

Inspection Report

Name of Service: Kingdom Healthcare Ltd

Provider: Kingdom Healthcare Limited

Date of Inspection: 18 November 2024

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:	Kingdom Healthcare Limited
Responsible Individual:	Mrs Niamh Conaty (registration pending)
Registered Manager:	Mrs Diana Mos (registration pending)
<p>Service Profile: Kingdom Healthcare Ltd is a nursing agency which supplies registered nurses to care for a small number of patients, with complex needs, who are being cared for in their own homes.</p> <p>Kingdom Healthcare also acts as a Recruitment Agency and supplies Health Care Assistants (HCA) to care home. RQIA does not regulate Recruitment Agencies.</p>	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 18 November 2024 between 10.40 a.m. and 2.45 p.m. by a care Inspector.

The inspection was undertaken to evidence how the agency is performing in relation to the regulations and standards; and to assess progress with the areas for improvement identified, by RQIA, during the last care inspection on 1 September 2023. It was undertaken to also determine if the agency is delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and if the service is well led.

Enforcement action resulted from the findings of this inspection. We identified serious concerns in relation to: the lack of robust governance arrangements and managerial oversight. Deficits were noted regarding the system in place to ensure that the registered nurses are supplied to settings in which they have the requisite qualifications, knowledge, skills and competencies. Serious concerns were identified regarding the lack of information provided to the service users and to patients' representatives, in respect of the registered nurses supplied by the agency.

In addition, serious concerns were also identified regarding a lack of effective quality assurance of service provision by the Responsible Individual.

An intention to serve four Failure to Comply (FTC) notices meeting was arranged with members of the senior executive team for Kingdom Services Group Limited, in the absence of the Responsible Individual, on 10 December 2024; the FTC notices were in respect of identified breaches under The Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, namely:

- Regulation 10 (1) relating to management and governance arrangements
- Regulation 12 (1) (a)(b)(c)(d) relating to the fitness of the nurses supplied by the agency
- Regulation 16 (1)(2) relating to the provision of information to service users
- Regulation 20 (1)(2)(3)(4) relating to the quality monitoring processes.

This meeting was attended by members of the senior executive team for Kingdom Services Group Limited. At the meeting, RQIA were provided with an action plan and some assurances in relation to the concerns identified. However, RQIA were not assured that the robust systems and processes were fully embedded into practice to drive the necessary improvements regarding the deficits which had been identified.

As a result, three FTC notices were served under The Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, relating to:

- Regulation 10 (1) relating to management and governance arrangements
- Regulation 12 (1) (a)(b)(c)(d) relating to the fitness of the nurses supplied by the agency
- Regulation 20 (1)(2)(3)(4) relating to the quality monitoring processes.

The date of compliance for each FTC is 23 January 2025. Actions required to be taken in order to ensure compliance with the Regulations are detailed in the FTC notices.

At the meeting, assurances were provided that registered nurses' profiles would be supplied to any Health and Social Care Trust which commissions the services of the agency; and that these profiles would be shared with patients' representatives, as appropriate, and in keeping with Regulation. On this basis, the decision was made not to serve the FTC Notice in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(2); however, an action in relation to this matter has been subsumed into the aforementioned FTC Notice in respect of Regulation 10(1).

The findings of this report will provide the management team with the necessary information to improve the quality of service provision.

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 agency 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 provider to ensure compliance with legislation, standards and best practice, and to address any deficits identified during our inspections.

To prepare for this inspection we reviewed information held by RQIA about this agency. This included any previous areas for improvement, registration information, and any other written or verbal information received from service users, relatives, staff or the commissioning trust.

Throughout the inspection process Inspectors seek the views of those in receipt of care provided by the agency staff and those working for the agency. We also review/examine a sample of records to evidence how the agency is performing in relation to the regulations and standards.

3.2 What people told us about the agency

As part of the inspection process we spoke with a number of registered nurses and representatives from the commissioning Trusts. The feedback provided indicated that there were concerns regarding the fitness of some of the nurses supplied by the agency and in relation to aspects of the governance and managerial arrangements.

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

Areas for improvement from the last inspection on 1 September 2023		
Action required to ensure compliance with The Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005		Validation of compliance
Area for improvement 1 Ref: Regulation 12 (1)(b)	The registered person shall ensure that the interview process is further developed to ensure that it adequately assesses the nurses' knowledge and expertise; as part of this process, enquiry should be made and documented regarding the amount of experience the nurses had in relation to speciality areas of practice listed in their employment history.	Partially met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: Whilst a new interview template had been implemented, this did not adequately assess the knowledge and expertise of the nurses. This area for improvement has been subsumed into the FTC Notice in respect of Regulation 12 (1) (a)(b)(c)(d).	
Area for improvement 2 Ref: Regulation 9 (2)(b)(ii)	The registered person shall retain written evidence on a monthly basis of efforts made to recruit a manager, who meets the criteria for registration.	Met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: There was evidence that this area for improvement was met.	

