

N C Homecare Limited

# N C Homecare Limited

## Inspection report

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## Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Outstanding 

Is the service safe?

Good 

Is the service effective?

Good 

Is the service caring?

Good 

Is the service responsive?

Outstanding 

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

About the service:

NC Homecare Limited t/a Home Instead Senior Care is a Domiciliary Care Agency located in Frodsham, Cheshire. The service provides care and support to people living in their own home and out in the community. At the time of this inspection 40 people were receiving support from the service.

People's experience of using this service:

People received exceptionally personalised care and support specific to their needs and lifestyle choices. People's needs were assessed and planned for with their involvement. Each person had a care plan that contained extremely detailed information about how their needs were to be met.

The leadership of the service demonstrated a high level of experience and capability to deliver excellent care. The registered manager promoted a culture that was extremely person-centred and inclusive which provided high-quality care and put people at the heart of the service. The registered manager was extremely knowledgeable and inspired confidence and passion within the staff team. They had a commitment in ensuring equality and inclusion across the workforce and this was reflected in the high levels of satisfaction of staff. There was a strong framework of accountability to monitor performance and risk leading to continual improvement within the service. The management team and staff worked with local communities in providing and working in conjunction with local initiatives to keep older people safe and well.

People were treated with dignity and respect and felt the service was caring towards them and was at the heart of the service's culture and values. Information was available in different formats to meet people's individual needs. People and their family members provided extremely positive feedback about the support they received and how they were treated. Staff worked hard to ensure that people benefited from continuing to and exploring new experiences. People were matched with staff who shared common interests to pursue activities. Staff supported people to maintain their independence within their own home and maintain a community presence. People were regularly asked for their opinions on the service and had information as to how to make a complaint if they were not happy.

People were protected from abuse and the risk of harm. Staff had received training in safeguarding and knew who to contact if they had any concerns about a person's safety. People's medicines were managed by staff who had received appropriate training. Safe recruitment procedures were followed so that suitable staff were employed. People received their care and support mostly from the same members of staff. Staff received the training and support they needed for their role. Staff clearly understood and respected people's rights to make their own decisions.

Rating at the last inspection: Good (report published 16 June 2016). The rating of outstanding in the Responsive and Well-led section of this report reflects the improvements made within the service since the

previous inspection.

Why we inspected: this was a planned inspection based on the rating of the last inspection. This service had improved on the quality of care provided and has been rated as outstanding overall with outstanding in the Well-led and Responsive sections.

Follow up: We will continue to monitor intelligence we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our inspection programme. If any concerning information is received 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 section below.

Good ●

### Is the service responsive?

The service was extremely responsive.

Details are in our Responsive findings below.

Outstanding ☆

### Is the service well-led?

The service was extremely Well-Led.

Details are in our Well-led findings below

Outstanding ☆

# N C Homecare Limited

## Detailed findings

### Background to this inspection

#### The inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection checked whether the provider is meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

#### Inspection team:

This inspection was carried out by one adult social care inspector.

#### Service and service type:

N C Homecare Limited trading as Home Instead Senior Care is a domiciliary care agency that provides care and support to people in their own homes.

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

#### Notice of inspection:

We gave the service 48 hours' notice of the inspection visit because we needed to be sure be sure that someone would be in the office to support our inspection.

#### What we did:

Before the inspection we reviewed the information we held about the service. This included the statutory notifications sent to us by the registered provider about incidents and events that had occurred at the service. A notification is information about important events which the service is required to send to us by law. The registered provider had completed a Provider Information Return (PIR). This is a form that asks the provider to give some key information about the service, what it does well and any improvements they plan to make. We used all of this information to plan how the inspection should be conducted.

During inspection site visit we spoke with the registered manager and the two directors of the service who were also the registered provider and six staff members. We looked at the care records belonging to six

people, the recruitment and training records of five staff and other records relating to the management and quality monitoring of the service. We held telephone conversations with six people who used the service and two family members on separate days from our visit to the service.

