

Inspection Report

25 February 2022



Balmoral Healthcare Agency Ltd

Type of service: Nursing Agency
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Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

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1.0 Service information

Organisation/Registered Provider: Balmoral Healthcare Agency Ltd	Registered Manager: Mrs Sharon Dunn
Responsible Individual: Mr Kieran McCormick	Date registered: 9 September 2016
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mr Kieran McCormick	
Brief description of the agency operates: Balmoral Healthcare Agency Ltd is a nursing agency located in Belfast. The agency currently supplies registered nurses to Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) facilities and a number of private nursing homes within Northern Ireland.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection was undertaken on 25 February 2022 between 12.15 a.m. and 14.45 p.m. by the care inspector.

The inspection focused on staff recruitment and the agency's governance and management arrangements.

No areas for improvement were identified during the last inspection.

Good practice was identified in the governance and management oversight systems in place including recruitment; staff induction; staff training and the appropriate checks being undertaken before nurses were supplied to the various health care settings. Good practice was also found in relation to the system in place for disseminating Covid-19 related information to staff.

RQIA was assured that this agency supplied nurses who were providing safe, effective and compassionate care and that the agency was well led.

3.0 How we inspect

RQIA's inspections form part of our ongoing assessment of the quality of services. Our reports reflect how they were performing at the time of our inspection, highlighting both good practice and any areas for improvement. It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure

compliance with legislation, standards and best practice, and to address any deficits identified during our inspections.

Prior to the inspection we reviewed the information held by RQIA about this agency. This included the previous inspection report, notifiable incidents and written and verbal communication received since the previous care inspection.

During the inspection we spoke to staff and provided an electronic poster for staff to submit feedback directly to RQIA. We also viewed feedback the agency had received from relatives and professionals.

During the inspection we met with the registered individual. The manager and compliance staff member joined in via Zoom. We focused on reviewing relevant documents. Balmoral Healthcare is paperless and uses a bespoke electronic system to hold all relevant documentation relating to the agency's governance and management arrangements. This included checking how the registered nurses' registrations with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) were monitored by the agency.

We discussed any complaints, adult safeguarding concerns and incidents during the inspection with the manager. We also reviewed the quality monitoring processes to ensure that these areas were routinely monitored as part of the monthly checks in accordance with Regulation 20.

The findings of the inspection were provided to the Kieran McCormick, Sharon Dunn and Danielle Irvine at the conclusion of the inspection.

4.0 What people told us about the agency?

We spoke with one staff member during the inspection who described working in the agency in positive terms. No staff responses were received from the electronic survey.

Staff comments:

"I think the service is more than well led, nothing that can't be communicated to management or escalated." "Their leadership is exemplary as they are so meticulous, comes from compassion towards the patients and service users." "It is great to have leadership you can depend on." "Any safeguarding issues go straight to management." "Fantastic organisation to work in and I'm incredibly proud of Balmoral Health Care."

We reviewed feedback provided to the agency from relatives and professionals.

Relative comments:

'My dad has had to go into a care home and is struggling with the transition. There is a Balmoral carer on one-to-one with him. I just want to say he is excellent with dad. I was so relieved when he came on duty last night.'

Professional's comments:

'I would just like to say that you provide an excellent service in Balmoral Health Care. I would be happy to recommend Balmoral and you at any time.'

5.0 The inspection**5.1 What has this agency done to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since last inspection?**

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic the Department of Health (DoH) directed RQIA to continue to respond to ongoing areas of risk identified in services.

The last inspection to Balmoral Health Care was undertaken on 5 December 2018; no areas for improvement were identified. An inspection was not undertaken in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 inspection years, due to the impact of the first surge of Covid-19.

5.2 Inspection findings**5.2.1 Are there robust systems in place for staff recruitment?**

The review of the agency's staff recruitment confirmed that recruitment was managed in accordance with the Regulations and Minimum Standards before nurses were supplied to the various health care settings. Records reviewed evidenced that criminal record checks (AccessNI) had been completed for staff. Where registered nursing staff required a work permit, there was evidence that the appropriate checks were completed and regularly monitored. There was clear evidence that robust recruitment procedures were in place.

A review of staff profiles confirmed that the information populated into the staff profile is in line with their policy and procedure. Staff profiles are completed and verified by management before staff are offered employment.

The agency requires registered nurses to complete an induction and mandatory training on commencement of employment. Staff are provided with a comprehensive member's handbook outlining their job description, key policies and procedures, training and details of their allocated shifts. In addition, staff have access to a "bespoke" Balmoral Health Care App which gives staff access to their personal details held on them by the agency; mandatory training; relevant policy and procedures; updated information on Covid-19 guidance and timesheets, including shifts. Staff are asked to download the App onto their mobile phone.

There was a robust system in place to ensure that nurses where placed into settings were their skills closely matched the needs of patient/service users. Nurses were provided with training appropriate to the requirements in which they were placed. This training included Deprivation of Liberties Safeguarding (DoLS) and Dysphagia training appropriate to their job roles. Review of the training records evidenced that all staff have received DoLs and Dysphagia training.

The management had a robust system in place to monitor alerts issued by the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) for Northern Ireland.

5.2.2 Are there robust governance processes in place?

The quality monitoring processes were reviewed to ensure that complaints and any incidents were routinely monitored as part of the monthly checks in line with Regulation 20 of Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. Evidence was reviewed that quality monitoring was being completed in line with Regulation 20 and on a monthly basis. Advice was given to ensure the monthly monitoring reports were available to view around the start of the following month. In addition to the monthly monitoring the agency also completed an internal governance report.

There was a system in place to ensure that staff received supervision and appraisal in accordance with the agency's policies and procedures. In addition, staff can avail of "one-to-one bespoke clinical supervision" provided by the registered nurse manager. Review of the electronic system evidenced that staff supervision and appraisals had been undertaken in line with the agency's policy and procedure.

A review of the records confirmed that all staff provided were appropriately registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). Information regarding registration details, renewal and revalidation dates was monitored; this system was reviewed and found to be robust and in compliance with Regulations and Standards.

The agency's complaints policy and procedure details the process and timescales for managing complaints. The records indicated the agency had managed complaints received in accordance with the policy and procedure.

Discussions with the registered individual and manager established that they were knowledgeable in matters relating to adult safeguarding and the process for reporting adult safeguarding concerns. The registered individual and manager are both adult safeguarding champions. An adult safeguarding champion report had been completed and was viewed by the inspector. The agency has an adult safeguarding policy in line with the Trust's regional policy 'Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership' July 2015 and staff are required to complete mandatory adult safeguarding training. Staff that are not up-to-date with adult safeguarding training are not given shifts until this training is completed. Review of the training record evidenced that all staff have up-to-date adult safeguarding training.

The agency has a whistleblowing policy in place which staff can access via the Balmoral Health Care App.

It was established during discussions with the manager that the agency had not been involved in any Serious Adverse Incidents (SAIs)/Significant Event Analyses (SEAs) or Early Alerts (EAs).

There was a good system in place in relation to the dissemination of information relating to Covid-19 and infection prevention and control (IPC) practices.

6.0 Conclusion

Based on the inspection findings RQIA was assured that the agency was providing nurses who provide safe, effective and compassionate care. The agency was deemed to be well led.

7.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

There were no areas for improvement identified during this inspection, and a QIP is not required or included, as part of this inspection report.



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Authority

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