



Northern Area Health Board
Bord Sláinte an Linnistéir Thuaidh

Registration and Inspection Service

*The Drive
Children's Centre*

Inspection Report September 2000





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REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION REPORT

Centre:	The Drive 26 The Drive Woodpark Ballinteer Dublin 16
General Manager:	Colm Healy The Cottage Home Tivoli Road Dún Laoghaire Co. Dublin
Team Leader:	Salvatore Giangrasso
No. of Children:	Six children
Dates of Inspection:	8 May 2000 9 May 2000 (team meeting) 10 May 2000 11 May 2000
Inspection Team:	Sharon McLoughlin 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 well-being 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 document *Standards and Criteria for the Inspection of Children's Residential Centres* provides the framework against which this inspection is conducted.

The inspection which forms the basis of this report took place over four days, and provides a comprehensive overview of the performance of The Drive 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

The Drive Children's Residential Centre is run by the Cottage Home. A Manager is responsible for the overall management of The Drive Children's Centre, who reports to a Board of Management (see Appendix 1). It accommodates six children (see Appendix 2). The Centre is managed on a day-to-day basis by a team leader (house parent). There are 10 care workers (seven female, one male) working either full-time or relief. There is one ancillary staff (see Appendix 3). The Centre is located in a private housing estate in South Dublin. It is a large detached house with six bedrooms, two sitting rooms, kitchen-cum-dining room, two bathrooms, and front and rear gardens.

The inspection took place in May 2000 and this report is based on the following inspection techniques:

- ♦ An examination of pre-inspection questionnaire and related documentation completed by the team leader.
- ♦ An examination of the questionnaires completed by:
 - (a) Staff (see Appendix 3)
 - (b) The young people residing in The Drive
 - (c) Some social workers with responsibility for young people residing in the Centre
- ♦ Interviews with other professionals, e.g. GPs and psychotherapist
- ♦ An inspection of the premises and grounds based on a checklist drawn up by Health and Safety and Fire and Safety personnel
- ♦ A systematic research of the Centre's files and recording process
- ♦ Interviews with all of the children/young people residing in the Centre
- ♦ Interview with Manager
- ♦ Interview with Member of Board of Management
- ♦ Interview with members of staff
- ♦ Interview with ancillary staff.
- ♦ Observations of care practices 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 by 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 Drive Children's Residential Centre is part of The Cottage Home group of centres and is in the voluntary sector of residential care service provision. The Cottage Home is accountable to a Board of Management and to the financial stakeholders – the East Coast Area Health Board. A manager for The Cottage Homes has overall responsibility for the effective running of the agency and a team leader has responsibility for the day to day running of The Drive. A deputy manager has recently been appointed.

The Drive's aims and objectives are to provide quality care to children and young people, and to recognise and value their individuality. This work is enhanced by the key worker system, which is based on establishing trusting relationships which children and young people can rely on and build on, and transfer to future life.

The Centre has devised its own documentation, i.e. referral forms, care plan forms, review forms.

The inspection of The Drive Children's Centre took place in May 2000. At the time of the inspection, there were six children residing in the Centre.

As part of the inspection process, the views of the young people and their families were sought, as were the views of the care staff, young people's social workers and other professionals involved in the Centre. These opinions were sought by means of interview and questionnaires. The feedback was positive about the care of the children and young people and the work carried out by the care team in The Drive.

The inspection visits comprised three days and attendance at the weekly team meeting. Observations in the Centre included mornings, late evenings and mealtimes.

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

- ♦ The Drive is managed and run by the Cottage Home and provides a high standard of care to children and young people in a community setting. The Centre is only two years in its present location, so it is working at establishing itself as a community based centre.
- ♦ The Centre is a domestic style building situated in a quiet cul-de-sac. There is plenty of open green space for the children and young people to play on, and the back garden has a purpose built playground area.
- ♦ Plans are underway to increase the number of bedrooms so that each child can have a single room. At present, only two of the children are sharing a room. Architects have completed a survey to redesign the interior of the Centre.
- ♦ The first draft of the Fire and Safety Statement drawn up by the Cottage Home for all its centres has been submitted to the Inspectorate. Reports are to be submitted by the Environmental Health and the Fire And Safety Officer.
- ♦ Care plans and reviews are arranged by the staff at The Drive and, in some cases, the social workers. Not all the care plans are prepared by the Area Health Board in accordance with the requirements of *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995*.
- ♦ The Centre strives to keep parents involved in decision-making and to work in partnership with families.
- ♦ The Centre does not have a written policy on leaving care or after care, but day to day life for the children and young people living at The Drive strives to prepare them for adult life.
- ♦ The Centre provides care for the children and young people in a manner that respects their individuality and preferences.
- ♦ The Drive has a booklet that explains to children and young people what it is like to live at The Drive. It is called 'What we do here'.

