

## SOS Medical Nurse Agency

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**Type of inspection:**  
Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**  
21 March 2025

**Service provided by:**  
SOS Medical Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2018013215

**Service no:**  
CS2018370854

## About the service

SOS Medical is registered as a nurse agency which will supply or introduce registered nurses to NHS facilities in all Scottish Health Boards, to private sector facilities and people living in their own homes. The service provider is SOS Medical Limited.

The service operates from an office base in London. At the time of the inspection, there were three nurses who were being supplied to NHS facilities across Lothian, Fife and the Highlands. This inspection was a virtual inspection and carried out remotely.

The client or service user of nurse agencies are not always the person who receives the direct care from the nurse. In this instance "service user" or "client" are NHS Health Boards who use SOS Medical to supply agency nurses to them when needed.

## About the inspection

This was an announced short notice inspection which took place between 19 and 21 March 2025 between 09:30 and 18:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

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

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two clients who use the service
- spoke with five staff and management
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Nurses felt well supported, confident and competent in their roles.
- There were robust and effective quality assurance systems in place to provide oversight for the management team.
- The service were effectively using self-evaluation to promote a culture continuous improvement.
- Staff were recruited safely and ongoing checks ensured they continued to remain suitable for working with people.
- Professional and skilled nursing staff were supplied to deliver care.

## 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?	5 - Very 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 evaluated this key question as very good. We found significant strengths in the service delivery and support provided, which supported positive outcomes for people.

Clients shared positive feedback about staff's performance, interaction and quality of care delivered. Feedback indicated staff were of a high standard, skilled and engaged with people in a respectful manner.

NHS Trusts were well informed about the service they were purchasing as there was a comprehensive information pack available. This included details of the agency, its aims and objectives, information on how it monitors quality and how people could raise concerns, make comments, suggestions and complaints.

The agency's aims and objectives reflected values which promoted good staff practice, which protected people from harm and respected people's rights and choices. Feedback we gained from nurses assured us they were aware of the relevant procedures to protect people and were clear about their accountability in reporting concerns about people's safety and wellbeing.

There was a range of service policies and procedures in place to help make sure people were treated equally and without discrimination. These included policies on equal opportunities, complaints and safeguarding. Although the provider was based in England, policies referred to Scottish legislation, good practice guidance and the Health and Social Care Standards. This helped inform staff as to what was expected of them when working in Scotland.

A matching process was in place to ensure that staff with the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding were placed appropriately. Clients requesting staff had access to staff profiles. This included information on their skills, knowledge and competencies. As a result, services benefitted from knowing that the agency would supply nurses to meet their requirements and provide continuity of care. Provisions were in place via increased supervision and monitoring for new placements to ensure staff were the correct fit for the role. This ensures high standards of care and support.

Nurses told us they felt confident and competent in their roles. One nurse told us, "the management team are very supportive, they're always available and go out their way to help us". Nurses appreciated the responsiveness of the management team and felt listened to. Additional supports had been developed to ensure agency nurses had access to helpful information to support their placements.

One client told us "the agency team are very responsive and helpful. If we have had any issues or queries, these have been managed quickly and efficiently. All members of the team are approachable and professional." This supported the clients and people experiencing care.

SOS Medical provided regular opportunities for meaningful feedback on individual staff and the experience of the agency. We saw evidence of good communication and a proactive approach to engaging with people to gather feedback using a range of methods. This helps people feel that they have a voice as the agency is responsive to comments and feedback.

All staff had received training on Infection Prevention and Control and we saw good compliance with this. There were ongoing processes in place for oversight, feedback on staff competency and identification of any developmental needs.

**How good is our leadership and staffing?****5 - Very Good**

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

Staff were recruited safely in line with Safer Recruitment guidance. The process of recruitment was well organised and documented so that all elements of the procedure were followed consistently. Detailed policies and processes were in place to ensure that the necessary checks were completed and staff were suitable candidates. This meant people using the service could be confident that staff had been recruited safely, keeping them safe from harm and risk.

A values based interview process was in place to ensure that staff were working in line with the aims and ethos of the service. We saw evidence of the application and interview process being reviewed and updated as part of the service improvement plan.

The management team demonstrated a clear understanding about what was working well and what improvements were needed. They ensured that the outcomes for people who were using the service and the support for nurses they deployed remained central to the systems. Staff wellbeing was a priority to SOS Medical, and reviews of staff wellbeing were being carried out consistently. The nurse manager also had links to professional body working groups. We saw action taken in response to feedback from nurses to ensure effective supports were in place.

There was a range of quality assurance processes in place, and regular audits were being carried out. Monthly team meetings provided opportunity to review how well the service was performing, and we saw evidence of analysis for themes and trends to support learning. The management team were effectively using self-evaluation to inform a dynamic service improvement plan. This helps support a culture of continuous development and drive forward improvements.

A detailed complaints procedure enabled concerns to be raised. People told us they felt comfortable raising concerns with the service and were confident that these would be addressed. One client told us "any concerns I have had have been addressed appropriately. It is important to us how these cases are managed. We have a good working relationship".

We found learning from complaints and incidents was central to the provider's quality assurance processes. Where things had went wrong we saw evidence of action being taken and learning from these events. This approach helps maintain very good standards of care and support.

Systems and processes to support and develop staff were in place such as, peer support channels, monthly supervisions and annual appraisals. The management team acknowledged the challenge of ensuring staff participation in monthly supervision and we saw creative ways adopted to promote engagement. We signposted the service to the "Clinical Supervisions National Framework for Nursing in NHS Scotland" (NES) to support ongoing developments in this area.

There were systems in place to provide oversight of staff training which showed good compliance rates. Staff had access to a wide range of training through a mix of online and face to face sessions. Training was relevant to the nurses' role and mandatory training was completed before staff began work. This contributed to people who use the agency being confident that staff have the right skills and knowledge to support them safely.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://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?	5 - Very Good
2.1 Safer recruitment principles, vision and values positively inform practice	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	5 - Very Good
2.3 Staff have the right skills and are confident and competent	5 - Very Good

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