<p>Area for improvement 3</p> <p>Ref: Regulation 14 (1)</p>	<p>The registered person shall ensure that nurses receive training in relation to Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG) care; nurses must also have competency assessments completed in relation to Tracheostomy care.</p>	<p>Partially Met</p>
<p>Action taken as confirmed during the inspection:</p> <p>Whilst there was evidence that the nurses had received training in respect of PEGs and tracheostomy care, there was no evidence that the competency assessments had been completed. This area for improvement has been subsumed into the FTC Notice in respect of Regulation 12 (1) (a)(b)(c)(d).</p>		
<p>Area for improvement 4</p> <p>Ref: Regulation 14 (3)(i)</p>	<p>The registered person shall ensure that a system is developed and implemented relating to receiving regular feedback on nurses' practice.</p>	<p>Partially Met</p>
<p>Action taken as confirmed during the inspection:</p> <p>Whilst there was evidence that this area for improvement was met in terms of the registered nurses employed by Kingdom Healthcare, RQIA were not assured regarding how feedback was sought on the registered nurses which had been supplied through subcontracting arrangements. This area for improvement has been addressed in the FTC Notice in respect of Regulation 20 (1)(2)(3)(4).</p>		
<p>Action required to ensure compliance with The Nursing Agencies Minimum Standards, 2008</p>		<p>Validation of compliance</p>
<p>Area for improvement 1</p> <p>Ref: Standard 4.2</p>	<p>The registered person shall ensure that employment references are sought from someone who has line management responsibility for the nurses.</p>	<p>Not Met</p>
<p>Action taken as confirmed during the inspection:</p> <p>This area for improvement was not met and has been included in the FTC Notice in respect of Regulation 12 (1) (a)(b)(c)(d).</p>		

Area for improvement 2 Ref: Standard 1.13	The registered person shall ensure that an annual quality report is completed, which includes the views of patients, relatives, staff and HSCT representatives.	Met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: There was evidence that this area for improvement was met.	
Area for improvement 3 Ref: Standard 6	The registered person shall ensure that training content is in keeping with regional policies and procedures; this relates particularly to, but not exclusively to, Adult Safeguarding training.	Met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: There was evidence that this area for improvement was met.	
Area for improvement 4 Ref: Standard 13.1	The registered person shall develop and implement a system to ensure that patients' written daily notes are returned to the registered office on a regular basis, to enable timely audit and follow up on any identified actions.	Met
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: There was evidence that this area for improvement was met.	

3.4 Inspection findings

3.4.1 Governance and Management arrangements

As discussed in section 3.2, serious concerns were identified regarding the lack of robust governance and managerial oversight of the agency.

RQIA was informed on 27 November 2024 that the Registered Manager had resigned from their post with immediate effect. The RQIA met with members of the senior executive team for Kingdom Services Group Limited on 28 November 2024 regarding the absence of an identified individual in place to assume managerial oversight of the agency in the absence of the manager. On 29 November 2024, a Non-Executive Director (Kingdom People) proposed an identified Registered Nurse as the interim acting manager from that date.

Review of information received from the Agency on 3 December 2024 evidenced that the proposed interim acting manager had and was being simultaneously supplied by the agency on an ongoing and full time basis to provide nursing care to an identified patient.

Review of a Notification of Manager Absence (NOMA) submitted on 4 December 2024 at RQIA's request, highlighted that an alternate Registered Nurse was to commence the role of acting manager with effect from 5 December 2024; this information was contrary to what RQIA was advised on 29 November 2024 by the aforementioned Non-Executive Director.

RQIA was therefore not assured that robust and effective managerial arrangements had been in place for the period 27 November 2024 to 4 December 2024.

It was also concerning to note during a meeting on 28 November 2024, with members of the senior executive team for Kingdom Services Group Limited, that the Responsible Individual was proposed as being suitable to assume managerial oversight of the agency upon their anticipated return from a period of leave, despite lacking the requisite professional qualifications for such a role as required by the Regulations.

RQIA was further concerned that despite the Responsible Individual currently being unavailable, inadequate arrangements had been put in place for the oversight and escalation of operational issues in a timely manner and that this deficit was only to be reviewed at the subsequent request of RQIA during the aforementioned meeting on 28 November 2024.

Information provided to RQIA evidenced that the agency regularly "commissions" other registered nursing agencies for the purposes of supplying nursing staff to several identified 'complex care' patients due to the agency's inability to meet the assessed staffing needs of those individuals as directed by relevant Health and Social Care Trusts. Such staffing arrangements are contrary to The Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 and have the potential to place patients at significant risk of harm.