- ♦ The children and young people living at The Drive are consulted about all key issues and decisions likely to affect their daily life, and their views and opinions are respected.
- ♦ The Centre actively promotes education. All the children either attend school or playschool locally.
- ♦ Good health care practices are promoted, and a healthy lifestyle is encouraged.
- ♦ The Centre encourages and supports children and young people to partake in and enjoy a range of leisure and recreational activities.
- ♦ The Centre has clear policy taken from The Cottage Home's *Child Protection Policy and Guidelines* on issues of child protection. This policy must incorporate the guidelines set out in the *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Department of Health and Children, 1999).
- ♦ Staff have been recruited within the requirements of the Department of Health and Children. Most of the staff are professionally qualified.
- ♦ The Drive encourages and supports staff to partake in further training and development.
- ♦ Staff receive supervision regularly from the team leader.
- ♦ The Centre maintains the required administration records and is in the process of updating and introducing some new policy and procedure guidelines.
- ♦ The inspectors would like to thank the children and young people in The Drive for their welcome, openness and contribution during the inspection.

The full co-operation of the care staff and management is also fully acknowledged.

Items for attention

- ♦ The Fire and Safety Statement must be completed, dated and signed and a date set for its review.
- ♦ Written care plans must be prepared by the area health boards for each young person living at The Drive 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.
- ♦ A written policy on aftercare and preparation for leaving care needs to be included in The Cottage Home Child Protection Policy and Guidelines.
- ♦ The current Statement of Purpose and Function of The Drive be agreed by the Area Health Board and this is agreed in the 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.

The Drive has a clearly written and presented *Statement of Purpose and Function*. This details the aims of the Centre 'to provide a safe secure and therapeutic environment, which supports and encourages the children's development'. It is also to 'enable the children to maintain their dignity, freedom of choice and value their individuality'. The Drive aims to achieve this by 'working in partnership with parents, staff from other agencies and the children themselves'.

The Drive is a community-based centre for boys and girls, and the name The Drive was chosen by the children as it was familiar to them, and part of their address.

The statement of purpose and function clearly lays out the Centre's approach to care practice. These are detailed under the following headings:

- ♦ *Working in partnership with parents and significant others*

Families are encouraged and supported to be involved in their children's lives from the pre-admission stage right through to placement.

- ♦ *Working with children and young people*

Children and young people are informed about all issues relating to their wellbeing, and their opinions are sought in the planning and running of The Drive.

- ♦ *Work with other agencies*

All other people working with young people, e.g. schools, social workers, are informed of all relevant information in relation to the children and young people, as interdisciplinary work is seen as essential to providing a good service for the young people.

- ♦ *Education*

Children and young people are encouraged and supported in their educational endeavours. Education is viewed as wider than formal schooling; it is also seen as part of a daily process providing learning as part of a life experience.

- ♦ *The environment*

The environment of The Drive is detailed under two headings: (a) the social environment and (b) the physical environment, both striving to encourage and provide a space in which children, staff, families and other professionals can engage positively.

- ♦ *Complaints, compliments and helpful pointers*

The Cottage Home has developed a comprehensive Complaints Procedure for all its centres. It also has clear guidelines on Child Protection Policy.

- ♦ *Staff support*

Staff at The Drive are seen as a valuable resource, and are supported in their task of caring for children and young people by written policies and guidelines, and by recognising team work as an integral part of quality care.

The *Statement of Purpose and Function* is available to be read within the Centre and the staff were familiar with its content. Some of the staff were involved in drafting the document through an interagency 'philosophy group'.

The Drive has developed an age appropriate and child friendly document for children and young people in the Centre. This is presented in cartoon form and is named *What Do We Do Here?*

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That the current *Statement of Purpose and Function* be expanded to include the age requirement for children and young people suitable for this centre.
- ♦ That the current *Statement of Purpose and Function* document should be dated and any subsequent reviews of documents dated as well.

