service was effective.

Details are in our effective findings below.

Good ●

Is the service caring?

The service was caring.

Details are in our caring findings below.

Good ●

Is the service responsive?

The service was responsive.

Details are in our responsive findings below.

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

The service was well-led.

Details are in our well-led findings below.

Good ●

Lifted

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. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

Inspection team

The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

Service and service type

Lifted is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own homes.

The service did not have a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. A registered manager is a person who is legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided. At the time of the inspection the new manager, who had started in September 2019, was in the process of completing their registered manager application.

Notice of inspection

We gave the provider three days' notice because we needed to ensure somebody would be available to assist us with the inspection.

Inspection activity started on 21 October and ended on 1 November 2019. We visited the office location on 23 and 24 October 2019 to see the senior management team, manager, office staff and to review care records and policies and procedures. We made calls to people and their relatives between 21 October and 1 November 2019.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. This included any significant incidents that occurred at the service. The provider was not asked to complete a provider information return prior to this inspection. This is information we require providers to send us to give some

key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make. We took this into account when we inspected the service and made the judgements in this report. We spoke with two people who used the service and two relatives for their experiences of the service they received. We used all of this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We reviewed a range of records. This included four people's care records and five staff files in relation to recruitment, training and supervision. We also reviewed records related to the management of the service, which included quality assurance audits, complaints, incidents and accidents and minutes of team meetings. We also had a demonstration of how the provider's app worked, including how care workers documented shifts, how alerts were received and managed and how people and their relatives could communicate with the office through the app.

We spoke with seven members of staff. This included the manager, the chief executive officer and the nominated individual. The nominated individual is responsible for supervising the management of the service on behalf of the provider. We also spoke with the operations analyst, the customer success analyst and two care workers.

After the inspection

We made further calls to people and spoke with one more person who used the service and a further three relatives. We also spoke with a further four care workers.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

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

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

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- The staff team had a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and systems were in place to ensure any concerns were followed up. Staff were very confident any concerns raised would be dealt with immediately by the management team.
- People and their relatives told us they felt safe using the service and having staff in their home. Comments included, "As I live on my own, it is nice to know somebody is coming and it gives me great peace of mind" and "It is safe yes, there are definitely no trust issues."
- Staff completed safeguarding training to ensure people were protected from avoidable harm. The provider had followed recommendations from an external audit to ensure staff had access to guidelines and advice about safeguarding, which had been sent out to care workers.
- We received positive feedback from people and their relatives about how the support with finances was managed. One relative told us their family member had offered money to the care worker, however they refused this and reported it to the relative and the office. They added, "From the beginning, they have been very trustworthy."

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Risks to people's health and wellbeing had been assessed in detail before the start of the service. Information was in place for risks related to people's mobility, with a separate falls risk assessment being completed with guidance for staff to support people safely.
- Care workers were knowledgeable about the risks to people they supported and explained how they managed them to keep people safe. They told us they had access to detailed information about people's conditions within the app and would always be able to speak with the office staff if they needed any further advice.
- Internal and external environmental risk assessments were also completed during the initial assessment. It included access and security of the property, care worker safety and fire risks. It also included important information about the location of utilities mains supply points. One relative said, "They checked the flat, it was very thorough, checked for fire safety. They looked around to make sure it was safe for their staff."

Staffing and recruitment

- There were systems in place to monitor staff and ensure calls were completed. The provider had developed their own 'Lifted' app, where care workers checked in and out of their visits through the app on their phone to confirm attendance. This was monitored from the office and staff received an alert if a care worker had not checked in for a call. The operations analyst demonstrated how this was monitored and we saw how alerts were received and followed up. We saw care workers could not check in 30 minutes before a call or if they were not in the location area. If this happened, the office would be alerted.

