

Inspection Report

Name of Service: The Cara

Provider: Cara Care Home Ltd

Date of Inspection: 9 April 2026

Information on legislation and standards underpinning inspections can be found on our website <https://www.rqia.org.uk/>

1.0 Service information

Organisation/Registered Provider:	Cara Care Home Ltd
Responsible Individual:	Mrs Elizabeth Lisk
Registered Manager:	Mrs Linda Jamieson
Service Profile: The Cara is a residential care home, registered to provide health and social care for up to nine residents. Residents have access to communal lounges, bathrooms and a dining room.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 9 April 2026, from 10.30am to 2.40pm. The inspection was completed by a pharmacist inspector and focused on medicines management within the home.

The inspection was undertaken to evidence how medicines are managed in relation to the regulations and standards and to determine if the home is delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and is well led in relation to medicines management. The areas for improvement identified at the last care inspection were carried forward for review at the next inspection.

Mostly satisfactory arrangements were in place for the safe management of medicines. Medicines were stored securely. Medicine records and medicine related care plans were mostly well maintained. There were effective processes in place to ensure that staff were trained and competent to manage medicines and residents were administered their medicines as prescribed. However, improvements were necessary in relation to ensuring that all residents have a personal medication record and records of the administration of controlled drugs.

Whilst areas for improvement were identified, there was evidence that with the exception of a small number of medicines, residents were being administered their medicines as prescribed.

Details of the inspection findings, including areas for improvement carried forward for review at the next inspection and new areas for improvement identified, can be found in the main body of this report and in the quality improvement plan (QIP) (Section 4.0).

Residents were observed to be relaxed and comfortable in the home and in their interactions with staff. It was evident that staff knew the residents well.

RQIA would like to thank the staff for their assistance throughout the inspection.

3.0 The inspection

3.1 How we inspect

RQIA's inspections form part of our ongoing assessment of the quality of services. Our reports reflect how the home was performing against the regulations and standards, 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.

To prepare for this inspection, information held by RQIA about this home was reviewed. This included areas for improvement identified at previous inspections, registration information, and any other written or verbal information received from residents, relatives, staff or the commissioning trust.

Throughout the inspection process, inspectors seek the views of those living, working and visiting the home; and review/examine a sample of records to evidence how the home is performing in relation to the regulations and standards.

3.2 What people told us about the service and their quality of life

Staff expressed satisfaction with how the home was managed. They also said that they had the appropriate training to look after residents and meet their needs. They said that the team communicated well and the management team were readily available to discuss any issues and concerns should they arise.

Staff advised that they were familiar with how each resident liked to take their medicines. They stated medication rounds were tailored to respect each individual's preferences, needs and timing requirements.

No completed questionnaires or responses to the staff survey were received following the inspection.

3.3 Inspection findings

3.3.1 What arrangements are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately prescribed, monitored and reviewed?

Residents in residential care homes should be registered with a general practitioner (GP) to ensure that they receive appropriate medical care when they need it. At times residents' needs may change and therefore their medicines should be regularly monitored and reviewed. This is usually done by a GP, a pharmacist or during a hospital admission.

Residents in the home were registered with a GP and medicines were dispensed by the community pharmacist.

Personal medication records are records used to list all of the prescribed medicines, with details of how and when they should be administered. It is important that these records accurately reflect the most recent prescription to ensure that medicines are administered as prescribed and because they may be used by other healthcare professionals, for example, at medication reviews or hospital appointments.

The personal medication records reviewed were accurate and up to date. In line with best practice, a second member of staff had checked and signed the personal medication records when they were written and updated to confirm that they were accurate. However, one resident did not have a personal medication record in place, which could result in medicines being administered incorrectly or the wrong information being provided to another healthcare professional. An area for improvement was identified.

Copies of residents' prescriptions/hospital discharge letters were retained so that any entry on the personal medication record could be checked against the prescription.

All residents should have care plans, which detail their specific care needs and how the care is to be delivered. In relation to medicines, these may include care plans for the management of distressed reactions, pain, modified diets etc. The management of distressed reactions and pain was reviewed.

Residents will sometimes get distressed and will occasionally require medicines to help them manage their distress. It is important that care plans are in place to direct staff when it is appropriate to administer these medicines and that records are kept of when the medicine was given, the reason it was given and what the outcome was. If staff record the reason and outcome of giving the medicine, then they can identify common triggers which may cause the resident's distress and if the prescribed medicine is effective for the resident.

