



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

**Social Services
Inspectorate**

**AN
AFTERCARE RESIDENTIAL CENTRE
IN THE
HSE SOUTH AREA**

INSPECTION REPORT ID NUMBER: 433

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1. Introduction

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) carried out an announced themed inspection of an aftercare residential centre in the Health Services Executive South Area (SA). The centre was associated with another children's residential centre in the area. Orla Murphy (inspector) conducted the inspection under Section 69 (2) of the Child Care Act 1991, on the 16th December 2010. This inspection concentrated on the provision of aftercare and other relevant standards and consisted of a meeting with the centre manager of the associated centre, a review of documentation, an interview with the young person living in the centre and a tour of the premises.

The centre is located in a semi-detached two storey house in an urban setting. The house is associated with a children's residential centre nearby and is staffed by staff from the associated centre on a part time basis. The centre had a written statement of purpose and function. At the time of inspection it provided an aftercare placement for one young man who will be 18 years old in early 2011.

At the time of this inspection the young person was living in the centre for two months, having undertaken a lengthy transition period from the associated centre.

1.1 Methodology

Inspectors' judgements are based on evidence of findings verified from several sources gathered through direct observation, interviews, examination of relevant records and documentation, and an inspection of accommodation. Details of sources of evidence are given below.

The inspectors had access to the following documents:

- The young person's aftercare care plan,
- The young person's care files,
- The young person's independent living programme
- Administrative records,
- Young person's census form,
- The centre's Health and Safety Statement,
- The centre's fire register,
- The centre register
- Maintenance records

In the course of the inspection, the inspector interviewed the centre manager associated with the service and the young man living in the centre.

1.2 Acknowledgements

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the co-operation of the young man living in the centre and the manager of the associated centre.

1.3 Management structure

The centre had an acting manager who reported to the HSE South child care manager responsible for children's residential services who in turn reported to the general manager.

1.4 Data on children

On the day of the fieldwork the following young person was residing in the centre:

Listed in order of length of placement

| Young Person | Age | Legal Status | Length of Placement | No. of previous placements |
|--------------|-------|----------------|--|----------------------------|
| # 1 (Male) | 17yrs | Voluntary Care | 2 months (resident in the associated centre for 2 years) | 3 |

2. Analysis of Findings

This centre had been inspected by SSI previously when individual young people from the associated centre lived there on a special arrangement. The associated centre had previously been inspected by SSI in mid 2010 (see inspection report ID 402). A follow up inspection was carried out recently (see inspection report ID 447) and the majority of recommendations arising from that inspection were met. This was a themed inspection, covering aftercare and associated standards, therefore not all of the *National Standards for Children's Residential Centres* were assessed on this occasion. The full standards were assessed at the inspection of the associated centre where this young man was residing earlier this year.

Practices that met the required standard

Purpose and Function

The centre had a written statement of purpose and function. The centre aims to provide a medium term aftercare placement for one identified young person. This young man has a diagnosed disability. The placement aims to provide a placement where the young man can be independent and enhance his life skills whilst having the security of the associated centre providing ongoing social and emotional support and advice when necessary.

Social work and care planning

The young man had an assigned social worker. The centre manager confirmed that the social worker had regular contact with the young man and his family. A statutory care plan and an aftercare plan were in place for him and he will be attending school until June 2011. Statutory reviews had taken place within the appropriate time frames and the young man and his family were fully involved in these reviews. Upon examination of the care files, the inspector found that consultation with the young man was good. Some long term plans were being explored by the HSE for this young man and professionals have conceded within the aftercare plan that he would require ongoing support into adulthood.

Preparation for leaving care

The young man had lived in the associated residential centre for two years. He began his transition to his current placement 11 months ago. Staff drew up a comprehensive independent living programme which included budgeting, shopping, cooking, laundry, travelling on public transport, responding to an emergency and socialising. The transition began with visits to the house with staff. It then progressed to longer stays, such as an evening spent in the house with staff. During this time the young man practised cooking, laundry and general household tasks. Eventually the young man stayed overnight in the house with staff. At the time of the inspection the young man was spending each evening alone in the house and staff came at night to sleep over. Detailed records were in place regarding the transition and these were examined and found to be satisfactory. The young man was able to inform the inspector what action he would take in case of various emergencies.

The young man had his own source of income and staff supported him in managing his money. He spent every weekend and festive periods with his family. It was evident to the inspector that the young man has progressed very well in his transition and staff felt he was ready to live alone with supports from early 2011. The inspector advised the centre manager to introduce some unusual scenarios (such as official callers without ID) as role play to gauge the young man's response.

Aftercare

The young man had an aftercare plan which detailed the supports that will be provided to him until he leaves school. These include remaining in his current placement. Long term plans were being explored by all professionals involved, the young man and his family. A psychological assessment and the aftercare plan both identify that this young man will need ongoing support through adulthood and this should be provided.

