



Northern Area Health Board
Bord Sláinte an Limistéir Thuaidh

Registration and Inspection Service

*Ballyowen Meadows
Children's Centre*

Inspection Report February 2000



103508



Ballyowen Meadows Children's Centre

Inspection Report



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REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION REPORT

Centre: Ballyowen Meadows
Fonthill Road
Balgaddy
Clondalkin
Dublin 22.

Director: Liam O'Driscoll
Traveller Families' Care Ltd
Ballyowen Meadows
Fonthill Road
Balgaddy
Clondalkin
Dublin 22

Manager: Liam Lynch

No. of children: Four children

Dates of Inspection: 30th November 1999
1st December 1999
8th December 1999 (½ day)
19th January 2000 (½ day)
24th January 2000 (½ day)
27th January 2000 (½ day)

Inspection team: Orla McKeon

Registered for period: October 2000 to 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 *Standards and Criteria for the Inspection of Children's Residential Centres* (EHB and WHB, 1999) document provides the framework against which this inspection was conducted.

The inspection which forms the basis of this report took place over four days, and provides a comprehensive overview of the performance of Traveller Families' Care Children's Centre.

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.

INTRODUCTION

Ballyowen Meadows Children's Residential Centre is run by Traveller Families Care. The Director is responsible for the overall management of Ballyowen Meadows, and reports to the Board of Management (see Appendix 1). Ballyowen Meadows accommodates up to eight children (see Appendix 2). The Centre is managed on a day-to-day basis by the manager. There are 10 care workers (of mixed gender) working either full-time or part-time. There is one ancillary staff (see Appendix 3). The Centre is located alongside the offices of Traveller Families Care Ltd., the Shared Rearing Service, the Community Support Service, and the Family Support Unit.

The inspection took place at the end of November-beginning of December 1999 and final meetings took place into January 2000. This report is based on the following inspection techniques:

- ◆ An examination of the pre-inspection questionnaires and related documentation, compiled by the manager of the centre.
- ◆ An examination of the questionnaires completed by:
 - (a) staff (see Appendix 3)
 - (b) the young people residing in Ballyowen Meadows
 - (c) social workers with responsibilities for young people residing in the Centre
- ◆ Interviews with other professionals, e.g. Youth Workers, County Council Social Workers, Project Workers, Social Workers from the Shared Rearing Service, Project Worker Family Support Unit, Outreach Workers Community Support Service.
- ◆ An inspection of the premises and grounds, using a checklist devised by the Fire & Safety Officer and the Health and Safety Co-ordinator of the Eastern Region 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) parents and guardians of the young people
 - (c) care staff
 - (d) two college students on placement in the centre
 - (e) a representative of the Board of Management
 - (f) The Director of Services
 - (g) The Manager
 - (h) The Ancillary staff person
- ◆ Observations of care practice, and the staff/young people's interactions.

The young people's social workers and parents/guardians 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

The inspection of Ballyowen Meadows Children's Centre took place at the end of 1999, and the beginning of 2000. At the time of the inspection, there were four children residing in the Centre. The mother of three of the children was also staying in the Centre.

As part of the inspection process, the views of the young people and those of the parents/guardians were sought, as were the views of the care staff, the young people's social workers and other professionals involved in the Centre. These opinions were sought by means of interviews and questionnaires.

The inspection visits comprised observation over six days – two full days and four half days – in the Centre, including mornings, evenings and mealtimes.

A checklist devised by the Health and Safety Co-ordinator and the Fire and Safety Officer of the Eastern Regional Health Authority was completed by a member of the inspection team. 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.

- ◆ Ballyowen Meadows is managed and run by Travellers Families' Care Ltd and the Centre is providing a high standard of care to the young people from the Travelling Community. The Centre, although relatively new within the area, has already established strong links with the local community.
- ◆ Ballyowen Meadows promotes good social care practice, whilst continuing to respect and nurture the culture of the Travelling Community. The Centre provides a unique service in endeavouring to tap into the immense resources within Travelling families, and facilitates the family to help themselves through times of difficulty.
- ◆ The Centre is located on its own site in West County Dublin. A Drug Treatment Centre has been built within the last two years on the grounds in front of the centre. Subsequently, an aluminium fence was erected between the children's centre and the treatment centre. Access to the Centre is now through gates operating on an intercom system. The physical appearance for the Centre and the grounds needs to be addressed. Once inside the Centre, the environment changes to a well laid out, 'homely', child-friendly one.
- ◆ Some minor work needs to be carried out in relation to fire safety, and health and safety, and a certificate of compliance has been submitted which has been accepted by the Fire and Safety Officer in the Eastern Regional Health Authority.
- ◆ Leaflets that explain the service to the young people and their families need to be devised.
- ◆ 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 relevant Head Social Workers. Reviews are arranged by the Centre. Mini reviews take place fortnightly.
- ◆ Social work support for young people is purposeful and regular.
- ◆ The Centre actively strives to preserve the young person's sense of identity, and to maintain links with their parents, by having the primary care giver come to live in the Centre with their children, and by supporting the parent to continue to parent their child/children in an environment which offers them support and guidance.
- ◆ The Centre actively promotes education and, where possible, facilities the young people to attend schools with strong links with the Travelling Community.
- ◆ Good health care practices are promoted in the Centre, and a healthy lifestyle is encouraged.

