



Making Social Care
Better for People

Inspecting for better lives

Key inspection report

Domiciliary care agencies

Name:	The Independent Living Service
Address:	92b Widemarsh St Hereford Herefordshire HR4 9HG

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

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

Lead inspector:	Date:
Christina Lavelle	0 9 0 1 2 0 0 9

This is a report of an inspection where we looked at how well this agency is meeting the needs of people who use it. 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.

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 Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

Our duty to regulate social care services is set out in the Care Standards Act 2000.

Reader Information

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Information about the agency

Name of agency:	The Independent Living Service
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Provider web address:	

Name of registered provider(s):	Herefordshire Centre of Independent Living Ltd						
Name of registered manager (if applicable)							
Conditions of registration:							
Date of last inspection							
Brief description of the agency	<p>The Independent Living Service provides people who have physical and/or learning disabilities with assistance so that they can stay in their own homes. It's vision is stated as being "a world of difference where individuality is valued and everyone has the opportunity to achieve and to give". People using the agency often require high levels of support and have substantial and/or complex needs. The service aims to meet the needs of those people who want choice and control over their personal support but who do not wish to become employers. The agency therefore employs their personal assistants but involves each person using the service in all aspects of the recruitment and management of their staff. Its main stated aim is "to provide a high quality service enabling people who have support needs to lead an individual lifestyle". There is now also a new arm of the service, which is to provide a short term service to enable disabled employers to sustain their independence during periods when they are short of personal assistants. The Independent Living Service is currently providing support to 34 people. The agency's office is situated in ground floor premises close to the centre of Hereford city. There is good access into the building for people with physical disabilities. Information about the service is provided in a Statement Of Purpose and Service Users' Guide. These documents are also made available in user-friendly formats to meet individuals' needs. People using the service also agree an individual service agreement specifying the support that they will receive and the cost.</p>						