- We received positive feedback from people and their relatives about timekeeping and being updated if there were any changes to the visit time. One person said, "They are always on time and always here with me."
- We also received positive feedback about the app and how it reassured relatives who did not live with their family members. One relative said, "I get a message to say that the carer has arrived and I can monitor the call and review the visit."
- The provider followed safer recruitment procedures to ensure staff were suitable to work with people who used the service. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for staff had been completed at the time of recruitment along with appropriate references and identity documents, with any gaps in employment history being discussed during the interview. The DBS helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and helps prevent unsuitable people from working with people who use care and support services.

Using medicines safely

- There were procedures in place to ensure people received their medicines safely and staff completed training during their induction before supporting people independently. At the time of the inspection the provider was only supporting three people with their medicines.
- Medicines assessments were completed before the service started with information about the level of support needed and whether any relatives were responsible for this. Samples of medicine administration records (MARs) for two people had been completed correctly and checks were in place which picked up any errors.
- Staff told us checks were completed which helped to ensure any errors were reduced or picked up quickly. We saw care workers were unable to checkout of their care visit if the medicines task had not been completed in the app. This helped to ensure people received their medicines at each visit. We saw any concerns with the recording of medicines, such as gaps in MARs, were followed up with staff.

Preventing and controlling infection

- There was an infection control policy in place and staff completed infection control and food hygiene training. Spot checks recorded if care workers were wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), washed their hands and followed safe practices. One care worker told us they were reminded about wearing gloves during a recent spot check. Staff confirmed they could pick up PPE from the office and that it was always available.
- Information was recorded in people's care records if there were any specific guidelines to follow. For example, one person had asked for care workers to wear shoe covers when in their home. Weekly reminders were also sent out to staff which reminded them about hygiene standards and disposing of waste in an appropriate manner. One person said, "They always wash up, tidy up, clean the worktops and leave everything how I want."

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- There were procedures in place for the reporting of any incidents and accidents across the service and evidence the provider used this as a learning experience. Where incident forms had been completed, we saw they had been followed up with supervisions with the staff member.
- The management team held quarterly lessons learnt meetings to discuss any concerns, what the root cause was and what impact it had on the service. We also saw the provider had been proactive in responding to feedback from people and discussing this across the staff team.

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.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated Good. This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

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

- People had been assessed before they used the service or when their health needs changed. Where one person's needs had changed since their assessment, we saw the provider had scheduled a reassessment of their needs after care workers had highlighted a change in their health.
- People and their relatives spoke positively about the detailed initial assessment process. One relative said, "They came out for the assessment and spent a long time with us, getting to know us face to face and what we needed. It went well."
- The provider followed guidance from The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to ensure best practice was followed across the service and when implementing key policies and procedures.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Staff completed an induction and shadowed regular care workers before they first started. Staff felt it gave them a good insight into working for the service and understanding the support people needed.
- The training programme for new staff was focused around the Care Certificate, which was introduced during the induction. This involved both practical and online training, with observations in the process of being carried out by a newly recruited assessor. The Care Certificate sets the standard for the fundamental skills and knowledge expected from staff within a care environment.
- Staff were positive about the content of the training and how it had been presented to them. One care worker said, "It was very detailed and we carried out a lot of role plays. We could ask questions and looked at a lot of scenarios."
- Staff received one to one supervision to support them in their role. Supervision focused on staff wellbeing, strengths and areas of improvement and any concerns with people's health or care needs. Staff also confirmed their calls were answered or returned if they needed any further advice or support.

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

- People were supported to eat and drink if this was part of their agreed care plan and the service monitored people's nutrition. People's records had instructions about what support was required, including preferred foods, nutritional risks, allergies and any cultural or medical requirements.
- We saw a recent compliment from a relative who gave positive feedback how their family member had not lost any weight and it was due to the support and encouragement of the care workers. They added, 'I'd really like to thank them for this.'
- We saw care workers were unable to checkout of their care visit if information about people's appetite had not been completed in the app. Staff also checked if people had enough food and drink in their home during routine spot checks.