Review of information has evidenced inadequate arrangements in regard to proactively monitoring the working patterns of nursing staff so as to ensure at all times they are physically and mentally fit for the work they are supplied to undertake. For instance, there was one identified nurse who worked extended working patterns with only one-day rest period between shifts. It was also noted that a number of 15 and 17 hour days had been worked in succession; this meant that the nurse only had a six-hour rest period before their next shift on those occasions.

Discussion with staff and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) also highlighted that the agency had been supplying care staff solely for the purposes of domiciliary care to one identified service user. RQIA was concerned that this arrangement fell outside the regulatory remit of the agency and that there were no plans in place to adequately address this.

In addition, it was noted during the most recent inspection that the alphabetical list of staff and service users provided to the Inspector was inaccurate. The inspector was also provided with conflicting information regarding whether or not the agency supplied registered nurses into care home settings.

It was also identified that registered nurses' profiles had not been provided into patient's homes; and patients' representatives therefore lacked any information in respect of those nurses' as required by Regulation.

The serious concerns identified above were discussed with members of the senior executive team for Kingdom Services Group Limited on 10 December 2024. RQIA was not assured that robust systems and processes were fully embedded into practice to drive the necessary improvements in regard to the deficits outlined above. RQIA therefore issued a FTC Notice

under Regulation 10 (1) of The Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. Actions stated within this notice require to be addressed by 23 January 2025.

Assurances were provided that registered nurse profiles would be supplied to any Health and Social Care Trust which commissions the services of the agency; and that these profiles must also be shared with patients' representatives, as appropriate, and in keeping with Regulation. On this basis, the decision was made not to serve the FTC Notice in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(2); however, an action in relation to this matter has been subsumed into the aforementioned FTC Notice in respect of Regulation 10(1).

3.4.2 Fitness of the Registered nurses supplied by the agency

Review of governance records following the inspection highlighted serious concerns in regard to the safe and effective selection and recruitment of staff. For example, it was evidenced that on three occasions, nurses' enhanced AccessNI checks had been undertaken by another organisation, rather than by Kingdom Healthcare Limited.

In addition, the interview process for registered nursing staff was inadequate. RQIA remains concerned that an area for improvement in relation to this deficit which was identified during the previous inspection on 1 September 2023, had not been fully met and/or sustained.

Some references had not been sought and/or obtained from identified nurses' current and/or last employer, and that a number of references had been accepted by the agency from individuals who had no line management responsibility for the applicant in question.

Review of selection and recruitment records also highlighted that while reasons for leaving employment had been recorded on application forms, there was no evidence of any further discussion having taken place with the applicant where they indicated they had been terminated from a previous post.

Review of governance records also highlighted that there were inadequate arrangements in place to ensure that registered nursing staff possessed the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies for the settings into which they were supplied such as, medicine competencies, enteral feeding, and Advanced Airway Management System (tracheostomies) competencies.

The serious concerns identified above were discussed with members of the senior executive team for Kingdom Services Group Limited on 10 December 2024. Whilst some assurances were provided at this meeting, RQIA was not assured that robust systems and processes were fully embedded into practice to drive the necessary improvements in regard to the deficits outlined above. RQIA therefore issued a FTC Notice under Regulation 12 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d) of The Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. Actions stated within this notice require to be addressed by 23 January 2025.

3.4.3 Review of Quality Service Provision

Serious concerns were identified regarding a lack of effective quality assurance of service provision by the Responsible Individual.

RQIA is not assured that the quality of care delivery and service provision is being robustly assessed, given that quality monitoring visits were being completed in an inconsistent and/or inadequate manner; for example, it was noted during the most recent inspection that these visits had not been undertaken in two months. RQIA is therefore, not assured that effective arrangements are in place to identify deficits and drive any necessary improvements in an effective and sustained manner.

As discussed in section 3.3, there was some evidence that feedback on nurses' practice had been sought in terms of the nurses employed by Kingdom Healthcare; however, RQIA was not assured regarding how feedback was sought on the registered nurses which had been supplied through the subcontracting arrangements. This area for improvement has been addressed in the FTC Notice in respect of Regulation 20 (1)(2)(3)(4).

The serious concerns identified above were discussed with members of the senior executive team for Kingdom Services Group Limited on 10 December 2024.

Whilst some assurances were provided at this meeting, RQIA was not assured that robust systems and processes were fully embedded into practice to drive the necessary improvements in regard to the deficits outlined above. RQIA therefore issued a FTC Notice under Regulation 20 (1)(2)(3)(4) of The Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. Actions stated within this notice require to be addressed by 23 January 2025.



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