The management of medicines, prescribed on a 'when required' basis for distressed reactions, was reviewed. Directions for use were clearly recorded on the personal medication record. Staff knew how to recognise a change in a resident's behaviour and were aware that this change may be associated with pain and other factors. Records of administration included the reason for and outcome of each administration. It was agreed that further detail should be added to the care plan regarding medicines currently prescribed and the parameters for use. Advice was provided and the manager agreed to complete update following the inspection.

The management of pain was discussed. Staff advised that they were familiar with how each resident expressed their pain and that pain relief was administered as required. It was agreed that further detail should be added to the care plan on how pain is expressed by the resident. Advice was provided and the manager agreed to complete these updates following the inspection.

3.3.2 What arrangements are in place to ensure that medicines are supplied on time, stored safely and disposed of appropriately?

Medicine stock levels must be checked on a regular basis and new stock must be ordered on time. This ensures that the resident's medicines are available for administration as prescribed. It is important that they are stored safely and securely so that there is no unauthorised access and disposed of promptly to ensure that a discontinued medicine is not administered in error.

Records reviewed showed that medicines were available for administration when residents required them. Staff advised that they had a good relationship with the community pharmacist and that medicines were supplied in a timely manner.

The medicine storage area was observed to be securely locked to prevent any unauthorised access. It was tidy and organised so that medicines belonging to each resident could be easily located. The temperature of the medicine storage area was monitored and recorded to ensure that medicines were stored appropriately. Satisfactory arrangements were in place for medicines requiring cold storage, the storage of controlled drugs and the safe disposal of medicines.

3.3.3 What arrangements are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately administered within the home?

It is important to have a clear record of which medicines have been administered to residents to ensure that they are receiving the correct prescribed treatment.

A sample of the medicines administration records was reviewed. Records were found to have been accurately completed. Records were filed once completed and were readily retrievable for audit/review.

Controlled drugs are medicines subject to strict legal controls and legislation. They commonly include strong painkillers. The receipt, administration and disposal of controlled drugs should be recorded in the controlled drug record book. There were mostly satisfactory arrangements in place for the management of controlled drugs. However, three records of administration had been omitted from the controlled record book. These had been recorded on the medication administration record and the audit was correct. An area for improvement was identified.

Management and staff audited the management and administration of medicines on a regular basis within the home. The date of opening was recorded on medicines to facilitate audit and disposal at expiry. There was evidence that the findings of the audits had been discussed with staff and addressed. An audit tool template, which can assist in this process, was shared with the manager following the inspection.

3.3.4 What arrangements are in place to ensure that medicines are safely managed during transfer of care?

People who use medicines may follow a pathway of care that can involve both health and social care services. It is important that medicines are not considered in isolation, but as an integral part of the pathway, and at each step. Problems with the supply of medicines and how information is transferred put people at increased risk of harm when they change from one healthcare setting to another.

A review of records indicated that satisfactory arrangements were in place to manage medicines at the time of admission or for residents returning from hospital. Written confirmation of prescribed medicines was obtained at or prior to admission and details shared with the GP and community pharmacy as necessary. Medicine records had been accurately completed and there was evidence that medicines were administered as prescribed.

3.3.5 What arrangements are in place to ensure that staff can identify, report and learn from adverse incidents?

Occasionally medicines incidents occur within homes. It is important that there are systems in place, which quickly identify that an incident has occurred so that action can be taken to prevent a recurrence and that staff can learn from the incident. A robust audit system will help staff to identify medicine related incidents.

There have been no medicine related incidents reported to RQIA since the last medicines management inspection. Management and staff were familiar with the type of incidents that should be reported. The inspector signposted staff to the RQIA provider guidance in relation to the statutory notification of medication related incidents available on the RQIA website.

The audits completed at the inspection indicated that the majority of medicines were being administered as prescribed. However, audit discrepancies were observed in the administration of a small number of medicines. The audits were discussed in detail with the staff on duty and the manager for on-going monitoring.

3.3.6 What measures are in place to ensure that staff in the home are qualified, competent and sufficiently experienced and supported to manage medicines safely?

To ensure that residents are well looked after and receive their medicines appropriately, staff who administer medicines to residents must be appropriately trained. The registered person has a responsibility to check that staff are competent in managing medicines and that they are supported. Policies and procedures should be up to date and readily available for staff reference.

