

Elstree Home Care Ltd

Elstree Home Care (Watford)

Inspection report

Suite 1 and 2, First Floor, Unit 1a Sandown Industrial
Estate
Sandown Road Industrial Estate
Watford
WD24 7UB

Tel: 01923223331

Website: www.elstreehomecare.co.uk/

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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

Elstree Home Care (Watford) is a domiciliary care service providing personal care for people living in the community. At the time of our inspection there were 10 people receiving personal care.

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.

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

People were safe and protected from avoidable harm because staff knew how to identify and report any concerns relating to the risk of abuse. Risks to people's health, safety and well-being were assessed and measures developed to remove or reduce the risks. People were supported by staff who had been safely recruited.

People's medicines were managed safely. Staff received appropriate training and had their competency assessed to help ensure they were sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable to safely administer medicines. Staff had received training in infection control practices and personal protective equipment was provided for them. The management team took appropriate action following any incidents and learning was shared with the staff team.

Before care delivery started assessments were completed to make sure people's needs could be met. Staff received training and support to enable them to carry out their roles effectively.

Management and staff knew people well and were able to promptly identify when people's needs changed, and they sought professional advice appropriately. People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

People and relatives praised the kind and caring nature of the staff team. People received consistent care from a small team of staff. People knew about their care plans and could decide what care and support they needed. People were confident to raise any concerns with the management team. Everyone we spoke with during this inspection was satisfied with the care and support they received.

The management team was committed to providing a high standard of care to the people they supported as well as the staff team and understood their responsibilities under the Duty of Candour. People, their relatives and staff spoke highly of the management team and told us they were always available and supportive.

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

This service was registered with us on 13 April 2021 and this is the first inspection.

Why we inspected

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

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service, which will help inform when we next inspect.

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 effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

Details are in our effective findings below.

Is the service caring?

Good ●

The service was caring.

Details are in our caring findings below.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

Details are in our responsive findings below.

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

The service was Well-led

Details are in our Well-led findings below.

Elstree Home Care (Watford)

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

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

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

Inspection team

This inspection was undertaken by one inspector.

Service and service type

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

Registered Manager

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

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

Notice of inspection

This inspection was unannounced.

Inspection activity started on 06 June 2022 and ended on 14 June 2022.

What we did before inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since initial registration. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR). This is information providers are required to send us annually with key information about their service, what they do well, and improvements they plan to make. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We received feedback from relatives of six people who used the service about their experience of the care provided. We received feedback from two care staff, two external health professionals and we had a video call with the registered manager on 13 June 2022. We reviewed a range of records relating to the management of the service, including a care plan and risk assessments, staff training records, evidence of monitoring staff practice and medication competencies.

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 of 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 provider had robust and effective systems to help protect people from the risk of harm or abuse and understood their responsibilities to safeguard people from abuse.
- Staff received training and were clear about how they would report any concerns both internally to the provider and externally to the safeguarding authorities. A staff member told us, "Whenever I raise any concerns about people I support there is always a quick response from the management team and they see to it the concerns are attended to promptly."
- People and their relatives told us staff provided safe care for people. One relative told us, "[Person] has formed good relationships with the staff and they do everything they can to make [person] feel comfortable and safe. Another relative said, "I had massive concerns of having strangers looking after [person] in their own home. Elstree Home Care have proved my fears to be unfounded and have given me confidence to be able to work and live my life whilst I know [person] is in safe, competent hands. It has given [person] the ability to live their life in their own home where they wanted to be."

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- Risks to people's health, safety and well-being were assessed and a care package was developed to remove or reduce the risks. Risk assessments enabled people to stay as independent as possible within the confines of their health needs.
- The management team helped ensure people received support in the event of an emergency. For example, they provided a 24 hour on-call service and provided emergency cover if needed for staff sickness or other such events.
- Relatives were confident staff managed incidents or accidents well. A staff member shared an example where they had arrived at a person's home to find them in some distress. The staff member said, just one call to the office and help was arranged, family contacted, and a health professional visited to provide the support needed. The staff member said it was a smooth process and very supportive approach for both the staff and the people using the service.

Staffing and recruitment

- People's relatives felt there were enough staff available to meet people's care needs. They told us there had not been any missed care calls and all feedback indicated staff provided people's care within agreed timeframes. A staff member told us, "The management see to it we are never short staff in Elstree Home Care (Watford). We never missed any of our calls and we are always punctual."
- One relative told us, "The staff don't appear at all rushed and take time to meet [person's] needs." Another relative said, "In the last year they (staff) have visited three times a day every day and only been late three times. On all three occasions they have called to advise they will be late." The relative went on to say,

"Through COVID-19 times I feel this was exceptional service and outstanding duty of care."

