

# Key inspection report

## Domiciliary care agencies

<b>Name:</b>	A1 Home Care Ltd
<b>Address:</b>	Chelmsford 112 Byron Road Essex CM2 6HJ

**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.

<b>Lead inspector:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Carolyn Delaney	2   9   0   1   2   0   1   0

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](http://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](http://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

Document Purpose	Inspection report
Author	Care Quality Commission
Audience	General public
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## Information about the agency

Name of agency:	A1 Home Care Ltd
Address:	Chelmsford 112 Byron Road Essex CM2 6HJ
Telephone number:	01245354774
Fax number:	01245355408
Email address:	support@a1homecareltd.co.uk
Provider web address:	

Name of registered provider(s):	A1 Home Care
Conditions of registration:	
The registered person may provide the following category of service only: Domiciliary care agency - Code DCA to service users of the following gender: Either	
Date of last inspection	<input type="text"/>
Brief description of the agency	
A1 Home care is a small care agency, which operates out of offices in Chelmsford. The agency provides support for people who need assistance with daily tasks such as personal care, domestic chores and assistance with medication. The fees for a care package range from £8.75 to &10.00 for a half hour visit to £12.75 to £16.95 for an hour visit.	

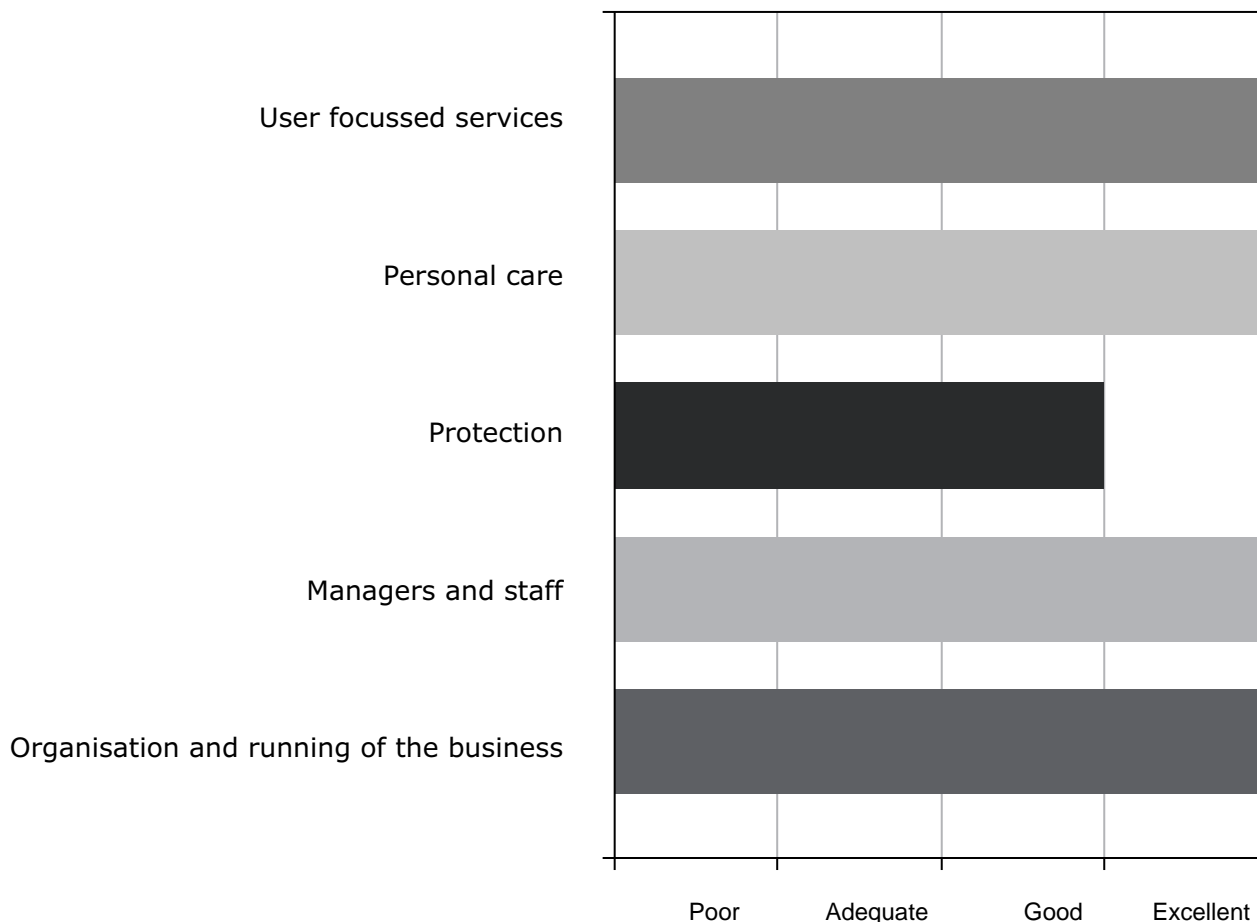
## Summary

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 a routine key inspection, which included a visit made to the agency. The last key inspection was carried out on 26th March 2009.

