Surrey resident Alison Jones describes the poor quality of care her father Brian received from MiHomecare in his final years.

When my dad got out of hospital in August 2013 after a variety of diabetes-related conditions he needed carers to come to his house in Caterham every morning and evening to help him wash, dress, prepare his food and take his medicine. He was 76 years old. The care was organised through MiHomecare.

Almost as soon as the carers started it was very clear that they did not have enough time to do their job. They did not seem to have enough time to travel between clients as they rarely turned up on time. This was important as dad was diabetic and needed his food and insulin at
regular times.

One carer was very good. She lived nearby and on the days she came dad was very well cared for. On the other days it was hit and miss.

Often, when I read the notes written after visits, it was clear the carers had no idea that dad could hardly move by himself. They would write that he was up and dressed when they got there in the morning, not realising that he was still dressed from the day before – sometimes the day before that - and hadn't left his chair.

Dad's medicines were kept in a locked box high in the cupboard in the kitchen. This was because he would get confused about what time of day it was and take the wrong medication. But I would regularly find the medicine box left unlocked on the side. I also found pills left on the floor beside dad's chair.

He was on Warfarin, which he needed once a day. The dosage was reassessed weekly by the district nurses and doctors. On several occasions the carers gave it to him more than once or not at all. This meant the next day's dose needed to be changed to keep it safe - and the only way to monitor it was blood tests. As that was not possible to do everyday he was constantly getting the wrong dosage and it was getting harder for the doctors to keep his levels steady.

When I spoke to the MiHomecare office they told me that it wouldn't happen again. But it kept happening. Alarm bells were constantly ringing in my head as I had to rely on these strangers to care for him.

Dad was becoming more and more confused being stuck in the same room day in day out. But not having his medications given correctly was keeping him out of sync and I believe led to him becoming more confused.

Once a carer almost let dad take an overdose of insulin. Luckily I was there and overheard the conversation. Dad was confused and checked with the carer that the dose he was about to take was correct. She said: "yeah, okay". I ran into the room to stop him. I explained in no uncertain terms that the amount could kill him. I asked the carer why she hadn't checked dad's medical folder. She didn't bat an eyelid.

After this incident I contacted the doctors. District nurses had to start coming in and doing his medication until it was sorted out with MiHomecare.

Me and dad had a meeting with a MiHomecare manager and the district nurse. We again discussed what was required from MiHomecare and another form was filled out with clear medical instructions for all carers to observe. But there was no change from before, with them not signing to say he had or hadn't taken his medication, or how much he may have had.

Another time I was there, one of the carers wanted to leave without giving dad the shower and breakfast he was supposed to. The carer said he didn't have enough time but I insisted that he give dad a shower. Dad can't stand up for long but instead of helping him into the purposely-designed chair to help him into the bath, his carer just got him to lean against the sink. The carer took the shower head, held it over dad's head, flooded the bathroom with water, then went home, leaving the bathroom completely flooded and unsafe for an elderly man to walk on.
On other occasions they just rubbed a flannel round dad's face and wrote that up as a wash.

He died in November 2013. I've complained but the complaints department have never returned my calls or emails. On the telephone they always say they will get the manager or the complaints person to call me. No one ever has.

I personally feel they should be closed down.

Thank you for reading this.

Corporate Watch put the above account to Mitie, the owner of MiHomecare. Mitie said:

“The quality of the care that we provide and the safety and dignity of our customers is our highest priority. We are working hard to continually improve standards across the business and we are investing in our people and processes to achieve this.”

If you have information about a company that you'd like to share with Corporate Watch, email us at contact[at]corporatewatch.org or call 02074260005.

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