- ◆ Traveller Families Care as an agency has a Child Protection Policy which is currently under review, to comply with the *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Department of Health and Children, 1999).
- ◆ The Centre has recently adopted a new approach to 'Care and Control', where sanctions are no longer used. To date, this model is proving successful, and is supported by care staff, the young people and families alike.
- ◆ Staff have been recruited within the requirements of the Department of Health and Children. All permanent staff are professionally qualified, and the Centre also recognises the value of employing people from the Travelling Community for their specific knowledge and insight.
- ◆ At the time of the inspection visit, staff supervision had lapsed. All care staff are currently receiving both external supervision and internal supervision once a month.
- ◆ The Centre maintains the required registers and log books, and is currently updating many of its policies and procedures.
- ◆ The inspectors would like to thank the young people in Ballyowen Meadows for their welcome, openness and contributions during the inspection.
- ◆ The full co-operation of care staff and management is also acknowledged.

Items for attention

- ◆ Written care plans must be prepared by the Area Health Board for each young person living in Ballyowen Meadows in accordance with the requirements of *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995*.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Leaflets/brochures that provide child-friendly information on the residential services and care practices be devised.
- ◆ The statement of purpose and function of Ballyowen Meadows be developed and agreed by Traveller's Families Care and the Area Health Board, and that this is reflected in their service agreement.

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.

Traveller Families' Care Limited provides a unique service to members of the Travelling Community. Traveller Families' Care endeavours to tap into the immense resources within Travelling families themselves, and to facilitate families to help themselves through times of difficulty.

Traveller Families' Care Limited has recently completed a draft statement of purpose and function. This statement of purpose and function encompasses all the services provided by Traveller Families' Care Ltd.

It outlines the ethos of the agency as:

Traveller Families' Care Ltd., in partnership with the Eastern Health Board, is committed to providing support and services to Traveller families and children who experience difficulties. We seek to do this, firstly by working with families in their community to prevent children coming into care. Where residential care is deemed necessary, we recognise the importance of involving and including parents and extended family, where possible, in the provision of our service.

It recognises the Travelling Community as an indigenous group:

The Traveller Community is an indigenous group with customs and values different to those of the settled community, but equally valid. We acknowledge this in our work and reflect it in our practice. In our work, we bring many years of unique experience of working with the Traveller Community in Ireland, and a commitment to having our staff trained to the highest professional standards in family work and child care, and to employ Traveller staff members where possible.

The agency outlines its commitment to providing the best quality standard of care possible, in compliance with current legislation, regulation and guidelines.

The document also details the agency's:

- ◆ Core values
- ◆ Aims and objectives
- ◆ Service provisions in the following services:
 - Ballyowen Meadows
 - Derralossary House
 - Community Support Service
 - Shared Rearing Programme
 - Referral and Discharge Procedures of Traveller Families Care

Ballyowen Meadows is currently pioneering a model of residential care which is unique in Ireland. While recognising the crucial importance of including parents in meeting the needs of their children, the Centre endeavours to involve parents and other family members, including, where appropriate, taking parents into residential care with their children. This has involved a complete change in thinking and practice within the Centre.

Ballyowen Meadows must be commended on their most unique approach to meeting the needs of young people in their care.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That Traveller Families' Care and the Health Board agree the purpose and function of Ballyowen Meadows, and that this is reflected in their service agreement.
- ◆ That the section on 'Service Provision' be developed further in the Statement of Purpose and Function, to highlight the specific nature of the service being provided by each of the following:
 - Ballyowen Meadows
 - Derralossary House
 - Community Support Service
 - Shared Rearing Programme
 - Family Support Unit
- ◆ That this statement be dated, and a date set for its review.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That a child-friendly, age-appropriate booklet on the purpose and function of the Centre be drawn up.
- ◆ That, when the statement of purpose and function is completed, it is distributed to the relevant people.

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.

Traveller Families' Care is located on its own site. The original buildings contain the offices of Management and of the Shared Rearing Service. To the left of this building is a Family Support Unit and to the right hand side is Ballyowen Meadows Children's Residential Centre.

The house consists of two staff bedrooms, with one doubling up as a staff office. There are two bathrooms, three single bedrooms, two double bedrooms. There is a large dining room with a play area. The sitting room is designed to resemble the inside of a trailer, and a second play area is located to its rear, with double doors leading into a spacious conservatory.

Ballyowen Meadows is specifically designed, and is based on a model of residential care development in Denmark. All rooms are off the main hallway, and are so designed to ensure that the young people can be continuously supervised with minimum disruption to their privacy. The kitchen is centrally located and surrounded by glass, to ensure continuous supervision.

The house is very homely, with the walls in the hallway, sitting room and play areas covered in murals depicting the Travelling way of life and the 'cant alphabet' – the language of the Traveller.

The young people and parents confirmed that they find the house homely and spacious.

In the last two years, a Drug Treatment Centre has been built on the grounds (on what was the young people's playing area) right in front of the Centre. Subsequently, an aluminium fence was erected between the children's residential centre and the drug treatment centre. This fence has spikes at the top. Entry to Ballyowen Meadows is now through double gates operating on an intercom system. This is a most imposing structure and is not child friendly. The children feel locked in.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That a play area needs to be allocated and developed for the young people.
- ◆ That plans to landscape the grounds need to be implemented.
- ◆ That the appearance of the aluminium fence needs to be addressed.
- ◆ That the purpose of double entrance gates controlled by the intercom should be reviewed.

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.

Traveller Families' Care has a very comprehensive Safety and Fire Precautions policy document entitled *Traveller's Families' Care, Health and Safety and Welfare at Work (1989 Act) Statement for Ballyowen Meadows and Derralossary House*.