As part of the inspection process we reviewed information we have received about the service since the last key inspection. This included the agencies Annual Quality Assurance Assessment. This document is a self-assessment which the registered provider / owner are required by law to complete to tell us how they provide good outcomes for people who use the agency, what they do well, how they evidence this and the improvements made within the previous twelve months.

We sent spoke with four people who use the agency for support and four members of staff who work for the agency. The comments expressed by these people were reflected in the report.

During the site visit, records including service user's care plans and assessments, and staff training files were examined. A brief tour of the premises was carried out. We spoke with the manager and one member of staff.

Information obtained was triangulated and reviewed against the Commission's Key Lines for Regulatory Activity. This helps us to use the information to make judgements about outcomes for people who use social care services in a consistent and fair way.

### **What the agency does well:**

Before a person commences a service with the agency they are provided with detailed information about how it operates, how to contact staff and how to complain if they are unhappy. The manager will visit each individual and carry out a detailed assessment of their needs, taking into account their wishes for how they would like to be supported.

From the assessment a detailed and individualised care plan is drawn up and staff follow this so that each person's needs are met in the way in which they expect. Risks to both clients and staff are identified and plans put in place to minimise these.

Staff are recruited robustly and trained to meet the needs of the people they are to support. There are policies and procedures in place around safeguarding people who may be vulnerable.

The agency is well managed and the people who use its services are consulted with so that their views are taken into account and used to make improvements where needed.

### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

A new manager has been employed and has been working at the agency for approximately six months. They have made improvements in the way in which the needs of people are assessed, how care is planned and how staff support clients.

All staff receive training, which is relevant to their roles and helps them to support clients appropriately.

### **What they could do better:**

We did not identify any areas for improvement throughout the inspection or when we spoke to people who use the agency.

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](http://www.cqc.org.uk). You can get printed copies from [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto: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 **excellent** quality outcomes in this area. We have made this judgement using a range of evidence, including a visit to this service.

People who use the agency can be assured that they will receive a well planned and individualised service, which is tailored to meet their needs.

Evidence:

The manager told us in the Annual Quality Assurance Assessment that an assessment of each person's needs is always carried out with the person and their family where possible so that their views are taken into account and the service is tailored to the person's individual needs. They told us that detailed information about each person's needs is always given to staff before they go out to support the individual.

When we visited the agency we looked at the arrangements for assessing the needs of people who use its services. The manager told us that they had twenty-five clients and

## Evidence:

we looked at the assessments for two people. We saw that the manager had completed a detailed assessment prior to the service commencing. There was detailed information recorded about the clients needs, their medical, social and family history including details of current family support. There was relevant information about both person's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing to enable staff to support each individual in a holistic way.

We saw that the manager carried out a review of each person's care package every three months. As part of this review they recorded the views and comments of both the client and the staff who support them. We looked at the reviews for both people and we saw that both clients commented very positively about the service they received from the agency. One person commented ' The company is what it says it is - A1 first class service'.

We asked the manager about missed visits and they told us that there are none, as she or other office staff would cover in cases where support staff were unable to attend. They told us of the extra arrangements put in place during the recent spell of adverse weather, which included the directors transporting staff to visit clients.

We looked at the information, which was given to people when their service commenced. There was clear advice around the services provided, how to contact the office, what to do if there were any problems, how to make a complaint if they were unhappy.

Following the inspection we spoke with four people who use the agency. They were all very complimentary about the service they received. One person said 'They always come at the right time or if there is a problem we get a call from the manager so we don't worry'. Another person said 'This is the best agency by far, they really go above and beyond what is expected'.

## 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.

People who use the agency can be assured that they will receive support for their personal care needs, which is agreed and meets their expectations.

Evidence:

The manager told us in the Annual Quality Assurance Assessment that the Privacy and dignity of service users was respected at all times. They told us that staff training emphasised the need for service users rights to be respected, valued and that they were given appropriate privacy. They told us that medication was correctly administered and accurate records were kept. They also said that their all staff undertook medication training and received copies of the medication policies and procedures. They told us that the standard of personal care was underpinned by the company policy (stated within the contract) of providing sufficient quality time to fully fulfil care obligations with true dignity and respect.

When we visited the agency we looked at the arrangements for supporting people for their assessed health and personal care needs. We looked at the care plans for two people who used the agency. For both there was clear information recorded about their assessed needs and a clear and detailed plan for staff to follow. The expressed

## Evidence:

wishes of clients and their preferences were recorded in the care plan. We saw that where there were any changes to the needs or wishes of clients that these were clearly recorded in an amended care plan. After carrying out each visit staff recorded in detail the support and care they had provided and these were regularly checked by the manager.

We saw that all staff had undertaken training around the safe handling of medicines and the policies and procedures around prompting clients to take medicines or administering these where the individual was unable to do so. Where clients required assistance with medication there was a clear and detailed plan in place to support staff and minimise the risk of errors.

