

Nutricia Ltd trading as Nutricia Homeward Nurse Agency

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Unannounced

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Service provided by:
Nutricia Limited

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About the service

Nutricia Homeward Ltd is a nurse agency who specialise in helping adults, children and young people to manage enteral feeding at home. They are contracted by NHS Boards to provide training in enteral feeding to individuals, their nominated representatives and other care and support services. They have an office base in England but provide care in Scotland through a team of nurses who are based in Scotland. At the time of inspection they were supporting 1521 adults and 823 children across 14 NHS Boards.

About the inspection

This was a first inspection which took place on 4, 5 and 6 June 2024. The inspection was carried out virtually by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with NHS Boards who contract the service and care homes who had received training from the service.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.
- Spoke with professionals.

Key messages

- The service excelled in providing clear, accessible information in a variety of formats designed to meet the needs of people.
- Recruitment and induction procedures prepared nurses well for their role.
- People experienced high-quality care and support.
- The service was responsive to feedback.
- There was a culture of continuous improvement.

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?	6 - Excellent
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?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for people.

Information was available in different formats to satisfy the various needs of people experiencing care to the extent that this was sector leading. The service used a platform that translated text on their website to other languages, easy read and pictorial guidance and could magnify or read text aloud. There were accessible videos available, explaining how to appropriately use or clean various pieces of enteral feeding equipment. This information was also available in pictorial and easy read formats. An app was available so that people could have a video call with a nurse to trouble shoot any issues or receive a recap of training or other advice and guidance. Information was in a format and language that was easily understood so people had the right information to keep themselves safe.

People experienced warm, encouraging interactions with staff. Nurses took the time needed to ensure learning was being understood. One nurse said, "I have enough time. We plan our diaries so that if emergencies happen, we can cope with it." Training was tailored to individual needs and people were positively encouraged to demonstrate their knowledge of using their enteral feeding pump. This ensured people could competently use their pump prior to going home. Where people were not able to retain the learning, this was communicated to the relevant professionals so that alternative arrangements could be made for using the pump at home which meant people were safely using their equipment.

The service was outcome focused with a goal of helping people to live well at home, which they did extremely well. One information booklet gave clear, relevant, outcomes-based information on what people can expect from living with a gastrostomy tube. Staff were actively encouraged to share improvement ideas and supported to develop and roll them out. One project focused on good outcomes for people and partnership working; a nurse worked with the local dietician and offered advice to people living with a gastrostomy tube in rural areas about preparing for adverse weather conditions. This meant people were supported sensitively by staff who anticipated issues and encouraged people to ensure they had enough supplies and the knowledge of how to access support virtually and by phone.

People could expect to receive outstanding care and support as staff were highly competent and skilled. Staff were regularly exposed to competency assessments and were required to pass annual validation checks by their line manager; the compliance rate was excellent. Staff said they felt more confident and competent because of this.

The provider responded well to the latest guidance and research and were exemplary at incorporating new information, for instance they offered a new core service in response to data gathered during the Covid-19 pandemic. Survey responses from people experiencing care showed overwhelmingly positive comments. One person said, "Absolutely fantastic saved a 5 hour wait in A&E. Very patient and helpful. Can't thank you enough." Other comments said the service was "Excellent - always responds, very professional, helpful and friendly." and "They feel like part of the family and excellent service is given by all."

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

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

The service followed safer recruitment guidance. All relevant pre-recruitment checks were in place prior to nurses commencing work. The induction period continued until all mandatory training and observed competencies and validations were completed and the new staff member demonstrated they were competent. Nurses said this took around 12 weeks. One nurse said, "They are strict with regards to policies and procedures and risk assessments. The whole picture is looked at. I was impressed with this, they really care about people." Nurses were allocated a buddy and described this as a positive experience. People then could be confident nurses were appropriately and safely recruited.

Nurses felt confident as relationships with their team, line manager and senior management were supportive. They told us there was always a senior nurse available for advice or support. Nurses wore a safeguard system, discreetly placed, to keep them safe when lone working. One nurse said, "I've never felt on my own, even though I work alone." Ongoing training was relevant, robust and compliance was very good. A nurse told us, "I love their values which set the scene for good team working which has a positive impact on people experiencing care." Supervision was regular with relevant content. Nurses described peer support at team meetings and daily chats which focused on workload and bringing about good outcomes for people and staff. This meant nurses wellbeing was looked after and people could be confident nurses had the necessary skills and confidence to support them.

There were enough nurses to provide a service in a person-centred manner. Nurses took their time when delivering training or performing a procedure to help people feel comfortable and aid their understanding. The service was available to people for however long they needed it and staff gave clear information about this and the various ways they could engage. As the main clients were NHS Boards, staffing levels were determined at the time of agreeing the contract. NHS Boards, adult and paediatric dieticians we spoke with gave extremely positive feedback on the service, stating that they were happy with the service, had received no complaints, nurses were thorough, responsive and people liked them and benefitted from their involvement.

Leaders were proactive in regularly evaluating both nurses practice and people's experiences. Nurses were encouraged to self-evaluate their care and support plan entries. The agency had effective procedures in place to maintain oversight of nurses professional registration and they supported nurses to revalidate. The service's processes were designed to filter relevant information from quality audits into a high level report so leaders could see at a glance where they were performing well and identify any areas for improvement. Relevant information was then cascaded to staff using 'communication bubbles', discussed at team meetings and important information was highlighted on their digital systems alongside frequently used systems. A nurse told us that relationship-centred 'behaviours' were "drummed into us, it all encircles the people experiencing care. They are always looking for ways to improve people's experience." This meant people could be confident their care and support benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement. People said they were happy with the service they received and described nurses as, "Very professional, respectful and informative." and "Very contactable and supportive."

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?	6 - Excellent
1.1 People's rights are promoted and respected	6 - Excellent
1.2 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	6 - Excellent
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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