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.

The Drive is a large two-storey detached house at the end of a cul-de-sac. There is a garden front and back, and a large green in front of the house which the children and staff use for football and other games.

Inside the house, there are six bedrooms, a spacious sitting room, a dining room-cum-kitchen with a playroom off the dining room and a utility room off the kitchen. There is also a large sitting room called the 'quiet room'. There is a shower and toilet downstairs, with a second shower /bath and toilet upstairs. One of the staff bedrooms also has a shower unit.

All the bedrooms are on the second floor; three of the children have single rooms and the other three, a sibling group, share one large room. There are two staff bedrooms – one small room and the other a large room that doubles as the staff office during the day.

There are plans to provide all the children with their own room in the immediate future, by reducing the size of some of the larger single rooms and also converting the attic into an office.

The back garden of The Drive has been purpose built to provide a safe playing area for the children, and has a climbing frame and swings. The garden shed is kept locked and contains only children's bikes and tools.

There are plans to develop the garage to the side of the house into a computer and art room.

The atmosphere experienced by the inspection team at The Drive was one of a relaxed and homely environment. The furnishings are of reasonable quality. Some of the décor may be a little dated, for example, the carpeting and wallpaper. There were very few pictures of the children or young people in evidence. The room called the 'quiet room' was very nicely decorated, and one of the children said he would prefer if this room were used as the sitting room. This room can be used by children to make private phone calls or to meet privately with visitors, parents and friends, where appropriate. The kitchen/dining room is very much the centre of the house and where most activity takes place, very much resembling an ordinary home.

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That plans to provide single rooms for all children be addressed as soon as possible.

Recommendations for good practice

- ♦ That the Centre maintain its relaxed and homely environment experienced by the inspection team.

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 Drive at the time of inspection did not have a Fire and Safety statement. The Cottage Home as an agency is planning to draft a statement for all three centres, and is aware that the statement is required for registration.

The Drive does have a Fire and Safety Officer who is responsible for ensuring all fire regulations are met and that fire drills take place regularly. Records show that fire drills take place every six weeks and are recorded appropriately. The Fire and Safety Officer also records all health and safety hazards, and ensures that they are either repaired or replaced at the earliest opportunity. Staff at The Drive have participated in fire safety training and there are plans to do further training.

The children and young people at The Drive confirmed that they are aware of procedures for fire drills and actively take part in them. However, one young person (aged 17 years) has, on occasions, refused to fully partake, so staff have asked this young person to sign the fire drill book, acknowledging that she chose not to participate.

All fire equipment is maintained and checked by an outside company called Champion. The last record of a check was May 1999. Fire equipment within the house is readily to hand, but not intrusive. At present in The Drive there is no fire exit on the second floor. It is hoped that a fire exit may be included as part of the plans to provide more rooms for young people.

All medication is kept in the staff office/bedroom in a locked cabinet. Records show that all medication administered to children or young people is recorded, signed, dated and a reason given as to why the medication is needed.

The inspector completed the checklist drawn up for the Registration and Inspection Service by the Fire and Safety and the Health and Safety Co-ordinator in the E.R.H.A for the inspection of voluntary run children's residential centres. There were some recommendations made, and these are outlined in 'issues requiring action'.

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That a full L.1 fire alarm system be installed in the Centre.
- ♦ That smoke alarms be put in each bedroom.
- ♦ That the provision of some means of fire exit for the second floor be made.
- ♦ That all windows be double glazed.
- ♦ That a shower mat be provided for the downstairs shower.
- ♦ That the press in the utility room be locked if it is being used for the storage of cleaning equipment.
- ♦ That no double adapters be used in the house.
- ♦ That a Fire and Safety statement be drawn up and this document to be dated.

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.

There are up-to-date care plans on all the children in their files. These care plans have been drawn up in the last couple of months. The Cottage Home's *Child Protection Policy and Guidelines* outlines very clear guidelines on care planning and the responsibility of the key worker in creating the care plan, in consultation with social worker, child/young person, parents or guardians and the rest of the care team.

The care plans we read were quite detailed and indicated that children/young people had seen and read the plan, and had signed it. These plans addressed all the key issues pertaining to the child's placement in The Drive, and a staff member was individually identified, usually the key worker, to address any issues that may arise.

