

# Inspection Report

2 March 2023



## Rathgill Link Supported Living Service

Type of service: Domiciliary Care Agency  
Address: Balloo, Bangor, BT19 7TT  
Telephone number: 028 9147 1683

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Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

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## 1.0 Service information

<b>Organisation/Registered Provider:</b> Autism Initiatives NI  <b>Responsible Individual:</b> Dr Eamonn James Edward Slevin	<b>Registered Manager:</b> Ms Marion Willis  <b>Date registered:</b> 16 July 2018
<b>Person in charge at the time of inspection:</b> Ms Marion Willis	
<b>Brief description of the accommodation/how the service operates:</b> Rathgill Link is a supported living type domiciliary care agency provided by Autism Initiatives. The agency provides care and support services to three individuals. A staff team provide 24 hours per day care and support to the service users.	

## 2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 2 March 2023 between 9.00 a.m. and 11.30a.m. The inspection was conducted by a care inspector.

The inspection examined the agency's governance and management arrangements, reviewing areas such as staff recruitment, professional registrations, staff induction and training and adult safeguarding. The reporting and recording of accidents and incidents, complaints, whistleblowing, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), Service user involvement, Restrictive practices, Dysphagia management and Covid-19 guidance was also reviewed.

Good practice was identified in relation to service user involvement and staff induction and training. There were good governance and management arrangements in place.

The agency uses the term 'people supported' to describe the people to whom they provide care and support. For the purposes of the inspection report, the term 'service user' is used, in keeping with the relevant regulations.

We noted some of the compliments received by the agency from various sources:

- "Staff at 43 are the best."
- "The team work well together supporting my relative."
- "Everyone provides a great service to clients."
- "I can only praise the team for the support to my relative."

### 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.

In preparation for this inspection, a range of information about the service was reviewed. This included any previous areas for improvement identified, registration information, and any other written or verbal information received from service users, relatives, staff or the Commissioning Trust.

As a public-sector body, RQIA has a duty to respect, protect and fulfil the rights that people have under the Human Rights Act 1998 when carrying out our functions. In our inspections of domiciliary care agencies, we are committed to ensuring that the rights of people who receive services are protected. This means we will seek assurances from providers that they take all reasonable steps to promote people's rights. Users of domiciliary care services have the right to expect their dignity and privacy to be respected and to have their independence and autonomy promoted. They should also experience the individual choices and freedoms associated with any person living in their own home.

Having reviewed the model "We Matter" Adult Learning Disability Model for NI 2020, the Vision states, 'We want individuals with a learning disability to be respected and empowered to lead a full and healthy life in their community'. RQIA shares this vision and want to review the support individuals are offered to make choices and decisions in their life that enable them to develop and to live a safe, active and valued life.

RQIA will review how service users who have a learning disability are respected and empowered to lead a full and healthy life in the community and are supported to make choices and decisions that enables them to develop and live safe, active and valued lives.

Information was provided to service users, relatives, staff and other stakeholders on how they could provide feedback on the quality of services. This included easy read questionnaires and an electronic staff survey.

### 4.0 What did people tell us about the service?

During the inspection we provided a number of easy read questionnaires for service users or their representative to comment on the following areas of service quality and their lived experiences. We also had discussions with staff. We also observed service users going about their morning routine with the support of staff.

#### Agency staff comments:

- "I am aware of NISCC their values and standards and my role as a care worker."
- "I have all my training up to date."
- "I have regular supervision."

- “The induction is comprehensive and prepares you for the role. You have the opportunity to shadow other staff.”
- “Good staff communication with each other.”
- “The manager has an open door policy.”
- “The people we support are put first.”
- “This is a very person centred service.”



- Do you feel your care is safe?
- Is the care and support you get effective?
- Do you feel staff treat you with compassion?
- How do you feel your care is managed?.

No service user questionnaires were returned prior to the issue of this report.  
Returned staff questionnaires show that staff were satisfied or very satisfied.  
Comments from staff:

- “All staff are greatly valued by our manager. Team is well lead. I am very satisfied with how our people supported are cared for and with the support from staff are able to carry out their lives as independently as possible.”
- “I have worked with AI for nearly 20years and although we have faced many a crisis such as the Covid pandemic we have all worked together under the eye of a fantastic service manager and been able to support our service users to live their daily lives to their full potential.”
- “The service has an incredible team who keep the people we support safe, happy and part of the community. Our manager ensures that all goals are met and that every member of the team feels supported and are happy in their job roll. she ensures the people we support get the highest level of care, compassion, fun and activities to suit them and their needs... the only negative is we desperately need staff. it’s very hard to get people in and who will stay.”

## 5.0 The inspection

### 5.1 What has this service done to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since the last inspection?

The last care inspection of the agency was undertaken on 1 February 2022 by a care inspector. No areas for improvement were identified.

## 5.2 Inspection findings

### 5.2.1 What are the systems in place for identifying and addressing risks?

The agency's provision for the welfare, care and protection of service users was reviewed. The organisation's adult safeguarding policy and procedures were reflective of the Department of Health's (DoH) regional policy and clearly outlined the procedure for staff in reporting concerns. The organisation had an identified Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC). The agency's annual Adult Safeguarding Position report had been completed and was satisfactory.

