



Northern Area Health Board
Bord Sláinte an Limistéir Thuaidh

Registration and Inspection Service

*Lisdeel House
Children's Centre*

Inspection Report August 2000



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Lisdeel House Children's Centre

Inspection Report

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INFORMATION SERVICE**

August 2000

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REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION REPORT

Centre: Lisdeel House
Swords Road
Santry
Dublin 9

Director: Sr. Goretti Butler
Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul
Children and Families' Services
Management Office
14 Baggot Road
Navan Road
Dublin 7

Manager: Liz Mulholland

No. of Children: Six children

Dates of Inspection: 7th March 2000
8th March 2000
9th March 2000

Inspection Team: Orla McKeon
Deirdre McTeigue

Registered for period: October 2000–October 2003

FOREWORD

The Registration and Inspection Service of the Northern Area Health Board has a duty under the *Child Care Act 1991* (Section 61) to inspect children's residential centres to safeguard the wellbeing and interests of children and young people living in them.

It must, in carrying out such inspections, be independent and fair, and undertake the process in an even handed manner.

The Eastern and Western Health Boards' *Statement and Criteria for the Inspection of Children's Residential Centres* (1999) document provides the framework against which this inspection is conducted.

The inspection which forms the basis of this report took place over three days and provides a comprehensive overview of the performance of Lisdeel House.

The report follows the format of the *Standards* document and, as such, is structured under the 12 standards.

1. Statement of purpose and function
2. Physical aspects of the residential centre
3. Care planning
4. Respect for child's dignity and individuality
5. The child's right to be heard
6. Education
7. Health
8. Living skills
9. Child protection
10. Care and control
11. Personnel policies
12. Organisation and management

Under each standard a number of 'issues requiring action' or 'recommendations for good practice' may be detailed.

Recommendations for good practice are proposals which the Inspectorate strongly recommends the residential centre undertakes to improve practice.

The manager of the centre is expected to complete a written implementation timetable with time scales, detailing the centre's response to the findings in this report. This was completed by the Director of the Centre and the recommendations have been addressed.

INTRODUCTION

Lisdeel House Children's Residential Centre is run by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul. The Director is responsible for the overall management of Lisdeel House, and reports to the Board of Management (see Appendix 1). Lisdeel House accommodates six children (see Appendix 2). The Centre is managed on a day-to-day basis by the manager. There are ten care workers (of mixed gender) working either full-time or part-time. There are two ancillary staff (see Appendix 3). The Centre is located in a private housing area on the main airport road in the Dublin suburb of Santry. It is a six-bedroomed detached house with a recent extension and garage.

The inspection took place at the beginning of March 2000 over a three-day period and this report is based on the following inspection techniques:

- ◆ An examination of the pre-inspection questionnaire and related documentation, completed by the Director of the service and the manager of the Centre.
- ◆ An examination of the questionnaire completed by
 - (a) care staff
 - (b) the young people residing in Lisdeel House
 - (c) all social workers with responsibility for young people residing in the Centre
 - (d) the parents and siblings of young people residing in the Centre.
- ◆ Interviews with other professionals, e.g. fostering social worker and outreach worker from the Lisdeel Family Placement Initiative.
- ◆ An inspection of the premises and grounds using a checklist devised by the Fire and Safety Officer and the Health and Safety Co-ordinator of the Eastern Regional Health Authority.
- ◆ A systematic research of the Centre's files and recording system (detailed later).
- Interviews with:
 - (a) all young people living in the Centre
 - (b) care staff
 - (c) two college students on placement in the Centre
 - (d) the manager
- ◆ Observations of care practice and the staff/young people's interactions.

The young people's social workers and parents were also invited to comment on the care provided.

Young people from the Centre were given feedback from the inspection team following the inspection (see Appendix 4).

There is documentary evidence to support the statements contained under each heading in this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the time of inspection on the 7th, 8th and 9th March 2000, there were six children residing at Lisdeel House Children's Centre, four from one family and two from another.

As part of the inspection process, the views of the young people and those of their parents/guardians/siblings were sought, as were the views of their social workers, GP and carers. These opinions were sought by means of interviews and questionnaires.

The inspection visits comprised three days' observation in the Centre, including early morning, late evening and meal times.

The Fire and Safety Officer of the Eastern Regional Health Authority did not inspect the Centre. There are conflicting views on the nature of the windows, which are not double glazed. A request has been made by the inspectors to the Fire and Safety Officer to visit and make a recommendation. This is outstanding. There is no report from an Environmental Health Officer.

Each of the standards outlined in the policy document *Standards and Criteria in the Inspection of Children's Residential Centres* (EHB and WHB, 1999) was considered as part of the inspection.

This comprehensive report, with an outline of items which require attention, was forwarded to senior management in the Eastern Regional Health Authority and to the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

Lisdeel House Children's Centre, as managed and run by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, is providing a good quality standard of care to the young people resident there. The Centre is well established in the area and draws on many years' experience in the child care field.

Lisdeel House was established in 1995 as a joint initiative between the Health Board and the Daughters of Charity. It incorporates the Lisdeel Family Placement Initiative.