The policy document outlines the following:

1. Health, Safety and Welfare Statement
2. Organisation structure
3. Introduction – Board of Management's policy
4. Co-operation of employees
5. Safety Officers and their roles
6. Safety Representatives and their roles
7. Traveller Families' Care, responsibilities of
8. Employees/disciplinary procedure
9. Accident investigation
10. Identification of hazards
11. Fire prevention
12. Fire procedure Ballyowen Meadows
13. Fire procedure Ballyowen Meadows (cont.)
14. Emergency procedure
15. Medical
16. Violence
17. Smoking/chemicals
18. Supervision
19. Stress management
20. Ongoing training

Staff are aware of its contents and copies of the policy document are readily available within the centre.

Ballyowen Meadows has an appointed Fire and Safety Officer, who has a clearly defined role. Staff have received fire training. This includes:

- ◆ Fire extinguisher training
- ◆ Fire evacuation training
- ◆ Fire lecture

Staff and young people confirmed that they know what to do in the event of fire. (The inspector observed a fire drill).

Both young people and staff confirmed that fire drills take place regularly, and records show that fire drills and checks are carried out. An outside company services the fire equipment, and the last check was in November 1999.

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

The Centre is to be commended for the standard of their Fire and Safety policy document, and their pro-active approach to fire and safety precautions.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That a fire guard be fitted to the gas fire in the sitting room.
- ◆ That a lock be fixed on the cleaning material cupboard (currently on maintenance list).
- ◆ That the double adapter be replaced by an extra double socket in the sitting room.
- ◆ That the leak in the roof over the cooker be fixed (currently on maintenance list).
- ◆ That the leak in the roof over the television be fixed.
- ◆ That the doors of the drawers in kitchen presses be fixed.

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.

The young people in Ballyowen Meadows do not have a specific written care plan. *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995* part IV, section 23 state that:

A health board shall, before placing a child in a residential centre, prepare a plan for the care of the child and the said plan shall, among other matters, deal with:

- (a) the aims and objectives of the placement,
- (b) the support to be provided to the child, the residential centre concerned and, where appropriate, the parents of the child by the health board.
- (c) the arrangements for access to the child by a parent, relative or other named person, subject to any order as to access by a court, and
- (d) the arrangements for the review of the plan.

In the absence of written care plans, Ballyowen Meadows strives to plan for the young people in their care. The Centre hosts fortnightly mini-reviews. These mini-reviews are attended by:

- ◆ the manager
- ◆ the social worker
- ◆ the young person (where appropriate)
- ◆ the parents (where appropriate)

The purpose of these mini-reviews is to discuss the young person's progress over the previous two weeks, to identify areas that need to be addressed, and to assign a specific worker who will ensure that the issues are dealt with, thus ensuring that plans for the young people are being continuously updated and received. Mini-reviews are discussed further later on.

The young people in the Centre confirm that they are aware of why they are in care, and are involved in plans which are made concerning them. Parents also confirmed that they are fully involved in all plans made concerning their children.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That 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.

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.

Formal reviews are held on all young people living in Ballyowen Meadows in accordance with *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995*.

Due to the nature of the Centre, i.e. that it is a short-term assessment centre, Ballyowen Meadows has adopted a unique way of ensuring that plans are regularly reviewed and updated. They have developed a system of mini reviews.

Mini-reviews are held fortnightly in the Centre. They are attended by:

- ◆ manager of the centre
- ◆ key worker
- ◆ social worker
- ◆ young person (where appropriate)
- ◆ parents (where appropriate)

At these mini-reviews, the young person's progress over the previous two weeks is discussed, and plans are put in place for the work that needs to be done over the next fortnight.

Minutes of these mini-reviews are present in the case files.

During the inspection visit, all case files were examined. The reviews (both mini-reviews and statutory reviews) were well minuted on the case files. The review forms used have been devised by the Centre, and include the key worker's form and the young person's forms. Only one case file contained a school progress report.

There was no evidence of any reports completed by a social worker. Social work files were not examined as part of the inspection.

The young people and their parents in Ballyowen Meadows confirmed that they are actively involved in their reviews (where appropriate), and felt their views and opinions were given full consideration.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the care workers and social workers continue to hold reviews in compliance with *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995*.

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.

Ballyowen Meadows provides a unique service to young people and their families. Where appropriate, the Centre aims to offer a residential placement to the parent who is the primary care giver. The Centre operates on the philosophy that parents provide the emotional support for their children, and that it is necessary for the Centre to provide developmental support, thus helping to alleviate the trauma experienced by the young person leaving their family behind when coming into residential care.

Each admission to Ballyowen Meadows is planned on the individual needs of the young person and family involved.

The Centre is to be commended for their unique policy of receiving parents on a residential basis, and that they continue to work in this inclusive manner with parents.

Issues requiring action

- That the Centre draw up an admission policy.
- ♦ That the Area Health Board consider placing a health board representative on the admissions committee.

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.

This is the very philosophy that underpins the work undertaken in Ballyowen Meadows. This Centre has taken this concept one step further and, where possible, encourages the primary care giver to move into the Centre with their child/children.

The Centre has moved from the traditional model of residential care, where the centre takes over the main parenting role, to one where the centre supports the parent so that they continue to parent their child/children in an environment which offers them support and guidance.

A key worker is assigned to the parent, whose role is to offer the parents support and guidance.