Not all the parents were involved in drawing up the care plans. The staff at The Drive are committed to involving all parents, when possible, and plans clearly set out arrangements for children to have contact with parents and family, and these are adhered to.

The care plans in the files were drawn up by the key workers, and accepted, agreed and signed by the allocated social workers. However, one young person did not have a social worker allocated at the time of the care plan meeting.

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*. Social work team leaders must ensure that children or young people with no allocated social worker have a written care plan.

Recommendations for good practice

- ♦ That The Drive continues its good practice in care planning and that the Centre be commended for having clear guidelines on responsibility for care planning and adhering to these guidelines.

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.

The review of all cases as outlined by Cottage Home's *Child Protection Policy and Guidelines* is the responsibility of the key worker and the team leader, who will ensure 'that a formal case review will take place twice per year'. This is in line with *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995, Part V, Section 25(1)*

At The Drive, every effort has been made to have regular reviews, in line with agency policy and *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995, Part V, Section 25(1)*. However, as yet, this standard has not been met adequately. Plans are in progress to have regularised reviews.

The reviews that have occurred have included the input of the children and young people. While children and young people filled out review forms, they have chosen not to attend their review meetings. It is house policy that all children be invited to attend, where it is age appropriate (one of the children is four years old).

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That the regularised format for review as outlined by agency policy and the *Child Care Regulations, 1995*, be adhered to by both the Centre and the Area Health Board.

Recommendations for good practice

- ♦ That the Centre continues to encourage children and young people to attend reviews, or continues the format used at present, where the child or young person fills out a review form.

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.

The Drive does not have a specific admission policy. However, under the heading of *Key Worker Duties* in the *Guidelines*, there is a clearly defined role for the key worker in the process of admitting a child to the Centre.

As this particular group has moved to The Drive from the Cottage Home, most of the present key workers were not involved in their admittance.

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That the Centre draws up an admission policy in accordance with the Cottage Home's *Child Protection and Policy Guidelines*.

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.

The Drive fully acknowledges the importance of involving the parents of the children and young people in their lives. The Cottage Home guidelines are in line with those outlined in the *Child Care Regulations*, 1995, Part 3, Section 8:

A health board shall satisfy itself in respect of each relevant residential centre that appropriate arrangements are in place to facilitate reasonable access and contact between children residing in the centre and their parents, relatives or friends.

A room is available within the house for children or young people to see their parents in private, if appropriate. Family visits, for the most part, are supervised by the social worker at a health centre. Staff facilitate these visits and they are seen as a priority.

The staff of The Drive encourage and try to facilitate parents and families to partake in significant life events of the children, for example, First Holy Communions. When we visited, the staff were actively planning a Communion that would include the parents.

As the children in the Centre are Roman Catholics, they are brought to Mass and also prepared for religious events, such as Communions or Confirmations.

Recommendation for good practice

- ♦ That the Centre continues with its policy of trying to involve family members in the lives of children and young people.

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.

The Drive, as part of its *Child Protection Policy and Guidelines*, outlines the need for interdisciplinary work, and states that part of the role of the key worker is to

... meet with social worker to clarify the goals of the placement, to agree the frequency and nature of the social worker contact with the young person and the key worker, and confirm that all relevant case information has been obtained. The key worker shall ensure that the social worker has been made aware of the centre's policies.

The Drive is meeting the required standard in working with social workers and other professionals in a planned and integrated manner. However, at the time of our inspection, not all the children and young people had an allocated social worker, and it was not clear, from speaking to the children or young

people, if they were fully aware of the role of the social worker in relation to their own situation. One young person aged 17 years said she did not want a social worker, as she had not had one for the past number of years.

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That the supervision and visiting of children residing at The Drive by social work staff must comply with *The Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995*, Part IV, Section 24(1).

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.

The Drive has no specific policy on preparing children to leave care or on aftercare. The key worker is the person who would prepare the child or young person for any transition, and would also be the one to maintain contact with the child or young person after leaving The Drive.

The day-to-day care of the children and young people in The Drive is planned in such a way as to prepare them for adult life, e.g. children are encouraged to join clubs and to make commitments and then to fulfil these commitments, pocket money is given to children to spend as they please, but they are encouraged to save and to put money aside for interests and hobbies.