- ◆ Lisdeel House Children's Centre provides care for young people from North Dublin, when a decision has been made that they require, and will benefit from, a structured residential care programme, in preparation for family placement either at home, or with relatives, or with foster carers.
- ◆ Where possible, the Centre's staff and social worker staff should arrange appointments with child guidance for young people with special needs, where there is no automatic programme of specialist support in place at the moment.
- ◆ Remedial work regarding fire and safety standards has been undertaken, and a certificate of compliance has been submitted which has been accepted by the Fire and Safety in Eastern Regional Health Authority.
- ◆ Literature or leaflets that explain the service to young people and their families have been compiled and are excellent.
- ◆ An excellent comprehensive policy document is available for staff, families and other appropriate agencies.
- ◆ Staff have been recruited within the requirements of the Department of Health and Children, and all the staff have childcare qualifications. Many have undertaken additional and related studies, supported by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul.
- ◆ The young people speak openly and positively about their experience of living in Lisdeel Children's Centre.
- ◆ Contact with families and former foster carers is encouraged.
- ◆ Care plans and reviews of care plans are not prepared by the Area Health Board in accordance with the requirements of *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995*. This has been brought to the attention of the Head Social Worker as part of this inspection.

Reviews are arranged usually by the Centre, and young people and their parents are invited to participate, which they usually do.

- ◆ The social work support for young people can vary from frequent and purposeful contact to irregular or more casual contact. This emerged as an issue during the course of the inspection, but has now been resolved to the satisfaction of the Health Board, the Centre and the Inspectorate. Some of the young people indicated that they have a positive relationship with their social worker. Other children had not yet had the opportunity to develop positive relationships, as they just had a change of social worker.
- ◆ The specific duties and tasks of the social workers who are supporting young people in residential centres, and their families, need to be developed by the Area Health Boards.
- ◆ The Centre has developed a range of written policies and procedures, and maintains the required registers and log books.
- ◆ The Centre, in conjunction with the Health Boards, is looking at the provision of a complaints procedure for children and young people.
- ◆ The inspectors would like to thank the young people in Lisdeel House Children's Centre for their welcome, openness and contributions made during this inspection.
- ◆ The full co-operation of staff and management in the Centre and in the social work department is also acknowledged.

Items for Attention

- ◆ The statement of purpose and function of Lisdeel Children's Centre as defined by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul should be agreed and incorporated into the service agreement with the Area Health Board.
- ◆ A written care plan must be prepared by the Area Health Board for each young person admitted to Lisdeel Children's Centre in accordance with the requirements of *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995* as soon as possible.
- ◆ The roles, tasks and duties of the social workers who are supporting the young people in Lisdeel Children's Centre need to be detailed and agreed.
- ◆ Formal arrangements should be established between the Centre and child guidance services, so that early assessment and care programmes are established for young people with special needs.
- ◆ An assessment by the Fire and Safety Officer of ERHA be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

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STANDARD 1: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

STANDARD STATEMENT:

The centre has a written statement of purpose and function which accurately describes what the centre sets out to do for children, the manner in which care is provided, and how this relates to the service plan for children as a whole.

Lisdeel House was established in 1995, as a short-term residential assessment centre. The Centre experienced great difficulty in finding suitable long-term placements for many of the young people in its care. In July 1997, a working group was established, consisting of representatives from the Health Board, Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul Board of Management and Lisdeel House Management to consider ways of addressing this difficulty.

Lisdeel Fostering Initiative was established in May 1999. Its statement of purpose and function states:

The Initiative is a forward-looking system of building and supporting foster parents. It has been developed, with a strong emphasis on support training, easy access to relevant services, and with good financial/practical back up and support.

The agency has produced a colourful brochure entitled *Lisdeel Family Placement Initiative – Foster Care Information Pack*, which clearly outlines the purpose and function of the Centre.

All staff are aware of the statement of purpose and function, and were actually involved in the development of their unique service, a fact of which they are very proud.

The young people in the Centre are aware of the purpose of the Centre, and of why they have come to live there.

As the purpose of the Centre has changed and developed over the years, the main aim of the placement is to identify an appropriate foster family to which the young person can move.

Currently, some of the rooms in the house are kept locked, and the young people do not have access to these rooms. In order to prepare the young people for family living, the Centre should review its policy on locking doors within the Centre. All confidential material and medication should remain stored away in a locked cupboard or filing cabinet to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Centre look at ways of operating without locking doors within the Centre.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre be commended for their initiative and foresight in developing such a pioneering service.

STANDARD 2: PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF THE RESIDENTIAL CENTRE

2.1 ACCOMMODATION LOCATION AND DESIGN

STANDARD STATEMENT:

The centre is designed and located in a place which is in keeping with its purpose and functions.

Lisdeel House is a four-bedroomed detached house, with a further two bedrooms in the recently added extension.

Two of the older children have a single room, the four other children share two double rooms. There are two staff bedrooms, with one doubling as an office for the manager and team leader, the other doubling as a staff office. Also, upstairs there is a bathroom and a separate toilet.

Downstairs consists of a spacious hallway, located to the right hand side of which there is a playroom/access room, and a spacious modern kitchen leading into a large garage. The laundry facilities are located in the garage.

To the left hand side of the main hallway is the sitting room. To the rear of the sitting room, a corridor leads into the extension. The extension consists of a staff/visitors' toilet, a staff shower, and an office for the Foster Initiative Service.

Lisdeel House is very well decorated and is very 'homely'. A large garden is situated at the rear of the house. The garden is well maintained, and contains play equipment for the young people.

The young people confirm that they find the house 'homely' and have been involved in the decoration of their bedrooms. Those sharing a bedroom were asked if they would like their own room; the feeling is sometimes they would like their own room but; for the most part; it was nice to share, as it is with a member of their own family.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to maintain high standards and the 'homely' atmosphere created.

2.2 SAFETY AND FIRE PRECAUTIONS

STANDARD STATEMENT:

The centre takes positive steps to keep children safe from the inherent risk of fire and other hazards to an extent that is consistent with the law and which is reasonable in daily life.

The Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul as an agency has a very comprehensive Fire and Safety statement policy document. Lisdeel House has a designated Fire Officer who has a clearly defined/understood role. Staff have received fire training. This included:

- ◆ Fire safety/prevention lecture
- ◆ Fire extinguisher training
- ◆ Fire evacuation training

Records show that fire drills take place regularly. The last fire drill was the week before the inspection visit. An independent fire company services the fire equipment and the last check was on 25 January 2000.