The young people in the Centre spoke of how their families are made welcome. The young people (whose parent also resides in the Centre) commented on how good it was to have their mother living with them.

One of the parents living in the Centre spoke of how important it was to her to be able to stay with her children. She found the support offered to her by the Centre very helpful, and really appreciated having another parent in a similar situation as herself to share their experiences.

One parent also commented that, at times, she felt like she was in prison, with the high fence around the centre and the automatic gates.

The Centre is to be commended for its unique way of working in partnership with parents.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Centre reviews the purpose of the aluminium fence and the automatic gates, and to consider replacing them with more appropriate ones.

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.

Ballyowen Meadows recognises and values the importance of inter disciplinary co-working.

Good working relations are evident between the Centre and outside agencies, such as:

- ◆ social workers; supported by the bi-monthly mini-reviews
- ◆ local school; by care staff visiting the schools regularly
- ◆ local Travellers groups, through Exchange House

The key worker role is vital here. The key workers act as the link between the Centre and outside agencies. Both care staff and social work staff confirmed that there is clarity around their respective roles and responsibilities.

The young people are clear about the links maintained between the Centre and outside agencies, on the purpose of maintaining these links, and of the fact that they are in their best interests.

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.

Ballyowen Meadows is a short-term assessment centre, and preparation for moving on is an integral part of the service provided by the Centre.

Initial preparations for leaving care are carried out by the key worker in the Centre, in conjunction with the social worker, the young person and their parents. An agreed plan is devised at the mini reviews and/or statutory reviews.

Traveller Families' Care as an agency offers a 'Community Support Service'. The Community Support Service has two outreach workers, one of whom is assigned to support the young person and their family through the transition from care. It is the outreach workers who will maintain contact and provide support for the young person and their family for as long as is deemed necessary.

Traveller Families Care also operates a 'Shared Rearing Service' as explained elsewhere in this report. Where appropriate, foster families are sourced from within the Travelling Community.

Where appropriate, a young person may make the transition to Derralossory House, Co Wicklow, which is a sister house providing medium-stay residential care.

Overall, Ballyowen Meadows, by its very nature, strives, from the day of admission, to prepare the young person/family for leaving care.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the agency is to be commended for their holistic approach to residential care and that the agency continue to work in this manner.

3.7 CASE FILES

STANDARD STATEMENT:

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

All case files in Ballyowen Meadows contain a high standard of records. These include:

- ◆ a comprehensive social history submitted by the social workers prior to admission
- ◆ minutes of reviews
- ◆ minutes of mini-reviews
- ◆ general communication records of phone calls, visits, etc.
- ◆ daily individual records sheets which are used by the Centre in place of individual day book
- ◆ incident report sheets (of accidents or injuries)
- ◆ medical reports
- ◆ medication sheets
- ◆ key worker notes

Case files are stored in file boxes based in the main staff bedroom.

The young people in Ballyowen Meadows are aware that case file are maintained by the Centre and, to date, do not have access to their files.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That daily individual sheets be replaced by individual day books.
- ◆ That case files should be stored in a secure filing cabinet or cupboard.
- ◆ That young people should be given access to their files, under the guidance of their key worker.

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.

Ballyowen Meadows works in partnership with the young people in their care. Individual views and beliefs are respected by the care staff. As the Centre caters only for young people from a Travelling background, the underlining philosophy of the Centre is to nurture and promote the Traveller way of life. Care staff strive in all aspects of their care provision to remain focused on the Traveller way of doing things, and are very conscious not to apply their own settled values.

The care staff actively encourage the young people to become involved in local Travellers' groups, and many of the young people are involved with local youth groups.

Young people's personal belongings are carefully stored, and young people have access to them.

The telephone is located in the main staff bedroom. Due to the location of the phone, a care staff member is usually present during phone calls. Some of the children currently residing in the Centre have supervised phone calls, and these children are aware of why this is so.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That a second phone be purchased and located at a more appropriate site within the Centre, to ensure privacy (when appropriate).
- ◆ That the children confirmed that they have never felt discriminated against in the Centre, school or in the locality.

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.

When young people come to stay in Ballyowen Meadows, they are assigned a key worker. The key worker provides the young person with information about the Centre.

The Centre is currently developing an information leaflet for young people, in which they intend to cover areas such as:

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Rights
- ◆ Responsibilities
- ◆ Rules
- ◆ Routines
- ◆ How to make a complaint

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 complete their child-friendly, age-appropriate information leaflet.
- ◆ That the children be involved in making of this 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.

Traveller Families' Care as an agency has a combined Complaints Procedure and Child Protection Policy which is currently about three years old, details of which are outlined later on.

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 either their key worker, care staff or manager if something happened that 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 but that they felt they could if they needed to.

The majority of care staff spoken to said that they were unaware of the Centre's complaints procedure. Most of the care staff had a good idea of how they would handle a complaint if one was made to them.

The manager is aware of this and is currently addressing this issue.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That all care staff are made aware of the Centre's complaints procedure as a matter of urgency.
- ◆ That the Centre update their current complaints procedure in compliance with *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, 1999.
- ◆ That the policy document be dated, and a date set for its review.
- ◆ That 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.

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.

Ballyowen Meadows works in a consultative and communicative manner with the young people in its care. It does so through:

- ◆ the use of the key worker relationship
- ◆ bi-monthly mini-reviews

The young people confirmed that they felt their views and opinions are taken seriously.

