

Inspection Report

Name of Service:	Sciensus
Provider:	Sciensus Pharma Services Limited
Date of Inspection:	12 January 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:	Sciensus Pharma Services Limited
Responsible Individual/Responsible Person:	Sir Jonathan Asbridge
Registered Manager:	Mrs Ursula Corbett
Service Profile: Sciensus is a nursing agency which supplies registered nurses to provide specialised care to patients. Whilst the care is generally provided in the patients' own homes, they also can provide the care in a health care setting. The type of care the nurses provide includes, but is not limited to, administering chemotherapy and different types of intravenous transfusions; they provide specific patient training; and plan to offer online support groups to patients, who may have specific medical conditions. Sciensus also liaises with Prescribing Providers, such as Consultant Oncologists and the Blood Transfusion Board on a regular basis, to ensure that clinical updates on patients are communicated appropriately. The patients' care is generally commissioned by a number of Health and Social Care Trusts; however, there are also a number of patients who pay for their own care; and a number whose care is paid for by private health insurance companies.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An announced inspection took place on 12 January 2026, between 9.30 am and 1 pm 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 28 January 2025; and to determine if the agency is delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and if the service is well led.

The inspection established that the nurses provided safe, effective and compassionate care in the various settings they were supplied to work in. However, improvements were required to ensure the effectiveness and oversight of certain aspects of the agency, such as management oversight of employment references.

It was evident that the nurses were well trained to deliver safe and effective care.

Patients in receipt of nursing care said that the care and support provided by Sciensus was an excellent experience.

As a result of this inspection the area for improvement previously identified was assessed as having been addressed by the provider. Full details, including a new area for improvement identified, can be found in the main body of this report and in the quality improvement plan (QIP) in Section 4.

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 the previous Quality Improvement Plan issued, registration information, and any other written or verbal information received from patients, relatives, nurses, the commissioning trusts or the Prescribing Providers.

Throughout the inspection process inspectors seek the views of the patients who are in receipt of the care and support provided; and we also seek the views of the Prescribing Providers and Trust' representatives. As part of the inspection process, a sample of records are reviewed/examined to evidence how the agency is performing in relation to the regulations and standards.

3.2 What people told us about the service

The patients consulted with described the excellent service they felt they received from Sciensus. They said that from the beginning of their treatment plan to the end, the team had been 'superb' and that they 'couldn't speak highly enough about them'. The nurses were described as being 'incredible', 'outstanding', 'amazing', 'fabulous', 'understanding', 'patient', 'thoughtful', 'caring, supportive and kind' and that 'clinically they were excellent' and 'completely professional'. The service was described as being 'second to none' and one respondent said that they were fortunate to have 'been gifted such a team' and that 'every visit has been marked with empathy, warmth and friendliness'. Another respondent said that notwithstanding their diagnosis, they counted themselves 'lucky to be under the care and supervision of these consummate professionals'.

Another respondent praised the nurses, describing them as being 'like family' to them. Patients commented in relation to the nurses' adherence to infection prevention and control practices and said that they were 'so clean, cleaner than any hospital'. The nurse consultations were described as having been 'conducted with a meticulous attention to clinical detail and an exacting standard of record-keeping'.

One respondent said that the continuing care for them had 'significantly lessened' the impact of the disease, not only on them but also on their family.

3.3 Inspection findings

Safe staffing begins at the point of recruitment and continues through to staff induction, regular staff training and ensuring that the nurses are appropriately skilled for the duties they undertake.

A review of the agency's recruitment records identified that pre-employment checks were generally undertaken before the nurses' commenced work. However, given that the recruitment checks were undertaken by a third party, we were unable to evidence that the references received were appropriate. An area for improvement has been identified.

There was a system in place for all newly recruited nurses to complete a comprehensive induction, to ensure they were competent to carry out the duties of their job in line with the agency's policies and procedures. The induction included specific training and a three-month probationary period. Competency Assessments were undertaken on all nurses in keeping with the Clinical Competency Framework; this included observation of practice by other experienced nurses.

