

Key inspection report

Domiciliary care agencies

Name:	Independence Homes Ltd
Address:	Suite 246-260 Airport House Purley Way Croydon Surrey CR0 0XZ

The quality rating for this domiciliary care agency is: three star excellent service

A quality rating is our assessment of how well an agency is meeting the needs of the people who use it. We give a quality rating following a full review of the service. We call this full review a 'key' inspection.

Lead inspector:	Date:
Michael Williams	1 6 1 1 2 0 0 9

This is a review of quality of outcomes that people experience in this agency. We believe high quality care should

- Be safe
- Have the right outcomes, including clinical outcomes
- Be a good experience for the people that use it
- Help prevent illness, and promote healthy, independent living
- Be available to those who need it when they need it.

The first part of the review gives the overall quality rating for the agency:

- 3 stars - excellent
- 2 stars - good
- 1 star - adequate
- 0 star - poor

There is also a bar chart that gives a quick way of seeing the quality of care that the home provides under key areas that matter to people.

There is a summary of what we think this service does well, what they have improved on and, where it applies, what they need to do better. We use the national minimum standards to describe the outcomes that people should experience. National minimum standards are written by the Department of Health for each type of care service.

After the summary there is more detail about our findings. The following table explains what you will see under each outcome area.

Outcome area (for example User focussed services)

These are the outcomes that people using domiciliary care agencies should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

This box tells you the outcomes that we will always inspect against when we do a key inspection.

This box tells you any additional outcomes that we may inspect against when we do a key inspection.

This is what people using this domiciliary care agency experience:

Judgement:

This box tells you our opinion of what we have looked at in this outcome area. We will say whether it is excellent, good, adequate or poor.

Evidence:

This box describes the information we used to come to our judgement.

We review the quality of the service against outcomes from the National Minimum Standards (NMS). Those standards are written by the Department of Health for each type of care service.

Copies of the National Minimum Standards – Domiciliary Care Agencies can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or bought from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering from the Stationery Office is also available: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

The mission of the Care Quality Commission is to make care better for people by:

- Regulating health and adult social care services to ensure quality and safety standards, drive improvement and stamp out bad practice
- Protecting the rights of people who use services, particularly the most vulnerable and those detained under the Mental Health Act 1983
- Providing accessible, trustworthy information on the quality of care and services so people can make better decisions about their care and so that commissioners and providers of services can improve services.
- Providing independent public accountability on how commissioners and providers of services are improving the quality of care and providing value for money.

Reader Information

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Information about the agency

Name of agency:	Independence Homes Ltd
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Provider web address:	

Name of registered provider(s):	Independence Homes Limited						
Conditions of registration:							
Date of last inspection							
Brief description of the agency							
<p>Independence Homes is a privately run domiciliary care agency providing specialist support for adults with epilepsy and some of whom may have learning disabilities and who live in the community but require substantive support from domiciliary care workers. The head office is based in South Croydon. The clientele served by this agency are not living in registered care homes but the agency seeks to provide a regular team of support workers for each of the addresses currently on their books. Typically the agency is providing support-workers to premises each occupied by up to six tenants with similar needs. This is an innovative service targeted at a specific client group. The provision of 24-hour care is unusual but is confirmed by the CSCI as meeting legal requirements because the Directors state that the service users' accommodation (rented accommodation) forms no part of the care service delivered by Independence Homes Limited. The Agency managers confirmed this point again during this inspection.</p> <p>The Commission confirmed the registration of Independence Homes Limited as a domiciliary care agency (and not a group of residential care homes). The Care Standards Act, Section 4(3) defines domiciliary care and differentiates between that service and residential care. As this agency intends only to provide care, and not accommodation, it is registered as a Domiciliary Care Agency within the meaning of the Act.</p>							

Summary

This is an overview of what we found during the inspection.

The quality rating for this agency is:

three star excellent service

Our judgement for each outcome:



How we did our inspection:

This was the fourth inspection of this Agency following its registration in 2004. The agency's office is based in South Croydon and the inspection was conducted in those offices. There have been no substantive changes to the Agency so many standards that were met before are still being achieved in the same manner.