One of the inspectors completed the checklist drawn up for the Registration and Inspection Service by the Fire and Safety Officer and Health and Safety Co-ordinator of the Eastern Regional Health Authority for the inspection of voluntary run children's residential centres. Some recommendations were made, as outlined below in the section 'Issues requiring action'.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That, as the windows consist of both single and double glazing, the Fire and Safety Officer make a decision on this.
- ◆ That a non-slip mat be obtained for use in the staff shower.
- ◆ That extra electricity sockets be installed in the staff bedroom/staff office to replace the existing extension lead.
- ◆ That the 'fire drill book' be replaced by a Fire Register.

STANDARD 3: CARE PLANNING

3.1 CARE PLANS

STANDARD STATEMENT:

There is a written care plan to promote the welfare of each child and young person in the children's residential centre.

All the young people living in Lisdeel House have a current written care plan. The care plan is very much supported by the referral system that exists within the Centre. The referral system supports the development of a care plan by setting out dates and times for reviews, which leads to the development of an inclusive, comprehensive care plan.

Parents and young people confirm that they are actively involved in all plans made for each young person.

In Lisdeel House, it is the key worker who takes on the role of writing up the care plan. Care plans include:

- ◆ the purpose and aim of the placement
- ◆ the developmental and emotional needs of the young person.

The care plans present in the case files were not signed by the allocated social worker.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That social workers ensure that there is a care plan negotiated with all parties in accordance with *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995, Part IV, Section 23*. A written and agreed care plan is a mechanism for ensuring that the young person's needs are met.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre should continue to use its existing format for care planning and to maintain the existing structure.

3.2 REVIEWS

STANDARD STATEMENT:

The care and life experiences of each individual child and young person in the children's residential centre are subject to formal systematic and regular reviews.

Lisdeel House sets down very clearly in its *Guidelines for Referring a Child to Lisdeel House* (October, 1999) its expectations in terms of reviews. Dates and times for reviews are set when a referral has been accepted by the Centre. These are:

- ◆ 3 weeks after admission
- ◆ 8 weeks later

- ◆ 3 months subsequently

Thus, Lisdeel House ensures that regular, ongoing planning is in place for the young people in their care.

The examination of case files found the following documentation present at reviews:

- ◆ young person's forms
- ◆ key worker's forms
- ◆ school report forms
- ◆ minutes prepared by the Centre

There was no evidence of review reports completed by a social worker on file.

Social work files were not examined as part of the inspection.

The young people in Lisdeel House confirmed that they are actively involved in their reviews, and felt their views and opinions were given consideration.

Parents also confirmed that they are involved in reviews, and that their opinions were valued. (Not all parents availed of the opportunity to attend reviews). They felt that the needs of their children were being fully addressed in the review.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That a systematic structure be undertaken by social work staff for the review of care plans in compliance with *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995, Part IV, Section 25(1)*.

3.3 PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children and young people shall enjoy an unhurried, warm and positive admission to the centre and shall be sensitively supported on their discharge.

Lisdeel House has a clearly defined referral procedure entitled *Guidelines for Referring a Child to Lisdeel House* (October, 1999).

These guidelines state clearly the information required in order to make a referral to the Centre, prior to the application being considered by the Admission's Committee.

When the placement has been agreed, roles are clearly defined outlining the work to be undertaken by Lisdeel staff and the social worker. Contracts of work are drawn up and agreed upon by all parties for clarification of roles.

Dates and times for reviews are set at this point.

All placements are initially for a three-month evaluation period, after which a formal review will take place to decide on the future care plan.

In all cases, the young person will either be prepared to:

- ◆ Return home; or
- ◆ Move to a foster placement.

3.4 PRESERVING THE CHILD'S SENSE OF IDENTITY: PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children are cared for in a way which stresses and particularly supports contact with parents, family and others of significance to them. Care is provided in the centre in partnership with parents or guardians wherever this is in the interests of the young person.

Lisdeel House works on a policy of inclusion. Parents, family and significant others are actively encouraged and supported to remain involved in all aspects of the young people's lives.

The young people confirmed that their parents and family are actively involved in their lives. The Centre facilitates access, and has a specific room where access can take place. The young people confirm that family members are welcomed in the house, that transport is offered to parents where necessary.

Parents and guardians confirmed that they are always made welcome in the Centre, that they are kept up to date with all developments in the young people's lives, that they are actively involved in the making of key decisions, and feel their opinions and views are valued.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues working in this inclusive manner.

3.5 INTERDISCIPLINARY CO-WORKING

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Work with children and young people in the children's residential centre is positively supported by social workers of the health board and other professionals in a planned and integrated manner.

Lisdeel Fostering Initiative is a unique service. The service is built on the philosophy of interdisciplinary co-working. The service itself employs a fostering social worker and an outreach worker, so the team within the Centre is multidisciplinary in its composition.

Due to the nature of the work undertaken in the Centre, the roles of professionals are clearly defined very early in the placement. Contracts of work are drawn up and signed by all parties.

A strong emphasis is placed by the Centre and the Health Board on co-working, and this appears to be working well, apart from a few minor hitches. As the Centre provides care for young people in preparation for family placement, a community care team leader is assigned to working with Lisdeel to ensure the smooth working of this joint venture by the Area Health Board and the Daughters of Charity.

Some of the young people in the Centre expressed to the inspection team that they do not see their social worker as often as they would like to. One of the six children went on to explain that the social worker is like a 'stranger' to them. The children did not identify their social worker as being the person they would speak to, if they needed someone to talk to outside the Centre about any worries they might have. Two of the social workers had only recently been appointed to work with some of the children. The frequency of social work visits ranged from weekly for some children, to six-weekly for others.

