



Health Information and Quality Authority

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

A Follow Up Inspection Report of a Children's High Support Unit in the Health Service Executive Southern Area

**Inspection Report ID Number: 517
Fieldwork Date: 31st January 2012
Publication Date: 14th March 2012
SSI Inspection Period: 14
Centre ID Number: 65**

Introduction

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) carried out an unannounced follow-up inspection of a children's high support unit in the Health Services Executive (HSE), South under Section 69(2) of the Child Care Act 1991 as amended in the Child Care (Amendment) Act 2011. The inspection was undertaken by Patrick Bergin, Inspector Manager on the 30th January 2012. The purpose of this inspection was to review progress on the implementation of the eight recommendations of the last inspection undertaken in May 2011 (report ID 463).

The inspector interviewed the Unit Manager, a telephone interview with the Child Care Manager who had line management responsibility for the centre and the HSE Acting Monitoring Officer. Three young people were in placement in the centre and they declined the opportunity to meet with the inspector. There was informal engagement by the inspector with two young people during the inspection. The inspector reviewed a range of documentation including supervision files, young people's care files and the fire risk assessment report (July 2011). The inspector observed interaction between care staff and young people and viewed the premises.

Since the last inspection in May 2011, there were four admissions and four discharges. Three of the discharges were planned while the fourth discharge occurred as the young person did not settle into the care regime of the unit. Care staff continued to work with this young person as part of a community support package put in place for him by the social work department.

The centre had a capacity for three young people; however, the Manager indicated that following the return of two staff from maternity leave, he intended to increase the capacity to four. There was a consistent group of relief staff available to the unit and as a consequence the unit did not require agency care staff. The Child Care Manager and the Unit Manager highlighted the possibility that future admissions to the unit could be undertaken through a central admissions committee for all children residential centres in the area. This system was in contrast to the operations of a specific admissions committee for the unit. The inspector was informed that this development was part of strategy to ensure best use of HSE children's residential placements and to streamline current operations.

The inspector found that the day-to-day operations of the centre were functioning well, the three young people were engaging positively with staff and they were principally adhering to the boundaries and limitations of the unit. There was evidence of ongoing family therapy with all three young people and this was seen as a crucial component to the sustainability of the care intervention of the unit for these young people following their discharge from the unit.

Findings

There were eight recommendations made following the inspection in May 2011. The inspector found that on this follow up inspection, four were met, two were met in part, and two were not met. The recommendations that were not met related to (1) the development of a policy on the management of computer generated information in the centre and (2) to consider what works could be feasibly carried out to the building to minimise the institutional features of the unit.

Further developments are necessary in regard to the recommendation pertaining to staff supervision and to the appointment of a monitoring officer in the region to achieve compliance with the standards.

See attached action plan

Social Services Inspectorate

Action Plan for Inspection No. 463/517

Centre ID: 65
HSE Area: South

Date Action Plan Dispatched: 12th July 2011.

No.	Recommendation	Action to be taken	Person Responsible	Implementation Date	SSI Response
1	<p>The HSESA should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supervision records make note of reasons for non-provision or attendance at supervision the required frequency of supervision be reviewed so that policy and practice may be congruent. 	<p>This has been addressed and action taken.</p> <p>Supervision will be reviewed.</p>	<p>Social Care Manager</p> <p>Social Care Manager</p>	<p>31st July 2011</p> <p>31st October 2011</p>	<p>This recommendation was met in part</p> <p>Supervision records for the staff team were reviewed and the supervision log indicated there was an increase in the frequency of supervision to staff. However there were deficits in the recording of individual supervision sessions. Some files had no notes of supervision taking place on dates indicated in the log and the quality of supervision records varied significantly from person to person. Records relating to staff that had left the service were maintained in an active file and these records need to be stored separately.</p>