During the inspection, we found, from talking to one of the older residents, that some more work needs to be done in relation to older children in developing their sense of responsibility. One young person suggested that she would like a key to the front door. This could be negotiated with the young person, key worker, manager and the rest of the team.

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That a policy on preparation for leaving care and aftercare be included in The Cottage Home's *Child Protection Policy and Guidelines*.
- ♦ That the Area Health Board comply with the regulations on aftercare as set out in the *Child Care Act, 1991*, Part VI, Section 45.

3:7 CASE FILES

STANDARD STATEMENT:

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

The case files in The Drive met the required standard. All files were stored in a locked cabinet in the staff office/bedroom. The case files were presented in an orderly manner and were available immediately on request.

Children's files contained all the required documentation, including up-to-date care plans signed and dated by all parties involved.

The children were aware that their files were stored in the staff office and that they could ask their key worker to see their files. Some of the files showed evidence of the children filling in their review forms. Staff confirm that young people can see their daily diaries if needed. However, children or young people do not contribute to these on a daily basis.

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.

The Drive places a high emphasis on respect and individuality. In their mission statement of purpose and function, they clearly identify one of their aims as 'to enable the children to maintain their dignity, freedom of choice and value their individuality'.

The privacy of the children and young people at The Drive is respected. Young people confirm that staff knock on bedroom doors before entering, the oldest child had a key to her own room. The house has a portable phone, and children and young people can take this phone to the 'quiet room' to make calls to friends or family. During the inspection, this was witnessed on several occasions. This room can also be used for family visits, if appropriate, or for children to speak to social workers confidentially.

Three of the young people in The Drive have single bedrooms, and three other brothers share one large bedroom. The young people in single rooms can choose how to decorate their rooms, and appear to take great pride in doing so. The children sharing do not have as much private space. There are plans to provide all the children or young people with a single room of their own.

The religious and cultural identities of the children are respected, and children are brought to Mass at parents' request. Older teenagers are given the right to choose whether or not to go to Mass. Children are also given the right to choose whether or not to recognise their cultural identity.

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That more emphasis be placed on the individual needs of children, to recognise their cultural identity, and to actively encourage participation in cultural events.

Recommendations for good practice

- ♦ That the Centre continue its good practice of providing care for children and young people in a manner that respects their wishes and preferences.

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.

The Drive has recently drawn up a small booklet, presented in cartoon form, that is to be given to children. It is called *What do we do here?* It explains in simple language what The Drive is, who will tell you about the rules that are in The Drive, what a key worker is, about contact with family, about expectations around school, and finally with whom you can talk to if you are not happy. There is also a place at the back for important phone numbers, e.g. home, social worker, the manager and friends.

This booklet was not given to the present group on admittance, as they were resident before the introduction of the booklet. However, the children have all received copies.

The Cottage Home as an agency has produced a comprehensive statement outlining the rights and responsibilities of children in the care of the Cottage Home. This document also has a comprehensive complaints procedure, providing guidelines for staff on how to receive a complaint from a young person, and how this complaint is to be dealt with by the team leader. The complaint procedure (not yet in place) makes reference to the 'Child Safety Monitor'. This person will ideally be a health care professional, and their role is to ensure that all complaints/allegations are investigated and dealt with. All the young people spoken to confirmed that they knew what to do if they wanted to make a complaint about something or someone.

All information is available to parents, families and young people. It is also available to social workers.

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That the booklet *What do we do here?* be dated.

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 Drive as part of the Cottage Home agency adopts the comprehensive complaints procedure included in the Cottage Home's *Child Protection Policy and Guidelines*. It also includes in its booklet for children and young people a short reference on what to do if you do not like something. In this booklet, children are told: 'You can talk about anything with all of us and also at your children's meetings. You will always be listened to'. The complaints procedure in the policy document outlines how to receive a complaint and then how to deal with it. The Child Safety Monitor is a key person in ensuring that all complaints are listened to and dealt with accordingly. The Cottage Home has not yet

allocated this role to anyone, but envisages that this person would be independent and ideally a health care professional.

All the children spoken to by the inspection team confirmed that they felt safe living at The Drive and that they knew what to do if they wanted to complain. They all stated they would talk to their key worker or to the manager. None of the children said they would talk to their social worker if they wanted to make a complaint. However, one of the children spoken to said he had made a complaint and nothing has changed for him. This was followed up by the inspection team, according to the guidelines set down in the *Guide to Good Practice in Children's Residential Centres*, 1996, Part II, Section 4. The weekly children's meeting also provides space for children to bring distress into the open.