What the agency does well:

The most outstanding commentary about this Agency comes from the service users themselves, they state it gives them their freedom. This is an unusual service in that it helps groups of service users, who require a lot of support because of their epilepsy, to live in the community when they might otherwise remain in hospital or a care home. From this and previous inspections it is clear the service users value the autonomy and independence they have whilst receiving the level of support commensurate with their needs and safety. The agency specialises in the care of people with epilepsy and to this end it ensures each new client has their condition, their diagnosis and treatment reviewed and refined. The agency proudly states that none of its clients have need hospital admission for their epilepsy since the agency has been in existence. The agency commissions independent surveys and the feedback from these is overwhelmingly positive so that in a survey of 28 clients on average 26 state that support is good or ok. Similarly, families of clients are also very positive about this agency.

What has improved since the last inspection?

In previous inspections only a small number of requirements have been made, for example, requiring improving records and the recruitment procedures. The agency has addressed these. Qualified Nurses specialising in the field of epilepsy are now employed as advisors to the Agency and this will also improve services. We met with one of the nurses and they explain several developments in the agency such as the use of technology to safeguarding residents at night, this allows for clients to have a greater degree of privacy but still maintain adequate monitoring of the epilepsy.

What they could do better:

No requirements arise on this occasion. The Agency itself is developing its services and is increasing the options for accommodation for service users, noting that the Domiciliary Care division of the organisation will not be providing that accommodation. The agency is working with the local authority to address recommendations arising from safeguarding referrals.

If you want to know what action the person responsible for this agency is taking following this report, you can contact them using the details on page 4.

The report of this inspection is available from our website www.cqc.org.uk. You can get printed copies from enquiries@cqc.org.uk or by telephoning our order line 0870 240 7535.

Details of our findings

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User focussed services

These are the outcomes that people using domiciliary care agencies should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

People are confident that the agency can support them. This is because there is an accurate needs assessment, which they, or someone close to them, have been involved in. This tells the agency all about them and the support they need and is carried out before they are offered a personal domiciliary care service.

People and their relatives can decide whether the agency can meet their support needs. This is because they, or someone close to them, have got full, clear, accurate and up to date information about the agency. People know that the agency can meet their needs because staff have the skills and experience to give them the care they need. If they decide to use the agency they know about their rights and responsibilities because there is an easy to understand contract or statement of terms and conditions between them and the agency that includes how much they will pay and what the agency provides for their money. People are confident that the agency handles information about them appropriately. This is because the agency follows their policies and procedures. They get a consistent, and flexible care service from reliable and dependable staff members.

This is what people using this domiciliary care agency experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

This domiciliary care agency provides all of the information needed for potential service users, and their relatives, to make an informed decision about whether it is able to meet their specific needs. This information is based upon thorough assessment before decisions are made whether or not to use the Agency's services.

Evidence:

This standard is met in so far as the agency has its own comprehensive assessment tool used to assess potential clientele prior to arranging a service. We noted the wide-ranging and thorough assessment undertaken by agency staff and noted that where appropriate documents can be translated in alternate formats, languages and communication methods.

Personal care

These are the outcomes that people using domiciliary care agencies should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

Each person is treated as an individual and the agency is responsive to his or her race, culture, religion, age, disability, gender and sexual orientation. Their right to privacy is respected and the support they get from workers is given in a way that maintains their dignity. If people take medicine, they manage it themselves if they can. If people cannot manage their medicine, the agency supports them with it in a safe way.

People's needs and goals are met. The agency has a plan of care that the person, or someone close to them, has been involved in making. They are able to make decisions about their life, with support if they need it, as the staff promote their rights, choices and independence.

This is what people using this domiciliary care agency experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **excellent** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

Service users have an individual care plan compiled from an initial assessment and they are supported in a respectful manner that maintains their dignity, privacy and personal autonomy. It is the ability of this service to give service users their autonomy within safe limits that gives an excellent outcome in this area. There are robust medication policies in place to protect the health of service users.

Evidence:

Service users contributed their comments during previous inspections and are quite certain that their right to be treated with respect is being upheld. People who use services are asked what they need and actively encouraged to be involved in their care plans and reviews and referred to them frequently during the inspection as the basis for planning and decision making. Innovative methods enable service users to participate this is reflected in the Agency's whole approach to its service users to ensure they are consulted and have real choices, about their accommodation, their care and their lifestyle.

