



The **Regulation** and
Quality Improvement
Authority

Inspector: Maire Marley
Inspection ID: IN025198

Healthcare at Home
RQIA ID: 10681
Units 7 & 15
Holly Business Park
Kennedy Way Industrial Estate
Belfast
BT11 9DT

Tel: 02890604675
Email: heatherm@hah.co.uk

**Unannounced Care Inspection
of
Healthcare at Home**

24 March 2016

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
9th Floor Riverside Tower, 5 Lanyon Place, Belfast, BT1 3BT
Tel: 028 9051 7500 Fax: 028 9051 7501 Web: www.rqia.org.uk

1. Summary of Inspection

An unannounced care inspection took place on 24 March 2016 from 9.30 to 12.00. Overall on the day of the inspection the agency was found to be delivering safe, effective and compassionate care. Areas for improvement were identified and are set out in the quality improvement plan appended to this report. This inspection was underpinned by The Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, and The DHSPSS The Nursing Agencies Minimum Standards (2008).

2. Actions/Enforcement Taken Following the Last Inspection

No enforcement action has been taken as a result of the last inspection.

3. Actions/Enforcement Resulting From This Inspection

Enforcement action did not result from the findings of this inspection.

4. Inspection Outcome

This inspection resulted in no requirements or recommendations being made. Findings of the inspection can be found in the main body of the report.

5. Service Details

Registered Organisation/ Registered Provider Healthcare at Home/Bridget Harrison	Registered Manager: Heather Rosemary McNeely
Person in Charge of the Agency at the Time of Inspection: Heather McNeely	Date Registered: 14 August 2008
Number of Registered Nurses, Health Visitors and Midwives on the Agency's Books: 11	

6. Inspection Focus

The inspection sought to assess progress with the issues raised during and since the previous inspection and to establish the level of compliance achieved with respect to the following themes:

Theme 1: Nurse Training - The agency has procedures in place to ensure all nurses are appropriately trained and qualified for their roles.

Theme 2: Vulnerable adults and children are protected from abuse.

7. Methods/Process

Specific methods/processes used in this inspection include the following:

- Discussion with the registered manager
- Discussion with a team of nurses
- Discussion with two nurses privately
- Review of records
- Observation during inspection of the premises
- Evaluation and feedback

Prior to inspection the following records were examined:

- Previous care inspection report
- Notifiable events submitted since the previous care inspection
- Written and verbal communication received since the previous care inspection

The following records were examined during the inspection:

- Staff training record
- Staff induction
- Dates of staff supervision and appraisal
- Staff recruitment files
- Staff competency assessment
- Selected policies and procedures
- Incident records
- Record of complaints
- Sample of policies and procedures

The inspector would like to thank the registered manager and the staff team for their support and co-operation throughout the inspection process.

8. The Inspection

8.1 Review of Requirements and Recommendations from Previous Inspection

Previous Inspection Recommendations		Validation of Compliance
Recommendation 1 Ref: Standard 9.2	The registered person should ensure that a policy is in place for Safeguarding Children and is in line with current legislation.	Met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: The policy for safeguarding children was available and up to date at the time of this inspection.	

Recommendation 2 Ref: Standard 2.5	The registered person should ensure that the Absence of Registered Manager Policy is reviewed three yearly or as required. Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: The policy was examined and found to be up to date and satisfactory at the time of inspection.	Met
Recommendation 3 Ref: Standard 2.1	The registered person should ensure that the following policies are in line with current legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults • Whistleblowing Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: A review of the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults and Whistleblowing policies found them to be current and up to date.	Met
Recommendation 4 Ref: Standard 4.2	The registered person should ensure that an Access NI check for all nurses has been received prior to commencement of employment. Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: A review of three staff files found that the appropriate Access NI checks had been undertaken.	Met

8.2 Theme 1: Nurse Training - The agency has procedures in place to ensure all nurses are appropriately trained and qualified for their roles.

Is Care Safe?

Healthcare at Home is a nursing agency based in Belfast. The agency provides specialist homecare nursing services which facilitates early discharge programmes, specialist outpatient treatment services, outreach chemotherapy and a broad range of clinical services within the Trusts and private sector.

The agency has a dedicated training department and effective policies that detail the role and responsibilities of the nurse and managerial staff regarding professional development and training, as specified by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). The policy outlines mandatory training requirements and was found to be up to date.

Records examined provided evidence that the training needs of individual nurses are identified and systems are in place to provide nurses with a wide range of training that included mandatory training and professional development. During discussions with nurses in a group and with two nurses individually, they outlined the training and information provided over the past year and all commented positively on the training opportunities provided by the agency.

Information examined indicated that each new nurse must complete an induction prior to any placement. The examination of three training records provided evidence that staff had completed a structured orientation and induction programme.

On the day of this inspection the administration systems were well organised and required records were maintained and easily retrieved for examination.

Is Care Effective?