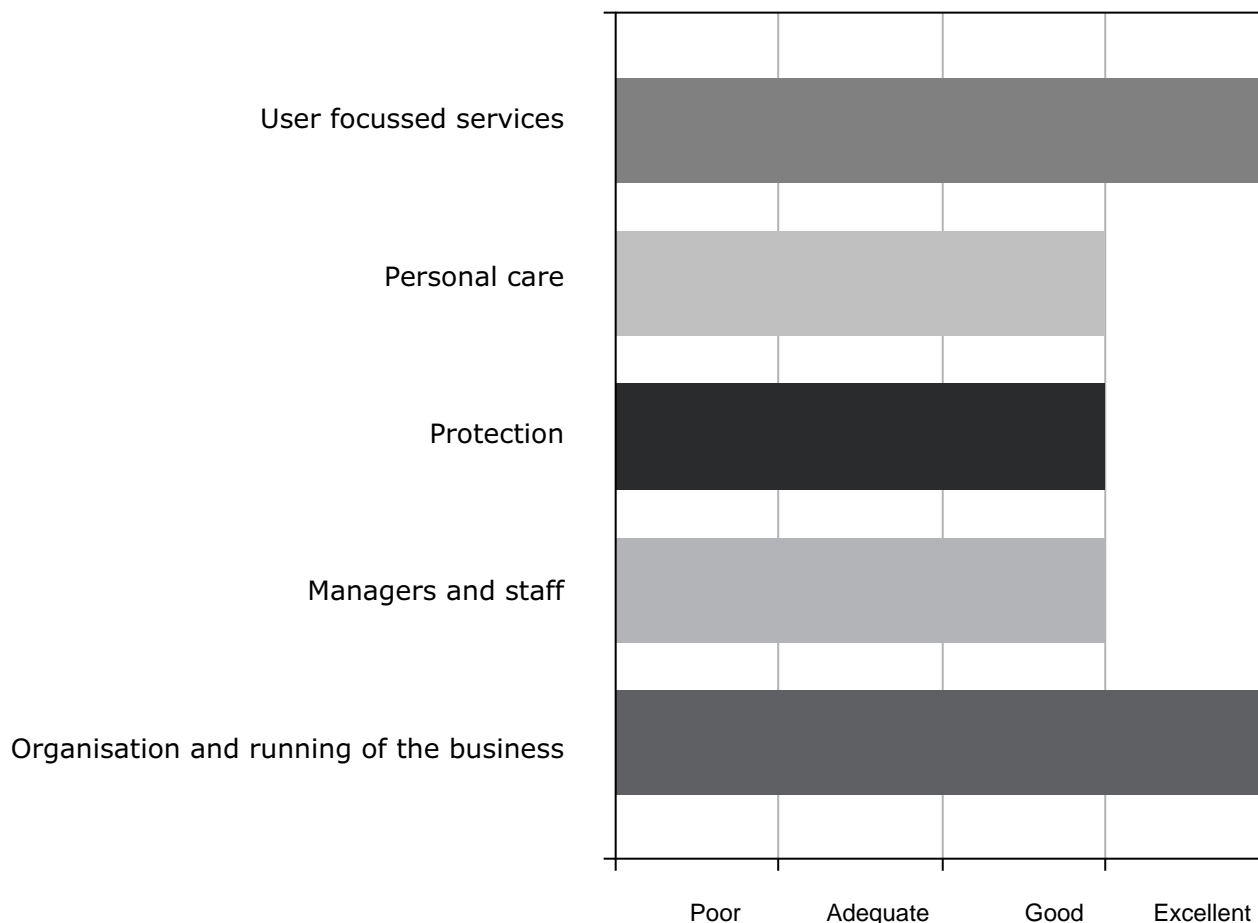
Summary

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 is a key inspection of the service provided by the Independent Living Service. This means all the standards that can be most important to people who receive a personal domiciliary care service are assessed. It was agreed with the manager that people using the agency's service would be referred to as customers in this report.

As part of the inspection we, the commission, arranged to visit the agency's office. The way the service is run and plans to improve it were discussed with the manager. Two support workers were also spoken with privately and asked about their work, training and support. Some relevant records relating to staff, customers' care and a sample of the agency's policies and procedures, were looked at.

Four customers were visited, three at their own homes, to discuss and check out the support they receive. Three of them had one of their support workers present for some or all of the time during our visit. Surveys were also sent to a sample of customers and staff to obtain their views of the service. Feedback from our discussions and from the five customer and eight staff surveys that were returned is referred to in this report.

An annual quality assurance assessment (AQAA) was completed before our office visit, as now required. The AQAA asks managers of care services to say what their service does well and could do better, what has improved in the last 12 months and about their plans to improve their service. It includes information about people using their service, staffing and other relevant aspects. All other information received by us from or about the agency since the last key inspection is also considered. This includes one complaint made through the commission, which was passed back to the agency to investigate. This matter is being dealt with directly by the manager with the complainant and is ongoing.

What the agency does well:

The agency is very careful to make sure that it can meet individuals' needs, wishes and goals before it offers them a personal support service in their own home.

The Independent Living Service's customers say that they are happy with the service they receive. One person comments in their survey that "they all provide me with a good quality of support to enable me to live as full and independent a life as possible".

Each customer is valued and treated by the agency as an individual. Their staff team know their needs and goals and support them to lead their chosen lifestyle. They respect their privacy, dignity and promote their independence.

The agency supports its customers to stay safe and secure. They can be confident that their health, welfare and safety needs are always promoted.

Staff receive training about how to keep people safe, protect them from abuse and meet customers' individual needs. Necessary checks are taken up to make sure that new staff are fit to do their job.

The agency is run well and the manager and staff are committed to providing a high quality, reliable and individualised service.

There are clear ways for people to give their views of the service and make complaints. This means that people know how to raise concerns and they are involved in how the service develops. The agency has a detailed plan to make improvements.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last key inspection, which was completed on the 7th of November 2006, the following improvements to the service have been made:

More customers are being enabled to manage their own medicines by using a monitored dosage system. This has promoted their independence.

All staff recruitment and selection now involves customers. This means they can choose staff who they feel they can get on well with.

Staff now have identity cards so customers can check who they are to keep them safe.

Staff continue to receive training to help them have the skills and knowledge to understand customers' needs and do their job better. This includes a session on values and attitudes which involves some customers of the agency as trainers.

The agency has developed the senior staff and on-call team. This means support workers and customers can get better and quicker support if and when they need it.

What they could do better:

Since its last key inspection the Independent Living Service has continued to follow a comprehensive development plan. This identifies and prioritises what needs to be done to improve their service. It involves disabled people, (mostly their customers), taking an active part in making decisions about the service they provide and plan to develop.

Their plans to make the service better in the next 12 months include the following:

Making all their information easier to understand.

Create a community inclusion project to enable customers' independence in their own community.

Employ a training co-ordinator to increase staff training and qualifications.

Improve their induction programme for new staff and help them complete it quicker.

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 set out on page 4.

The report of this inspection is available from our website www.csci.org.uk. You can get printed copies from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.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.