Suitable placement and admissions

The centre has been designated for the exclusive use of one young man approaching adulthood as an aftercare placement. It was clear to the inspector that the placement is suited to his needs as he is more comfortable and secure living in an individual setting. A structured independence programme was put in place and he has been transitioning to the placement from the associated residential centre for 11 months, gradually spending increased periods of time in the placement with staff and alone. At the time of the inspection, staff were escorting the young man to and from his school which was a significant distance away. He then spent each afternoon /evening alone, with two staff then coming to stay overnight in the placement.

Management and staffing

The inspector found that the centre manager and staff team demonstrated a strong commitment to the young man and to supporting him through to adulthood. The staff currently supporting the young man were also part of the staff team of the associated centre. Providing staffing for the transition to the aftercare placement meant staff have been very flexible in shift patterns and extra duties, in order to meet the needs of this young man and the children in the associated centre.

The centre manager based his office in the aftercare placement to ensure the young man has contact with someone on a daily basis. Staff will continue to transport the young man to school in 2011. In addition, staff in the associated centre will be available for telephone support and emergencies. The inspector found evidence from records and interviews that young man has demonstrated an ability to contact staff when he has queries or concerns throughout the transition period. One staff member will also complete a work placement with the young man in 2011 as part of course work they are undertaking. Records were maintained for all staff contact with the young man and these were found to be clear and up to date.

Emotional and Specialist Support

The young man had a comprehensive psychological assessment and work plan completed in 2010. He had ongoing therapeutic input whilst living in the associated residential centre and will need to access similar adult services once he becomes 18 years old. The psychological assessment and plan clearly identifies the young man's needs and strategies that will address these needs.

Individual care

The young man met the inspector in the afternoon of the inspection. He showed the inspector around his home and was very positive about approaching adulthood. He had all of his belongings and keepsakes displayed throughout the house and appeared very comfortable there. He informed the inspector that he had enjoyed his transition to the placement and said he "couldn't wait to be treated as an adult". A family member visits him in his home regularly for dinner and he visits his family every weekend. He identified staff that he would talk to about any worries he had and also said that staff were kind and supportive to him. He enjoyed cooking and being responsible for household chores. The young man informed the inspector he also enjoys managing his money with staff support and plans his own routine and activities. Records and interviews demonstrated staff had a good knowledge of the young man's tastes in music, dress, leisure pursuits, talents and his future aspirations. The inspector observed the young man interacting positively with the centre manager and staff during the inspection.

Contact with Families

Records demonstrated that staff maintained significant contact with family through telephone calls and visits. The inspector was informed that staff provide transport for the young man's family to visit the placement regularly.

Education

This standard was met. The young man was in his last year in school and is due to sit his exams in June 2011. His school was a significant distance away but staff were committed to providing transport to and from school to maintain his school place. School reports were evident on file and staff attended school meetings.

Practices that met the required standard in some respect only

Accommodation

This standard was partly met. The house is a semi detached two storey property in an urban setting. The property is owned by the HSE. Accommodation consisted of three bedrooms, a bathroom, a sitting room and kitchen/dining area. It was in good structural repair but some areas were showing signs of wear and would benefit from redecoration. The inspector recommends that these areas in the home are redecorated in consultation with the young man. The flooring and a tap in the kitchen area should also be replaced.

The centre was adequately insured against accidents or injuries to young people and inspectors saw evidence of this. Open steep steps led up to the raised rear garden area. These steps represent a hazard, particularly in the dark or in icy conditions. The inspector recommends that handrails are erected on either side of these steps. The paved area in the garden was uneven and this should be rectified.

Safety

This standard was partly met. Inspectors examined a copy of the health and safety statement. The young man was starting to become involved in completing safety checks which is commendable as it enhances his independent living skills and promotes a level of self determination in his own home. The hazards identified in the *Accommodation* section above should be attended to without delay.

Fire Safety

The inspector found evidence of up to date checks undertaken by care staff and authorised persons of the fire extinguishers and the fire alarm system. The young man living in the placement has sensory sensitivity and found the current system of door closures difficult to tolerate due to the noise they create. The centre manager has explored an electronic system of door closures that would be triggered by the fire alarm which would address this concern. The inspector recommends this system is sourced and fitted as a matter of urgency.

The centre did not have a written confirmation from a certified engineer or qualified architect that all statutory requirements relating to fire safety and building control have been complied with. The inspector recommends that the written confirmation is sought as a matter of urgency.

3. Findings

1. Purpose and function

Standard

The centre has a written statement of purpose and function that accurately describes what the centre sets out to do for children and the manner in which care is provided. The statement is available, accessible and understood.

| | <i>Practice met the required standard</i> | <i>Practice met the required standard in some respects only</i> | <i>Practice did not meet the required standard</i> |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Purpose and function | √ | | |

2. Management and staffing

Standard

The centre is effectively managed, and staff are organised to deliver the best possible care and protection for children. There are appropriate external management and monitoring arrangements in place.

| | <i>Practice met the required standard</i> | <i>Practice met the required standard in some respects only</i> | <i>Practice did not meet the required standard</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Management | √ | | |
| Register | N/A | | |
| Notification of significant events | N/A | | |
| Staffing (including vetting) | √ | | |
| Supervision and support | N/A | | |
| Training and development | N/A | | |
| Administrative files | √ | | |