All the staff spoken to felt comfortable with the complaint procedure, and were aware of the process once a complaint had been made. The staff all confirmed that they would speak to the team leader if they had a complaint to make against a colleague. They felt this would be handled professionally, with all parties treated fairly.

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That a standard complaint sheet be drawn up and used to record all complaints and responses to same.

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.

The Drive places a lot of importance on the right of children to be involved in key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life. This is reflected in their statement of purpose and function: 'we undertake to provide for those in our care by working in partnership with parents, staff from other agencies and the children themselves'. It is also reflected in the Cottage Home's *Child Protection Policy and Guidelines* under the heading of Children's Rights and Responsibilities.

During our visit at the Centre, we observed the children making choices about areas of daily life, for example, food or choice of leisure activity. A children's meeting was held while we were there. These occur usually every Friday but can change to Thursday, with the children's permission. The meeting was well run and the minutes of the meeting were recorded by the staff. The children were offered the opportunity to do this, but did not want to. To ensure that every person at the meeting is listened to, a 'microphone' is used. The microphone can be anything. The day I attended, it was a banana, and only the person holding the banana, i.e. the microphone, can speak. This worked very well and the children were familiar with this rule and used it effectively. While staff at The Drive are aware of the importance of including parents and family in making decisions which affect the lives of their children, they are at present unable to engage all the parents in decision making.

Recommendations for good practice

- ♦ That The Drive continues to seek the children's and young people's views and opinions in the way they are currently doing.

STANDARD 6: EDUCATION

STANDARD STATEMENT:

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

All the children and young people at present in The Drive attend either full-time education or play-school locally. There is a strong commitment to education in the Centre, and all the children are encouraged to attend school. In their booklet for children *What do we do here?*, school is presented as a place where you meet new friends, and a place to learn new and interesting things. Children are also assured that they will receive help with homework, and that staff and teachers will work together to help with any difficulties.

When we visited the Centre, staff were seen to be helping children with schoolwork, and records showed regular contact between teachers and key workers. The case files also included up-to-date school reports.

Care plans addressed the individual educational needs of children, and identified who was the person responsible for meeting this need. One of the key workers has developed an individual programme to help her particular key child address some learning difficulty through a shared reading programme. This is all recorded in the child's file and all the staff are involved on a daily basis in implementing the shared reading programme.

Recommendations for good practice

- ♦ That education is paramount to good quality care and the Centre is to continue to support and encourage the children and young people in achieving a good standard of 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.

The health care needs of the children and young people in The Drive are adequately met, for the most part. All the children have a choice of local GP, and a choice of either male or female doctor. The local doctors were consulted as part of the inspection. They were not very familiar with the children and have never visited the house. One of the GPs stated that he had seen one of the children because the child has slight asthma. He felt that staff were monitoring this well and had no concerns over the child's medical care.

Records show that some of the children have not had a medical examination in over twelve months but presented during our visit to be in good health.

Case files contain medical histories of the children and care plans address the medical needs of the children and young people.

The children and young people are encouraged to get involved in sport and leisure activities. Some of the activities they are involved include gymnastics and football.

The large green in front of the house provides the Centre with ample space for both staff and children to play games outside. While we visited, staff and children were enjoying playing football and frisbee on the green.

There is a no smoking policy in the house. However, the staff and one of the young people do smoke outside the house.

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That The Drive revise its smoking policy.

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.

The food provided for the children and young people in the Centre is of a good standard and of adequate quantity. The children are involved in choosing a menu for the week. The person to choose the menu is decided on at the children's meeting. The children and young people are also involved in the weekly shopping. The kitchen at The Drive is very domestic in its operation. The staff prepare all the meals and the children can help if they choose to. Children have free access to the kitchen or under supervision, if age appropriate. Older young people can prepare their own meals or join in with the main meal, whichever they choose.

During our visit, we observed both breakfast and evening meals. There was plenty of choice and individual preferences were catered for, e.g. both pasta and potatoes were cooked so children could choose either one or both, separate sauces were made, leaving out onions. Mealtimes varied from being a little hurried and noisy, on one occasion, to being very relaxed and social on another.

All food is stored appropriately and all kitchen equipment is of a domestic nature.

