

Carers Direct Ltd Support Service

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 October 2023

Service provided by:
Carers Direct Limited

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2004076349

About the service

Carers Direct Limited provides a care at home service to adults and older people living in their own homes. The main company office is located in Helensburgh. The service operates within Argyll and Bute including the areas of Helensburgh, Oban, Campbeltown, Taynuilt, Dalmally and Inveraray. Services are also provided on the Isle of Tiree.

The service aims to "Deliver care and support services that assist people with a range of needs to live at home and participate in the community as independently as possible".

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17, 18, 19, 20, 23 and 24 October 2023. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- visited 17 people using the service across Helensburgh, Oban, Campbeltown, Dalmally and Inveraray and spoke with 10 of their family members
- spoke with 16 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Staff were respectful of people and their homes.
- People and families liked staff and valued the support offered.
- Staff felt supported by leadership.
- There was a culture of improvement.
- Management were responsive to the inspection and suggested improvements.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

During our visits, staff were consistently observed to offer support with kindness, gentleness and, where needed, with a good dose of fun. People responded well to staff. One person was positively beaming when the worker arrived, their joy was clearly visible. Everyone spoke very highly of the staff and their role in providing support. Some family members told us that they were hesitant to use a care service but found it had exceeded their expectations and improved their and their loved one's day. People and their families truly valued all staff at Carers Direct, this is testament to staff's hard work and commitment to provide a good service to all.

Staff were noted to be mindful of people's health and were able to recognise and respond to changes in people's needs. They knew when to offer advice to keep well such as recommending the use of moisturisers for dry skin but explaining that if it persisted medical support would be needed. They were praised by various family members for recognising when a health professional was required and for following up such support. It was also refreshing to see that there was a recognition of people's emotional wellbeing and the development of training around loneliness which was being rolled out across the staff team. This was developed in conjunction with a local voluntary organisation with staff learning from their knowledge and experiences. This reassured us that staff were thinking beyond task based work and looking at a person's overall needs.

Staff were proactive in ensuring that when people could do for themselves, it was encouraged. One person had support around meal preparation and they directed the staff as to what had to be done and when. This meant that the person retained control over their support and in turn over how they lived their life. We were reassured that staff were determined to help people retain skills and for them to thrive. In life, we rarely function in complete isolation, we need others around us to thrive and staff support can often ensure this happens.

In some cases staff supported people with their medication. At the start of the inspection, we were made aware that management had already asked for up to date training and audit support from the pharmacy service attached to the Health and Social Care Partnership. This was positive as it indicated a service which reached out to others for support in areas of practice which were more specialised. We did feel that improvements were required in some aspects of recording and also to ensure that people's legal rights around medication support were properly documented. We discussed this with management and were confident of their ability to make improvements in a timely manner.

How good is our leadership?**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the leadership provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

The main office is based in Helensburgh but support is provided by team co-ordinators who support the manager and cover different areas of the authority. Alongside them are the administration team who are often the first point of contact for people getting in touch with the service. People, families and staff all reported positively on the responses they received from the administration team as the first port of call.

Management told us at the outset that staff worked well to provide solutions to any issues that they came across. This indicated a team who were confident in their abilities but also a leadership style that encouraged staff to use their initiative to problem solve. This is really important when it is considered that staff are often working with people who they know very well and management will not know people as well. Staff still used management for support and reported concerns as required. The service did not receive many complaints but where they were asked to investigate any concerns, this was completed to a high standard.

Staff training was in place with good tracking of what staff had completed and when they needed refresher training. Along with this, staff were offered supervision which gave staff and supervisors a formal chance to discuss good practice and where further skills and knowledge could be developed. It was positive to see that the service promoted the use of observation of staff competency. Taken together, these formal supports reassure us that management are mindful of their responsibilities to employ and retain staff who have the required skills and conduct themselves in a manner that is supportive of people and their needs.

Equally staff reported good informal support. They felt supported by co-ordinators, the manager and the provider. Staff spoke of a good work, life balance. Their wishes around leave were respected and taken into consideration. We were under no illusion that this added an extra layer to rota planning but staff felt valued by this commitment to their wellbeing. Staff also valued peer support. Staff worked as a team and recognised their role in making the team work whether from sharing information or from seeking it from colleagues. This helped to promote a consistent service for people because staff knew what to do and when.

It is important that all care services look at what they are doing well and what needs to improve. Quality assurance was in place. Feedback was sought in a variety of different ways and used to inform the service development plan. Self evaluation was used in the service which allowed managers to reflect on how the service was meeting people's needs. This reassured us that the leadership team were mindful of improvement and were not complacent about the service. We did discuss some areas such as looking at themes within audits which would develop their quality assurance processes further. We were reassured by their engagement throughout the inspection and anticipate that when we return they will have looked at this.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To minimise risk and ensure people's safety, all staff should receive practical training in moving and assisting prior to the provision of support requiring the use of a hoist or lifting equipment.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 3.14)

"I am supported and cared for sensitively by people who anticipate issues and are aware of and plan for any known vulnerability or frailty" (HSCS 3.19).

This area for improvement was made on 21 February 2020.

Action taken since then

The service had ensured that staff in a supervisory role were able to gain the required qualification that allowed them to deliver practical moving and assisting training and to assess staff competency. This ensured that staff can easily and quickly access training that may be required to carry out their role. The trainers are also able to deliver this in a manner that ensures it is bespoke to the person supported if needed. Staff were also required to refresh such training which ensured they were following up to date practice.

This area for improvement has been met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 People get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	5 - Very Good

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