Difficulties around regular contact with some of the social workers assigned to certain young people in the Centre were also highlighted by the staff and management in the Centre.

The social workers identified an issue in relation to the children they had responsibility for in the Centre. This had arisen at the time of case allocation concerning the Centre's expectations of their role, and the frequency of their visits to the young people.

Due to their workload, staff shortages and current pressures, the social workers regretted that they were not able to offer more than monthly contact with the young people. The staff in the Centre were requesting fortnightly visits in the interests of the children. This has created some tension between the Centre and the social work department, which needs to be addressed.

The care plans and reviews are carried out by the staff in Lisdeel, in conjunction with the social workers concerned. All who have an interest in the young people are consulted, attend and agree with these plans where possible. However, the health board is not fulfilling its statutory obligations under *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Care) Regulations, 1995*, in meeting its own responsibilities in initiating the care plans.

As the parties to the care planning and their review do not sign these reports, it is recommended that they do so.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Head Social Worker, Team Leader and Manager in Lisdeel House meet and agree how this particular case can be managed in the best interests of the children, and the duties of the social workers be clearly defined.

3.6 PREPARATIONS FOR LEAVING CARE

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children and young people in the residential children's centres are prepared, equipped and advised with the skills and resources which they will require as young adults.

Lisdeel House aims to return young people back home or on to an appropriate foster placement, thus aiming to reduce the time a young person spends in residential care.

The purpose of a young person's placement is to assess their needs, and to find the most appropriate long-term placement for each child.

Lisdeel Fostering Initiative provides an outreach worker who will act as the aftercare worker and remain a support to the young person on leaving the Centre for as long as is necessary.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to maintain and develop the good standards in place to date.

3.7 CASE FILES

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Case files contain all significant information, decisions and actions relevant to the running of the centre.

Lisdeed House maintains case files to a very high standard. Each individual's file contains a photo of the young person on the front. A clearly defined table of contents leads to easy access to all its contents.

All case files contain:

- ◆ A detailed social history
- ◆ Copy of minutes from Family Meetings and Reviews
- ◆ Care worker's form for review meeting
- ◆ Young person's form for review meetings
- ◆ Care plans
- ◆ Key worker's case notes
- ◆ School reports
- ◆ Apart from the initial referral report, the absence of social work reports was noted.

The young people living in Lisdeed House are aware that case files are maintained on them, and they are clear as to why case files must be maintained. Some of the young people have seen their case files but, to date, the Centre does not have a policy on allowing young people access to their files.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Centre devise a system giving young people access to their files, under the guidance of their key worker.
- ◆ That social workers share their reports and information with the Centre, when appropriate.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to maintain its case files to this high standard.

STANDARD 4: RESPECT FOR CHILD'S DIGNITY AND INDIVIDUALITY

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children and young people receive care in a manner which respects their wishes, preferences and individuality.

Lisdeel House works in partnership with the young people in their care. The young people in Lisdeel House are treated as individuals. This is achieved through the care plan, in conjunction with the key worker, to ensure that the specific needs of each individual young person are met.

All young people in the Centre were spoken to by the inspection team. The young people confirmed that they were treated well by the staff, and were offered privacy. The Centre facilitates children's meetings at which they can discuss, as a group, issues which concern them.

Lisdeel House now aims to move children home or on to a family placement. In order to support this, the Centre should review its policy on locking doors within the centre.

Young people are encouraged to respect each other's space and this is working well within the Centre. This should be developed further, so that staff bedroom/office should be able to remain unlocked, with confidential information and medication stored in a locked cupboard or filing cabinet.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Centre reviews its policy on locking doors within the Centre.

STANDARD 5: THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO BE HEARD

5.1 THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children, young people and their families receive easily understood written information about the centre and its practices.

Information for young people is communicated, for the most part, through the key worker relationship. A key worker is assigned to a young person prior to their admission to the Centre. It is the key worker who will explain the routines and rules of the Centre to the young person, thus reducing confusion and distress.

To date, the Centre has not developed an information leaflet for young people. Management and care staff are aware of the need to develop an information leaflet, and are currently looking at ways of developing this leaflet.

The young people confirmed that they were provided with information about the Centre, and that they are kept up to date on relevant information and issues by their key worker.

Issues requiring action

- That the Centre develops a child-friendly, age-appropriate information leaflet.

5.2 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children and young people know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the centre and that any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay.

The Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service has recently drawn up a complaints procedure. It consists of an information leaflet outlining the agency's complaints and appeals procedure. The leaflet is well laid out and easily understood. The complaints procedure also consists of a form entitled 'Complaints Information' on which the complaint is written.

During the inspection visit, the young people were asked if they knew how to make a complaint. The language used, i.e. complaint, was unfamiliar to them. When it was re-phrased, each young person confirmed that they would go to their key worker or the manager if something happened they were unhappy with. When asked if they would go to their social worker, all said that they hadn't thought of their social worker. One young person said they never see their social worker.

Parents also confirmed that they would know how to make a formal complaint if the need arose and considered that it would be handled appropriately.

The agency has recently updated its Personnel Policy entitled 'Daughters of Charity, Child and Family Services, Dublin, Personnel Procedures, January 2000', and has a substantial section on 'Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures'. All staff confirmed that they are aware how to make a complaint on behalf of a young person and on their own behalf.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That future complaints procedures also comply with *Children First: National Guidelines for Protection and Welfare of Children*, 1999.
- ◆ That a date be set for its review.
- ◆ That a leaflet be devised for young people stating clearly how to make a complaint or include a section on complaints in the children's information leaflet.
- ◆ That social workers discuss with the young people their role as case managers in the handling of complaints/allegations.