In discussion with staff it was evident emphasis was placed on training. Records examined demonstrated that the training needs of individual staff are identified and systems are in place to meet identified training needs. There was evidence in records examined that mandatory training was up to date. A sample of comments made on the day by nurses regarding their professional development opportunities and training was as follows:

- “Healthcare at home is excellent at providing training.”
- “I feel the training is over and above the requirements and ensures I remain up to date with my practice.”
- “The training and development opportunities provided are really excellent and those areas which I identify in my appraisals are always met.”

Prior to employment, agency staff are required to complete the required mandatory training provided by the agency. It was noted from records viewed that the agency maintains a record of the content of training and the name and qualifications of the person providing the training.

There were suitable arrangements in place to ensure that the skills and expertise of the nurse are matched to the requirements of placements. The registered manager and staff consulted reported that prior to any new contract the nurse is required to complete training in areas specific to the needs of individual service users. This information was confirmed in the three training records reviewed.

Arrangements are in place to check that nurses are registered with the NMC, and nurses are required to produce evidence that their professional registration requirements are met and maintained on an ongoing basis. Policies also referred to the need for nurses to adhere to the NMC Code of Professional Conduct.

There was evidence that staff are in receipt of annual appraisals. An element of the appraisal meeting is to identify and plan training for the forthcoming year. Records viewed provided evidence of regular supervision. Staff consulted expressed satisfaction with the support they received from the management team and reported contact is both informally and formally.

Is Care Compassionate?

Arrangements are in place for the agency to obtain the views of service users. These arrangements also include obtaining service users' views on the nurses provided and their competency. The registered manager discussed these arrangements and described the process for engaging with service users monthly in order to obtain their feedback. The feedback is then populated in a graph format.

The agency analyses the outcome of feedback received, and if required an action plan is developed to address any identified improvements. Comments viewed in returned questionnaires were very positive and indicated service users' satisfaction with the service received.

The registered manager reported that the training record for each nurse is reviewed every month, with a further review of training impact and competencies undertaken by the manager approximately every two months. This is an effective arrangement that ensures the continued competence and capability of the nurses.

Areas for Improvement

There were no areas for improvement identified within this theme.

Number of Requirements	0	Number Recommendations:	0
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8.3 Theme 2: Vulnerable adults and children are protected from abuse.

Healthcare at Home has a global policy for safeguarding vulnerable adults. Within each region policies are then further developed to include the local arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable adults.

The training records examined confirmed that procedures for protecting vulnerable adults, and safeguarding children and young people, are included in the induction programme for staff. In addition, information is displayed in the office on the contact numbers for the local trusts and the regional out of hours social work offices.

There is a written policy on whistleblowing and procedures that outline the responsibility of staff in highlighting concerns or issues relating to poor practice.

The registered manager and staff employed in Northern Ireland were fully familiar with the reporting systems in the event of concerns regarding the protection of vulnerable adults, young people and children, and were fully aware of the records that are required to be maintained. There had been no reported incidents within the agency in the past year.

Is Care Effective?

The registered manager told the inspector of the range of safeguards the agency had implemented to ensure vulnerable adults, young people and children are protected from abuse.

The registered manager reported she was assured that prior to placement agency nurses were provided with sufficient information to ensure they took appropriate action in the event of a suspicion of, or actual abuse. The registered manager was confident with her role and responsibility regarding any investigation in the event of an allegation of abuse being made. The Director of Clinical Services assumes the role of "Safeguarding Champion" and ensures that the organisation's adult safeguarding policy is implemented throughout the organisation.

Is Care Compassionate?

Robust systems were in place to recruit staff as outlined in the recruitment policy and procedures. The registered manager confirmed that she is actively involved in the recruitment process and it was evident that the management team are committed to ensuring any nurse placed by the agency is competent and suitably skilled for the placement. Records are held regarding placement of nurses and the decision making process in this regard.

Three personnel files reviewed were found to be fully compliant with the legislation and standards.

Staff employed complete a corporate induction and are then inducted locally. The induction programme included training in all aspects of abuse and the protection of vulnerable adults, young people and children. Refresher training is provided for nurses on an annual basis. As previously stated, there was evidence that the agency has a programme of supervision in place for each nurse.

Discussion with the registered manager and the staff team, along with the review of training materials and nurse's training files, demonstrated that the agency was effectively adhering to appropriate adult safeguarding procedures.

The agency provides the nurse and service users with an out of hours telephone number should they have a need to raise a concern or require guidance.

Areas for Improvement

There were no areas for improvement identified within this theme.

Number of Requirements	0	Number Recommendations:	0
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Standard 11: There are arrangements in place to respond promptly to requests for private nursing care.

Is Care Safe?

The agency referral system for responding to requests to provide a service within a patient's own home was discussed, and the registered manager and staff could clearly describe the arrangements in place. These arrangements corresponded with the agency procedures to attend any such requests. It was evident the referral system from the local health care trust to the agency was robust and transparent.

Following referral, patients are assessed by a member of the nursing team and an information booklet, treatment record and care plan is developed with the patient. A copy of the information booklet and treatment record is provided to all new patients.

Is Care Effective?

Review of the statement of purpose and the service user guide evidenced up to date information regarding the agency. The complaints section in the statement of purpose and the service user guide had been revised and were in keeping with regulations.

