The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

Inspection Report

Name of Service: SENSE

Provider: SENSE

Date of Inspection: 3 September 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:	SENSE
Responsible Individual:	Mr Martin Walls
Registered Manager:	Miss Alisha McNally

Service Profile:

SENSE is a residential care home, registered to provide health and social care for up to 10 residents with a sensory impairment. The home is divided into two five bedded bungalows which are interlinked by a courtyard garden.

Residents' bedrooms all have en suite facilities. Residents have access to communal lounges and dining rooms and an enclosed courtyard garden.

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 3 September 2026, from 10.50am to 2.10pm. 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 inspection also reviewed the areas for improvement identified at the last medicines management inspection. The areas for improvement identified at the last care inspection were carried forward for review at the next inspection.

Review of medicines management found that satisfactory arrangements were in place for the safe management of medicines. Medicines were stored securely. Medicine records and medicine related care plans were generally well maintained. There were effective auditing processes in place to ensure that staff were trained and competent to manage medicines and residents were administered their medicines as prescribed.

The areas for improvement in relation to distressed reactions, records of receipt of medicines and records of administration, identified at the last medicines management inspection were assessed as met and no new areas for improvement were identified. Areas for improvement identified at the last care inspection were carried forward for review at the next inspection. Details can be found 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.

RQIA received six completed questionnaires from service users or their representatives, all indicated that they were satisfied with how their medicines are managed in SENSE.

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 were in place for each resident. These 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. One minor discrepancy was highlighted to staff for immediate corrective action and on-going vigilance.

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.

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 and resident-centred care plans were in place. 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.

Care plans were in place when residents required insulin to manage their diabetes. There was sufficient detail to direct staff if the resident's blood sugar was outside of the recommended range.

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. Accurate records of medicines received into the home were maintained.

The medicine storage areas were observed to be securely locked to prevent any unauthorised access. They were tidy and organised so that medicines belonging to each resident could be easily located. Temperatures of medicine storage areas were monitored and recorded to ensure that medicines were stored appropriately.

Medicines which require cold storage must be stored between 2^{o}C and 8^{o}C to maintain their stability and efficacy. In order to ensure that this temperature range is maintained it is necessary to monitor the maximum and minimum temperatures of the medicines refrigerator each day and to then reset the thermometer. The current temperature of the medicine refrigerator was monitored each day; this does not provide evidence that the temperature is maintained within the required range at all times. The manager provided assurances that the maximum and minimum temperature of the medicine's refrigerator would be recorded daily and this would commence immediately following the inspection.

Satisfactory arrangements were in place for 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.

Management and staff audited the management and administration of medicines on a regular basis within the home. There was evidence that the findings of the audits had been discussed with staff and addressed. The date of opening was recorded on medicines to facilitate audit and disposal at expiry.

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.

There had been no recent admissions/readmissions to the home. Staff advised that robust arrangements were in place to ensure that they were provided with a current list of the resident's medicines and this was shared with the GP and community pharmacist.

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.

Management and staff were familiar with the type of incidents that should be reported. The medicine related incidents which had been reported to RQIA since the last inspection were discussed. There was evidence that the incidents had been reported to the prescriber for guidance, investigated and the learning shared with staff in order to prevent a recurrence.

The audits completed at the inspection indicated that medicines were being administered as prescribed.

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.

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

4.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of Areas for Improvement	3*	1*

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

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

Quality Improvement Plan	
Action required to ensure compliance with The Residential Care Homes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005	
Area for improvement 1 **Ref:** Regulation 19 (1) (b) **Stated:** First time **To be completed by:** 14 October 2025	The registered person shall ensure that confidential information relating to residents is safely secured.
	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 14 (2) (c) **Stated:** First Time **To be completed by:** 14 October 2025	The registered person shall ensure as far as reasonably practical that all parts of the home to which residents have access are free from hazards to their safety. This is in relation to the safe storage of prescribed creams and air fresheners.
	Prescribed creams were stored securely. However, action required to ensure compliance with this regulation was not fully reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0

Area for improvement 3 **Ref:** Regulation 12 (1) (b) **Stated:** First Time **To be completed by:** 30 November 2025	The registered person shall ensure that the proposed transport scheme is shared with the relevant Health and Social Care Trusts for review, prior to being implemented. The outcome of the review (including evidence that the Trusts are in agreement with the revised scheme) should be forwarded to RQIA once available.
	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 Residential Care Homes Minimum Standards (Dec 2022)	
Area for improvement 1 **Ref:** Standard 23.3 **Stated:** First time **To be completed by:** 31 December 2025	The registered person shall ensure that staff receive dysphagia training, in line with their roles and responsibilities.
	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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