5.3 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children and young people's opinions and those of their family and significant others are sought over key decisions, which are likely to affect their daily life or their future. These views are seen as significant and taken seriously, having regard to the young person's age, understanding and maturity.

Lisdeel House works in consultation and co-operation with the young people in its care. It achieves this through many forums:

- ◆ Regular contact with their key workers
- Family meetings and reviews
- ◆ Children's meetings

Early appointment of each child's key worker, and description of their role, opens the channels of consultation and communication with young people before they come to live in the Centre. This has proved very successful, with the young person being very involved in their placement from a very early stage.

Family meetings and review meetings are viewed positively by both young people and their parents/significant others, who feel their opinions and views are heard and given due consideration.

Children's meetings take place fortnightly in the Centre. Clear guidelines are laid down for care staff in the Centre's policy document entitled *Children's Meetings Guidelines*. A member of the inspection team sat in on a children's meeting. Children set the agenda to which staff could add items. Opinions were sought from all in attendance, and individuals were listened to by the group.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to work in an inclusive manner.

STANDARD 6: EDUCATION

STANDARD STATEMENT:

The centre actively promotes the education of children and young people.

Lisdeel House places a strong emphasis on education. Young people are facilitated to remain in their original schools, which involves a high level of commitment from the care team, as the school may be some distance from the Centre.

The key worker maintains regular contact with the school. The young people confirm that their key workers regularly visit their teachers. They understand why this is so, and are happy to have it happen.

All the young people in the Centre said that help is readily available with homework, and that somewhere quiet to work is always at hand. All spoke positively about school and the support they received in the Centre.

Parents also confirmed that they are kept up to date on their children's education and are happy with the standard of education their children are receiving.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to promote a positive attitude towards education.

STANDARD 7: HEALTH

7.1 HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

STANDARD STATEMENT:

The centre is energetic in promoting the health care of each child in a pro-active and planned way.

Good health care practices are promoted within the Centre. All children attend a local GP.

Case files indicated that regular health checks take place, and all medication given is recorded in both the young person's daily diary and in the medication book.

Medications are stored in a locked cabinet in one of the staff bedrooms, and the Centre has appointed a First Aid Officer who is trained in first aid, and who takes responsibility for the upkeep of all medication stored in the Centre.

The Centre has devised its own handbook entitled *Lisdeel House – Guidelines and Procedure* and a section of this is also allocated to 'Medical Information'.

The Centre has a no alcohol, no smoking, no drugs policy. Some of the care staff smoke cigarettes, and the garage has been designated as the smoking area. The staff do not smoke when children are present in the garage, and ashtrays are emptied after use. The Centre promotes a healthy life style. Many of the young people are involved in regular leisure pursuits and clubs.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the staff do not smoke while on duty.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to promote a health conscious environment and encourages the young people to maintain a healthy life style.

7.2 FOOD AND NUTRITION

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children and young people are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared and nutritious food having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to shop for and prepare their own meals.

A weekly shop is done in the local supermarket. Where possible, some of the young people accompany the care staff on the shopping trip.

The young people are encouraged to help with the preparation of meals and take great pride in doing so. During the inspection visit, the inspectors had the opportunity to share breakfast and dinner with the young people. The food served was of a very high standard, with the young people confirming this was the usual standard. Mealtimes were very pleasant and relaxed.

Fresh fruit and snacks are readily available within the Centre. At present, there are no young people in the Centre requiring special diets.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to offer the range of choice available
- ◆ That the young people be encouraged to learn how to cook and develop healthy eating patterns.

STANDARD 8: LIVING SKILLS

8.1 CHILDREN'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children and young people are guided and able to make suitable choices with regard to their own clothing and appearances.

All of the young people living in Lisdeel House are well dressed, and their clothes are maintained to a very high standard. All the young people confirmed they have a 'say' in what they wear on a daily basis. They are also actively involved in the purchasing of their own clothes and choose their own clothing.

The young people are sensitively advised on matters of personal hygiene by the staff.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to encourage the young people to exercise choice in the purchase of their own items of clothing.
- ◆ That care staff continue to promote a positive understanding of personal hygiene.

8.2 RECREATION AND LEISURE

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children and young people have regular and ample opportunity to participate in and enjoy a range of leisure and recreational activities of their choice.

The young people in Lisdeel House are actively involved in pursuits such as football and gymnastics.

The Centre places a strong emphasis on finding the appropriate leisure pursuit to meet the needs of the individual young person, and transport is made available when necessary.

The Centre offers a playroom which is well stocked with books and games. Computer games are available, and each young person has their own bicycle which they use regularly.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to promote a positive attitude to recreation and leisure activities.

STANDARD 9: CHILD PROTECTION

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children and young people being cared for shall receive protection from abuse. All staff including domestic staff, volunteers and students know what action to take if they observe or have reported to them possible evidence of abuse.

The Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul have a comprehensive Child Protection Policy. Lisdeel House has also many sets of guidelines in place to guide staff as they go about their daily routine.

These guidelines include:

- ◆ Charter of rights for children
- ◆ Rules for children
- ◆ Policies in place to safeguard children
- ◆ Charter of rights for staff
- ◆ Guidelines for staff protection

All these guidelines are included in *Lisdeel House, Guidelines and Policies*, copies of which are readily available in the Centre. Staff confirm that they are familiar with their contents.

There is a 'beam-to-night-buzzer' system in operation. These beams are on each bedroom door, with a control panel in both staff bedrooms. When a young person breaks the beam, a low buzzer goes off, alerting staff to that fact that one of the young people has left their room.