There were records in place to show that staff responsible for medicines management had been trained and deemed competent. Medicines management policies and procedures were in place.

It was agreed that the findings of this inspection would be discussed with staff to facilitate the necessary improvements.

4.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

Areas for improvement have been identified where action is required to ensure compliance with Standards.

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of Areas for Improvement	3*	11*

* the total number of areas for improvement includes twelve, which were carried forward for review at the next inspection.

Areas for improvement and details of the Quality Improvement Plan were discussed with Mrs Linda Jamieson, Registered Manager, as part of the inspection process. The timescales for completion commence from the date of inspection.

Quality Improvement Plan	
Action required to ensure compliance with The Residential Home Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005	
Area for improvement 1 Ref: Regulation 27 (4) (b) Stated: Second time To be completed by: 25 November 2025	The registered person shall ensure the practice of wedging open of fire doors ceases with immediate effect
	Action required to ensure compliance with this regulation was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Area for improvement 2 Ref: Regulation 30 Stated: Second time To be completed by: 25 November 2025	The registered person shall ensure that all notifiable events are submitted to RQIA without delay.
	Action required to ensure compliance with this regulation was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Area for improvement 3 Ref: Regulation 14 (2) (a) Stated: First time To be completed by: 25 November 2025	The registered person shall ensure that all areas of the home to which residents have access are free from hazardous to their safety. This area from improvement is stated in reference to the storage of unnamed toiletries in the communal bathrooms and the hairdressing salon.
	Action required to ensure compliance with this regulation was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Action required to ensure compliance with the Care Standards for Residential Homes, December 2022	
Area for improvement 1 Ref: Standard 31 Stated: First time To be completed by: 9 April 2026	The registered person shall ensure that all residents have an accurate and up to date personal medication record in place. Ref: 3.3.1
	Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: This was completed for the new resident on the 10/04/2026.

Area for improvement 2 Ref: Standard 31 Stated: First time To be completed by: 9 April 2026	The registered person shall ensure that the controlled drug record book is accurately maintained. Ref: 3.3.3 Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: Staff member was spoken to about repeated errors in the controlled drugs book. Audit tool template is now in place.
Area for improvement 3 Ref: Standard 19.2 Stated: First time To be completed by: 31 March 2026	The registered person shall ensure all necessary pre-employment checks are in place prior to the commencement of employment. Action required to ensure compliance with this standard was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Area for improvement 4 Ref: Standard 20.1 Stated: Second time To be completed by: 31 December 2025	The registered person shall ensure a competency assessment is in place for all staff who are responsible to take charge of the home in absence of the manager Action required to ensure compliance with this standard was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Area for improvement 5 Ref: Standard 29.6 Stated: First time To be completed by: 31 December 2025	The registered person shall ensure that all staff attend a fire evacuation drill at least once a year and that records are kept of staff attendance. Action required to ensure compliance with this standard was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Area for improvement 6 Ref: Standard 24.2 Stated: First time To be completed by: 31 December 2025	The registered person shall ensure that all staff have recorded individual, formal supervision no less than every six months. Action required to ensure compliance with this standard was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0

Area for improvement 7 Ref: Standard 24.5 Stated: First time To be completed by: 31 December 2025	The registered person shall ensure that all staff have formal recorded appraisal annually. Action required to ensure compliance with this standard was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Area for improvement 8 Ref: Standard 8 Stated: First time To be completed by: 25 November 2025	The registered person shall ensure that post fall observation records are kept up to date, are legible and reflect accurately the delivery of care. Action required to ensure compliance with this standard was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Area for improvement 9 Ref: Standard 6 Stated: First time To be completed by: 30 November 2025	The registered person shall ensure residents care plans are kept up to date with sufficient detail to direct the care required. This is stated with specific reference to falls and choking. Action required to ensure compliance with this standard was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Area for improvement 10 Ref: Standard 5 Stated: First time To be completed by: 30 November 2025	The registered person shall ensure that all risk assessments are up to date and reflect the resident's current needs. Action required to ensure compliance with this standard was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Area for improvement 11 Ref: Standard 22.4 Stated: First time To be completed by: 30 November 2025	The registered person shall ensure that the records held in the home are complete, accurate and up to date. This area for improvement is in relation to the recording of accidents and incidents with in the home. Action required to ensure compliance with this standard was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0



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