Due to the unique set up in Ballyowen Meadows, parents are perfectly positioned to be fully involved in all major and minor discussions concerning their children.

At present, the Centre does not hold children's meetings, due to the fact that, over the period of a few months leading up Christmas, there were, in fact, twelve young people (8 of whom lived in the Family Support Unit next door) present in the residential centre at certain times. This is no longer the case, and the Centre plans to re-establish the children's meetings as soon as possible.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Centre re-establish children's meetings.

STANDARD 6: EDUCATION

STANDARD STATEMENT:

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

Ballyowen Meadows actively promotes education within their Centre. Where possible, they strive to maintain young people in their original school. This is supported by use of the Centre's car and access to taxis for the non-drivers.

Good links are maintained with the schools. The local school has the added benefit of having a teacher from the Travelling background, and 15% of the school's population are Travellers, thus providing continuing support and local links for the young people.

All young people confirmed that they are happy in school and, during the time of the inspection visit, were preparing to be in their first ever Christmas Concert.

The young people also confirmed to the inspector that they receive help with their homework, when appropriate, and that they are able to do their homework undisturbed.

School reports can be found on all young people's case files.

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 in the Centre. Some of the young people are from outside the Dublin area so, while in Ballyowen Meadows, they are registered with the local GP.

Case files indicated that regular health checks are maintained and that all medication given is recorded.

Medications are stored in a locked cabinet in the second staff room. Two of the staff team are qualified nurses and they are responsible for the maintenance of the medicine cabinet.

The 'Stay Safe Programme' is in operation in the Centre. The Stay Safe Programme, and the decision to introduce it to a young person, is decided at a mini-review or statutory review. It is the key worker who implements the programme with the young person.

The Centre at present does not have a policy on HIV and Aids. To date, such information is imparted on an individual needs basis (taking into consideration that all the young people are under 12 years of age).

The Centre has one designated smoking area for staff and visitors. None of the young people at present smoke.

Young people are actively encouraged to join local clubs and activities, and are supported in doing so.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to promote a health conscious environment.
- That the staff do not smoke while on duty.

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.

Ballyowen Meadows have their own cook who is also from a Travelling background.

When young people are placed with their parents, it is the parent who takes responsibility for their children's breakfast and tea. This helps the parent continue to nurture their children.

Guidance is given to the parent around good nutrition and food preparation.

Young people and parents are actively involved in shopping.

At present there is nobody with special nutrition needs in the Centre.

The kitchen is well equipped, but, at time of the inspection, some of the cupboard doors were broken and are currently on the maintenance list.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the items on the maintenance list be addressed as soon as possible.

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 the young people in Ballyowen Meadows present as very well dressed and cared for. Parents living in Ballyowen Meadows take responsibility for the purchase and maintenance of their own children's clothes, thus continuing to nurture their children.

The young people confirm that they are actively involved in the choice and purchase of their clothes. During the inspection visit, Christmas clothes were being purchased and shown off with pride.

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.

Recreation and leisure pursuits are actively encouraged in the Centre.

Young people go on regular outings to the pictures, bowling and swimming, to mention a few. Two of the young people are involved in a local pool club which they attend weekly and really enjoy. The young people also have weekly contact with the local Travellers group.

During the holidays, the young people are able to attend summer projects organised through the youth workers in Exchange House.

Young people confirm that they have access to good recreation and leisure facilities, and would love to see a pool table bought for the house.

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.

Traveller Families Care as an agency has a Child Protection Policy which includes:

- ◆ ***Guidelines re Inappropriate Sexual Activity***

This outlines for care staff the procedures to be followed if staff find young people engaging in inappropriate sexual activities.

- ◆ ***Guidelines for the Investigation and Management of Alleged Incidents of Non-Accidental Injury and Sexual Abuse***

These guidelines were drawn up based on the *Guidelines on Procedures for the Identification, Investigation and Management of Child Abuse*, Department of Health, 1987, and outline the following:

- ◆ What is child abuse?
- ◆ Where the abuse occurs outside the unit.
- ◆ Where abused occurs within the house where the child resides
- ◆ Where the abuse is allegedly perpetrated by an employee of Traveller Families' Care
- ◆ Recommendations regarding implementation
- ◆ Social workers

These guidelines are currently three years old. The majority of staff spoken to were unfamiliar with their contents.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That a new Child Protection Policy be drawn up on compliance with *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, Department of Health and Children 1999.
- ◆ That all care staff are aware of this new policy and familiar with its contents.
- ◆ That the policy document be dated, and a date set for its review.

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.

Ballyowen Meadows does not at present have a written policy on care and control.

All care staff are currently receiving training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI). Due to the nature of the training, it is not possible for the team as a whole to train at the same time. This must be done on a phased basis.

In the absence of the full team at present being trained in TCI, the Director of the agency has encouraged all staff to use the 'Life Space Interview'. This involves talking to the young person after an incident, hearing all sides, and help the young person to come up with a different way for handling a similar situation next time. At the moment, this use of 'Life Space Interviews' is proving successful.

All sanctions and limits are recorded on the young person's 'daily individual report sheets'. The sanctions currently being employed in Ballyowen Meadows are:

- ◆ fining of pocket money
- ◆ being given 'time out', i.e. being sent to their room for a fixed period of time, followed by a Life Space Interview
- ◆ being restrained when refusing 'time out' or posing a threat to themselves or others, followed by a fixed period of time in their room, and a Life Space Interview

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Centre devise a clear policy on Care and Control that all young people, their families and staff are aware of, and the policy document be dated, and a date set for its review.

