

Darlington Home Care Ltd

Home Instead

Inspection report

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17 May 2023

23 May 2023

25 May 2023

31 May 2023

01 June 2023

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05 July 2023

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

Home Instead is registered to provide personal care to people living in their own homes and offers services to people in and around Darlington and North Allerton. At the time of our inspection there were 59 people using the service.

Not everyone using Home Instead 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 told us 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. The provider had developed a culture within the staff team, which people found was like receiving care akin to that delivered by very close and attentive family members.

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 told us the quality of staff working with them was exemplary.

Staff found the management team's expectation to treat everyone compassionately. They expected staff to give people all the time they needed, treat each person as an individual and look after the individual as if they were a relative. People told us this 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.

There were enough staff on duty to cover the care packages. Staff told us the rotas were very well organised and gave them enough time to get to people on time and properly support people. Staff said when people needed extra support the care packages were readily extended. An active and effective recruitment programme was in place.

Medicine management was effective and closely monitored. Staff who administered medicines had the appropriate training. 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 undertook all the assessments and these were used as the basis for the care records. They ensured the assessments fully captured people's need. When necessary, external professionals were involved in individual people's care.

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.

The management team had created a robust governance system, which rapidly identified the smallest of issue, which was then quickly addressed. People found the service had made sure all aspects of the service were delivered to an extremely high standard and enhanced people's lives. Staff took steps to safeguard people and promote their human rights. People told us they never had need to complain as the staff team were so responsive to their changing needs.

The team had won several awards for their performance including carers awards and for over 10 years had been in the top 20 recommended care providers in the North East in an online review site. It was evident from feedback we received the service had lived up to its aim of delivering person-focused compassionate care, which enabled people to enjoy a good quality of life.

People told us the provider clearly understood the difficulties life might present and how these could adversely affect work life so had introduced compassionate and innovative ways to support staff through challenges they might face. They regularly rewarded staff for their dedication.

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

Rating at last inspection

The last rating for this service was good (report published 23 April 2018).

Why we inspected

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

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.

Home Instead

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

An inspector carried out the inspection.

Service and service type

Home Instead 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.

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 17 May and ended on 1 June 2023. The inspector visited the office location on 25 and 31 May 2023.

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 4 people using the service and 11 relatives. We spoke with the provider, registered manager, a range of office staff and we also received feedback from 15 of the care staff.

We looked at people's care records, 2 staff files staff files, staff rotas and a variety of management and quality assurance records for the service.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

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

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has remained 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; Using medicines safely; Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Staff understood when people required support to reduce the risk of avoidable harm, and risk assessments were in place. The risk assessments were very detailed 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. A relative said, "I have been blown away by the level of professionalism shown consistently by Home Instead. I think I can count on one hand the number of businesses I've dealt with over the years that have hit this level of service."
- 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.
- The management team constantly critically reviewed the operation of the service and actively made changes as and when these were needed.

Staffing and recruitment

- There were enough staff to safely care for people. The minimum time staff spent with people was 60 minutes, which people reported they found extremely beneficial as staff had time to deliver very person-centred care. One person said, "The staff are all lovely and go out of their way to make sure I'm looked after properly. The 4 different ladies I have are all very competent and always on time."
- The provider operated safe recruitment systems to ensure suitable staff were employed.

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.

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 the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has remained 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 are clear about their roles, and understand 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; Working in partnership with others; Continuous learning and improving care

- The provider and registered manager ensured the service operated an open, honest and inclusive culture. People and relatives told us the registered manager was approachable and always listened to their views. A health and social care professional said, "Over the years we have worked closely with the owner of Home Instead in a variety of ways. More recently they supported us to improve dementia care practices in the area by providing training to staff of other local care providers."
- The provider and registered manager regularly reviewed the systems and processes in the service to determine if improvements could be made. Action plans were used to identify and monitor where changes were required and how these could improve the service.
- The provider ensured the service was able to work with the local community services and had employed an engagement officer. This officer routinely spoke at local network meetings with organisations such as Age UK and veterans groups. They had also produced a leaflet outlining what was available for people to join in locally, which had been well-received by various organisations including GP surgeries.
- Reports had been sent to alert the CQC and local authorities when incidents occurred. The registered manager closely reviewed all incidents. They ensured all relevant parties were involved in this process and outcomes were discussed.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people; Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics

- People told us they 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 Home Instead is superb." A relative said, "Home Instead are a great support not only to [person's name], but to me as well. I do not live locally and it can sometimes be difficult for me because of this. Home Instead are always willing to give extra support, sometimes at short notice such as taking her for medical appointments. They are always available when I call, know who I am, and are always willing to help me should I have any concerns."
- 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, "It's honestly been one of the best care companies I have worked for and they really listen."

- 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 met their needs. Staff had walked dogs, fed horses and taken people to hospital when needed. Health care professionals told us they found the management team and staff were dedicated to providing people with all the support they needed.
- 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. A staff member said, "Home Instead is a very professional outfit, highly knowledgeable and responsive, offering flexible working arrangements. The concepts of offering person-centred values and care, and promoting client safeguarding are continually re-enforced."