

Unannounced Care Inspection Report

26 February 2018



Homecare (Northern Ireland) Ltd t/a Homecare Independent Living

Type of service: Domiciliary Care Agency
Address: Callan House, 51 Hill Street, Milford, Milford
Tel No: 02837511333
Inspector: Bridget Dougan

www.rqia.org.uk

Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

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

This is a domiciliary care agency which provides personal care to around 1464 service users in their own homes. The agency covers all trust areas in Northern Ireland (with the exception of Western Health and Social Care Trust) and also provides domiciliary care in Southern Ireland.

3.0 Service details

Organisation/Registered Provider: Homecare (Northern Ireland) Ltd t/a Homecare Independent Living Responsible Individual: Mairead Mackle	Registered Manager: Joanne Murray
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Head of Quality and Compliance	Date manager registered: 10/08/2015

4.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 26 February 2018 from 10.00 to 13.00 hours.

This inspection was underpinned by the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 and the Domiciliary Care Agencies Minimum Standards, 2011.

The inspection was undertaken following information received by RQIA from an anonymous source in relation to recruitment practices.

Evidence of good practice was found in relation to a range of policies and procedures.

One area for improvement under the regulations and two areas for improvement under the standards were identified in respect of recruitment processes.

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

4.1 Inspection outcome

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of areas for improvement	1	2

Findings of the inspection were discussed with the head of quality and compliance, 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 29 June 2017

A serious concerns meeting was held on 11 July 2017 to discuss with the responsible person RQIA's concerns in respect of Regulation 13 (a) and (b) of the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (fitness of domiciliary care workers supplied by the agency).

RQIA received assurances from the responsible person that appropriate actions had been taken to ensure all matters remain in compliance. A decision was made by RQIA not to proceed with further enforcement action at that time. The positive aspects of the inspection and the discussions with the staff during the inspection of 29 June 2017 were taken into consideration in this regard.

5.0 How we inspect

Prior to the inspection a range of information relevant to the service was reviewed. This included the following records:

- notifiable events since the previous care inspection
- written and verbal communication received since the previous care inspection which may include information in respect of serious adverse incidents (SAI's), potential adult safeguarding issues and whistleblowing
- the previous care inspection report.

During the inspection the inspector met with the the head of quality and compliance, the employee relations manager, two service delivery managers and one care staff member.

The following information was examined during the inspection:

- six recruitment records
- recruitment policy and procedure
- whistleblowing policy and procedure
- safeguarding policy and procedure
- induction and training policy and procedure
- alphabetical index of domiciliary care workers
- records relating to adult safeguarding
- NISCC checks

The findings of the inspection were provided to the the head of quality and compliance at the conclusion of the inspection.

6.0 The inspection

6.1 Review of areas for improvement from the most recent inspection dated 29 June 2017

The most recent inspection of the agency was an unannounced care inspection. No areas for improvement were identified.

6.2 Review of areas for improvement from the last care inspection dated 29 June 2017

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

6.3 Inspection findings

A range of policies and procedures were reviewed in relation to staff recruitment, induction, training, safeguarding and whistleblowing. These policies and procedures were found to be up to date and compliant with related regulations and standards.

The inspector reviewed a list of all staff currently employed by the agency. Six staff records were selected by the inspector for review in respect of recruitment practices.

It was noted that a telephone reference from the most recent employer had been obtained for four members of staff. This was discussed with the head of quality and compliance who informed the inspector that telephone references had been sought when all other avenues had been exhausted. There was evidence that two written references had been requested for each of the members of staff and had been followed up prior to obtaining the telephone references. For each of the telephone references obtained, there was evidence that the reference request form had been used to record the telephone conversation and that the name of the person they were speaking to, the date and time of the calls had been recorded. Any witnesses to the telephone conversation should also be recorded. An area for improvement has been made.

There was evidence in five staff records that all relevant pre-employment checks had been completed and information obtained prior to staff commencing work. A reference from the most recent employer of one staff member had not been obtained prior to the staff member commencing employment. An improvement has been made in this regard.

The manager informed us that this member of staff had been recruited some time ago and prior to a serious concerns meeting with RQIA on 11/7/17 following which significant improvements had been made in the agency's recruitment processes.