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 care team in Ballyowen Meadows is both competent and professional. They are very committed to the provision of a high quality standard of care to the young people and families in their care, and to each other as a team.

All permanent staff are recruited by public advertisement and interview. It is the policy of the agency to give preference to professionally qualified staff. Interview panels are made up of a representative of the Board of Management, the Director, the Management of Ballyowen Meadows and Derralossary, and, where possible, a representative from the Health Board. The Centre recognises the value of employing people from the Travelling Community on their care team for their specific knowledge and insight. At present, two of the residential care staff are from a Travelling background.

At present, the Centre does not have a policy for care staff to have access to their personnel files.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre continues to recruit staff in compliance with the Department of Health guidelines *Recruitment and Selection of Staff to Children's Residential Centres operated by Voluntary Bodies* (1994).
- ◆ That the Centre considers ways of making staff personnel files available to the care staff.
- ◆ That the Centre continues to employ people from the Travelling Community.

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.

As already stated, Ballyowen Meadows has a policy of employing professionally qualified personnel. In order to encourage suitable personnel to gain access to permanent positions on the team, the Centre has facilitated people in undertaking a professional training course.

From examination of care staff questionnaires, and interviewing many of the care staff, it is apparent that few team members attend on-going training courses. The main reason cited for this was the extra workload undertaken by the staff in the Centre in order to support the family (of eight children) living in the Family Support Unit.

To date, the Centre has not developed an induction programme for new staff members. It is the general feeling from the care team, and especially the view from the Travellers themselves employed in the agency, that a specific part of induction training needs to be designed specifically around Travellers' culture.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That people from the Travelling Community be encouraged to join the care team.
- ◆ That a Staff Induction Policy be developed.
- ◆ That staff induction should be two-fold:
 1. Induction into Travelling culture (drawing on the expertise already in the agency)
 2. Induction to all the Centre's policies and procedures, contracts of employment, etc.
- ◆ That, arising from the above, a Staff Induction Manual be devised. That all care staff are aware of its contents, and receive induction training.
- ◆ That the Staff Induction Policy and Manual be dated, and a date set for its review.
- ◆ That staff are encouraged to partake regularly in on-going training.

11.3 STAFF SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

STANDARD STATEMENT:

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

Management at Ballyowen Meadows are very aware that, at present, formal supervision has lapsed in the Centre, and they can readily identify why this has come about. New time tables are being drawn up and specific formal supervision time is being allocated.

Although all staff members acknowledged that formal supervision was not taking place, they commented on the fact that they felt they had 100% access to the centre's managers when required. They found informal support on the floor from the care team themselves as excellent, and also commented that team meetings provided a vital source of support.

Issues requiring action

- ◆ That the Centre draw up a Supervision Policy which is dated, and a date set for its review.
- ◆ That formal supervision be re-established on the timetable.
- ◆ That separate supervision is provided for those who supervise college students.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That Traveller Families' Care look at the possibility of employing an intermediary person/deputy manager to share the work load of the manager.

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.

Traveller Families' Care as an agency is currently in the process of developing and updating its policies and procedures. This process is being undertaken jointly between Ballyowen Meadows and Derralossary House Children's Residential Centres.

The young people's information booklet is currently in draft form and, in its absence, the young people confirm that they are clear about who is in charge in the Centre at any particular time, and are aware of who is and who will be on duty.

Communication with the young people is clear, with key workers playing a vital role here. The young people confirm that they feel well looked after in Ballyowen Meadows.

All staff are aware of their specific duties and responsibilities, and are clear about levels of delegation. The current contract of employment clearly lays out duties and responsibilities, and staff confirm they are familiar with same.

An extra workload was placed on the care staff in the residential centre in supporting the family of eight children living next door in the Family Support Unit. This, in effect, meant that, at certain times, the two care staff on duty in the Centre had up to twelve children/young people, thus stretching resources and the time care staff could give to any one individual to its limits. This is no longer the situation in the Centre.

Traveller Families' Care as an agency should be commended on their flexibility and adaptability in meeting the individual needs of a family at a time when they were experiencing difficulties. The agency is aware of the extra burden this placed on the staff in Ballyowen Meadows, while recognising that they are two separate services. The agency is currently looking at the development of the Family Support Unit.

Recommendations for good practice

- That the agency develop a long-term plan for the Family Support Unit.

12.2 ADMINISTRATION RECORDS

STANDARD STATEMENT:

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

The young people living in Ballyowen Meadows are aware that records on them are maintained by the Centre. With the exception of one young person, the inspector was given permission to read their files. This young person's wishes were respected. All records are easily made available. All records are signed and dated. Records indicated the actions of staff as well as those of the young people.

The sort of records kept include:-

- ◆ Child Care Journals
- ◆ Daily Record Sheets
- ◆ Admissions and Discharge Book
- ◆ Team Meeting Minutes Book
- ◆ Communications Record
- ◆ Medication Record
- ◆ Fire Book

The Centre does not have a sanctions book or a restraints record book. Such incidents are recorded on the daily record sheets. There is no complaints register. Such information does not appear to be recorded if complaints have been made.

