

Announced Care Inspection Report 19 February 2021



Antrim Community Services

Type of Service: Domiciliary Care Agency
Address: Oriel House, 12 Castle Street, Antrim, BT41 4HP
Tel No: 028 9442 6002
Inspector: Corrie Visser

www.rqia.org.uk

It should be noted that this inspection report should not be regarded as a comprehensive review of all strengths and areas for improvement that exist in the service. The findings reported on are those which came to the attention of RQIA during the course of this inspection. The findings contained within this report do not exempt the service provider from their responsibility for maintaining compliance with legislation, standards and best practice.

1.0 What we look for



2.0 Profile of service

Antrim Community Services is a Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) domiciliary care agency, based in Antrim town. The staff team of 72 provide personal care and social support to 140 service users.

3.0 Service details

Organisation/Registered Provider: Northern HSC Trust Responsible Individual: Ms Jennifer Welsh	Registered Manager: Mrs Elizabeth McErlean
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Manager	Date manager registered: Acting since 17 August 2020

4.0 Inspection summary

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. Since the inspection on 22 January 2019, RQIA have not completed a primary inspection.

Having reviewed the agency's regulatory history, in addition to RQIA not being made aware of any specific risk to the service users within the agency, the decision was made to undertake a remote inspection approach, to reduce any risk in relation to the spread of Covid-19.

An announced inspection took place on 19 February 2021 from 10.00 to 11.05 hours.

Information was requested to be submitted to RQIA prior to the inspection and this was reviewed by the inspector in advance of the inspection. The inspection focused on discussing aspects off the submitted information, in order to substantiate the information. We contacted stakeholders to obtain their views on the service quality.

We reviewed the dates that criminal records checks for staff employed by the agency (AccessNI) had been completed to ensure that they were in place before staff were supplied to service users. We checked that all staff were registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and that there was a system in place for ongoing monitoring of staff registrations. Staff adherence to the Covid-19 guidance was also reviewed through discussion with a number of staff. This was also verified through discussions with the manager, the quality and compliance manager, service users and service users' representatives. In addition, we reviewed Covid related information disseminated to staff.

The inspection assessed progress with any areas for improvement identified since the last care inspection and to determine if the agency was delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and if the service was well led.

Evidence of good practice was found in relation to staff registrations with NISCC, recruitment, communication with stakeholders and monitoring of staff practice. Good practice was also found in relation to infection prevention and control (IPC). It was also evidenced that all staff had been adhering to the current Covid-19 guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

No areas for improvement were identified during this inspection.

Those consulted with indicated that they were satisfied with the care and support provided.

The findings of this report will provide the agency with the necessary information to assist them to fulfil their responsibility, enhance practice and service users' experience.

This inspection was underpinned by the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007, the Domiciliary Care Agencies Minimum Standards, 2011 and The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Social Care Workers Prohibition) and Fitness of Workers (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.

4.1 Inspection outcome

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of areas for improvement	0	0

This inspection resulted in no areas for improvement being identified. Findings of the inspection were discussed with the manager, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.

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

4.2 Action/enforcement taken following the most recent care inspection dated 22 January 2019

No further actions were required to be taken following the most recent inspection on 22 January 2019.

5.0 How we inspect

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

Following our inspection we focused on contacting the service users, their relatives and staff to find out their views on the service. We also spoke with HC professionals involved with the service.

To ensure that the required pre-employment checks were in place before staff visited service users, we reviewed the following:

- recruitment records specifically relating to Access NI and NISCC registration

We also reviewed IPC procedures to ensure that they were compliant with the current Covid-19 guidance for domiciliary care providers in Northern Ireland.

We discussed any complaints and incidents that had been received by the agency with the manager and in addition we reviewed the quality monitoring processes to ensure that these areas were routinely monitoring as part of the monthly checks in line with Regulation 23 of The Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.

RQIA provided information to service users, staff and other stakeholders that will support feedback on the quality of service delivery. This included an electronic survey for service users, relatives and staff to feedback to the RQIA. No feedback was received by way of the electronic survey.

We would like to thank the manager, service users, service user's relatives, staff and professionals for their support and co-operation throughout the inspection process.

6.0 What people told us about this agency

The feedback received indicated the people were very satisfied with the current care and support. During the inspection we spoke with the manager with the use of video technology. It was confirmed that staff wore PPE as necessary.

Following the inspection, we spoke with three service users, one service user's representatives, two care workers and three HSC professionals. All those spoken to indicated that they were generally very happy with the care and support provided by the agency. Comments are details below:

Staff:

- "Everything is grand."
- "My line managers are great."
- "Supervision is being done over the phone as there is no face to face contact at present."
- "We get weekly supplies of PPE."
- "We received guidance and training in relation to the donning and doffing of PPE."
- "They are a good company to work for."
- "Training has started up again."
- "My induction, even though it was many years ago, was very good."
- "We have enough time to deliver the care to our service users."
- "Training is kept up to date as much as it can be in the current circumstances. Pre Covid-19, we were always being called in for training."

Service users:

- "Perfect."
- "I'm absolutely happy with the care I am getting."
- "They are marvellous."
- "They are just like friends."
- "They chat as they go along and always ask me if there is anything else I need."
- "They couldn't be better equipped."
- "They are all risking their lives every time they come in with what is going on but we keep ourselves as safe as we possibly can."