Both staff and young people are happy with this system, and the young people are aware of why the system is in use.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the young people's information leaflet include information for the young people on child protection policies within the Centre.

STANDARD 10: CARE AND CONTROL

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Staff, children and young people feel safe, and a positive approach to care shall be practised which sets limits which everyone understands on what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.

Lisdeel House's current sanction policy is entitled *Policy on Sanctions* (December, 1997), which states that:

Sanctions applied in Lisdeel are put in place to identify and stop inappropriate behaviour, and are a means to educate the young person, and show consequences for anti-social or inappropriate behaviour.

Inappropriate sanctions include:

- ◆ Smacking
- ◆ Denial of a visit home or family visits
- ◆ Denying a child food

Permitted sanctions include:

- ◆ Docking of pocket money
- ◆ Early bedtime
- ◆ TV restrictions
- ◆ Not allowed to use the playroom
- ◆ Grounded to Lisdeel

Very clear criteria exist for the issuing of sanctions, thus ensuring sanctions are appropriate and not excessive.

The care staff are currently undergoing training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI). The Centre finds itself in the situation where it has not, to date, needed to use any form of restraint. The *Lisdeel House, Guidance and Policies* handbook contains a clear policy on TCI.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Centre complete its draft 'Sanctions Policy'.
- ◆ That it be signed and dated, and a date set for its review.
- ◆ That the young people's information leaflet included a section on the Centre's policy on care and control.

STANDARD 11: PERSONNEL POLICIES

11.1 STAFF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

STANDARD STATEMENT:

All staff in children's residential centres are recruited with particular care and thorough selection with vetting procedures designed to protect children and young people. Each centre shall have a balanced staff team which is cohesive, committed and skilled.

The Centre has a policy of employing professionally qualified staff. All staff confirmed they have a written job description and are familiar with the *Daughters of Charity, Child and Family Services, Dublin, Personnel Procedures* (January, 2000). Each staff member has their own copy, and copies are readily available within the Centre.

The recruitment and selection of staff is carried out by the Director of Services and the Manager. The interview panel consists of a representative from the Eastern Regional Health Authority, a representative from the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul Board of Management, the Director of Services and the Centre's manager. The process is carried out in compliance with the Department of Health circular (1994).

Staff are aware that they have access to their personnel files which are stored at Head Office. However, staff do not feel comfortable about making an appointment to see their personnel file.

All new staff receive staff induction training, which is facilitated by the manager or team leader. New staff are made aware of all the Centre's policies and procedures contained in *Lisdeel House, Guidelines and Policies*.

Young people in Lisdeel House confirmed that they have every confidence in the care team. The young people believe their opinions are important to the care team, and feel valued within the Centre.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul develop procedures for personnel to access their personnel files.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That current recruitment and selection process be maintained.

11.2 TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Children and young people are looked after by staff who are trained in the skills required to meet their needs.

The care team in Lisdeel House are very professional and competent, evidenced by our observations of the staff working with children and other professionals, and as seen on case records. Staff are well supported and supervised. The care team work well together, and are committed to providing a high standard of care to the young people in their care, and to each other as team members.

The care team confirmed that they feel valued by management, and this is reflected in their positive attitude to their daily tasks.

The agency has a positive attitude to training, and many of the staff are currently pursuing further training.

The care team are currently being trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.

Staff meetings are held on a weekly basis, and are effectively and efficiently run. Handover meetings take place at the end of each shift.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to promote staff training and development.

11.3 STAFF SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

STANDARD STATEMENT:

All staff, including night staff, ancillary staff and the manager, shall be appropriately supported and supervised in their tasks and duties, and are accountable for their actions.

Supervision in Lisdeel House is of a very high standard. The manager and team leader share this role. Supervision takes place every four to six weeks. Both the manager and team leader are trained in supervision.

Lisdeel House, Guidelines and Policies sets out clear guidelines for supervision entitled 'Supervision Format' stating that the following areas are addressed in varying degrees:

- ◆ Case reviews/key child
- ◆ Student supervision/extra duties i.e. fire officer
- ◆ Contact with other professionals
- ◆ Review of other cases in House
- ◆ Household duties
- ◆ Training and development
- ◆ Any other issues

Staff confirmed that they found supervision within the Centre to be of a very high standard, being both supportive and developmental. All felt that they could ask for extra supervision if necessary. Informal supervision was also highlighted as being very beneficial, where the opportunity to sit and chat with team members and management provided a great source of support within the team.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to maintain this high standard of supervision.

STANDARD 12: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

12.1 CENTRE ADMINISTRATION

STANDARD STATEMENT:

The manager of the children's centre shall be professionally qualified and well experienced in residential child care, and the staff in the centre shall be organised and managed in a manner designed to deliver the best possible child care service.

Lisdeed House operates to the recommended standards. The agency as a whole has developed very clear policies and procedures which act as a guide to management and staff. Thus, staff are clear about levels of delegation, and roles and responsibilities of individuals.

Staff rotas ensure appropriate cover for:

- ◆ Key worker time
- ◆ Hand over meetings
- ◆ Staff meetings
- ◆ Access
- ◆ Administrative duties

The majority of care staff feel that a third person on duty late into the evening would allow for more flexibility within the Centre.

The Centre, although new to the area, has already established good links within the community, and sees themselves as being very much part of the local community.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That management consider reviewing rotas to allow for a third person to be on duty in the evenings.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ The Centre administration continue to be maintained to this high standard.

12.2 ADMINISTRATION RECORDS

STANDARD STATEMENT:

Administrative records contain significant information, decisions and actions relevant to the running of the centre.

Lisdeed House maintains its administrative records to the highest of standards. All records are readily available within the Centre.

Staff are aware of the importance of maintaining records, and young people are aware that records are maintained on them.