Recommendations for good practice

- ◆ That the Centre devise a system of recording information on young people which actively involves the young people themselves in the recording process and which is accessible to the young people.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES REQUIRING ACTION

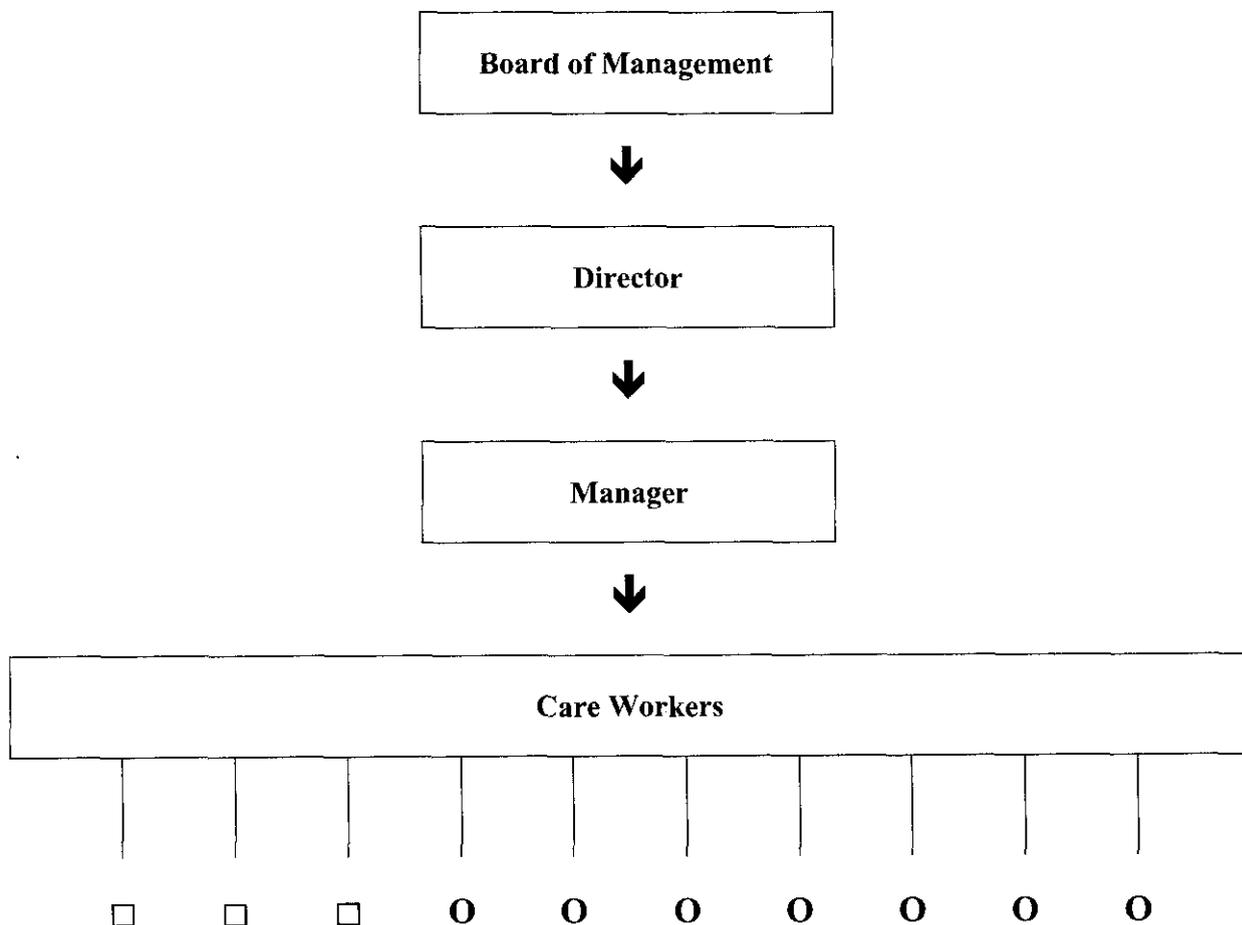
- ◆ That Traveller Families' Care and the Health Board agree the purpose and function of Ballyowen Meadows, and that this is reflected in their service agreement. (Done June 2000)
- ◆ That the section on 'Service Provision' be developed further in the *Statement of Purpose and Function* to highlight the specific nature of the service being provided by each of the following:
 - Ballyowen Meadows
 - Derralossary House
 - Community Support Service
 - Shared Rearing Programme
 - Family Support Unit

(Done June 2000)

- ◆ That this statement be dated and a date set for its review. (Done June 2000)
- ◆ That a play area needs to be allocated and developed for the young people. (Done May 2000)
- ◆ That plans to landscape the grounds need to be implemented.
- ◆ That the appearance of the aluminium fence needs to be addressed.
- ◆ That the purpose of double entrance gates controlled by the intercom should be reviewed.
- ◆ That a fire guard be fitted to gas fire in sitting room. (Done April 2000)
- ◆ That a lock be fixed on the cleaning material cupboard. (Done April 2000).
- ◆ That the double adapter be replaced by an extra double socket in the sitting room. (Done April 2000).
- ◆ That the leak in the roof over the cooker be fixed (currently on maintenance list).
- ◆ That the leak in the roof over the television be fixed.
- ◆ That the doors of drawers in kitchen presses be fixed.
- ◆ That 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.
- ◆ That the centre draw up an admission policy. (Done April 2000).
- ◆ That the Area Health Board consider placing a health board representative on the admissions committee.
- ◆ That the Centre reviews the purpose of the aluminium fence and the automatic gates and considers replacing them with more appropriate ones.
- ◆ That daily individual sheets be replaced by individual day books. (Done following the inspection)
- ◆ That case files should be stored in a secure filing cabinet or cupboard. (Done April 2000).
- ◆ That young people should be given access to their files under the guidance of their key worker. (Done April 2000)
- ◆ That a second phone be purchased and located at a more appropriate site within the Centre, to ensure privacy (when appropriate).

