

Inspection Report

17 November 2022



Direct Medics 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: Direct Medics	Registered Manager: Mrs Jean Margaret Knapton
Responsible Individual: Mr Paul Owen Mulvenna	Date registered: 9 May 2016
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mrs Jean Margaret Knapton	
Brief description of the agency operates: Direct Medics is a nursing agency operating from premises based in Belfast. The agency currently supplies nurses to all five Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT) including private nursing and residential care homes, district nursing teams and mental health teams. Direct Medics also acts as a Recruitment Agency and supplies their staff to various healthcare settings. RQIA does not regulate Recruitment Agencies.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An announced inspection was undertaken on 17 November 2022 between 10.15 a.m. and 4.00 p.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), restrictive practices, Dysphagia management was also reviewed.

Good practice was identified in relation to the monitoring of nurses' registrations with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). There were good governance and management arrangements in place.

For the purposes of the inspection report, the term 'service user' describes the hospitals or care homes, the agency's nurses are supplied to work in.

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.

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 nursing agencies, we are committed to ensuring that the rights of people who receive services are protected. This means we will seek assurances from service users that the agency takes all reasonable steps to promote people's rights. People in receipt of nursing care have the right to expect their dignity and privacy to be respected and to have their independence and autonomy promoted. They should also experience their individual choices and freedoms.

Information was provided to service users and staff on how they could provide feedback on the quality of services. This included an electronic survey.

4.0 What people told us about the agency?

There were no service users or registered nurses available during the inspection. The following HSCT representatives' comments were received:

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- "I am in contact with agencies very regularly. My opinion is that Direct Medics are very responsive to issues which are brought to them."
- "Direct Medics nurses are generally of a high standard. I find the manager professional in her dealings with me and have no issues with her communication with myself or this office."
- "I am happy to advise that on the whole the registered nurses that work for direct Medics we have no issues with. If there are ever any issues they are dealt with very promptly and with efficiency."
- "I've an excellent working relationship with the team in Direct Medics – they supply high quality staff with whom we rarely have an issue with their candidates. If we have any concerns, they are raised with the team at Direct Medics and they deal with it promptly and to a high standard. Nursing support via the manager is excellent and we have a good working relationship."
- "We use Direct Medics and have no concerns in relation to the registered nurses supplied by this agency."

No responses were received in relation to the electronic survey.

5.0 The inspection

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

The last care inspection of the agency was undertaken on 8 June 2021 by a care inspector. A Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was issued. This was approved by the care inspector and was validated during this inspection.

Areas for improvement from the last inspection on 8 June 2021		
Action required to ensure compliance with The Nursing Agencies Minimum Standards, 2008		Validation of compliance
Area for Improvement 1 Ref: Standard 6.5 Stated: First time	The registered person shall ensure that all staff undertake training in relation to DoLS, as relevant to their roles and responsibilities.	Met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: Review of the agency's training records confirmed all staff were trained in DoLS.	

5.2 Inspection findings

5.2.1 What systems are in place for staff recruitment and are they robust?

A review of the agency's staff recruitment records confirmed that pre-employment checks including criminal record checks (AccessNI), were completed and verified before registered nurses were supplied to the various health care settings.

The manager had a robust system in place to monitor alerts issued by the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) for Northern Ireland. This indicated that the appropriate checks were undertaken before the registered nurses were employed.

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

A review of the records confirmed that all registered nurses were appropriately registered with the NMC. Information regarding registration details, renewal and revalidation dates was monitored by the manager; this system was reviewed and found to be in compliance with regulations and standards. Records had been retained of any referrals the agency made to the NMC.

It was good to note that registered nurses had supervisions undertaken in accordance with the agency's policies and procedures.

There was a system in place to ensure that the registered nurses were placed into settings where their skills closely matched the needs of patients. Nurses were provided with training appropriate to the requirements of the settings in which they were placed. This training included DoLS, adult safeguarding, Dysphagia, National Early Warning Score (NEWS) and the Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA), as appropriate to their job roles.

The content of the Adult Safeguarding policy and training was reviewed and was noted to reflect the regional guidance in Northern Ireland.

There were quality 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 with service users and staff. It was noted that the reports routinely monitored any incidents as part of the monthly checks to identify any patterns or trends.

There was a system in place to ensure that complaints were managed in accordance with the agency's policy and procedure. Review of complaint records evidenced that they were not robust as they did not contain details of the actions taken by the agency or the outcome of the investigation. Following the inspection, a further discussion took place with the manager and evidence was provided from the relevant Trust regarding the delay in a response in relation to a particular complaint. The manager gave assurances that complaints are robustly investigated followed up with the service user and the Trust and are also reviewed through the monthly quality monitoring reports to identify any patterns or trends.

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

RQIA had been notified of a number of concerns since the previous inspection of the agency. These were all individually reviewed during the inspection and the manager provided RQIA with updates from single or joint agency investigations. The manager there has been no further safeguarding allegations or concerns open.

The alphabetical list of staff employed by the agency was up to date.

Records were retained in accordance with the Nursing Agencies Regulations.

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

6.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

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



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