



Statement in response to recent CQC inspection

Background

Bloomsbury Home Care has been trading in Thorpe le Soken, Essex for 13 years.

The management team has extensive home care experience, the CEO and Operations Director between them have over 50 years. The CEO was instrumental in drafting the first national standards for home care.

In our view, the performance of the branch over the past year merits an outstanding rating and the most recent inspection does not truly reflect the performance of our staff during the past two years.

Failure to inspect

CQC inspected the Thorpe branch on 3 April 2019.

Under CQC's own remit, the service must be re-inspected within one year of that date.

Yet CQC did not inspect again until 29 April 2021 despite numerous requests from ourselves.

Feedback from customers and staff

Our major customer, Essex County Council, inspects our service regularly. Their latest published inspection gave a rating of overall good.

Feedback from staff has been invariably positive.

Our unique small team structure means that staff know who their direct line manager is and are well-managed and supervised.

Our turnover of staff, particularly at the team leader level, is remarkably low.

Our customer feedback, both from reviews and from questionnaires, has been exceptionally positive.

Again the small team structure means that customers know the person who manages their service, and receive care with good continuity from a small number of staff.

Overall rating based on narrow findings relating to Covid 19

We were extremely disappointed with the draft inspection report that was recently provided to us by the CQC after our most recent inspection on 28 April 2021. So much so that we robustly challenged areas that we believed were not factually accurate.

The inspector who conducted that inspection seems to have based her findings almost exclusively on her belief that we did not have a sufficiently robust covid policy in place. We strongly dispute this. Throughout the pandemic Bloomsbury has managed, sometimes only with huge efforts from staff, to deliver an uninterrupted service to all of its customers, missing no visits, using no agency. Staff have put themselves at risk to achieve this.

- At all times we have kept all of our customers safe.
- CQC reviewed our Covid practices in August 2020 and found them to be good.
- The inspector's major issue seems to have been the lack of a robust covid policy. Yet, as we pointed out, government guidance and best practice advice was changing often on a weekly basis. We therefore felt it more appropriate to issue guidance regularly to staff as advice changed ensuring they were kept up to date with current government guidelines.
- We disputed all of the inspector's negative findings, but all of our factual accuracy comments were rejected and the report has been published.

The report is not representative of the branch's overall performance:-

The branch has delivered outstanding care for the last year and more.

We can evidence this (and was evidenced during the inspection and in our subsequent factual accuracy challenge) through the following:-

- Staff feedback
- Staff turnover
- Customer feedback
- Feedback from Essex County Council
- Overall rating based on narrow findings relating to Covid 19 regardless of the fact that all staff and clients remained safe.

We have notified the CQC that we reject their inspection report upon our belief that the regulator has acted unfairly in the way that it has inspected our service and its failure to properly consider our factual accuracy comments.

We are particularly disappointed that the CQC, in our inspection and others around the country, have failed to contextualise their findings or relate them to the extremely challenging times presented during the pandemic.

We will continue to strive to provide excellent services to the people that we care for and remain extremely proud of our staff team that have worked so selflessly during the pandemic.