- ◆ That the Centre complete their child-friendly, age-appropriate information leaflet, and the children be involved in making of this leaflet.
- ◆ That all care staff are made aware of the Centre's complaints procedure as a matter of urgency. (Done April 2000)
- ◆ That the Centre update its current complaints procedure in compliance with *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, 1999.
- ◆ That the policy document be dated, and a date set for its review.
- ◆ That 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 Centre re-establish children's meetings. (Done immediately after inspection)
- ◆ That the Centre continues to promote a health conscious environment.
- ◆ That the staff do not smoke while on duty.
- ◆ That the items on the maintenance list be addressed as soon as possible.
- ◆ That a new Child Protection Policy be drawn up in compliance with *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, Department of Health and Children, 1999.
- ◆ That all care staff are aware of this new policy and familiar with its contents.
- ◆ That the policy document be dated, and a date set for its review.
- ◆ That the Centre devise a clear policy on Care and Control, that all young people, their families and staff are aware of it, and that the policy document be dated, and a date set for its review. (Done April 2000)
- ◆ That a Staff Induction Policy must be developed which will include:
 - (i) Induction into Travelling Culture (drawing on the expertise already in the agency)
 - (ii) Induction to all the Centre's policies and procedures, contracts of employment, etc.
- ◆ That, arising from the above, a Staff Induction Manual be devised, that all care staff are aware of its contents and have received induction training
- ◆ That the Staff Induction Policy and Manual be dated, and a date set for its review.
- ◆ That the Centre draw up a Supervision Policy which is dated, and a date set for its review.
- ◆ That formal supervision be re-established on the timetable.
- ◆ That separate supervision be provided for those who supervise college students.

APPENDIX 1: STAFFING STRUCTURE OF BALLYOWEN MEADOWS



2 Outreach Workers

2 Students

1 Administrator

1 Cook

APPENDIX 2: CHILDREN RESIDING IN BALLYOWEN MEADOWS

Gender	Age	Legal Status	Status of Siblings	Time in current placement
Male	11.7	Interim Care Order	Same family	3 months
Male	9.11	Interim Care Order		3 months
Male	6.11	Interim Care Order		3 months
Female	11	Care Order	1 sister in long-term foster care 3 brothers living independently	1 year

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APPENDIX 3: STAFFING

Position	Qualification	Employment Status	Time in Centre
Director Male	♦ C.Q.S.W 1992	Permanent	18 years
• Manager Male	♦ National Diploma in Child Care 1989 ♦ Post Graduate Diploma in Adult Community Education 1992 ♦ MSC Management of Care 1994	Permanent	5 years
Project worker Female	♦ National Diploma Social Care 1994 ♦ Diploma Supervisory Management 1996 ♦ Certificate in Students' Supervision 1997	Permanent	16 years
Project worker Female	♦ Currently studying National Diploma in Social Care	Permanent	10 years
Project worker Male	♦ National Diploma Child Care 1989 ♦ Foundation Years in Family Work 1997	Permanent	11 years
Project worker Female	♦ BA Psychology 1989	Permanent	3.2 years
Project worker Female	♦ National Certificate in Applied Social Studies 1990 ♦ BA Humanities 1996 ♦ MA Equality Studies 1998	Permanent	11 months
Project worker Female	♦ Degree in Social Studies 1999	Permanent	2 months
Relief worker Male	♦ National Diploma in Social Studies 1997	Part-time Temporary	2 years
Relief worker Female	♦ Certificate in Care of People with Learning Disabilities	Part-time Temporary	1.1 years
Relief worker Female	♦ National Diploma in Social Studies 1998	Part-time Temporary	1.2 years

APPENDIX 4: FEEDBACK GIVEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE

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



Registration and Inspection Service



Eastern Health Board
Bord Sláinte an Oirthir

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 838 71 22

Registration and Inspection Service

Inspection Feedback for Young People at Ballyowen Meadows Children's Centre.



Ballyowen Meadows Children's Centre was visited in late November, early December to see what it would be 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 Ballyowen Meadows Children's Centre

You said that:

- ◆ You liked living in Ballyowen Meadows
- ◆ It's great that your mother can stay too
- ◆ The care staff care about you
- ◆ Your views and opinions are listened to
- ◆ Your family and friends are always made welcome
- ◆ The food is good
- ◆ School is good and you like getting help with your homework
- ◆ You like going out on trips

The things that some of you would like changed

- ◆ You would like a pool table
- ◆ You would like to go out more often with your key worker
- ◆ Some of you would like to be more involved in your review meeting
- ◆ You would like to see what is written about you in the daily record sheets and on your file
- ◆ Sometimes you didn't feel safe when other children were fighting

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

- ◆ When your key worker left and you had no key worker for a time
- ◆ Sometimes it is hard being the only person from your family in the centre

What the inspection found

- ◆ Ballyowen Meadows is a good place to live
- ◆ The care staff genuinely care for you and take an interest in your welfare
- ◆ Every effort is made to keep you in touch with your family and friends
- ◆ The care staff actively promote the Traveller culture in the centre
- ◆ You are helped with your school work and supported in your hobbies and interests.

Some things that we are suggesting

- ◆ That a leaflet be printed explaining about Ballyowen Meadows 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 record sheets and file, and read the bits that are about you