Customers can be confident the agency could support them. This is because a full assessment is carried out of their individual needs, preferences and goals, which they and people close to them have been involved in. In this way the agency knows all about them and the support they need and want before they are offered a personal domiciliary care service.

Evidence:

Customers confirm that they are receiving the support they need and that respects their lifestyle choices, in ways that are flexible and reliable. User involvement is given a high priority by the agency to enable people to make choices and take control of their lives. A service user involvement project and forums involve them in making

Evidence:

decisions about day-to-day issues affecting them. Regular newsletters are produced and it is to be ensured all information documents are easy to read and understand.

Before a service is offered to anyone the agency's manager described and records show how a referral form is completed by the prospective customer and/or their representative with their background details. A copy is also obtained of the person's community care assessment (if a social worker is involved). The manager then visits them to make an initial assessment of their needs and to discuss the service and give people relevant information documents, including their Service Users' Guide.

The assessment process includes individuals' families and/or representatives, if they need or want this support. One person who had recently started to receive a service had an independent advocate to assist them. Necessary risk assessments are also carried out and a support plan is drawn up based on their needs and risk assessments. Plans are agreed between everyone involved to show the support people need and the personal service required (social and domestic). A service agreement (contract) is then drawn up, agreed and signed by all parties, which includes the cost of the service.

The service does not start until individuals' support teams are in place and staff have received any training needed to inform them about their special needs, such as epilepsy and autism awareness. Customers are involved in selecting their own staff team and they spend time getting to know each other. One support worker described how they had visited a prospective customer at their previous residence, also working alongside their staff team and going out in the community with them. As most people have 24 hour care packages this creates an individualised service built around their specific needs, which staff and customers confirm is good as it provides continuity.

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

Every customer of the Independent Living Service is treated as an individual . They are supported by the agency's staff with respect and in a way that maintains their privacy and dignity. If people take medicines they manage it themselves if they are able to. If they cannot manage their own medicines then the agency supports them with it safely.

Evidence:

Each customer has a support plan that details their care and support needs. The agency has an appropriately "person centred" approach to care planning, which means that people are actively involved in setting up and regularly reviewing their own plans, with support from their family and advocates when agreed or necessary.

These care planning and reviewing processes ensure that individuals' needs and goals are identified. Their staff team focus on making sure that their needs are met and support is given to help them achieve their goals. Efforts are also made to enable people to communicate as part of promoting their independence. One person we visited uses signs, which their support workers understand, and they also have photographs to help them make choices about what they want to do, where to go etc.

Evidence:

Staff also aim to promote people's life and social skills and community integration, to the extent they want and are able to.

It is evident that individuals' wishes regarding their privacy and dignity in their chosen lifestyles are taken into consideration. The agency provides relevant policies and procedures for staff to follow, including on equal opportunities, anti-discrimination and harassment. Induction and training programmes for staff also focus on the principles of dignity and respect for people's diverse needs and promoting their equality, choice and control. Some people using the service are now being employed as trainers of a "Values and Attitudes" course provided for care workers.

Feedback from customers' surveys and discussions, and observed in their homes, confirm that staff always listen to them and respect their choices and preferred routines. Their comments include "when I need support and assistance with my hobbies we work out new and different strategies to enable me to do them" and "my meals are always cooked and prepared in the ways I like them and the cleaning and washing is also done the way I want it". Some customers state that they do not want many written records kept about them, which is also respected.

Medication and health requirements are specifically included and detailed in customers' plans. The sample of plans seen include risk assessments and any support people needed with such as moving and handling, skin care and continence. Staff interviewed are clear about their responsibilities in respect of peoples' health and medication.

The agency provides appropriate policies and procedures for staff to follow when they need to help with and/or manage customers' medicines. They support them to self-administer whenever they can, which is risk assessed. It is good that more people are being enabled to manage their own medicines by using a monitored dosage system.

Records checked in customers' homes show how their staff team support them with their health care, such as arranging routine health care checks and when attending appointments. Staff were also found to be maintaining records properly when they were administering medicines and one customer says that they help her to make sure she takes her tablets and to order the medicines she needs.

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's customers and staff are kept safe through it's policies, procedures and working practices. Risk assessments are also carried out to minimise possible safety risks and accidents. Staff understand their responsibility for protecting people from abuse, neglect and self-harm and the agency takes action to follow up any allegations.

Evidence:

The agency provides a comprehensive range of health and safety policies and procedures to help to ensure staff working practices promote safety and protect people. These include confidentiality, identity cards, entry arrangements to customers' homes, handling their money, and safeguarding adults. There are also guidelines for staff regarding their personal protection, working alone, obtaining support in emergencies and for managing aggression.