A dedicated human resources administrator had been identified to manage a checklist in each applicants file. The checklist identified the significant dates for the process of recruitment and included the dates references had been requested, received and start dates. This checklist was evidenced during the inspection. The agency may wish to review its' current application form to ensure they ask the following "have you ever been dismissed from any employment". An improvement has been made in this respect.

Records reviewed evidenced all staff members' registration with Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and a system was in place to review staff renewal of registration. The manager confirmed all staff are registered with NISCC.

An updated safeguarding policy and procedure was in place and a safeguarding champion for the agency had been identified. The head of quality and compliance confirmed that all staff had been made aware of the updated policy, which was available on the staff portal. It was also confirmed that all staff had received mandatory safeguarding training on an annual basis and were aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

One safeguarding concern had been reported to the agency since the last inspection. Discussion with the head of quality and compliance and review of records evidenced they had investigated and reported to RQIA and other relevant bodies appropriately. The inspector spoke with two service delivery managers and one care staff member during the inspection.

Staff confirmed they had received training, supervision and appraisal, that communication was good within the agency and they could speak to their manager if they had any concerns. Staff confirmed they were satisfied that a good standard of care was provided and that service users were safe and protected from harm.

Areas of good practice

Areas of good practice were found throughout the inspection in relation to a range of policies and procedures.

Areas for improvement

One area for improvement under the regulations was identified in respect of recruitment processes. Two areas for improvement under the standards were identified in respect of recruitment processes.

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of areas for improvement	1	2

7.0 Quality improvement plan

Areas for improvement identified during this inspection are detailed in the QIP. Details of the QIP were discussed with the head of quality and compliance, as part of the inspection process. The timescales commence from the date of inspection.

The registered provider/manager should note that if the action outlined in the QIP is not taken to comply with regulations and standards this may lead to further enforcement action including possible prosecution for offences.

It is the responsibility of the registered provider to ensure that all areas for improvement identified within the QIP are addressed within the specified timescales.

Matters to be addressed as a result of this inspection are set in the context of the current registration of the agency. The registration is not transferable so that in the event of any future application to alter, extend or to sell the premises RQIA would apply standards current at the time of that application.

7.1 Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement have been identified where action is required to ensure compliance with the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.

7.2 Actions to be taken by the service

The QIP should be completed and detail the actions taken to address the areas for improvement identified. The registered provider should confirm that these actions have been completed and return the completed QIP via Web Portal for assessment by the inspectors.

Quality Improvement Plan

Action required to ensure compliance with The Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007

Area for improvement 1 Ref: Regulation 13 (d) Stated: First time	The registered person shall ensure that before making an offer of employment, two satisfactory written references are obtained, one of which is from the applicant's present or most recent employer. Ref: 6.3
To be completed by: 31 March 2018	Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: HCIL will make every effort to obtain two satisfactory written references, one of which will be from the applicant's present or most recent employer, with at least the dates of employment. After exhausting every option of trying to obtain a written reference for a present or most recent employer, HCIL will then seek to obtain a reference from a previous employer. Every effort will be made to obtain past employment references and these will be documented within the HR file, but if candidates have not worked before or have not worked for a number of years, then two written character references will be obtained.

Action required to ensure compliance with The Domiciliary Care Agencies Minimum Standards (2011)

Area for improvement 1 Ref: Standard 11.2 Stated: First time To be completed by: 31 March 2018	The registered person shall ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to source two written references for each applicant. Where the previous employer will not provide a written reference and a reference is taken by telephone, a record should be kept of the time and date of the call, the name of the person you are speaking to, and any witness to your conversation. Ref: 6.3
	Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: When a telephone reference has been obtained, a written record will be kept of the time and date of the call, the name of the person they are speaking to and the call will be recorded for auditing purposes. Witnesses to the conversation is only obtained during training and monitoring.

<p>Area for improvement 2</p> <p>Ref: Standard 11</p> <p>Stated: First time</p> <p>To be completed by: 31 March 2018</p>	<p>The registered person shall ensure that the job application forms are reviewed to ensure that the following question is asked "Have you ever been dismissed from any employment?"</p> <p>Ref: 6.3</p> <p>Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: Application forms are in the process of being reviewed and will obtain the following statement: "Have you ever been dismissed from any employment".</p>
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Please ensure this document is completed in full and returned via Web Portal



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