A report from the Environmental Health Officer is outstanding

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.

The children and young people at The Drive were well presented; their clothing was of good standard and is bought through normal retail shops. The young people are involved in the choosing and purchase of their own clothes. Staff, however, commented that the clothing budget is quite limited and that they would prefer if they had a little more money to spend on clothes.

Key workers, as part of their role, discuss with children and young people issues around personal hygiene. Items such as toiletries are included in the weekly shopping. Children or young people just put what they require on the shopping list. There are no aerosols allowed in the house, as staff consider them to be dangerous.

The staff at The Drive take responsibility for doing the laundry. This is age appropriate for some of the children.

Recommendations for good practice

- ♦ That the older young people should be encouraged to be more responsible for their own laundry.

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 children and young people have plenty of opportunity to participate in and enjoy a range of leisure activities. The staff actively engage children and young people, and facilitate their involvement in sporting activities. While we were visiting, staff were organising to collect a young person from a weekend away with a club, so that they could also attend a gymnastics display.

Weekly activities are arranged for the children, and two staff members have responsibility for researching and sourcing new and interesting activities.

This summer, all the children and young people and most of the staff are going on their summer holiday to Sicily. This is a great source of excitement for the children, and a lot of planning has gone into making this possible for them. Staff have been involved in fundraising, and the children and young people have been saving hard in order to pay for this holiday. It has also been agreed that the oldest girl can bring a friend, as there is quite an age gap between her and the others.

Everyone in The Drive is encouraged to read. Stories are read to children at bedtime or during the day as the opportunity arises. The room called the 'quiet room' provides space for children to have quiet time on their own to read, listen to music or, as we witnessed with one child, to draw.

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 Cottage Home *Child Protection Policy and Guidelines* details all issues around child protection. These issues are addressed under the following headings:

1. *Who is responsible for child safety in the Cottage Home?*

This defines each person's role in relation to child protection, beginning with the management committee, the manager, the team leader, care staff, ancillary staff and outside contractors.

2. *Definition of child abuse*

This section defines each type of abuse that a child or young person might experience and lists the most common forms of abuse.

3. *Children's rights and responsibilities*

This clearly outlines children and young people's 'right to be heard' and their right to 'the best quality of care'. It also lists the rights of children taken from UN Convention on Children's Rights.

4. *Basic safe practice rules*

These guidelines are designed to offer some protection to both the children and staff by putting some safeguards in place, e.g. 'always let others on the team know if and when you intend spending time on your own with a young person', to ensure that safe care exists.

5. *How to receive a complaint*

This clearly describes how a complaint is to be received and then how this complaint is processed and finally what will happen as a result of an investigation.

6. *Sanctioning (draft)*

The Cottage Home has adopted Discipline for Learning in January 1998. This method is grounded in a more holistic approach to the care of young people and aims to respond to behaviour rather than react to it. There is also a definite list of sanctions that are not permitted and an expectation that sanctioning is included in the care plan.

7. *Bullying*

In this section, all types of bullying are defined and also a list of possible signs of bullying. The anti bullying strategy gives a comprehensive guide on how to work with the bully, the victim and the care team.

Care staff at The Drive were all familiar with these policies and guidelines, and indeed some were involved in drawing them up through the 'philosophy groups'. A domestic staff when spoken to was very clear in her responsibility to report any suspicion of abuse to the manager.

The children and young people spoken to all confirmed that they felt safe living at The Drive and all stated they would tell the team leader and/or key worker if they were being hurt or if they thought that another child was being hurt. (Hurt was the word used by the children instead of abused).

While some children and young people were aware of their social worker, none of them stated they would contact their social worker if they were unhappy.

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.

The issue of limit setting is addressed in the draft document on sanctioning policy. This policy has been directly adapted from the *Child Care Regulations*, 1996.

The Cottage Home adopted Discipline for Learning as a response to sanctioning in 1998. This approach is used as a learning tool and places as much emphasis on positive reinforcement as on the negative

The policy document gives a list of sanctions that are not permitted. In the event of children and young people having to be physically restrained, the staff are currently either trained or training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. The guidelines around the use and the recording of TCI must be included in the Child Protection Policy and Guidelines. At present it is not.

In The Drive, the key worker relationship is of great importance. The key workers take it as their role to ensure that each child or young person understands what is acceptable behaviour or what is not.