A service user plan is produced from the initial assessments, which support workers are aware of prior to providing support. The support plan identifies the level of support required by the person receiving care and includes accommodation needs, risk

Evidence:

assessments and plans for their daily activities.

A folder is kept in their home, which holds a copy of the plan of care. Daily recording sheets are also held in the home and used to record all relevant events including personal care, the administration of medication, assistance in handling cash, for shopping, and other assistance provided day by day. The support workers complete the daily recording sheets, which are sent to the head office after an agreed period of time. The plan is being used as a working tool between service users and the on site carers, so that it positively supports delivery of an effective and positive service. Staff are exceptionally aware of the individuals particular requirements and how these are to be addressed having particular regard to service users various levels of epilepsy and how it will affect their daily living, cooking, bathing, swimming, travelling, employment, and so forth. Where staff change overs occur, the care planning and recording systems will ensure that care is always provided to the highest standards providing seamless recording and a well managed handover meetings.

The agencies service managers visit service users homes and monitors these records regularly. Managers were interviewed during the course of the inspection and it is clear they recognise that working in partnership with service users will result in better outcomes for users of services. The service users and a consultant neurologist confirm the Commissions assessment that this standard is excellent, the service users state that the Agency has, given them their freedom, which is a tremendous endorsement of the service.

The agency provides a minimum of five days training for all support workers as part of the induction process. The content is also repeated during staff meetings. The agency also provides equality, diversity and anti-discrimination training for the staff team during the induction period. A number of service users and their carers were contacted during the inspection process and they commented that the personal care and support they receive is of a very high standard and the staff are polite and respectful at all times. The written feedback to the Commission describes the agency, as it did last year, as an excellent service providing excellent care.

In order to ensure safe standards in the administration of medication two Nurses are now employed to monitor support given to service users, this includes regular checks to ensure policies and guidance are put into practices. No errors in this area were identified including the arrangements for service users to self administer medication and the arrangements for travelling with emergency and immediate use medication. The Nurses now employed by this Agency are specialist in the care of people with epilepsy and so they can assist staff in monitoring the well being of service users. Feedback from a consultant neurologist indicates good health care support is being provided by the Agency.

Protection

These are the outcomes that people using domiciliary care agencies should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

People using the agency are safeguarded. This is because the agency follows health and safety procedures, keeps records appropriately and ensures their staff follow policies and understand the importance of assessing risks. The agency safeguards people from abuse, neglect and self harm and takes action to follow up any allegations.

People are confident that their property and money will always be safe as the agency follows the right procedures. Their health and rights are safeguarded as the staff keep an accurate record in their home of all the support they give them.

This is what people using this domiciliary care agency experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

The Agency has in place the Policies and Procedures to ensure service users are protected from harm.

Evidence:

The company regularly overhauls its health and safety policies and procedures and has in place nominated health and safety advisors. Policies and procedures are in place to deal with health and safety matters such as manual handling, restraint, chemical safety, food safety and so forth. Risk assessments are in place for a range of matters in which the agency gives support including medication, dealing with challenging behaviour and close supervision when bathing for example. The staff that were interviewed by us in other inspections have confirmed that they have received training in respect of the protection of service users from abuse. This Agency has a comprehensive range of policies including written procedures for the safe management of specific and predictable risks that might be a hazard for service users or Agency staff. These policies are available to all staff. Key policies are in each staff members handbook, and will be updated in line with changing legislation. Health and safety issues are discussed at the time of induction of new staff and this was confirmed by staff interviewed by the inspector during the inspection. Staff confirmed that they receive training in respect of these risk taking areas including information

Evidence:

about dealing with challenging behaviour, handling service users money, support in giving medication and so forth. The Agency has specific forms for both service users and carers to complete when any financial transactions are undertaken. There have been a number of safeguarding referrals to the local social service departments. This is where concerns or complaints have been raised and need to be assessed by local care managers as to whether or not vulnerable adults have been at risk. In each case the agency has cooperated with any investigations and any recommendations by care managers have been followed up by the agency. Service users have individual risk assessments depending upon their needs. Risk assessments are completed in consultation with the service users. Copies of individual risk assessments are kept in the service users files and covers a variety of situations including personal care, dealing with challenging behaviour and manual handling. The agency has comprehensive documentation relating to adult protection. It was cross-referenced to the Local Authority multiagency adult protection procedures. All staff complete training on adult protection.

