

Elmfield Home Care Ltd

Blossom Home Care Teesdale and Weardale

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

Blossom Home Care Teesdale and Weardale is a new service registered to provide personal care to people living in their own homes in rural County Durham. At the time of our inspection there were 26 people using the service.

Not everyone using Blossom Home Care Teesdale and Weardale receives a regulated activity; CQC only inspects the service being received by people provided with '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 reported they were extremely satisfied with the service. People and relatives said staff excelled at their jobs and always went above and beyond in delivering the care. They described the little extras staff just did as a part of their job. Some people commented this had never occurred when they had used other home care provision.

Staff were passionate about providing good care outcomes and took ownership for their practice. People found the service provided a high standard of care and the quality of staff working with them was exemplary.

Staff found the management team's expectation to treat everyone compassionately, give people all the time they needed, treat each person as an individual and look after the individual as if they were a relative WAS an excellent approach to adopt. Staff found this enabled them to really work to their best and they really loved working for the company.

The team had won several awards for their performance including a business of the year award. It was evident from feedback we received the service had lived up to its aim of delivering holistic and compassionate care, which enabled people to enjoy a superb quality of life and assisted them to remain in their own home for longer.

The management team had created an extremely robust governance system, which rapidly identified the smallest of issue, which was then quickly addressed.

There were enough staff on duty to cover the care packages. Staff reported the rotas were very well organised and enabled them to easily travel to deliver each care package and meant they had enough time to properly support people. Staff said when people needed extra support the care packages were readily extended. An active recruitment programme was in place and all avenues were explored such as having a stall at a local fete as means of attracting staff.

Medicine management was effective and closely monitored. Staff who administered medicines had the appropriate training.

Staff adhered to COVID regulations and procedures. The registered manager ensured staff had access to ample supplies of PPE and they completed regular spot checks to make sure staff complied with the guidance and best practice.

The registered manager and deputy manager undertook all the assessments and these were used as the basis for the care records. The deputy manager ensured the assessments fully captured people's need. When necessary, external professionals were involved in individual people's care.

Staff had received mandatory and condition-specific training. Staff supervision sessions were regularly completed, as well as spot checks and competency assessments.

Staff had received training around the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and associated code of practice and felt confident applying this in their practice. 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.

Some people needed staff to assist them prepare meals. The care records clearly set out what people wanted, how the food was to be prepared and associated risks such as choking were to be managed. People reported the staff made lovely meals.

Staff took steps to safeguard people and promote their human rights. The management team confirmed they took all concerns seriously and determined what lessons could be learnt. Since started no one had needed to make a formal complaint.

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

Rating at last inspection

This service was registered with us on 5 November 2020 and this is the first inspection.

Why we inspected

This was a planned inspection as the service had not previously been rated.

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.

Blossom Home Care Teesdale and Weardale

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

Blossom Home Care Teesdale and Weardale is a domiciliary care agency. It provides personal care to people living in their own houses and flats.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means the registered manager and the registered provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of inspection

This inspection was announced. We gave a short period of notice of the inspection because we needed to ensure the registered manager was available and to contact people to gather their feedback.

Inspection activity started on 29 March and ended on 21 April 2022. One inspector visited the office location on 7 April 2022.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service. We also sought feedback from partner agencies

and healthcare professionals. These included the local authority's contracts and commissioning services. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

The provider was not asked to complete a Provider Information Return (PIR) prior to this inspection. A PIR is information providers send us to give some key information about the service, what the service does well and improvements they plan to make.

During the inspection

We contacted all the people who used the service and received feedback from five people using the service and 15 relatives. We spoke with registered manager, deputy manager and one of the providers. We also received feedback from 19 of the care staff.

We looked at three people's care records and three staff recruitment files. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including audits and action plans, were reviewed.

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.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management; Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- Staff understood when people required support to reduce the risk of avoidable harm, and risk assessments were in place. The risk assessments were very detail and effectively assisted staff to safely mitigate risks.
- The provider had a range of policies and procedures to manage risk and monitor the safety of both people and staff.
- The provider had safeguarding systems in place. Staff said they had training and a good understanding of what to do to make sure people were protected from harm or abuse.
- People confirmed they felt safe using the service. One person told us, "The standard of care I receive from Blossom Home Care is absolutely marvellous." A relative said, "I arrive on an evening after the call and find [person] is happy and well looked after. The carers have alerted me to potential health changes which I wouldn't have noticed and they do genuinely care about [person]."

Staffing and recruitment

- The provider operated safe recruitment systems to ensure suitable staff were employed. The provider completed a gap analysis around applicants' previous employment history.
- There were enough staff to safely care for people. The minimum time staff spent with people was 50 minutes, which people reported they found extremely beneficial as staff had time to deliver very person-centred care.

Using medicines safely

- People's medicines were managed in a safe manner. Staff were trained in medicines management and were assessed as competent to administer people's medicines.
- Regular checks were carried out of people's medicines to ensure records were accurate.
- Staff were given clear guidance on when to administer medicines which were required on an 'as and when' basis.