# Is the service safe?

## Our findings

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

People were safe and protected from avoidable harm. Legal requirements were met

### Systems and processes

- People were supported to keep safe by an effective system and robust policies and procedures to safeguard people from harm.
- To maintain people's safety and promote staff awareness staff received regular supervision and attended team meetings where safeguarding was discussed.
- Systems were in place to ensure that any concerns raised could be dealt with quickly and appropriately. Members of the management team were always accessible to offer advice and support. In addition, staff identification badges contained information as to who they needed to contact if they felt a person was at risk.
- Staff completed safeguarding training and knew what action to take to safeguard people.
- Records relating to people who used the service were clearly written and contained detailed information. These records were kept securely at the office.
- People and their family members told us the service was safe. Comments included, "I feel very safe when the staff are visiting, they help me a lot" and "Staff deliver my care in a respectful and safe manner."

### Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

- People were enabled and supported to take positive risks with robust care planning and support. This enabled individuals to have maximum control over their lives wherever possible.
- Robust systems were in place to monitor and plan for people's changing needs. For example, when supporting a person with their hospital discharge the service maintained regular contact with health care professionals to ensure that appropriate care and support could be provided on the person's return home. A review by a family member stated that the service was professional, extremely efficient and went above and beyond to arrange an assessment to be discharged from hospital.
- An incident tracker was in use to identify any trends to help minimise reoccurrences. For example, in the event of a person experiencing all fall, a review of their environment took place to ascertain any actions that could minimise further risk.
- Risk assessments were completed and measures put in place to reduce the likelihood of harm to people and others.
- Identified risks were continually reviewed and care plans updated where necessary. People's choices and freedom were fully considered in the development of risk management plans.
- An out of hours on-call system was in place for people and staff to contact when the office was closed. People confirmed that they had access to all relevant contact numbers including the directors of the service and manager. People had a lot of confidence in this system which made them feel safe. Comments included, "You can always get in touch at anytime" and "I know who to call if needed."

### Learning lessons when things go wrong

- Effective systems were in place to identify and drive improvement when things went wrong. Following the identification of a number of recording errors, a new medicines administration record (MAR) had recently been introduced to enhance the recording of information by staff. Staff were in receipt of regular support to learn and implement the new recording format. This support included 'drop in' sessions for staff to receive one to one support.
- The registered manager had a system in place to monitor all accidents incidents and clearly understood how to use them as learning opportunities.
- Risk assessments and care plans were reviewed following incidents to prevent re-occurrence.

#### Staffing and recruitment

- People received support from the right amount of suitable staff. Recruitment checks were conducted to assess the suitability of applicants before they were offered a job.
- People received the level of staff supported in line with their assessed needs. Where needed staff levels would be adjusted to ensure people were kept safe.
- People told us that they received care and support from competent staff who they thought had the right skills to make sure they received safe care and support.
- Arrangements were in place to inform people if staff were running late.□

#### Using medicines safely

- The management of medicines was safe. Staff completed medication training and their competence was checked prior to them administering people's medicines.
- Staff had access to procedures and national guidance for the safe administration of people's medicines.
- People were encouraged to manage and maintain their independence wherever possible with the management of their medicines.
- People told us they were happy with the support they received to take their medicines.

#### Preventing and controlling infection

- The service had systems in place to manage the control and prevention of infection.
- Staff had received training in the prevention of infection control and they had access to up to date procedures to support their role.
- Regular unannounced visits by senior members of staff take place which includes the monitoring of staff and their compliance with the service's infection control policy.
- People told us that staff always followed good practice in relation to preventing the spread of infection. Their comments included "They always clean up" and "They go above and beyond" in relation to cleanliness.



# 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

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.

- The service had a holistic approach to the assessment of people's needs and wishes. Where specific needs were identified the service sought advice from health professionals to ensure that people's needs were effectively met. For example, advice had been sought from speech and language therapists, general practitioners and dieticians to ensure that people's care was appropriately planned.
- People's needs were fully assessed and took account of their personal choices and wishes. This information was clearly recorded.
- Assessments of need were completed in detail and clearly reflected expected outcomes for people and how they were to be achieved. People, family members and where appropriate healthcare professionals were fully involved in the assessment process and the development of care plans. Where required, meetings for specific staff involved in a person's care and support were held to refine care plans and mitigate risk.
- The service actively supported people to transition to other service when their needs changed. Support was also given to people to apply for appropriate funding for their health and care needs.
- People told us that staff always arrived on time and stayed for the scheduled amount of time. One family member commented "Never let us down" and "They always turn up, even though we live in a very rural part of Cheshire."