Is Care Compassionate?

It was reported that generally the nurse visits the patient prior to discharge from hospital and all relevant information and training is provided. During home visits the nurse provides any additional information or support. Staff outlined the work/support provided and it was evident that care provided was person centred and individualised to the programme of treatment each patient has agreed.

Areas for Improvement

There were no areas for improvement identified within this theme.

Number of Requirements	0	Number Recommendations:	0
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Standard 12: Safe effective nursing care, that is based on continuous assessment, is planned and agreed with the patient, is accurately recorded in care plans and is regularly reviewed.

Is Care Safe?

A person-centred nursing care plan based on an initial assessment of the patient's care needs is implemented and re-assessed at each visit. The care plan is agreed and signed by the patient, and a copy of the record is held in the patient's home.

Is Care Effective?

The agency has a system in place to ensure that they obtain consent from each patient prior to the commencement of any treatment. It was evident that arrangements were in place to ensure that patients were kept fully informed of issues relating to the care provided by the agency nurse.

Systems were in place to ensure that patients were provided with opportunities to make comments about the quality of care provided. These included the regular visits to the patients' homes by the nurse's line manager.

There was evidence that the agency had robust systems in place to provide ongoing clinical supervision, annual competency assessments and appraisals for the nurse employed by the agency.

Is Care Compassionate?

Patients are encouraged to participate in their care and have the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided.

The discussions held with the registered manager and the named nurse demonstrated that any outcomes of the prescribed treatment and care are clearly explained to patients, and there are ample opportunities to discuss the options available.

Areas for Improvement

There were no areas for improvement identified within this theme.

Number of Requirements	0	Number Recommendations:	0
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Standard 13: There are accurate and up to date case records for private patients who receive care in their own homes by nurses supplied by the nursing agency.

Is Care Safe?

The staff team was fully familiar with the agency guidelines relating to the management of record keeping and access to patient records. A review of a sample of case records found that entries were contemporaneous, dated, timed and signed, with the signature accompanied by the name and designation of the signatory.

Is Care Effective?

Staff consulted outlined the records maintained in the patients' homes, and explained that on each visit they recorded the care or treatment provided in the patients' records. Staff were fully aware of the procedures regarding the management of the patients' records.

Is Care Compassionate?

The information provided to patients and discussions with the staff team and registered manager provided evidence that patients are fully aware of the records maintained and how they would be retained.

Areas for Improvement

There were no areas for improvement identified within this standard.

Number of Requirements	0	Number Recommendations:	0
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Standard 14: Consent to treatment and care is obtained from private patients who receive care in their own home.

Is Care Safe?

The agency has a clear policy and procedure in place for obtaining consent to treatment and care that reflected the NMC Code of Professional Conduct and DHSSPS guidelines.

Nurses spoken with during the inspection explained that prior to any treatment the patient has also consented to be involved in the treatment plan.

Nurses are available during home visits to explain all procedures and answer any questions.

Is Care Effective?

It was evident from the review of records and discussions with the named nurse that the patient is provided with information regarding their treatment, possible side effects and expected outcomes prior to obtaining consent.

Is Care Compassionate?

Discussions with the staff team found them to be professional and fully conversant with the different aspects of obtaining consent. It was evident that the nurses placed emphasis on ensuring that patients and their representatives were fully informed of the implications of the treatment and any options available to them.

Areas for Improvement

There were no areas for improvement identified within this standard.

Number of Requirements	0	Number Recommendations:	0
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Standard 15: There are arrangements in place to ensure that agency nurses manage medicines safely and securely in private patients' own homes.

Is Care Safe?

Nurses are issued with relevant information regarding the medication to be administered and any specific treatment protocols relating to the medication. An information pack is also included in the patient support programme. In discussions it was confirmed that compliance with the medications policy and procedure and the specific treatment administration is checked during supervision/site visits.

Is Care Effective?

The agency has policies and procedures in place for the management and administration of medication in the patient's own home. The policy and procedures covers all activities concerned with the management of medicines for private patients.

Is Care Compassionate?

Staff consulted were fully aware and could confidently discuss the records to be maintained regarding the administration of medicines. The procedures for reporting any medication incidents that occur in private patients' homes were discussed, and the named nurse was familiar with the process to follow in the event of such an occurrence.

Areas for Improvement

There were no areas for improvement identified within this standard.

Number of Requirements	0	Number Recommendations:	0
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No requirements or recommendations resulted from this inspection.

I agree with the content of the report.			
Registered Manager	Heather McNeely	Date Completed	25/05/16
Registered Person	Nicholas Conway	Date Approved	24/05/16
RQIA Inspector Assessing Response	Maire Marley	Date Approved	25/05/16

Please provide any additional comments or observations you may wish to make below:

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It should be noted that this inspection report should not be regarded as a comprehensive review of all strengths and weaknesses that exist in the service. The findings set out are only those which came to the attention of RQIA during the course of this inspection. The findings contained within this report do not absolve the registered person/manager from their responsibility for maintaining compliance with minimum standards and regulations.