Preventing and controlling infection

- The provider had systems in place to mitigate the risks of people and staff from catching and spreading infections. Staff were tested on a regular basis for COVID-19.

Learning lessons when things go wrong

- The management team constantly critically reviewed the operation of the service and actively made changes as and when these were needed.

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

- The registered manager and deputy manager undertook all the assessments, and these were used as the basis for the care records. The deputy manager ensured the assessments fully captured people's need by visiting the person several times to discuss and observe how an individual functioned in their home.
- The registered manager and deputy manager used these comprehensive assessments as the basis for developing the detailed risk assessments and care plans.
- People's records included contact details for GPs and immediate family members, and information about healthcare conditions. This helped staff recognise any deterioration in health so they could contact people's relatives and 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.

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 and whether any conditions on authorisations to deprive a person of their liberty had the appropriate legal authority and were being met.

- At the time of the inspection nobody using the service was subject to restrictions of their liberty under the Court of Protection, in line with MCA legislation.
- People told us they were involved in decisions about their care.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience

- Staff had the skills and knowledge to carry out their role effectively. Staff completed training in relevant areas to ensure they could carry out their role safely and competently. The service was registered to provide support for children, and staff had training in this area.

- People told us they were happy with the support they received and felt staff were competent. One person told us, "All the staff are very professional and caring and with their support I am able to remain in my own home." A relative said, "I am pleased to report they have been everything I could wish for."
- Staff supervisions were being completed in line with the company policies and expectations.

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

- Staff supported people with eating and drinking where they had needs in this area. One person told us, "The carers always make sure I get a very tasty meal and they are all good at cooking them."

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 were exceptionally well treated and supported. People were delighted staff and managers placed them at the heart of the service. A person said, "The standard of care I receive from Blossom Home Care is absolutely marvellous. All the staff are very professional and caring and with their support I am able to remain in my own home." Another person said, "The carers make me feel like the most important person in the world and really pull all the stops to make sure I'm alright."
- The management team had an excellent approach to care. Staff found the expectation to treat everyone compassionately and look after clients like they were a relative, was an excellent approach to adopt. A staff member said, "I love working for blossom were a little family."
- People and relatives expressed amazement at the high levels of personalised support delivered. A relative said, "Blossom has been everything I could wish for. The team all genuinely care for [person] and I am confident to leave them in their care whilst I leave the house." Another person said, "I am so pleased we found this care company, all of the carers are compassionate, caring and treat [person] with the dignity and respect she deserves."
- Staff were extremely committed to supporting people and offering them their best care possible. People told us about instances when the management team and staff had gone above and beyond to ensure care packages were delivered during recent storms. This had, at times, involved requesting support from mountain rescue to assist staff get to remote locations.
- A staff member said, "I feel proud to be part of the Blossom 'family' and I have found them to be one of the most caring organisations that I have ever worked for." A relative said, "[Person] had been really poorly and we thought they might not manage at home but the support the girls offered has been phenomenal. With their help they have regained some of their ability to manage things and seems to be getting more mobile each day."

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care; Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- The managers and staff constantly sought people's views and encouraged them to make decisions about their care. The deputy manager gave people time to think through what they needed, listened closely to their views and involved them in developing the exact package they needed. A person said, "The team always let you know what is happening and listen to exactly what you want them to do."
- Staff took time to get to know people very well which had resulted people retaining and developing the skills they needed to remain living at home for longer. One relative said, "[Person] had been really poorly and we thought they might not manage at home but the support the girls offered has been phenomenal. With their help they have regained some of her ability to manage things and seems to be getting more mobile

each day. They are also so much happier. "

- Staff had formed excellent relationships with people and their families. One person said, "The time they spend with me is wonderful. I'm never rushed and they always respect my wishes." A relative said, "Blossom staff are genuinely extremely caring, efficient and helpful in all respects, doing what could only be described as a stressful and difficult. They always let us know what is happening and I absolutely trust them."
- Staff had an in-depth understanding of how people liked their privacy and dignity to be protected. A staff said, " I must say I have been very impressed so far with the levels of care and time given to each client, all the staff I have worked with so far absolutely love the job, mainly because of the way it's run and the time given to each client, and support offered to all staff."
- Relatives praised the staff for their skills in supporting people. A relative said, "I never thought I would need support in looking after my wife but as her dementia progressed I had to call for help and I couldn't be more satisfied with the care that Blossom is providing and would recommend them to others."

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; 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

- The service delivered person-centred care with people having choice and control regarding how staff met their needs. The registered manager and deputy manager had ensured care plans contained pertinent information about people's needs and preferences to enable staff to provide appropriate care.
- One staff member said, "The care plans are invaluable. You have access to the care plans, risk assessments and previous visit notes which provide continuity during the daily visits. They all help to create a picture of the person, which allows you to build relationships and understand the level of independence for each person you support and assist. This all helps you to tailor your support uniquely to each individual."
- People and relatives also described a person-centred service. One person said, "All the staff are very professional and caring and with their support I am able to remain in my own home." A relative said, ". The care provided is high quality and personalised. The care is delivered with empathy by the carers without exception and with consideration for the whole family."
- Staff had time built into each visit to provide opportunity to socially interact with people and engage them in activities they enjoyed. The staff also attempt to find ways to keep people stimulated in activities and events. One relative said, "We have discussed the possibility of them taking my wife out for walks with our dog when the weather improves and again, I am happy and confident this will take place safely."