Staff skills, knowledge and experience

- Staff had the right knowledge, skills and approach to meet people's needs. New staff were inducted into their roles.
- Staff training was developed and delivered around people's specific needs. People, their family members and other staff were involved in planning and delivering this training.
- Innovative training methods were used to give staff awareness of the challenges older people may face. This included the use of equipment such as a frailty simulator and a sensitivity kit to help staff appreciate difficulties people with arthritis and numbness may experience.
- Training was adapted to reflect individual learning needs of staff with one to one support available for staff with literacy, numeracy or language difficulties.
- Staff told us that training was informative and delivered in a way that was easy to understand. An example of this was that 'drop in' sessions had been held to offer guidance and further training in relation to managing people's medicines. Staff told us that they were asked on a regular basis if there was any further training they required or wished to participate in.
- Staff received regular supervision and their competency to carry out their role was regularly assessed.
- People were complementary about staff knowledge, skills and approach. Their comments included "Well trained staff" and "Staff provide an excellent service."

Supporting people to eat and drink enough with choice in a balanced diet

- The service placed a strong emphasis on ensuring that people's nutritional needs were met. Where required people were appropriately supported to maintain a balanced diet. The support they needed was clearly set out in their care plan.
- Staff had developed creative ways in which to encourage people to eat, drink and maintain independence with shopping. This had included staff liaising with family members in sourcing specific crockery and cutlery that a person living with dementia was familiar with. For another person, staff used pictorial prompts to support the person when shopping.
- People told us they received the support they needed to eat and drink. Their comments included "They [staff] always do as I ask" and "They prepare my food very well."
- Information was available to staff to help increase their awareness in relation to good nutrition and hydration.

Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support

- Staff supported people with their healthcare needs when it was required. arrangements for both transport and staff to accompany people to appointments were undertaken if required.
- People told us that they could always ask staff to contact their GP or a healthcare professional on their behalf.

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.

- We checked whether the service was working within the principles of the MCA, whether any restrictions on people's liberty had been authorised and whether any conditions on such authorisations were being met. At the time of this inspection no person using the service had any restrictions placed on their liberty.
- The registered manager had completed MCA training and knew their responsibilities for ensuring consent to care and treatment was obtained in line with the law.
- Where a person was unable to verbally give consent, the service recorded physical gestures or movements that the individual displayed when consenting to care or support.
- When required, people's family members and significant others were involved in best interest decision making.
- Staff understood what depriving a person of their liberty meant and they knew to obtain a person's consent before providing them any care and support. People told us "They always ask me before they do anything for me or in the house."

# 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

People were truly respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; equality and diversity

- People were treated well and felt supported by the staff team. Their comments included "They know me well" and "Excellent service." One family member explained that staff were very caring towards their relative who experienced periods of confusion. They told us that staff took time when communicating with them.
- Staff demonstrated a warm, caring approach to their role and spoke fondly and with knowledge of the people they supported.
- The service had developed 'memory books' for people which were used to work alongside the families of people living with dementia to reflect on their life experiences.
- People and family members spoke extremely highly of staff and the excellent service that was provided. Their comments included, "They are very caring", "It's the excellent support that my father receives that enables him to continue to live in his own home."
- Information within the service was available in differing formats to meet people's needs. The registered manager understood the importance of providing information which was easily accessible to people.
- Many compliments had been received by the service from family members reporting outstanding care received by their relatives. For people with family members living overseas, the service provided regular updates on their family members welfare and also sent photographs of their family members participating in activities.
- People were introduced to new members of staff prior to them delivering care and support and had a choice of staff that supported them.
- Staff had access to training and guidance in relation to equality and diversity. They had a clear understanding of delivering care and support specific to the person.
- People confirmed that they received supported from the same group of staff most of the time.. People received a rota of what staff were visiting them for that week which they found helpful.

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

- Staff had good knowledge of people's diverse needs and their personalities, likes and dislikes and what was important to them.
- People were encouraged and supported to express their views about the service through direct contact with the registered provider and the completion of surveys. Regular reviews of people's care gave them the opportunity to contribute to how their care and support was provided.

Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence

- People told us that staff respected their privacy and dignity. Their comments included "Always obliging and polite," "They absolutely respect my privacy and dignity", "Very friendly and respectful" and "They're always

respectful of me and my environment." One person said "Having them there gives me the confidence whilst I am in the shower. This way I can maintain my independence",

- Records relating to people's care and support were stored securely at the office location and where only accessed by authorised staff. Staff understood their responsibilities in relation to keeping people's personal information confidential.

## Is the service responsive?

### Our findings

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

Services were tailored to meet the needs of individuals and delivered to ensure flexibility, choice and continuity of care.

#### Personalised care

- The registered manager had an exceptional understanding of person centred care and support and this was apparent in the planning of people's needs and wishes. For example, people were given an opportunity to state what information they wanted recording about themselves and their personal history, as not everyone wanted historical information about their private life sharing.
- Staff knew people well and were able to identify people's emotional needs and demonstrate that positive relationships had been formed. Staff demonstrated a detailed person-centred approach when speaking about the people they supported and demonstrated that their role was centred around people's needs and wishes. People's care plans contained detailed information that staff were fully aware of. A family member told us that their relative enjoyed talking to staff and looked forward to their visits. Ambulance personnel attending to a person had written, "Fantastic care seen by [staff] today. Well kept care file and this communication book is a fantastic idea. Well done."
- Information was available to people in differing formats to meet their needs. Staff explained how they communicated using gestures. In addition, the service had adapted information to meet the specific needs of people. For example, an alternative format that had been used for a person with a learning disability and text formatted specifically for a person who had dyslexia. This met the requirements of the Accessible Information Standard.
- People's care and support was planned around their individual needs and lifestyle choices. People were involved in the planning of their care and support and their care plans contained extremely detailed information about how they wanted their care to be delivered. For example, one person was very specific as to how they wanted their tea prepared. Their care plan gave detailed step by step instructions as to how the drink should be made to ensure that it met the needs of the individual.
- Staff used innovative ways to enhance the quality of the service delivered whilst ensuring that people's needs were met. For example, for health reasons one person needed encouragement to carry out prescribed daily exercises. Staff had worked with the person to plan a series of exercises down into specific timeframes of their choice and included having a cup of tea with them in between.
- Staff were extremely creative in encouraging people to pursue past and present interests. For example, one person had an interest in the planetary system. To support his interest staff had supported the person to visit a planetarium. Another person had a lifelong interest in a specific breed of horses but had not been in contact with the animals for a long time. Staff arranged and supported the person to visit a local farm that specialised in that particular breed to spend time around the animals.
- People who were experiencing isolation in their homes were gently encouraged by staff to get out and about. For example, to visit the cafes, local parks and to watch the birds outside in their garden, activities that promoted positive wellbeing to people.
- There was a strong ethos of ensuring that staff were matched with people with similar hobbies and lifestyle

choices. For example, one person was supported to go swimming with the assistance of a member of staff who was a swimming instructor.

- Staff very clearly understood the needs of the people they supported. One person wore a piece of equipment that they didn't like to show. Staff explained that they had great fun together trying out different looks with the use of scarves to cover the equipment.
- People and their family members said that the service was extremely flexible and responsive in making changes to ensure that individuals' needs were met at all times. Comments included "Very adaptable."
- The provider took a very proactive approach to ensuring people had their needs met and their safety was maintained. This included working with family members to provide the best care and support to their relative. For example, when there were sudden changes to a person's or family carers needs the service worked with them by offering a flexible service by changing the times of visits to accommodate the needs of the family. One family member told us that that staff had found that their relative's door lock had broken. To ensure the person's safety the service made arrangements to have the lock fixed immediately. The family members of another person raised concerns about their relative's dietary intake certain foods. Staff worked with the family to support the person to improve their diet.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- A complaints procedure was in place and made accessible to all. All complaints were dealt with in line with the service's procedure.
- People and their family members knew who to contact in the event of raising a concern about the service they received.
- All complaints and concerns were discussed at the weekly management meeting and detailed records were maintained of all complaints which included responses and any actions taken to minimise the risk of a situation re-occurring.

End of life care and support

- No person using the service at the time of this inspection was receiving end of life care. Previously, the service had worked along with health professionals and offered companionship calls and support to family members to ensure that people experienced peaceful death.
- Staff were in the process of receiving further end of life care training as it was an area of interest identified by staff of an area of interest.

