

National Locums Nursing Agency Scotland Nurse Agency

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Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
14 February 2025

Service provided by:
National Locums Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2018013168

Service no:
CS2018368786

About the service

National Locums Ltd is registered as a nurse agency with the Care Inspectorate and currently supplies registered nurses to various hospitals in NHS boards throughout Scotland. The service is based in England with a satellite office in Edinburgh.

At the time of inspection, the service had 56 nurses on their register who worked in several specialities such as mental health, accident and emergency, intensive therapy, community and children's nursing.

About the inspection

This was an announced (short notice) inspection which took place on 07/02/25 between 12:00 and 17:00 hours, 10/02/25 between 14:00 and 17:30 and 11/02/25 between 09:00 and 17:00.

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate and was carried out virtually.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the service registered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with NHS Board commissioning teams who used the service
- Spoke with staff and management
- Reviewed documents

Key messages

- The agency had strong relationships with the NHS boards
- The agency recruited nurses safely and in line with safer recruitment guidance
- The agency supplied nurses who were skilled and well trained
- The nurses were well supported by the agency through regular communication
- The agency needs to notify the Care Inspectorate of any significant events

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership and staffing?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in the service delivery and support provided by this service, which supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

The ethos of the management team was very much values-based with a desire to supply nurses who would provide the care that they and their family would expect to experience. This was reflected in the aims and objectives of the service, and in the feedback we received from professionals who contracted support from the agency.

There was evidence of strong working relationships with the NHS boards to whom the agency supplied nurses. They described the agency as working within the NHS framework and supplied skilled nurses in a timely manner with good availability to meet their current and ongoing needs.

Feedback from NHS services was that the quality and values of nurses provided was very good and that they are offered consistency of staffing. One NHS service described the agency as "very human and friendly in their approach. Not pushy, take time to understand the need and it feels they genuinely want to help you find the best nurse for your organisational needs". This meant people's wellbeing was supported and their rights respected.

All nurses supplied by the agency were NMC registered. This meant they were required to work within their code of conduct of prioritising people, practicing effectively, preserving safety and promoting professionalism and trust. We discussed with the management team that although NMC values overlap with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), additional focus on HSCS during induction and training would be beneficial in ensuring that the outcomes of people cared for by their nurses, were met. At the time of inspection, the agency already had a plan in place to address this.

Comprehensive policies were in place and staff told us that these were easily accessed. The management team had oversight of any complaints received and the nurse consultant and a team of registered nurses supported the health boards and the individual nurses in the investigation of complaints. This helped ensure that quick and appropriate action was taken to address any concerns.

There were effective protection policies and training in place to ensure that people were kept safe. Although these referred to Scottish legislation, we discussed the importance of ensuring that the terminology used throughout the policy and training reflected the Scottish policy and legal context.

There was an extensive range of training in place for the nurses before being placed, which included medication, infection prevention and control and adult protection. All of the nurses spoke about being well trained by the agency, with regular supervision, good communication and they felt very well supported outwith office hours by their agency consultant and a senior nurse.

The agency had an effective process of matching nurses with specific health boards and specialist needs. Timesheets provided a feedback section so that services could provide valuable feedback on nurse's work. The nurses supplied by the agency commented that the agency valued their staff, empowering and engaging them and ensuring that staff were confident, comfortable and compliant with any assignment allocated to them. This meant that people's health and wellbeing were supported by nurses who were competent and skilled, and complied with relevant guidelines and best practice.

How good is our leadership and staffing?**4 - Good**

We made an evaluation of good for this key question. Several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Agency staff had been recruited safely in line with national Safer Recruitment guidance. All pre-employment checks were carried out for new employees before they started employment and we saw evidence that interview questions were values-based as well as competency-based. A registered nurse undertook the nursing interviews and there was oversight of nurse's membership of their professional body with regular checks. This meant people using the service could be confident that staff had been recruited safely.

There were annual appraisals for staff which covered previous objectives, development plans, revalidation discussions and performance reviews.

A quality assurance process was in place including a comprehensive range of audits being carried out both internally and externally. The agency had completed a self-evaluation based on the quality framework for nurse agencies and were in the process of updating this for the coming year.

The nurse consultant who is also the clinical lead, was active in other specific nursing organisations such as the Royal College of Nursing. This helped to ensure the agency was up to date with any current issues in the field.

The agency were looking at methods of gathering additional feedback about their staff from the NHS boards and had made some good connections to allow them to collate and quality assure the work of their staff across Scotland.

We discussed with the agency the importance of notifying the Care Inspectorate of significant and relevant events. This allows the care inspectorate to gain oversight and intelligence and alerts us to any issues around actual or potential protection concerns (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1.

To support people's safety, the provider should comply with Care Inspectorate guidance on notification reporting as detailed in 'Records that all registered care services (except childminding) must keep and guidance on notification reporting' and submit relevant notifications, under the correct heading, within the timeframe identified in the guidance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event' (HSCS 4.14); and 'I benefit from different organisations working together and sharing information about me promptly where appropriate, and I understand how my privacy and confidentiality are respected' (HSCS 4.18)

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 People's rights are promoted and respected	5 - Very Good
1.2 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership and staffing?	4 - Good
2.1 Safer recruitment principles, vision and values positively inform practice	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	4 - Good
2.3 Staff have the right skills and are confident and competent	5 - Very Good

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