- The registered manager operated effective recruitment procedures; appropriate checks were undertaken to help ensure staff were suitable to work at the service. Criminal record checks and satisfactory references had been obtained for all staff before they worked with people independently.
- Newly recruited staff were personally introduced to people who used the service by the management team. A relative told us, "[Person] has a core of two regular staff and then two others as back up. [Person] has been introduced to everyone and newly recruited staff have shadowed the regular staff. [Person] has a good rapport with them."

Using medicines safely

- Staff received the training necessary to support them to safely administer people's medicines. The management team undertook competency assessments once staff had completed their training to ensure safe practice.
- Staff supported some people with administering their medicines and just prompted others to take theirs as needed. A relative shared with us, "They (staff member) know all [person's] medicines and are confident in administering them."

Preventing and controlling infection

- Staff were provided with training and personal protective equipment (PPE) including gloves and aprons to help promote effective infection control. Practice in this area was monitored by the management team during spot checks. A staff member said they felt the management team had dealt with the pandemic very professionally despite the difficult time it had presented for all. One staff member said, "During the pandemic and even afterwards we were given training regularly to keep ourselves safe and also training was given from time to time by the management on how important it is to use our PPE when we give care."
- People and their relatives told us care staff promoted good hygiene practices.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The provider took appropriate actions in response to any concerns and learning was shared with staff by a variety of means including updates, face to face meetings, group supervisions and team meetings.

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's needs were assessed before they started to use the service. Assessments included people's support needs and their individual preferences. These assessments formed the basis of people's care plans and risk assessments.
- People's relatives praised the staff team for the effective care and support they delivered.
- The staff team told us the time allocated for the care visits was appropriate to meet people's needs. One staff member said, "The time allocated to each person is right and I don't have to rush to do my job."

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Staff received training in areas including safeguarding, moving and handling, advanced dementia, fire safety and the Mental Capacity Act. Staff had a good understanding of these topics; however, we noted some refresher training was overdue. The provider told us they had a plan in place to help ensure staff training was up to date by the end of June 2022.
- A staff member told us they received training to meet people's specific health and care needs as the need arose. One staff member told us, "When a new client comes along and has a condition that is new, the training for that particular condition is given. Understanding diabetes is one example of the training we have received to support a new client with the condition."
- Staff received supervision and competency observations to help ensure they had the knowledge to perform their job roles. Staff told us they enjoyed good support from the management team. A staff member told us, "There is great support from the management, there is good training that makes one feel comfortable and confident carrying out the role."
- Inductions for new staff were thorough and their knowledge was tested during shadow shifts prior to the staff member working with people unsupervised.
- People and their relatives praised the staff team for their skills, knowledge and compassion

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

- People's dietary needs and requirements were identified in their care plans and staff had a good understanding of how to support people with these.
- Staff shared their understanding of the need to encourage people to take food and fluids. One staff member told us, "For example taking the time to lay out food beautifully just to encourage a client to eat the food."

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

- The management and staff team worked well with external professionals for the benefit of people who used the service. A relative said, "Staff always advise of any issues with [person's] condition and whether we should contact the GP, District Nurses, etc." Another relative told us, "Staff skills in detection of early signs of concern has stopped issues before they progressed. They have asked me to call GP and this has been justified and called 999 and again been justified."
- Information was shared with other agencies if people needed to access other services such as hospitals.
- The management team told us they changed the times people received their support so they could support them to health appointments if this was the person's choice.

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 MCA 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.

People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA. 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.

- People and relatives told us staff always asked for consent when supporting them. People had been asked for their consent to be supported in line with their individual care plans and risk assessments.
- Staff received training in the Mental Capacity Act and had a good understanding of how to put this in to practice.

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

- The management team were passionate about providing people with the care they needed, how they needed it, and in the best possible way for the individual. Staff told us, "Working with colleagues who truly care, are compassionate and competent at what they do. Makes me proud to be part of such a team at Elstree Home Care."
- Staff had a good understanding of the people they supported. Staff took time to get to know people's individual likes and dislikes, their pasts and interests and incorporated these into their care. A staff member said, "We forge great relationships with both families and people using the service. This is because we are placed mostly with the same people and we get to know them really well."
- People and their relatives praised the staff team for the care and support they provided. A relative told us, "Staff are absolutely amazingly caring and courteous, within minutes of arriving they often have [person] laughing and in a much better frame of mind than before they arrived."