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2	The HSESA should ensure that the timescale for the appointment of a monitoring officer notwithstanding, formal arrangements be put in place to ensure that the HSE continues to carry out its monitoring function in respect of the HSU as outlined in the Child Care Regulations 1995, Part III, Article 17 continues to be complied with.	This has been referred to HSE Senior Management with a request to prioritise monitoring in High Support Units on interim basis.	Child Care Manger	31 st August 2011	This recommendation was met in part. The HSE SA put in place a temporary arrangement pending structural changes within the HSE and an Acting Monitoring Officer was appointed to meet the standard. The Monitoring Officer had visited the centre in December 2011, reviewed centre files, met with centre staff and young people and made recommendations on areas of improvement. A report on this visit is pending. Significant incident reports were furnished to the Monitoring Officer by the Centre Manager in line with local procedures. The inspector noted that the Acting Monitoring Officer continues to fulfil her substantive duties as the Registration Officer for the area, while undertaking the role of Acting Monitoring Officer for the area. The Authority is concerned that the temporary arrangement is not sustainable in the medium-to-long term considering the demands of the post.

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3	The HSESA should ensure that formal aftercare plans are formulated immediately for the two young people who are due to be discharged in the coming weeks. A report should be issued to the Authority confirming when the written plans are in place.	Social Work Department has been requested to submit report to HIQA.	Principal Social Worker	1 st October 2011	This recommendation was not met. Both young people were discharged from the service as part of a planned exit from the service but a report was not issued to the Authority confirming that written plans were in place.
4	The HSESA should ensure that a unit policy is developed in relation to computer-generated information.	HSE has a very comprehensive IT Policy. This will be reviewed in association with IT Department to address recommendation.	Social Care Manager	31 st December 2011	This recommendation was not met. The HSE has a general policy in relation to the management of computer generated information. However there was no progress on the development of a policy on the recording, storage and disposal of information generated by staff on their work computers in the centre. Other HSE areas have initiated developments in this area and the centre could utilise the learning to address this deficit.

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5	The HSESA should ensure that every effort is made to keep absences from the centre to a minimum.	HSE will continue to review all absences without permission internally and externally with Gardai at bimonthly meetings.	Social Care Worker & Child Care Manager	August 2011	This recommendation was met. The level of absences in the centre had significantly reduced since the last inspection. There was evidence of a review process in place and this included meetings between the Gardai and local HSE management on a regular basis to consider all reports of children missing from care from this and other services. This was a proactive and welcome measure in the area.
6	The HSESA should ensure that senior managers engage the services of an architect to look at what works could be feasibly carried out to enhance and maximize the use of the current building and to replace as much of its institutional features as possible so that it better resembles a home.	Technical Services Department have been contacted.	General Manager	30th September 2011	This recommendation was not met. Inspectors were told there were no plans to relocate the service due to the current financial constraints on the HSE. There was an awareness that where possible, minor works could be undertaken to address the institutional features of the centre. The inspector was told by the Centre Manager that the meeting with the architect has not occurred and no further progress had been made on this recommendation.

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7	The HSESA should ensure that in order to conform to the standard, the unit should develop a rolling programme of maintenance to ensure that the level of repairs remains low.	Maintenance in Unit as it is a residential centre continues to be prioritized for repairs, upgrade work are undertaken with in existing resources.	Social Care Manager	Ongoing	This recommendation was met. Since the last inspection, some furniture and sports equipment had been purchased for the centre. Flooring in some rooms had been replaced and bedrooms had been painted.
8	The HSESA should ensure that all checks are put on a regular basis, and that the fire safety officer, or other designated staff, monitors every aspect of fire safety.	All necessary fire equipment checks and services have been undertaken.	Social Care Manager	N/A	This recommendation was met. A Fire Risk Assessment was undertaken in July 2011 by a chartered fire engineer and event safety consultants. The inspector viewed the report. Recommendations were made in the report and the HSE had addressed the works identified. A follow up visit was undertaken by the consultants on the 27 th of January 2012 to determine that works were completed satisfactorily. The final report is pending.