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.

- The provider understood the AIS requirements and had made sure appropriate communication tools, such as large print documents were in place to meet people's needs.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- People and relatives said they had no complaints and were happy to raise any concerns with the management team.
- The management team used all feedback to assist them improve the quality of care. No complaints had been received but they monitored and responded to even minor concerns. Relatives said, "We have had very few queries but if they arise they are swiftly dealt with."

End of life care and support

- Staff provided good end of life support. A relative said, "Blossom helped me to care for [person] in the last few months of her life. The office manager and her team quickly established a good relationship with them and they were all a great support to the whole family."

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

- Throughout the inspection, it was apparent that the service went above and beyond when providing care packages and achieved exceptional outcomes for people. This improved people's quality of life and wellbeing. One person said, "Because of the high standard of care Blossom provides, it has meant I am able to remain in my own home and I don't think another home care could have helped me do this. The staff have been exceptional."
- Without exception we found people were routinely engaged with developing their care package and their opinions were taken on board. People spoke very highly of the service, the staff and the management team. One person said, "The team are fantastic and really go out of their way to provide the care how you want it.. They are the best one we have had. We tried a couple of others, but they were not a patch on Blossom."
- A staff member said, "After reviewing and discounting a number of local companies, I applied to Blossom Home Care and was lucky enough to be offered a role with the company. It really is a family of carers who very much support the people we care for and each other."
- The registered managers said they had worked over the last year to listen to staff and involve them in opportunities to learn and develop their skills. One staff member said, "I feel proud to be part of the Blossom 'family' and this I believe is due to the exemplary leadership and example set by the directors."

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; 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 provider was committed to ensuring people needs were at the centre of everything they did and aimed to deliver high-quality care standards. Over the course of the last year the branch has won 'Best New Franchise' award and Teesdale Best Business award for 'high standards of care and resilience through COVID-19 pandemic.'
- The provider and staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities. The registered manager had set up a WhatsApp group, which ensured communication flowed between staff and the management teams. They also ran weekly update meetings. Staff were appreciative of the support they got from the management team. One staff member said, "I have been very impressed so far with the levels of care and time given to each client, all the staff I have worked with so far absolutely love the job, mainly because of the way it's run and the time given, and support offered to all staff."
- The management team clearly valued each staff member. Star of the month and Superstar awards were given to staff and these were accompanied with a financial gift of £50 and £100 respectively. Also, they made staff aware of compliments being received and these came in on an almost daily basis.

- There was a strong culture of understanding what enhanced quality when delivering the service then putting this in place. This approach had led to exceptionally high levels of customer satisfaction, for example people said, "The care given was wonderful," "We are very impressed" and "They go the extra mile."

- Staff understood the need to be open and honest when things go wrong.

Continuous learning and improving care

- The management team continuously look to learn and improve the service. They complete detailed, comprehensive audits, which greatly assist in identifying gaps and assisted them to consider new initiatives. For instance, the management team had found recruiting in a rural area could be challenging so they needed to be more inventive. The various approaches they adopted included putting a stall up in one of the local country shows.

- The management team had considered other service's approaches to delivering home care and determined following the ethos of good communication was an essential component to good care. To implement this ethos they had ensured people were rapidly alerted to any changes in visit schedules, some one was available to provide the care package if a carer was going to be very late and all minor issues were treat as complaints. People told us this had contributed to their high levels of satisfaction with the service.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics; Working in partnership with others

- Relatives commented on the excellent communication between themselves and the service. One relative said, "The team always let you know what is happening and listen to exactly what you want them to do. If the girls are going to be late, they let you know straight away. I've never had any complaints but [registered manager], I know, would sort anything out to my satisfaction. I can't praise them highly enough."

- Staff described the management team as "very supportive." One staff member said, "It really is a family of carers who very much support both service users and each other. The office staff and on call team are responsive to questions and concerns and you feel that you have been heard, understood and actions effected as a result."

- The service only delivered care packages which were a minimum of 50 minutes and everyone found this level of support really assisted them sustain a good quality of life. The management team was finding the positive affect this had on people's lives was leading to more packages being commissioned by local authorities in the area.

- At every level of the organisation good partnership working was embedded. The provider sent us photos which demonstrated they worked closely in partnership with healthcare providers such as Marie Curie and were heavily involved in working with local communities including schools and local voluntary groups.

- People who had worked as community healthcare professionals had chosen to work for the service because of the excellent standard of care being provided. A staff member said, "In the course of looking after [person] I came across Blossom Home Care and was very impressed by the staff and observed had high clinical standards. Although after retiring as a nurse I never had any intention of returning to any sort of paid employment, I was so impressed I applied to work with Blossom."