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

- The provider effectively monitored people's wellbeing and supported people to access healthcare services. Care workers had to complete a wellness check through the app at each visit. It recorded people's nutrition and hydration, their mood, how they slept, if they had been in any pain and if they had been to the toilet. We saw this data was monitored which highlighted any changes in people's wellbeing.
- Relatives told us how helpful this information could be. One added, "When I log in I can see what has happened and how they are feeling. It works well, but if there is anything urgent they will always call."
- One person told us how their care worker supported them to regular healthcare appointments. Another person said, "If ever I've not been well, they always check on me and made sure I am OK or if I need the GP. It is good to know they monitor my health."
- Samples of daily records showed when staff noticed any changes in people's health and wellbeing, these issues were reported and followed up with people's relatives and any relevant health and social care professionals.

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.

When people receive care and treatment in their own homes an application must be made to the Court of Protection for them to authorise people to be deprived of their liberty. We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA.

- The provider followed best practice in how they recorded people's consent to the care and treatment they received. Mental capacity assessments were completed with guidance on how to complete them. Assessments confirmed if people needed support making decisions in their best interests and whether relatives or representatives were involved.
- Staff completed training on the MCA during their induction and spot checks ensured people's consent was sought for each care task. One care worker said, "It is important people are involved in all decisions, even simple things like what they want to wear or want to eat. We always give options. If we have any concerns about people's capacity, we report it to the office."
- As people's relatives were able to access the app to review the care and support provided, an assistive technology policy was in place and this was discussed with people and their families to ensure people consented to this.

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.

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated Good. This meant people were supported and treated with dignity and respect; and involved as partners in their care.

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

- People and their relatives spoke positively about the kind and caring nature of the staff and the positive relationships that had developed. Comments included, "The carers are amazing. You can see they are very passionate and it isn't just a job for them" and "We are absolutely very happy with the carers, 100%. We feel very lucky to have them and they've certainly gone above and beyond."
- One relative spoke in detail about the wonderful relationship their care worker had developed with their family member and how reassuring it was for the family. They added, "They are very patient and understanding, I am so impressed."
- People and their relatives told us they had regular care workers and where possible, were introduced to new staff before they started working. One person told us how they could access care worker profiles through the app which helped to give them a better understanding. They added, "I find it very important, I get to know who is coming and it helps to build a conversation."
- As the provider had minimum one hour visits, care workers told us this helped to give them more time to build up better relationships with people. One care worker told us they were always briefed about the people they supported which was helpful when they started. They added, "We know some people can be quite isolated, so the more we see them and spend time with them, the more relaxed they will be."

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

- People and their relatives were involved in making decisions about their care and support at the time of their assessment. People's records had information about who should be involved with any reviews or decisions about people's care. One person said, "I've been fully involved throughout the whole process and it is very much client led. They make it clear they are here to help you."
- We received positive feedback about the app and how a 'live chat' function helped to keep people and their relatives involved and updated in their care. One person said, "The best part is it gives me the freedom to be involved, see who is coming, what the carer has recorded." A relative said, "I find it very helpful. I can view the daily report and can highlight if anything needs to be changed. It saves having to ring the office if I haven't got time."

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- Care workers had a good understanding about the importance of respecting people's privacy and dignity and it had been covered during their induction. Spot checks also covered whether staff were respectful and promoted people's independence.
- People and their relatives told us staff were respectful when they were in their home and helped to maintain their independence. One person said, "They don't try and take over. I've felt I have had so much of

my independence back purely because of Lifted, which has been really helpful."

- One relative gave positive feedback about the dignified way the care worker supported their family member during personal care. They added, "They really understand this and we are very happy." We also saw samples of positive feedback that had been received through the app, with one person's comment highlighting their care visit was respectful, discreet and sensitive to their needs.

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

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

This is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated Good. This meant people's needs were met through good organisation and delivery.