Staff surveys and those spoken with confirm they are aware of and follow all these procedures. They have received training in required health and safety topics and in relation to abuse, neglect and safeguarding adults. They are clear about their responsibility for protecting customers and know how to recognise and report any suspicion or incidence of abuse or neglect. They also feel confident about working

Evidence:

alone and say they can obtain support from the agency whenever they need it.

Risk assessments are carried out in relation to customer's specific needs and home environment, which are agreed with them wherever possible. This is to minimise risk of accidents and harm to people. Any accidents and incidents are appropriately recorded and analysed by the agency's management so that action can be taken if necessary to eliminate these risks. Staff carry out regular checks of such as fire and electrical equipment in customers' homes, which are audited by their managers.

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.

Customers can be confident that their needs will be met and they will be well and safely supported because staff receive relevant training, support and supervision from their managers. Thorough recruitment and selection procedures also make sure that staff are checked out and are suitable to do their job.

Evidence:

The manager and assistant manager are appropriately qualified and experienced. Staff confirm they provide good leadership and support and overall feel that communication within the staff team is good. They say that management are open and receptive, one comments "I find all senior staff are approachable and feel able to go to them if there is a problem" and another says "the Independent Living Service listens and supports their service users and staff".

Support workers confirm that they receive regular individual supervision from their team leaders who are always available to offer them advice and support. They also have monthly meetings with their customers and team leaders when they can all express their views and ensure peoples' needs are being fully met. All staff also have an annual work performance appraisal.

The agency has a low staff turnover, which is good for consistency of care. Staff are

Evidence:

positive about their role, training, support and the service they provide. Their comments include "very good training specific to the service I work with" and that "continuous training is good and promotes confidence in the workplace. I feel well trained enough to complete my job satisfactorily". Training includes topics such as epilepsy, autism and Parkinson's and the agency has its own moving and handling trainer. All the staff team have completed values and attitudes training. Staff also have opportunities for development and to achieve a social care qualification - NVQ (National Vocational Qualification). Every staff member has an individual record kept of their training and a continuing development portfolio.

New staff are always selected with input from their intended customers, to the extent this is possible. Thorough recruitment procedures are operated. The agency's AQAA, support workers and some staff records confirm that they all had a police check obtained and appropriate written references taken up before starting work.

The agency's induction process includes going through and ensuring that new staff understand all the agency's policies and procedures. Staff also complete necessary health and safety and any specific training in relation to their customers' needs. The agency has an accredited induction programme, which new staff must complete during their probationary period before their employment is confirmed.

Staff surveys and interviews reflect their commitment to achieving good outcomes for customers and promoting their independence, choices and control over their lives. They are positive about the service and their support. Most customers also confirm they receive a reliable service from their staff team who are respectful and competent.

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.

Customers receive consistent, planned support because the agency is well run with an open approach that makes them feel valued and respected. If people have concerns about the service they and/or their representatives, know how to complain. Their concerns are looked into and appropriate action is taken.

Evidence:

The agency has clear systems for managing the business, its finances and resources. Management actively look at how they can improve their service and the support and care delivery to its customers. The user involvement project, forums and satisfaction questionnaires are some of the ways that show how they include their customers in the day-to-day decisions and development plans for the service.

Comprehensive quality assurance and monitoring processes are operated. The agency also has a quality sub-committee that involves customers. External independent accreditors such as Investors in People also validate their quality assurance system.

The AQAA contains excellent information that is fully supported by appropriate evidence. It includes a high level of understanding of equality and diversity and shows how they listen to their customers. The AQAA also shows how areas that still need to be improved are recognised, with plans made to do this. It describes how the agency

Evidence:

keeps up-to-date with national and local policy changes and developments and seeks to introduce new initiatives and accepted best practice.

There is a clear, user-friendly complaints procedure that is available in formats individuals can understand. The advice and support of external advocates are sought as necessary. Customers confirm in surveys that they know how to make a complaint and most say they are often asked what they think of their care. One person comments "whenever I see people from the agency they ask me about my home carers". Staff confirm in their surveys and discussion that they would know what to do if concerns are raised with them.

The agency has a positive, proactive approach to complaints and a log is kept of all complaints, issues raised and compliments. Their records show that four complaints have been made since the last key inspection (one passed to them through the commission). Three complaints were upheld and two resulted in action being taken. One is ongoing but is being investigated thoroughly and promptly with the complainant kept informed.

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
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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
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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
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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
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Helpline:

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