Managers and staff

These are the outcomes that people using domiciliary care agencies should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

People have confidence in the staff at the agency because checks have been done to make sure that they are fit to do the job. Their needs are met and they are supported as the staff get relevant training, support and supervision from their managers.

People have safe and appropriate support because the staff providing their care are qualified and competent. They are confident that the staff that provide their support are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

This is what people using this domiciliary care agency experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

The recruitment procedures ensure that service users are protected. A wide range of training is available for staff so they can meet the needs of service users. Staff are supervised and receive regular performance appraisal to monitor how well they are meeting service users needs.

Evidence:

A number of staff were interviewed and their individual personnel files were checked in detail in order to evaluate the recruitment procedures of this Agency. The staff files are detailed and substantial in size because they contain all the information required by Regulation including pre-employment checks plus induction, training and supervision records. The files are now in very good order and contain as recommend a detailed checklist of the recruitment processes. The Agency provides a specialist service to a limited range of service users those with severe epilepsy so training is very detailed in these areas. we on previous occasions attended induction training during the previous inspection in order to meet new recruits and he was then able to observe examples of training dealing with epilepsy in its complex forms and how service users are supported when seizures occur. The staff records, and the staff themselves, confirm that they now receive regular supervision and appraisal from senior staff. At the last inspection a number of requirements arose in respect of staff recruitment including matters relating to police checks and the application forms required to be completed by staff applying to work for the Agency. These matters

Evidence:

have now been addressed and the recruitment of new staff appears sound.

Organisation and running of the business

These are the outcomes that people using domiciliary care agencies should experience. They reflect the things that people have said are important to them:

People get consistent and planned support from the agency because the manager runs it appropriately with an open approach that makes them feel valued and respected.

People using the agency are safeguarded because it follows financial and accounting procedures, keeps record appropriately and ensures that their staff follow policies. If people have concerns about the agency they, or people close to them, know how to complain. Their concern is looked into and action taken to put things right.

This is what people using this domiciliary care agency experience:

Judgement:

People using this service experience **good** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

This is a well managed Domiciliary Care Agency, operated from a suitable office base in South Croydon. Effective procedures are in place to ensure good financial management and record keeping. The views of service users and their relatives are listened to, and taken seriously.

Evidence:

The Agency is well run by the registered manager, and the development managers who manage day to day services. The Agency operates from well-appointed offices in South Croydon and appears to have a suitably large team of administrators. All records inspected and, required to be maintained by Regulation, were found to be in order. The management structure reflects the increasing size of the Agency and the volume and complexity of the care provided. Administration at the agency is of a good standard and all records maintained for Regulation purposes were found to be in order and stored securely. Daily care records are kept in the home of service users with copies held in the head office. Service users are helped to access their records when they wish and there is a policy on accessing personal information in accordance with Data Protection legislation. We checked the registration of Independence Homes Limited - as a domiciliary care service and not a group of residential care homes. The Care Standards Act defines residential care as a service that provides both accommodation, that is, a place to ordinarily reside and care, that is, assistance with

Evidence:

bodily functions. As this agency provides, and intends only to provide, care and not accommodation then it is registered as a Domiciliary Care Agency within the meaning of the Act. The managers assisting with the inspection confirmed this continues to be the case.

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

Yes

No

Outstanding statutory requirements

These are requirements that were set at the previous inspection, but have still not been met. They say what the registered person had to do to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

Requirements and recommendations from this inspection:

Immediate requirements:

These are immediate requirements that were set on the day we visited this domiciliary care agency. The registered person had to meet these within 48 hours.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

Statutory requirements

These requirements set out what the registered person must do to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must do this within the timescales we have set.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

Recommendations

These recommendations are taken from the best practice described in the National Minimum Standards and the registered person(s) should consider them as a way of improving their service.

No	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations

Helpline:

Telephone: 03000 616161

Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

Web: www.cqc.org.uk

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