

Ethos Care Services Limited

Ethos Care

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good ●

Is the service safe?

Good ●

Is the service well-led?

Good ●

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

Ethos Care is a domiciliary care agency providing personal care and support to people in their own houses and flats. The service provides support to people in the Christchurch area of Dorset. At the time of our inspection there were 39 people receiving personal care and support.

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.

We expect health and social care providers to guarantee people with a learning disability and autistic people respect, equality, dignity, choices and independence and good access to local communities that most people take for granted. 'Right support, right care, right culture' is the guidance CQC follows to make assessments and judgements about services supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people and providers must have regard to it.

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

Right Culture

Governance systems were not always operating effectively, they had not identified some documentation was not in place for staff recruitment and actions from audits were not always documented as carried out. The service actively sought feedback on the service it provides and made individual changes for people. However, this was not consistently recorded and therefore feedback was not always used to shape the service. We have made a recommendation to the service about strengthening the systems, and they have been responsive to rectify the shortfalls. The registered manager and manager understood their statutory responsibilities and had made notifications to CQC as required by law. Staff felt appreciated by the management team, there were various ways the service showed thanks to their staff. There was a small staff team and they told us they felt involved.

Ethos Care was linked with the providers other service, they offered each other support. The service worked well with external health and social care professionals, and we received positive feedback on their working relationship. The Ethos Care management team were approachable, visible and supportive.

Right Support

There were enough staff to meet the needs of the service. Recruitment processes were in place to ensure staff had the necessary checks before starting work with the service. However, we found some gaps in the documentation, the manager acted immediately to obtain the missing information. People were protected from avoidable harm by a staff team who knew how to raise safeguarding concerns both within the service and outside. Staff told us they were confident their concerns would be acted upon by the manager.

Risks to people had been identified, assessed and actions taken to reduce them, this included environmental risks. Staff knew people well and risk assessments covered all aspects of their daily care and support. Staff had access to the electronic system which explained safe working practices. People told us they were happy with the service they received from Ethos Care. 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. Staff told us they promoted independence for people, one person told us, "They [staff] enable me to have a life." People told us they knew who would be visiting them to provide care and were kept informed if staff were going to be late.

Right Care

People received their medicines as prescribed. Medicines management within the service was monitored by an electronic system. Staff had received training including regular assessment of their competency. An electronic care planning and medicines system supported safety, as changes to medicine regimes were made without delay. The system sent alerts to staff in the service office and they acted on any changes.

People were protected from the risk of avoidable infection. Staff had received training in infection prevention and control. There were plentiful supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff. The policy and guidance were in line with government and best practice guidance.

Accidents and incidents were recorded, analysed for themes and trends. Leadership was visible and staff knew their roles and responsibilities.

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

Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was good (published 12 December 2018).

Why we inspected

This inspection was prompted by a review of the information we held about this service.

For those key questions not inspected, we used the ratings awarded at the last inspection to calculate the overall rating.

The overall rating for the service has remained as good based on the findings of this inspection.

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 well-led?

Good ●

The service was well led.

Details are in our well led findings below.

Ethos Care

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 Health and Social Care Act 2008.

Inspection team

The inspection was carried out by 1 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 provider is required to have a registered manager to oversee the delivery of regulated activities at this location. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Registered managers and providers are legally responsible for how the service is run, for the quality and safety of the care provided and compliance with regulations.

At the time of our inspection there was a registered manager in post and a care manager who had day to day oversight of the service, we will refer to them as, 'manager' throughout this report.

Notice of inspection

We gave the service 48 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because it is a small service and we needed to be sure that the provider or registered manager would be in the office to support the inspection.

Inspection activity started on 16 June 2023 and ended on 19 June 2023. We visited the location's office on 16 June 2023.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority service improvement and safeguarding teams. The provider completed 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. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We spoke with 4 people who used the service about their experience of the care provided. We spoke with and received feedback from 12 members of staff including the registered manager, care manager, administrator, and care workers.

We received feedback from 1 health and social care professionals on their experience of working with the service.

We reviewed a range of records. This included 6 people's care records and medication records. We looked at 3 staff files in relation to recruitment and staff supervision. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures were reviewed.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

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

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. At this inspection the rating has remained the same. This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Staffing and recruitment

- Recruitment processes were in place. However, we found some employment documentation was not in place. For example, staff employment histories were not explored fully as required by the regulations and the providers policy. The manager took immediate action to rectify this during the inspection. We received assurances from the registered manager the process had been improved.
- Recruitment processes included interviews questions and a thorough induction. The staff induction included blended learning of face to face, online training, and shadow shifts. Staff competency was checked before they were able to work alone with people, for example, where people needed equipment to support movement.
- Staff files contained appropriate checks, such as a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. DBS checks provide information including details about convictions and cautions held on the Police National Computer. The information helps employers make safer recruitment decisions.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management; Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Risks to people's safety and wellbeing had been identified, assessed and actions to mitigate were in place. An electronic system in place meant risk assessments were updated immediately when there was a change to a person's needs.
- Staff knew people well and clear records supported staff to work in safe ways with people. Staff told us they had the most up to date information in order to support people safely.
- Environmental risks were explored, and actions taken to ensure staff working was safe, for example, guidance to support people to evacuate their home in an emergency.
- Accidents and incidents were recorded, and the necessary actions taken. Analysis took place regularly to identify themes and trends. This meant they could learn lessons from events which took place in the service and prevent further occurrence.
- The service shared learning with staff through team meetings, emails, and face to face communication. There was a small team at Ethos Care and they were encouraged to attend the service's office.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse

- People, their relatives and staff told us the service they received from Ethos Care was safe. Some comments we received were: "Yes, I feel safe. I am very happy with the service", "They are A1, top class", "I am safe, they [staff] are well trained", "I am safe, absolutely reliant, I wouldn't survive without them", "I feel happy and safe, it's an excellent service."
- Staff told us they knew how to recognise the signs that someone may be at risk of harm or abuse. They knew who to report their concerns to both within the service and outside. One staff member told us, "I can

report to the manager, and then to the local authority outside of the service." Another staff member told us, "I would report concerns to the manager [name] and I feel very confident they would be dealt with."