3. Monitoring

Standard

The Health Service Executive, for the purposes of satisfying itself that the Child Care Regulations 5-16 are being complied with, shall ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to enable an authorised person, on behalf of the Health Service Executive to monitor statutory and non-statutory children's residential centres.

| | <i>Practice met the required standard</i> | <i>Practice met the required standard in some respects only</i> | <i>Practice did not meet the required standard</i> |
|------------|---|---|--|
| Monitoring | N/A | | |

4. Children's rights

Standard

The rights of children are reflected in all centre policies and care practices. Children and their parents are informed of their rights by supervising social workers and centre staff.

| | <i>Practice met the required standard</i> | <i>Practice met the required standard in some respects only</i> | <i>Practice did not meet the required standard</i> |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|
| Consultation | N/A | | |
| Complaints | √ | | |
| Access to information | N/A | | |

5. Planning for children and children

Standard

There is a statutory written care plan developed in consultation with parents and children that is subject to regular review. The plan states the aims and objectives of the placement, promotes the welfare, education, interests and health needs of children and addresses their emotional and psychological needs. It stresses and outlines practical contact with families and, where appropriate, preparation for leaving care.

| | <i>Practice met the required standard</i> | <i>Practice met the required standard in some respects only</i> | <i>Practice did not meet the required standard</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Suitable placements and admissions | √ | | |
| Statutory care planning and review | √ | | |
| Contact with families | √ | | |
| Supervision and visiting of children | √ | | |
| Social work role | √ | | |
| Emotional and specialist support | √ | | |
| Preparation for leaving care | √ | | |
| Discharge | √ | | |
| Aftercare | √ | | |
| Children's Case and care records | √ | | |

6. Care of young people

Standard

Staff relate to children in an open, positive and respectful manner. Care practices take account of the children's individual needs and respect their social, cultural, religious and ethnic identity. Children have similar opportunities to develop talents and pursue interests. Staff interventions show an awareness of the impact on children of separation and loss and, where applicable, of neglect and abuse.

| | <i>Practice met the required standard</i> | <i>Practice met the required standard in some respects only</i> | <i>Practice did not meet the required standard</i> |
|--|---|---|--|
| Individual care in group living | √ | | |
| Provision of food and cooking facilities | √ | | |
| Race, culture, religion, gender and disability | √ | | |
| Managing behaviour | N/A | | |
| Restraint | N/A | | |
| Absence without authority | N/A | | |

7. Safeguarding and Child Protection

Standard

Attention is paid to keeping children in the centre safe, through conscious steps designed to ensure a regime and ethos that promotes a culture of openness and accountability.

| | <i>Practice met the required standard</i> | <i>Practice met the required standard in some respects only</i> | <i>Practice did not meet the required standard</i> |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Safeguarding and child protection | N/A | | |

8. Education

Standard

All children have a right to education. Supervising social workers and centre management ensure each young person in the centre has access to appropriate educational facilities.

| | <i>Practice met the required standard</i> | <i>Practice met the required standard in some respects only</i> | <i>Practice did not meet the required standard</i> |
|-----------|---|---|--|
| Education | √ | | |

9. Health

Standard

The health needs of the young person are assessed and met. They are given information and support to make age appropriate choices in relation to their health.

| | <i>Practice met the required standard</i> | <i>Practice met the required standard in some respects only</i> | <i>Practice did not meet the required standard</i> |
|--------|---|---|--|
| Health | N/A | | |

10. Premises and Safety

Standard

The premises are suitable for the residential care of the children and their use is in keeping with their stated purpose. The centre has adequate arrangements to guard against the risk of fire and other hazards in accordance with Articles 12 & 13 of the Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995.

| | <i>Practice met the required standard</i> | <i>Practice met the required standard in some respects only</i> | <i>Practice did not meet the required standard</i> |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| Accommodation | | √ | |
| Maintenance and repairs | N/A | | |
| Safety | | √ | |
| Fire safety | | √ | |

Recommendations:

1. The HSE SA should ensure that health and safety risks are addressed and the premises maintained in good order by:

- **erecting handrails on either side of the steps leading to the raised rear garden**
- **the uneven paved area in the garden should be rectified**
- **the areas within the centre showing wear should be redecorated in consultation with the young man living there**
- **the flooring and tap in the kitchen area should be replaced.**

2. The HSE SA should ensure that:

- **the electronic door closure system is sourced and fitted as a matter of urgency**
- **that the written confirmation from a certified engineer or qualified architect that all statutory requirements relating to fire safety and building control have been complied with is sought as a matter of urgency.**

4. Summary of Recommendations:

- 1.** The HSE SA should ensure that health and safety risks are addressed and the premises maintained in good order by:
 - erecting handrails on either side of the steps leading to the raised rear garden
 - the uneven paved area in the garden should be rectified
 - the areas within the centre showing wear should be redecorated in consultation with the young man living there
 - the flooring and tap in the kitchen area should be replaced.

- 2.** The HSE SA should ensure that:
 - the electronic door closure system is sourced and fitted as a matter of urgency
 - that the written confirmation from a certified engineer or qualified architect that all statutory requirements relating to fire safety and building control have been complied with is sought as a matter of urgency.