Service users' representatives:

- "I am very happy with the care."
- "My relative likes the carers."
- "It's fine."
- "They were full PPE."

HSC professionals:

- “The service is great.”
- “They are very efficient and very effective.”
- “All my service users are grateful and thankful for the service they receive.”
- “The service couldn’t be any more helpful.”
- We have an excellent rapport and they are a very friendly team. I feel I can approach them about any aspect of manual handling as they all offer a person centred approach to their clients and are dedicated to keeping to keeping both their clients and their homecare workers safe
- “I get a large percentage of my referrals from this team for new packages of care starting up and also for yearly reviews. If there is a difficulty or issue with manual handling I also have urgent reviews being flagged . They do all this in a timely manner and refer on appropriately. It helps me plan my review list as if they know I am going out to a certain area especially a rural area they would ask me to check in on someone else as well rather than re- referring them the following week.”
- “If I have an issue or concern about a client I am able to ring them directly for support. Whilst the named worker may not be there that day they all know about each other’s cases and are able to get me the information I need immediately. They all work together as a team and I can speak to any of them about any case at all. If I need to liaise with home care workers to demonstrate manual handling techniques or to discuss difficulties in mobility they arrange all that for me so that the client can be seen quickly and I don’t have to make appointments with everyone.”
- “I am very happy with the service they provide. It makes my role as a risk assessor easier when all the relevant referral forms have been filled in accurately. They know their clients “inside out” so when an urgent referral comes through they are able to give me a bit of insight as to what is going on with that person so I can bring specific pieces of equipment out to them to assist with their manual handling and transfers thus keeping the client independent and in control at all times.”
- “I work very closely with the Home Care Team in commissioning services for our service users. They provide much needed support with personal care, dressing, toileting, mobility, meals and medication. They help to highlight any issues that as social workers we may not be aware of given our restricted face to face contact during these times. They are good at communicating with us and I feel we work really well together to meet the needs of our service users. They have a quick response time and professional approach in addressing any issues/concerns raised and are happy to accommodate joint reviews etc. given their busy schedule. In particular, the team we work with are now based in the same office as our team which is very effective in communicating and discussing care services directly, as often telephone contact can delay things. They are a very important aspect of our community service and the staff themselves are very approachable. Carers and families speak very highly of the staff and often request for their service over others. They are a very valued, highly demanded service that we could not operate as effectively without.”

7.0 The inspection

There were no areas for improvement made as a result of the last care inspection.

7.1 Inspection findings

The review of the agency's staff recruitment records confirmed that recruitment was managed in conjunction with the human resources (HR) department in accordance with the regulations and minimum standards. All pre-employment checks are completed before staff members commence employment and visit service users. This ensures that the staff employed are appropriate to have direct engagement with service users.

A review of the records confirmed that all staff provided by the agency are currently registered with NISCC. We noted that there was a system in place each month for monitoring staff registrations. The manager advised that staff are not permitted to work if their professional registration lapses.

Covid-19

We spoke to the manager and to two staff members who were knowledgeable in relation to their responsibility in relation to Covid-19. Staff stated they were aware of the guidance in relation to the use of PPE for activities that brought them within two metres of service users. Staff were also aware of the need to replace PPE between service users and how to appropriately dispose of used PPE. There was evidence that staff had completed training with regards to IPC and they had been provided with clear guidance.

We reviewed the current practices relating to the following areas of guidance and good practice relating to Covid-19:

- dissemination of information to staff
- IPC policies and procedures have been updated to address all current guidance in relation to Covid-19
- PPE storage and disposal
- staff training and guidance on IPC and the use of PPE equipment in line with guidance

We reviewed records relating to IPC policies which were in-line with the guidance. The policies and procedures had been updated to include Covid-19

The procedure and guidance in place show that:

- robust systems are in place to ensure that current IPC guidance is available and accessible to staff
- all staff working in the service are able to demonstrate their knowledge of IPC practice commensurate to their role and function in the service

Based on feedback it was positive to note that staff were working well together to support the best outcomes for service users, in a caring manner whilst being caring and compassionate to both service users and their relatives.

It was also noted that staff were committed to working in line with Covid-19 guidance to ensure that the impact of current measures, strikes the correct balance between keeping people safe and promoting a good quality of life, as highlighted by relatives in their comments. Staff are being vigilant in terms of monitoring people for symptoms and are adhering to the public health guidance in order to minimise the risk of introducing or spreading Covid-19.

Areas of good practice

Evidence of good practice was found in relation to staff registrations with NISCC, recruitment, communication with stakeholders and monitoring of staff practice.

Good practice was also found in relation to all current Covid-19 guidance and the use of PPE guidelines, Covid-19 education and management including IPC measures.

Areas for improvement

No areas for improvement were identified during this inspection.

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of areas for improvement	0	0

8.0 Quality improvement plan

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



The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
9th Floor
Riverside Tower
5 Lanyon Place
BELFAST
BT1 3BT

Tel 028 9536 1111
Email info@rqia.org.uk
Web www.rqia.org.uk
 [@RQIANews](https://twitter.com/RQIANews)