- Staff had received training in safeguarding and were confident any concerns they raised would be taken seriously and acted upon. Safeguarding concerns were reviewed monthly, records showed referrals had been made to the local authority where necessary. A health and social care professional said, "Ethos Care are proactive and report where they need to."

Using medicines safely

- People received their medicines as prescribed. The service had safe procedures in place for ordering, administering, and recording medicines.
- Staff responsible for giving medicines had been trained and had their competency assessed.
- Where people were prescribed medicines, they only needed to take occasionally, guidance was in place for staff to follow to ensure those medicines were administered in a consistent way. The manager told us they were working to transfer the information on to the electronic system.
- The electronic system meant staff updated medicine administration records (MAR) instantly when there was change. This meant people were receiving the most up to medicines, safely.

Preventing and controlling infection

- Safe infection prevention and control procedures in place meant people were protected from avoidable infections.
- Staff had received training in hand hygiene procedures and applying PPE, and this was monitored throughout the service through spot check.
- There were plentiful supplies of PPE and people confirmed staff wore their PPE when visiting to provide their care.
- Changes to policies and procedures had been made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and adjusted in response to government guidance where necessary.

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.

At our last inspection we rated this key question good. At this inspection the rating has for this key question has remained as good. This meant the service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; Continuous learning and improving care

- Quality assurance systems in place to monitor and improve the standard of the service were not always robust. There was a range of audits in place, however, these had not been comprehensive enough to identify the shortfalls found during the inspection in recruitment documentation and actions from feedback. The manager and registered manager took immediate action to improve their systems and oversight.
- People and their relatives were asked for the views on the service provided by Ethos Care. However, the information was not always used to drive improvements in the service as a whole. We did receive assurances individual requests and concerns were addressed in a timely manner.

We recommend the provider strengthens their governance systems to ensure they are always operating effectively, and feedback is used to shape the service.

- Staff understood their role and had clear responsibilities. Staff had job descriptions and told us they were clear on what was expected of them.
- The provider was in the process of updating their policies and procedures. This meant they could assure themselves they were working within the necessary legislation.
- The provider and the management team were passionate in their vision for the service. Staff told us they were a close team, and all got along well together. This meant staff morale was of a good level within the service.

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

- The manager told us they were a team and worked together to create an excellent, reliable, service. Staff felt like they could contribute, the manager was approachable and there was a open door.
- Staff were proud to work at Ethos Care, their comments included: "I like that they really care about clients and do their best for them. I also feel proud to work with such good carers", "Yes I feel proud to work for Ethos Care, because we carry our duty of care well, and we treat our clients with dignity and respect", "We are a great company and always try to give 100% great care", "They always do what they can to help the service users in any way possible", "Ethos Care is a very good company, promoting good practice and ensuring customer's needs are met, I'm happy to work for them."
- People, their relatives, professionals and staff were complimentary about the leadership of Ethos Care. Some of their comments included: "The manager [name] is a great boss, they are very kind, caring and very

supportive. They are always free to talk and listen, they are very hard working and gets things done straight away", "The manager [name] and registered manager [name] are very caring managers, they always listen to any concerns I may have and always help to make working for Ethos as good as possible", "Management at Ethos are the best I have worked for, they are always on hand to offer support with any problem both work related and personal."

- Staff felt appreciated working for Ethos Care. One member of staff told us, "I am thanked and praised often in the office for the work I do." Another member of staff said, "Ethos have seen my love for care and my skills and are helping me to work to my full potential."

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 registered manager and manager understood the requirements of the duty of candour, that is, their duty to be honest, open and apologise for any accident or incident that had caused or placed a person at risk of harm.
- The registered manager and manager understood CQC requirements, in particular, to notify us, and where appropriate the local safeguarding team, of incidents including potential safeguarding issues, disruption to the service and serious injury. This is a legal requirement.

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

- The manager encouraged people and their relatives to complete online reviews of the service, we saw these were positive, mostly scoring 5 out of 5 stars. We read, 'Ethos is a very reliable care company, very polite and courteous, available to assist with any problems that you may have. I would definitely 100% recommend Ethos for those who are looking for care. The staff arrive on time and are very professional at their job.'
- People told us they felt involved in the service and happy with the level of care and support they received. Many had access to an online service where they could check which staff member was coming to them next and at what time. People told us this was valuable to them. One person said, "It's an excellent service. I have access to the electronic system [name] and I can check who is coming so I don't worry."
- Ethos Care worked and communicated well with health and social care professionals to support people. One health and social care professional told us, "It is a pleasure to work with the manager [name] and they appear to have a steady staff team around them, which provides continuity of care for service users. When a sensitive situation arose the manager [name] could not have been more supportive and receptive."