Planning personalised care to ensure people have choice and control and to meet their needs and preferences

- The provider spent time with people and their relatives during their initial assessment to get a good understanding about how people wanted to be supported. Comments included, "They asked what I wanted, it was led by me and the care plan was designed around this and what I could do" and "After the detailed assessment, we were able to check it and sign it off to make sure it included everything. They were brilliant."
- People and their relatives told us how important it was for the care to be flexible. One person said, "They are flexible to my needs and they really understand that things happen in life and try to accommodate me." Another person told us how the support they received was able to be reviewed due to changes in their wellbeing, which they found very helpful. One relative said, "They have really helped out when we needed them."
- People and their relatives told us how the personalised initial assessment had given staff important information about their health conditions, but also about their life histories, likes and interests and what they hoped to achieve from the care they received. One relative said, "They have a true understanding of their needs and I am highly impressed with the rapport they have built up." A compliment from a relative stated, 'By engaging with [family member], talking about their younger days and taking part in dancing, it has brought them to a much brighter place.'
- The provider's app also helped people and their relatives have control over their care and feedback confirmed it had a positive impact on their experience. One relative told us how they could use the 'live chat' function to change the time of a visit to accommodate a hospital appointment. One relative said, "Their technology allows another relative who lives overseas to be as much in touch as I am with my [family member's] care."

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 onwards all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). The standard was introduced to make sure people are given information in a way they can understand. The standard applies to all people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss and in some circumstances to their carers.

- People's preferred communication methods were discussed during their assessment, with information for staff to be able to communicate with them more effectively. We saw office staff also had regular discussions with people to ensure information was fully explained to them.
- Documents were available in people's preferred formats and could be made available in other languages upon request. For example, one person requested paper copies of their invoice by post each month, while a relative requested weekly invoices via email.

Supporting people to develop and maintain relationships to avoid social isolation; support to follow interests and to take part in activities that are socially and culturally relevant to them

- People received companionship and support to access the local community or activities of interest if this was part of their agreed care. The provider also discussed people's religious and cultural needs and if any support was needed. One relative told us their care worker supported their family member to their local place of worship.
- One person told us they were supported to go swimming each week. A relative told us how their care worker always encouraged their family member to go out for walk, and was good at persuading them, even if they refused. Samples of daily records showed the care worker was regularly encouraging the person and spending time having conversations with them.
- Where one person had had a close family bereavement, we saw information for staff to monitor their moods and share a meal with them to make sure they were not alone. We spoke with this person's relative who praised the staff for the support and also taking their family member out for a meal to help reduce their social isolation.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- There was an accessible complaints procedure in place. Information was given to people and their relatives in a client home folder when they started using the service about how they could complain. It encouraged people to provide feedback about the service they received.
- A complaints log was in place and any concerns, no matter how small, were recorded and followed up appropriately. People and their relatives told us the whole staff team were approachable and would feel comfortable raising any issues.
- People and their relatives were positive with how any issues they highlighted had been managed. Comments included, "We highlighted some care staff might not be suitable and they responded really well and made the changes" and "They listened to initial feedback and took this into consideration, which gives me confidence."
- People and their relatives were able to rate their care visit from one to five through the app. Any feedback that was below a rating of three would create an alert to the staff team to follow it up. Complaints were also reviewed weekly at team meetings to identify any trends.

End of life care and support

- People were not being supported with end of life care at the time of the inspection. The manager told us they were able to provide training and support to the staff team if they started to support people at this stage of their life.
- The provider had an advanced care planning policy in place and told us this would be discussed with people and their relatives if appropriate. People's records had information about their Do not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) status which was completed during the initial assessment.