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

- People's care plans showed they were consulted about changes to their care and these were documented. Regular reviews of people's support involving people, their relatives and other professionals took place.
- People and their relatives told us they were always involved in any decisions about their care.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- People and their relatives said staff promoted people's privacy, dignity and independence. Staff told us how people were supported to maintain their dignity and increase their independence. For example, with the right support a person had reduced to two daily visits from three because they had grown in stamina and strength and were able to do some of their care safely by themselves. Staff told us, "The joy this has brought [person] is lovely to see." The person felt useful and more independent.

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

- People received care to meet their individual needs and preferences.
- People's care was adapted to meet their changing needs. For example, where people began to regain some of their mobility the support was amended to help maximise independence.
- Care plans were detailed with regards to people's preferences, likes and dislikes. This meant staff had the information available to help ensure people received consistent care that met their individual needs.

Meeting people's communication needs

Since 2016 all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard. The Accessible Information Standard tells organisations what they have to do to help ensure people with a disability or sensory loss, and in some circumstances, their carers, get information in a way they can understand it. It also says people should get the support they need in relation to communication.

- The provider had not yet had the need to make information available in different formats but said they would do so should the need arise. We were given an example where a person with partial sight was supported by staff using a white board to help communicate.

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

- Staff supported people to maintain contact with their friends and families during periods where COVID-19 restrictions meant they could not freely see people. The registered manager acknowledged record keeping did not reflect this support provided and took this forward as a learning point.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- The provider had a complaints and compliments policy, people and their relatives told us they had a copy of the policy in their homes to access if needed. People and their relatives told us they had not had the need to raise any complaints, but all said they would be confident to do so if the need arose. One relative said, "No complaints. I feel that if I needed to, that any matters would be correctly addressed."

End of life care and support

- The staff team supported people at the end of their life according to their wishes and preferences. People were supported to stay in their own home if they chose to do so and extra support was provided as needed from specialist services such as Hospice nurses. Staff knew how to support people at the end of their life.

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.

How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong; Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements

- The registered manager had a clear understanding about the duty of candour and told us they encouraged staff to be open and honest in their feedback. Throughout this inspection process we found the registered manager to be very honest and open in their approach.
- The management team and staff understood their roles and respected the impact their roles had for people.

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

- The registered manager had a good understanding of their responsibilities towards the people they supported and demonstrated a strong passion for delivering person-centred care.
- People and relatives told us they found the registered manager to be warm and professional. A relative said, "For a 'new' agency, they have met all of our expectations. It appears to be well managed; the staff appear to be caring and courteous. I have no hesitation in recommending them to others." A further relative told us, "In summary - Elstree Home Care are fantastic, [person] thinks so too. I have asked on many occasions; [person] has never had a bad word to say about any of the staff."
- Staff said they felt proud to work for Elstree Home Care (Watford). For example, one staff member told us: "I recommend Elstree Home Care (Watford) to anyone for care because of the lovely management and staff and how dedicated they are in performing their roles."

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

- People and their relatives gave positive feedback about the service and how it operated. A relative told us, "I would have no hesitation in recommending Elstree Home Care Watford. They have given us peace of mind that [person] is being given the best possible care and support." Another relative said, "I'm 100% certain that if I ever had a problem with the care Elstree provides, [registered manager] would do their utmost to resolve it. We would not hesitate in recommending Elstree Home Care to anyone."
- Staff feedback was sought via satisfaction surveys and face to face meetings with the management team.
- Staff were positive about working for the company. One staff member said, "I would not hesitate to recommend Elstree Home Care. This is because the people I work with have shown compassion, genuine care and go beyond and above the call of duty. It is the small thoughtful things that make a great difference"

to the people we look after."

- Regular feedback about the quality of the service provided was gathered from people and their relatives. The satisfaction scores were high and written feedback included confirmed people were very happy with the care and support they received from Elstree Home Care (Watford).

Continuous learning and improving care; Working in partnership with others

- Learning was taken from incidents to improve people's experience of care.
- The management team worked with external professionals to achieve good outcomes for people. For example, social working teams, community nurses, occupational therapists, wheelchair services, GPs and dentists.
- We received positive feedback from two professionals who had worked with the provider. One professional told us, "I have only had positive experiences with Elstree Home Care and positive feedback from people who used the service. Staff work very hard in difficult circumstances, and care has been arranged very rapidly often due to end of life circumstances. I can only speak positively of Elstree Home Care and the way the registered manager works, they appear well-organised and responsive in moments of crisis."