Background
The number of people being cared for in their own homes is increasing and this trend will continue well into the future.

The number of home care agencies registered with us went up by 16% in 2011/12 and a further 6% in the first half of 2012/13.

Our inspection programme
During the programme, we inspected 250 agencies - 208 were owned privately, 22 by councils and 20 by voluntary organisations.

Their sizes ranged from ‘micro’ agencies to one caring for more than 700 people. Overall, 184 (74%) were meeting all five standards.

What worked well
Our inspectors found a lot of good practice that could be reflected in all home care. Here, we have highlighted some of these to help drive improvement.

Inductions for staff include training, supervision and shadowing of more experienced colleagues.

There is good written information about the services and choices and this is explained face-to-face.

People are encouraged to express their views. Detailed records are kept showing their preferences and care plans in the home are up to date.

Care workers are properly introduced before starting, there is continuity of staff and any changes are notified in advance.

What needs to improve
In our report, we highlight the following areas for improvement and make recommendations on each...

Late and missed calls
Lack of consistency of care workers
Lack of support for staff and failure to address ongoing issues around travel time
Poor care planning and a lack of regular review
Staff understanding of their safeguarding and whistleblowing responsibilities