



**Care Inspectorate Wales**

**Care Standards Act 2000**

# **Inspection Report**

**Smooth Starts Plus**

**NEWPORT**

**Type of Inspection – Full**

**Date of inspection – Wednesday, 29 May 2019**

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## Summary

### About the service

Smooth starts Plus Ltd is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide a domiciliary support service in the Cardiff and Vale regional partnership area. A responsible individual has been appointed to oversee the operation of the service and a manager who is registered with Social Care Wales (SCW) has been appointed.

### What type of inspection was carried out?

This was a full, unannounced, post registration inspection.

The following sources of evidence inform our report:

- Information held by CIW about the agency.
- Discussion with the appointed manager and with two staff members.
- Consultation via telephone calls with three people using the service.
- Case records for three children.
- Staffing records including records of training, supervision and recruitment.
- The statement of purpose and service user guide.

### What does the service do well?

We found that:

- People were complimentary about the support provided by the agency; the calibre of the staff and their ability to respond dynamically to the changing support needs of children.

### What has improved since the last inspection?

This was the first inspection of the service.

### What needs to be done to improve the service?

We found the following areas where improvement is necessary to fully meet legal requirements:

- Staff recruitment records must include all information referred to in Schedule 1; including a full employment history with dates to establish if there are any gaps that need to be accounted for.

A non-compliance notice was not issued on this occasion as we did not identify any

significant or adverse impact on people using the service. We expect immediate and effective action to be taken by the registered provider in regard to this matter which will be followed up at the next inspection.

In addition, we made the following recommendations to improve the service:

- That the information in the statement of purpose in relation to assessing, planning and reviewing people's care and support and for the governance and oversight of the service demonstrates alignment and cross referencing with the relevant regulations.
- That the service user guide includes information about how concerns can be made to CIW, the service regulator.
- That staff files are indexed and uniformly structured.

## Quality Of Life

The service is registered to provide a domiciliary support service but to date, no care and support or personal care has been provided for people in their homes.

The manager told us that the agency had only provided support to children to take part in activities within the community. They said that some personal care tasks had been undertaken during these activities but no care and support or personal care had been provided in people's own homes.

We saw in case files that the support being provided by the agency was community based and feedback we received from the parents of children confirmed this. Their feedback however was very positive about the quality of support provided by the agency.

On that basis, we conclude that the services provided by the agency to date are not subject to The Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017.

## Quality Of Staffing

Staff recruitment practices need improvement to fully meet legal requirements. We checked the recruitment records for three staff members and saw that disclosure and barring scheme (DBS) checks had been undertaken and at least two references had been obtained. Some evidence was available of the employment histories of staff members but in some instances this information was included in curriculum vitae (CVs) and did not include the specific dates of their previous periods of employment. The manager acknowledged the need for specific dates of employment to be known so any gaps in employment could be discussed and accounted for. We also found that staff files were not indexed or uniformly structured. We conclude that staff recruitment practices need improvement.

There are a sufficient number of staff to deliver the service. The manager confirmed there was a full staff compliment at the time of the inspection but additional staff were being recruited to meet an increase in demand. They said there had been a period when they had needed to cease the contracts of some staff because of a drop in demand for the service but some of these staff had since been reemployed. They said there had been challenges in maintaining continuity of support for children but all children were supported on a 1:1 basis and at least one experienced staff member had always been available that children were familiar with. We spoke to the parents of three children receiving support from the agency and their feedback was very positive about the quality of the support the agency provided and the calibre of the staff. The parent of one child said that some staff had left and some new staff had started but one of the two staff providing support for their child had always been a staff member they knew well and were comfortable with. This indicates that there have been some staff changes but the agency has been effective in maintaining continuity for children.

Staff are supported, supervised and trained. We saw records to confirm that staff received support and supervision from managers and that they had completed core training; including safeguarding and positive behavioural support (PBS) training. No manual handling tasks were undertaken. A newer staff member confirmed they had received induction training and that they were shadowing an experienced staff member to develop confidence and competence in their role. An experienced staff member who fulfilled a dual role of senior support worker and occupational therapist told us they received good support from managers and that they attended regular team meetings. The manager told us that in addition to staff supervision and team meetings that the staff used a group chat facility to keep in touch with each other to discuss any issues arising whilst fulfilling their roles. We conclude that staff are suitably trained and supported and that communication between them is effective.

## Quality Of Leadership and Management

A suitably qualified and experienced manager has been appointed.

The statement of purpose submitted for the registration of the service on 25/07/2018 had been amended but had not been submitted to CIW, the service regulator. The information in relation to assessing, planning and reviewing people's care and support and for the governance and oversight of the service did not demonstrate alignment or cross referencing with the relevant regulations.

A guide to the service dated 19/03/2019 contained a range of helpful information including that required by regulations.

Whilst the service is registered to provide a domiciliary support service, the manager told us that to date, the agency had only provided support to children to take part in activities within the community. They said that some personal care had been provided for children whilst undertaking community based activities but no care and support or personal care had been provided in people's own homes. They said they had registered the agency to provide care and support for children within their own homes but they had not done so to date.

Records in case files and consultation with staff and people using the service confirmed that the services provided had been community based activities. On that basis, we conclude that the services provided by the agency to date are not subject to The Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017.

## **Quality Of The Environment**

The environment does not currently form part of the remit of the inspection of domiciliary support agencies. However, we found that the agency had secure arrangements for the storage of records as well as offices and meeting rooms for staff. In addition, there was a lounge with sofas and a range of play equipment for children to use when visiting the service and a computer and sensory room.

## How we inspect and report on services

We conduct two types of inspection; baseline and focused. Both consider the experience of people using services.

- **Baseline inspections** assess whether the registration of a service is justified and whether the conditions of registration are appropriate. For most services, we carry out these inspections every three years. Exceptions are registered child minders, out of school care, sessional care, crèches and open access provision, which are every four years.

At these inspections we check whether the service has a clear, effective Statement of Purpose and whether the service delivers on the commitments set out in its Statement of Purpose. In assessing whether registration is justified inspectors check that the service can demonstrate a history of compliance with regulations.

- **Focused inspections** consider the experience of people using services and we will look at compliance with regulations when poor outcomes for people using services are identified. We carry out these inspections in between baseline inspections. Focused inspections will always consider the quality of life of people using services and may look at other areas.

Baseline and focused inspections may be scheduled or carried out in response to concerns.

Inspectors use a variety of methods to gather information during inspections. These may include;

- Talking with people who use services and their representatives
- Talking to staff and the manager
- Looking at documentation
- Observation of staff interactions with people and of the environment
- Comments made within questionnaires returned from people who use services, staff and health and social care professionals

We inspect and report our findings under 'Quality Themes'. Those relevant to each type of service are referred to within our inspection reports.

Further information about what we do can be found in our leaflet 'Improving Care and Social Services in Wales'. You can download this from our website, [Improving Care and Social Services in Wales](#) or ask us to send you a copy by contacting us.