Lisdeel House keeps all its records in locked cupboards in the staff office. All records are kept in an orderly fashion, signed and dated, and easily understood.

Records indicate actions of staff as well as those of the young people. The list of records kept includes:

- ◆ Individual daily diaries
- ◆ Staff diary
- ◆ Concerns log
- ◆ Sanctions book
- ◆ Medication book
- ◆ Attendance book
- ◆ Maintenance records
- ◆ Health and safety concerns and maintenance log
- ◆ Behaviour observations log
- ◆ Individual pocket money book
- ◆ On call record book
- ◆ Staff rotas
- ◆ Shift hand over book
- ◆ Petty cash book

At present, the young people are not actively involved in writing their daily diaries, or in the recording of information which concerns them.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Centre considers ways of involving young people in the writing and recording of information which concerns them.

Recommendations for good practice

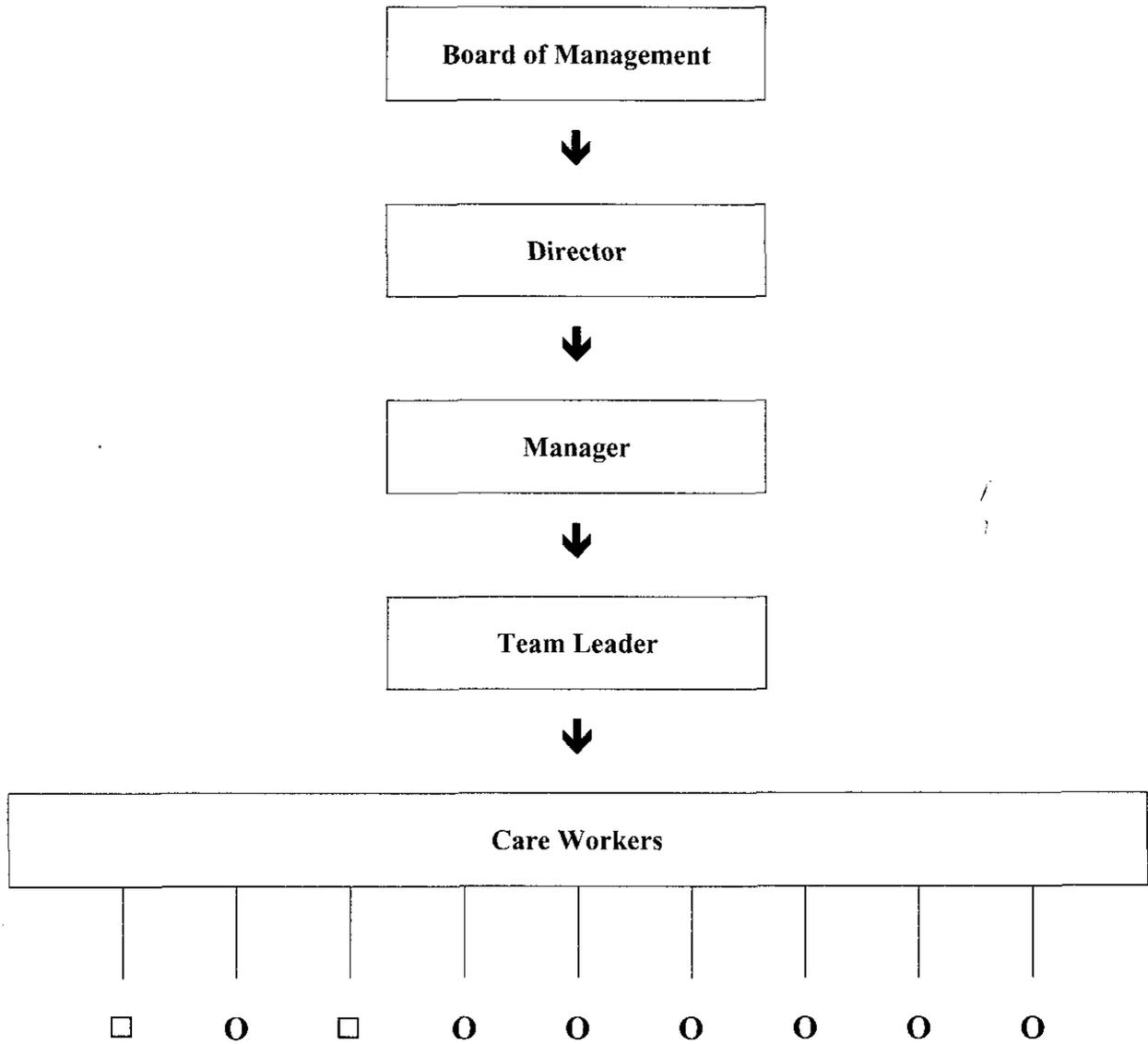
- ◆ The Centre continues to maintain administrative records to a high standard.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES REQUIRING ACTION