## 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

Service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the service culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

Planning and promoting person-centred, high-quality care and support; and how the provider understands and acts on duty of candour responsibility

- The management team had a clear ethos and commitment to delivering a person-centred service. This commitment included investing time to speak with people, their family members and staff on a regular basis to establish that the service they were receiving was right for them.
- People and their family members were extremely complimentary about the personalised service that they received. This was also reflected in the most recent client satisfaction survey that stated 94% of people would very likely or likely to recommend the service.
- The registered manager promoted a compassionate, inclusive and effective service. They demonstrated a high level of knowledge and experience of delivering safe, effective care to people.
- People and their family members spoke very positively about the accessibility of the management team. Their comments included "You can call them anytime" and "They are contactable day and night, we have all their direct contact numbers."

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff; And include information on working in partnership with others.

- To promote the service and awareness within the community staff were working with a local authority to promote a wellness initiative. This involved staff delivering dementia awareness to members of the public. To further promote inclusion and networking, events such as a charity cake and coffee morning were held.
- To promote effective team building and interaction the service arranged a barbecue for staff and their families to attend in the summer. This annual event is a way for the providers to thank staff for their commitment to their roles.
- The management team continually improved staff knowledge and understanding of supporting older people. For example, a 'Stay Nourished' initiative was in process, which involved staff receiving training to promote healthy eating in older age.
- Staff were routinely provided with professional guidance to enhance their learning and to support best practice in their role. For example, all staff had received a copy of NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) and Royal Pharmaceutical Society guidance in relation to safe, effective medicines management.
- Staff felt very well supported as individuals by the registered manager and provider. One staff member told us that, following a negative experience whilst carrying out their role the management team offered emotional support and they were made to feel special.
- Staff received a weekly newsletter informing them of any changes within the service, and information to be cascaded. The newsletter also gave the provider and registered manager the opportunity to say, 'well done'

to staff and to offer special recognition to staff following specific pieces or work and success stories.

- The provider demonstrated a commitment to the local communities in the promotion of inclusion. They produced a 'what's on' guide that was widely distributed around the local towns to promote community activities to all.
- There was a strong ethos of working with the wider community. The provider was working in partnership with local authority to provide training for members of the community and other agencies in keeping people safe. For example, in relation to protecting senior members of the community from scams and fraud.

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

- There was an open and inclusive culture where staff opinions and suggestions were promoted. In response to staff comments and feedback the management team made improvements in ensuring quarterly team meetings for all and subscribed to an employment advice programme for staff to access.
- There were clear lines of accountability within the management team. The registered manager was clear about their role and fully involved in decision making at a management level. The registered manager told us that they never felt compromised when decision making with the provider.
- An effective system was in place to give the registered manager clear oversight of the service people received. Medicines records were audited weekly and people's care plans were audited monthly to ensure that people received support that met their needs.
- The registered manager and provider received support in the continual monitoring and further development of the service provided to people. The provider had access to regular advice and support from the Home Instead Senior Care national office. In addition, their quality support team visited the service annually to carry out a full review. Any identified actions from the reviewing process were developed into an action plan.
- Home Instead Senior Care provided detailed policies and procedures to promote safe, effective care to people. These documents were updated annually to ensure that staff had access to up to date best practice and guidance for them to carry out their role.
- Weekly operational meetings took place to review and address any changes to people's needs and wishes.

Continuous learning and improving care

- Additional coaching and support had been introduced following recognition that newly recruited staff may require more support in some areas of their role.
- To improve the service people received, changes had been made to how the service monitored the service delivery.
- Plans were in place to further introduce technology into the service to assist with monitoring the level of service people received. This would include electronic record keeping and monitoring of arrival and departure times of staff.
- To continually improve service delivery to people a business (continuity) plan had been developed to ensure that people's records were fully person centred and to fully reflect the service delivered to people.
- The service continually invested in resources and training opportunities for staff to enhance people's experience when they received support. For example, virtual reality equipment had been purchased to enable staff to actually experience feelings of frailty that older people often experienced. By using the equipment staff experienced both the visual and emotional aspects often associated with frailty.
- Plans were in place to introduce new services for people to access. This included a 'Medical Support Line' and Medication Information Service for people to access. In addition, a Personal Alarm Service for people to request help.