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 is the first inspection for this newly registered service. This key question has been rated Good. 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

- The provider strived to ensure people and their relatives were the main focus of the service and were dedicated to improving the care and support people received. Comments included, "They have been absolutely brilliant and the support has been great. We couldn't live without them", "They all do an amazing job and there is no way I'd be wanting to change" and "They make it very personal, rather than feeling like a business, which is really nice."
- Although the manager had only been in post since September 2019, we received positive feedback about their supportive and understanding attitude. One relative said, "She has been very open, encouraging and supportive and listened to our views, appreciating this is an emotional experience for us as a family. I've never had this level of support before."
- Staff we spoke with were positive about the culture of the service and the commitment of the management and executive team. Comments included, "The best thing is their passion. Anything is possible with the drive they have", "They have changed my opinion of the care industry as it has been a great experience here" and "They want to make sure that people are getting 110% care."
- Where some people and their relatives were not using all functions available through the provider's app, the staff team ensured their service was still inclusive and there was regular contact with calls and home visits to ensure they were happy with the care they received. The manager added, "We are combining care and technology and although there are challenges, we are determined to work to be pioneers in care and technology and provide quality care."

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

- The manager was aware of their regulatory responsibilities regarding notifiable incidents. Since they had started in September 2019, they felt confident with the staff team being able to meet people's needs and provide a good level of care.
- Weekly reminders were sent to the care staff to remind them about their key responsibilities. This included guidelines with completing people's medicines records, guidelines when dealing with emergencies and general standards when working in people's homes.
- The provider's app also ensured that care workers were unable to complete their visit unless the tasks that had to be carried out were completed and an alert would be sent to office based staff monitoring the service.

Continuous learning and improving care

- There were systems in place to regularly monitor the service and ensure people were happy with their care. Weekly management meetings discussed and reviewed any issues or complaints, staffing matters and any updates to the app.
- Regular audits across the service identified any areas of improvement and we saw this was shared across the staff team with weekly updates. Unannounced spot checks were carried out to ensure people were receiving the care they needed.
- The provider had further oversight with both internal and external quality assurance assessments that had been designed in line with the CQC's inspection methodology. We saw actions had been implemented from the external visit in September 2019.
- The provider also used feedback to help develop and regularly update and improve their app to help monitor and improve the quality of care. We saw they had been proactive in responding to feedback about punctuality, which led to notifications being sent through the app to remind care workers about their shifts. Comments from care workers about the app included, "Having this app is definitely the way forward and it is very clear what to do" and "It's the best thing since sliced bread."

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

- The provider sought people and their relatives' views about the care and support received through regular reviews over the phone and through the app, including instant feedback through the app. One person said, "Once the visit is complete, I can rate and comment about it. I really like it and it is really easy to use, especially if I have had a good experience."
- People's responses were positive and we saw the provider take appropriate action in relation to any improvements that were highlighted. There were also 10 reviews online on a consumer review website which had all been rated as excellent. A recent comment in October 2019 stated, 'Lifted is an amazing care company. I would definitely recommend Lifted to my friends and family.'
- Staff praised the support they received and spoke positively about their experience working for the provider. Comments included, "I felt immediately involved and they were extremely welcoming. I felt part of them straight away and feel valued, respected and fully supported" and "They make us feel valued and have a real emphasis on us and that we are happy."
- Care staff also told us how their achievements were recognised by having a 'Care worker of the week' award, where they were taken for lunch with one of the directors. One care worker who had experienced this added, "I have never felt so appreciated. They are always thanking us for the work we do."

Working in partnership with others

- The provider had worked to create links with a national charity that helped to support care workers and we saw this had been shared across the staff team. They had also created links with the CQC policy team to share their ideas about innovating the home care sector.
- Where necessary, the provider worked with health and social care professionals to seek advice and guidance related to people's health concerns.
- The provider shared recent published newspaper articles that highlighted Lifted had been successful in securing £1.5million in funding in a bid to transform the care sector.

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

- The manager had a good understanding of their responsibilities of making sure they were open and honest with people and their relatives. We saw they had acknowledged and apologised if there had been issues that affected the service.

- The customer success analyst said, "It is important to have a transparent and open learning culture and demonstrate a willingness to listen to help us understand what quality care looks like."