There was a system in place to ensure that the nurses were supported in their roles. This included supervisions, one to one meetings and Professional Development meetings which were held in keeping with the agency's policies and procedures. Spot checks on nurses' practice were also undertaken, alongside reviews of their documentation. Where any deficits are identified, an action plan would be put in place and a follow up spot check would be planned, to ensure the matter was addressed.

All the nurses had received an annual appraisal.

There was a system in place which prevented nurses from being booked into shifts, unless all their training had been completed. Staff compliance with training was monitored by the manager.

There were sufficient nurses available to meet the needs of the patients/service.

For patients who were receiving Chemotherapy at home, there was a system in place whereby if they had any concerns, they could call the Sciensus' Care Bureau, who would complete the UK Oncology Nurses Society (UKONS) 24- Hour Triage Tool. This is a risk assessment tool that uses a Red, Amber and Green (RAG) scoring system to identify and prioritise the presenting problems of patients contacting 24-hour advice lines for assessment and advice.

There was a system thereafter for the Sciensus Specialist Nurse to contact the patient's Consultant or the Belfast City Hospital (BCH) oncology helpline, if out of hours. If a patient requires hospital admission, the Sciensus nurse emails all clinical documentation, patient demographics to the BCH and contacts the Oncologist to confirm the patient's admission.

Sciensus also sends a list to the Oncology Ward every Friday, detailing the patients who have received chemotherapy that week; and those planned for the following week. This ensures that the patients' Consultants are always aware of the exact stage of chemotherapy patients are at. This is good practice.

Sciensus also provides on-line support groups that are specific to patients who have the same medical condition.

Mrs Ursula Corbett has been the Registered Manager since 18 June 2024. It was evident that the manager focuses on providing a high quality and compassionate service. Feedback from patients described the management team as being 'outstanding'.

Review of a sample of records evidenced that there was a robust system in place for reviewing the quality of services provided by the agency on a monthly basis. There were a number of systems in place for receiving feedback from patients on the quality of the care provided. There was a process in place to ensure that any incidents and complaints were managed appropriately. It was good to note that there was a QR code on the patient information sheet given to patients, to facilitate easy access to the organisation's complaints system. Patients were also provided with the manager's name and contact details.

There was a process in place to monitor the nurses' registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). An area for improvement previously identified in this regard had been addressed by the provider.

The Annual Quality Report and an Annual Infection Prevention and Control report had been completed. Sciensus also engages in a Cancer Mortality Review Committee (CMRC) process as part of their continuous quality improvement processes. This is good practice.

Agencies are required to have a person known as the Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC), who has responsibility for implementing the regional protocol and the agency's adult safeguarding policy. The manager was identified as the appointed ASC for the agency. It was established that good systems and processes were in place to manage the safeguarding and protection of adults at risk of harm. An annual Safeguarding Report had been completed. Advice was given in relation to cross referencing this against the regionally agreed template used in Northern Ireland, to ensure that the information within meets the requirement.

Sciensus had a system in place to ensure the safety of their nurses, who in the main, are lone workers. This is good practice.

4.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

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

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of Areas for Improvement	1	0

The area for improvement and details of the Quality Improvement Plan were discussed with Mrs Ursula Corbett, 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 Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005	
Area for improvement 1 Ref: Regulation 12 (1)(d) Stated: First time To be completed by: Immediate from the date of the inspection	The registered person shall ensure that the manager views any employment references to ensure they are in keeping with the regulations. 3.3 Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: The Registered Manager for Northern Ireland has reviewed the recruitment and employment referencing process with the HR team to ensure compliance with the Nursing Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. It has been confirmed that the third party organisation Giant, which is used to obtain employment references, provides the HR team with a report outlining the references requested and the outcomes of those requests. With immediate effect from the date of inspection, it has been agreed that this report will be forwarded to the SCSM for review and confirmation that employment references meet regulatory requirements prior to any offer of employment being made. This process has now been embedded into the recruitment workflow to ensure appropriate managerial oversight.

****Please ensure this document is completed in full and returned via the Web Portal****



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Gasworks
Belfast
BT7 2JA



Tel: 028 9536 1111



Email: info@rqia.org.uk



Web: www.rqia.org.uk



Twitter: @RQIANews