Discussions with the manager established that they were knowledgeable in matters relating to adult safeguarding, the role of the ASC and the process for reporting and managing adult safeguarding concerns.

Staff were required to complete adult safeguarding training during induction and every two years thereafter. All staff had undertaken training in relation to adult safeguarding. Following review of incident records, it was evident that staff understood their role in relation to reporting poor practice and the agency's policy and procedure with regard to whistleblowing. The agency had provided service users with information about keeping themselves safe and the details of the process for reporting any concerns.

RQIA had been notified appropriately of any incidents in keeping with the regulations. Incidents had been managed appropriately.

Staff were provided with training appropriate to the requirements of their role. The manager advised that there were no service users requiring the use of specialised equipment to assist them with moving.

A review of care records identified that risk assessments and care plans were up to date.

Care reviews had been undertaken in keeping with the agency's policies and procedures. There was also evidence of regular contact with service users and their representatives, in line with the commissioning trust's requirements.

All staff had been provided with training in relation to medicines management. The manager advised that no service users required their medicine to be administered with a syringe. The manager was aware that should this be required; a competency assessment would be undertaken before staff undertook this task.

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) provides a legal framework for making decisions on behalf of service users who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The MCA requires that, as far as possible, service users make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When service users lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.

Staff had completed appropriate Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) training appropriate to their job roles. The manager reported that current service users were subject to (DoLs) arrangements. The documentation in place was satisfactory.

There were arrangements in place to ensure that service users who required high levels of supervision or monitoring and restriction had had their capacity considered and, where appropriate, assessed. Where a service user was experiencing a deprivation of liberty, the care records contained details of assessments completed and agreed outcomes developed in conjunction with the HSC Trust representative.

Restrictive practice agreements were in place and were reviewed on a regular basis.

There was a system in place for notifying RQIA if the agency was managing individual service users' monies in accordance with the guidance.

### **5.2.2 What are the arrangements for promoting service user involvement?**

From reviewing service users' care records, it was good to note that service users and their relatives had an input into devising their own plan of care. The service users' care plans were person-centred and contained details about their likes, dislikes and preferences. Care and support plans were kept under regular review and services users and /or their relatives participate, where appropriate, in the review of the care provided on an annual basis, or when changes occur.

The review of the care records identified that the agency focused on the service users' human rights. It was good to note the service users' consent was sought and that they had a choice.

It was important that individuals with learning disabilities are supported to maintain their relationships with family, friends and partners during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Service users were provided with an easy read document to explain Covid-19 and how they could keep themselves safe and protected from the virus. Where individuals with learning disabilities continued to experience anxiety about the pandemic, the agency's Positive Behaviour Support team was available to support them.

### **5.2.3 What are the systems in place for identifying service users' Dysphagia needs in partnership with the Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)?**

A number of service users were assessed by SALT as being at risk when they were eating and drinking. Relevant documentation in place was satisfactory. A review of training records confirmed that staff had completed training in Dysphagia and in relation to how to respond to choking incidents.

### **5.2.4 What systems are in place for staff recruitment and are they robust?**

There was a robust recruitment procedure in place which ensured that all pre-employment checks, including criminal record checks (Access NI), were completed and verified before staff members commenced employment and had direct engagement with service users.

There were no volunteers working in the agency.



The agency uses the services of another domiciliary care service and the records reviewed were satisfactory and included training and a comprehensive induction.

### 5.2.5 What are the arrangements for staff induction and are they in accordance with NISCC Induction Standards for social care staff?

There was evidence that all newly appointed staff had completed a structured orientation and induction, having regard to NISCC's Induction Standards for new workers in social care, to ensure they were competent to carry out the duties of their job in line with the agency's policies and procedures.

There was a robust, structured, induction programme which also included shadowing of a more experienced staff member. Written records were retained by the agency of the person's capability and competency in relation to their job role. This was verified by staff during discussions.

### 5.2.6 What are the arrangements to ensure robust managerial oversight and governance?

There were monitoring arrangements in place in compliance with Regulations and Standards. A review of the reports of the agency's quality monitoring established that there was engagement and observations of service users and staff interactions, service users' relatives, staff and HSC Trust representatives. The reports included details of a review of service user care records; accident/incidents; safeguarding matters; staff recruitment and training, and staffing arrangements. We noted some of the comments received during quality monitoring:

#### Staff:

- "I'm very well supported by the whole team."
- "Good communication with the Bangor team."
- "Good working relationship with the manager and open communication."

#### Relatives:

- "Thank you for all the support my relative receives."
- "My relative is very well supported."
- "Things are very good staff are always thinking ahead."

#### HSC Staff:

- "Staff support the person supported very well."
- "The staff are very approachable."
- "Staff are very proactive."

No incidents had occurred that required investigation under the Serious Adverse Incidents (SAIs) or Significant Event Audits (SEAs) procedures.

The agency's registration certificate was up to date and displayed appropriately along with current certificates of public and employers' liability insurance.

There was a system in place to ensure that any complaints were managed in accordance with the agency's policy and procedure. Any complaints received were reviewed as part of the agency's quality monitoring process. In some circumstances, complaints can be made directly to the commissioning body about agencies. No complaints had been received since the last inspection.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

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.





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