We spoke with four people who used the agency. They told us that staff were 'efficient and caring'. One person said 'They do all the things I need with a caring smile'. Another person told us ' We could not ask for a better agency, we are extremely fortunate to have found them'.

## 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.

People who use the agency are protected from harm because risks are identified and well managed by the manager and staff.

Evidence:

The manager told us in the Annual Quality Assurance Assessment that during the initial service user assessment, all aspects of health & safety regarding the service user and the care staff were risk assessed and appropriate provision initiated such as moving & handling requirements, fire safety, food hygiene and home environmental conditions. They told us that rigorous training in moving & handling, health & safety, basic first aid, infection control and food hygiene was provided. They said that staff were trained in abuse awareness (SOVA) and systems were in place so that any incidents of abuse were reported accurately. They said that the agency's Whistle Blowing policy and procedure was highlighted in staff training.

When we visited the agency we looked at the arrangements for protecting the people who use its services from harm. We saw that there was a comprehensive assessment carried out by the manager when a new service was commenced. The assessment identified risks to clients' health and safety, the safety and welfare of staff. The assessment covered environmental issues, equipment, substances etc. These

Evidence:

assessments were reviewed periodically.

We saw that staff received training around health and safety and they received information and guidance for handling clients money, entering and leaving a clients home and lone working.

All staff received training around safeguarding people who may be vulnerable and staff were provided with a handbook issued by the local social services safeguarding team. There had been no issues of concern raised about the agency within the previous twelve months.

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

People who use the agency know that staff will meet their assessed needs because they are recruited robustly, trained and supervised.

Evidence:

The manager told us in the Annual Quality Assurance Assessment that they rigorously follow set policies and procedures on recruitment of staff. They told us that a full training programme had been developed in the last four months. They told us that communication records were kept on each member of staff to record lateness, cancellation of shifts, concerns, compliments, actions taken concerning clients and staff complaints. These were then used as evidence of their performance during supervisions.

When we visited the agency we looked at the arrangements for recruiting, training and supervising staff. We looked at files and information for two members of staff who had commenced employment within the previous twelve months. We saw that the manager had checked both people's employment history for gaps and explanations were sought as appropriate. References were obtained from both individuals previous employers and Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and Independent Safeguarding Authority checks were obtained as part of the agencies recruitment procedure. As an extra safeguard measure the manager provided a photograph of candidates on the reference request sent to previous employers. This helped to validate the identity of

## Evidence:

each candidate. We saw that each candidate was interviewed by the manager and the interview covered employment history, training and qualifications, skills and communication to help determine the person's suitability to work for the agency. When staff commence employment for the agency they undertake Skills for Care Common Induction Standards. This helps to ensure that staff support people in a consistent way, in line with the agency's expectations, policies and procedures.

We looked at the arrangements for training staff to meet the needs of the people they support. We saw that all staff undertook training around supporting people who have dementia, moving and handling, medication, safeguarding people. In addition all staff who work for the agency undertake National Vocational Qualification training in social care.

Following the site visit we spoke with three members of staff. They told us that all the checks including references and Criminal Records Bureau disclosures were carried out before they started work. They told us that they received training, which was relevant to their roles, helped them understand the needs of people they support and kept them up to date with new ways of working. Each of the three people told us that the manager met with them regularly to discuss their work and training needs. Staff told us that they 'Enjoyed working for the agency'. One person told us 'We do a good job and make clients happy'. Another person said 'The manager is always available to help if needed so that there are no problems'.

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

The service is managed in a consistent way in the best interests of those who use its services.

Evidence:

The manager told us in the Annual Quality Assurance Assessment that they feel that the services provided were consistently delivered and well managed and planned. They told us that they had a clear complaints procedure in place which was closely adhered to.

When we visited the agency we looked at the arrangements for receiving and dealing with complaints. We saw that there was a clear policy and procedure and this information was readily available to clients. We saw that one complaint had been made within the previous twelve months. A client complained that staff had turned up late. We saw that the manager acted promptly to resolve the issue, discipline the member of staff, reinforcing policies around punctuality and communication and compensating the client by way of waiving the fees for an agreed number of visits.

We spoke with the manager about the arrangements for running the agency. They told us that they had four years experience in domiciliary care agency management and had recently submitted their application to be registered as manager with the Care Quality Commission. They were undertaking their Leadership and Management

Evidence:

Award training at the time of the inspection.

The agency was operated out of dedicated office premises close to Chelmsford town centre. There were appropriate numbers of staff employed to meet the current needs of the business and there were plans to move to larger premises as the business increased.

We looked at how the manager consulted with and obtained the views of people who used the agency so as to monitor and improve the service. We saw that people were asked to comment on their care plan, how staff supported them to retain independence, quality of care and how staff respected them and promoted their dignity. We saw that all clients responded positively. One person said 'Nothing is too much trouble'.

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](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)

**Web:** [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

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