- ◆ That the Centre look at ways of operating without locking doors within the Centre. (Done May 2000)
- ◆ As the windows consists of both single glazing and double glazing, it is recommended that a decision be made on this by the Fire and Safety Officer.
- ◆ A non-slip mat needs to be obtained for use in the staff shower. (Done immediately after inspection)
- ◆ Extra electricity sockets need to be installed in the staff bedroom/staff office to replace existing extension lead. (Done May 2000)
- ◆ The 'fire drill book' needs to be replaced by a Fire Register. (Done immediately after inspection)
- ◆ Social workers must ensure that there is a care plan negotiated with all parties, in accordance with the *Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995 Part IV, Section 23*. A written and agreed care plan is a mechanism for ensuring that the young person's needs are met.
- ◆ A systematic structure for the review of care plans in compliance with the *Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations 1995, Part IV, Section 25(1)* be undertaken by social work staff.
- ◆ That the Head Social Worker, Team Leader and Manager in Lisdeel House meet and agree how particular cases can be managed in the best interests of the children, and the duties of the social workers be clearly defined. (Done May 2000)
- ◆ That the Centre devise a system giving young people access to their files, under the guidance of their key worker. (Done May 2000)
- ◆ Social workers share their reports and information with the Centre, when appropriate.
- ◆ That the Centre reviews its policy on locking doors within the Centre.
- ◆ The Centre develop a child friendly, age appropriate information leaflet. (Done May 2000)
- ◆ That future complaints procedures also comply with *Children First – National Guidelines for Protection and Welfare of Children, 1999*. (Done May 2000)
- ◆ That a date be set for its review.
- ◆ A leaflet be devised for young people stating clearly how to make a complaint or including a section on complaints in the children's information leaflet.
- ◆ That social workers discuss with the young people their role as case managers in the handling of complaints/allegations.
- ◆ That the staff do not smoke while on duty.
- ◆ That the young people's information leaflet include information for the young people on child protection policies within the Centre.
- ◆ That the Centre complete their draft 'Sanctions Policy'. (Done May 2000)
- ◆ That it be signed and dated, and a date set for its review. (Done May 2000)

- ◆ That the young people's information leaflet included a section on the Centre's policy on care and control. (Done May 2000)
- ◆ That the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul develop procedures for personnel to access their personnel files. (Done immediately after inspection)
- ◆ That management consider reviewing rotas to allow for a third person to be on duty in the evenings. (This is done when ever possible)
- ◆ That the Centre considers ways of involving young people in the writing and recording of information which concerns them.

APPENDIX 1: STAFFING STRUCTURE OF LISDEEL HOUSE



2 Students

1 Domestic

1 Gardener

1 Bookkeeper with access to clerical work at central office

APPENDIX 2: CHILDREN RESIDING IN LISDEEL HOUSE

Gender	Age	Legal Status	Status of Siblings	Time in current placement
Male	13.2	Full Care Order	Same family	22.4.1998
Male	12.2	Full Care Order		22.4.1998
Female	11.2	Full Care Order		22.4.1998
Female	9.10	Full Care Order		22.4.1998
Male	7.4	Full Care Order	Same family	19.11.1999
Male	6.3	Full Care Order		19.11.1999

APPENDIX 3: STAFFING

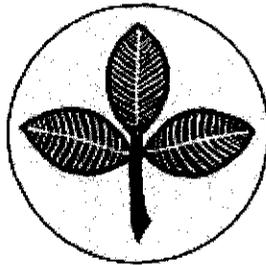
Position	Qualification	Employment Status	Time in Centre
Director Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Registered Family Therapist (FTAI) ◆ NCEA Diploma in Child Care 	Permanent	40 years
Manager Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ C.Q.S.W. 1992 ◆ Masters in Management of Care 1997 	Permanent	4.3 years
Team Leader Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National Diploma in Child Care ◆ Certificate in Supervision ◆ Studying Diploma in Management 	Permanent	4.3 years
Child Care Worker Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Higher Diploma in Teaching 1989 ◆ National Diploma in Applied Social Studies in Social Care 1995 ◆ Studying Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy 	Permanent	2.2 years
Child Care Worker Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National Diploma in Applied Social Care 1999 	Permanent	0.5 years
Child Care Worker Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National Diploma in Social Care 1993 	Permanent	1.3 years
Child Care Worker Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National Diploma in Social Care 1997 	Permanent	1.10 years
Child Care Worker Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National Diploma in Social Care 1996 	Full-time Temporary	0.11 years
Child Care Worker Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National Diploma in Social Care 1999 	Part-time Temporary	1.8 years
Child Care Worker Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National Certificate in Pre-School Care 1991 	Part-time Temporary	0.2 years
Relief Worker Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ B.S.S.C. Psychology/Sociology 1994 ◆ Counselling Course 1998 ◆ Studying C.Q.S.W 	Part-time Temporary	1.7 years
Relief Worker Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National Diploma in Social Care 1996 	Part-time Temporary	0.2 years

APPENDIX 4: FEEDBACK GIVEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Thank you very much for your help during our visit to
Lisdeel House Children's Centre.



Registration and Inspection Service



**Northern Area Health Board
Bord Sláinte an Limistéir Thuaidh**

If you have any questions about any of this, please talk to your
key worker or your social worker.

If you would like us to attend at a house meeting to discuss any
of these matters, please phone us

Deirdre McTeigue or Orla McKeon at 8387122.

Registration and Inspection Service

Inspection Feedback for Young People at
Lisdeel House Children's Centre.



Lisdeel House Children's Centre was visited in March 2000, to see what it is like to live in a residential centre. Here is some information about what was found, and some suggestions for the future.

Some things you like about Lisdeel House Children's Centre

You said that:

- ◆ You like living in Lisdeel House
- ◆ The staff care about you
- ◆ Your views and opinions are listened to
- ◆ Your family and friends are made welcome
- The holidays are really good

Some things you were not sure about or found hard at times

- ◆ When your family visits don't happen
- ◆ When you don't see your social worker for a long time

What the inspection found

- ◆ Lisdeel House is a good place to live
- ◆ The care staff take good care of you
- ◆ You like your key worker
- ◆ Every effort is made to keep you in touch with your family
- You are helped with your school work
- ◆ Care staff help you to spend your free time doing things you like
- ◆ The play room/access room is good, so you can see your parents and visitors in private

Some things that we are suggesting

- That a leaflet be printed explaining about Lisdeel House to young people who may come to live there in the future
- That you might help with the design and information for these leaflets
- ◆ That you can see your daily diaries and file, and read the bits that are about you