Sanctions imposed were recorded in the children's or young people's daily diaries and also in the communication diary. While we visited, none of the children or young people were given, nor needed to be given, any sanctions, so we did not witness the process. However, records indicated that sanctions used were appropriate and used as a learning tool and not a control measure, e.g. being asked to leave a room if they were disrupting the group watching TV.

Issues requiring action

- ♦ That TCI policy and guidelines be included in policy document.
- ♦ That sanctions be recorded separately, not just in the daily diaries.

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.

All staff recruitment for The Drive is done through the Cottage Home as an agency. The interview panel is made up of the Cottage Home manager, team leader and an Area Health Board representative. The recruitment procedure meets the required standard as set out by the Department of Health circular (1994). Garda checks are completed on all possible candidates for employment.

All the staff confirmed that they have current job descriptions. We were given a copy of the job description, and it clearly outlines the duties and expectations of staff. The Cottage Home *Child Protection Policy and Guidelines* has a very detailed section on key working. This outlines the role and responsibilities of a key worker and identifies and defines each role.

The key working role is seen as paramount to the care of children and young people. The document describes the key working role as 'perhaps the most beneficial resource we can offer the child in our care'.

The children and young people confirmed to us, by both speaking to us and by observing their interactions with the staff, that they trust the people who care for them, and that they see their key worker as someone who will protect them. All the children immediately named their key worker as the one they would speak to if they were upset.

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 Cottage Home as an agency has a commitment to staff training and development. Staff are encouraged to seek out training and development opportunities and, when budget allows, the Cottage Home will pay for staff to take up courses. The manager highlighted the need for more money to be allocated to training and development. The Cottage Home has a part time training and development officer who works with the three centres addressing training needs.

The staff at The Drive present as being a professional group and confirm that they feel valued as a member of the team and valued by their team leader. New staff are required to take part in induction training. This addresses such areas as child protection and safe care practices, permitted and prohibited disciplinary measures, and report writing, to mention just a few.

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 of staff in a formal and structured way has only been recently introduced to the team. Prior to the appointment of the present team leader, supervision was either non-existent or of a very informal nature. All the staff spoken to felt that, at present, they were receiving supervision that was helpful to their development as workers and that it took place regularly, i.e. once a month, and that it was for at least one hour. It was also felt that supervision was available to everyone as need arises within the month.

The team leader was also happy with the level of supervision that he received, and stated that he felt very supported in his role by his team members and his manager.

Staff meetings occur regularly every week, and are organised and supportive. During the visit, we attended a team meeting. The team came with a pre-written agenda. This was adhered to, decisions were easily made, and minutes of the meeting were recorded.

Team members are responsible and accountable for various roles within the Centre, e.g. staff responsible for budgeting, or staff responsible for researching and sourcing activities. This gives staff added value in their role and encourages ownership of it.

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.

The manager and staff at The Drive present in a professional manner. The majority of the staff, i.e. seven out of the nine full-time staff, are professionally qualified, and have been working for the Cottage Home for at least two years. The daily routine observed by us indicated a centre that was organised and managed to meet the needs of the children and young people.

Handover between shifts was effective and information was passed on, either in the communications book or information about children or young people was in the daily diaries. The daily diaries are read before the staff on shift begin work. The staff rota, according to staff, met the needs of the Centre and the children and young people. It provides allocated time for hand over, supervision and administration work. Staff are very flexible and make themselves available for day duty as the need arises. While we visited, for example, a key worker was coming in to take a key child out to buy clothes, and another key worker was there to bring a young person on a trip out to see a family member. As already mentioned in this report, the role of the key worker is very clearly defined and is also seen very much as the essence of quality care.

The children and young people display confidence in the staff and confirmed that they knew who was in charge and some of the older children were able to name who was on shift the next day.

12:2 ADMINISTRATION RECORDS

STANDARD STATEMENT:

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

All the records kept by The Drive are safely stored in a locked cabinet in the staff office. The children or young people are aware of records being kept and have access to their files, under supervision. However, according to staff, the children and young people seldom, if ever, ask to see their files.

The records we saw were up to date, clearly written and were presented in an orderly manner. The following are the records kept:

- ♦ Communications diary
- ♦ Daily book
- ♦ Appointments book
- ♦ Daily diary sheets for children or young people
- ♦ Medication sheets
- ♦ Serious incident report sheet

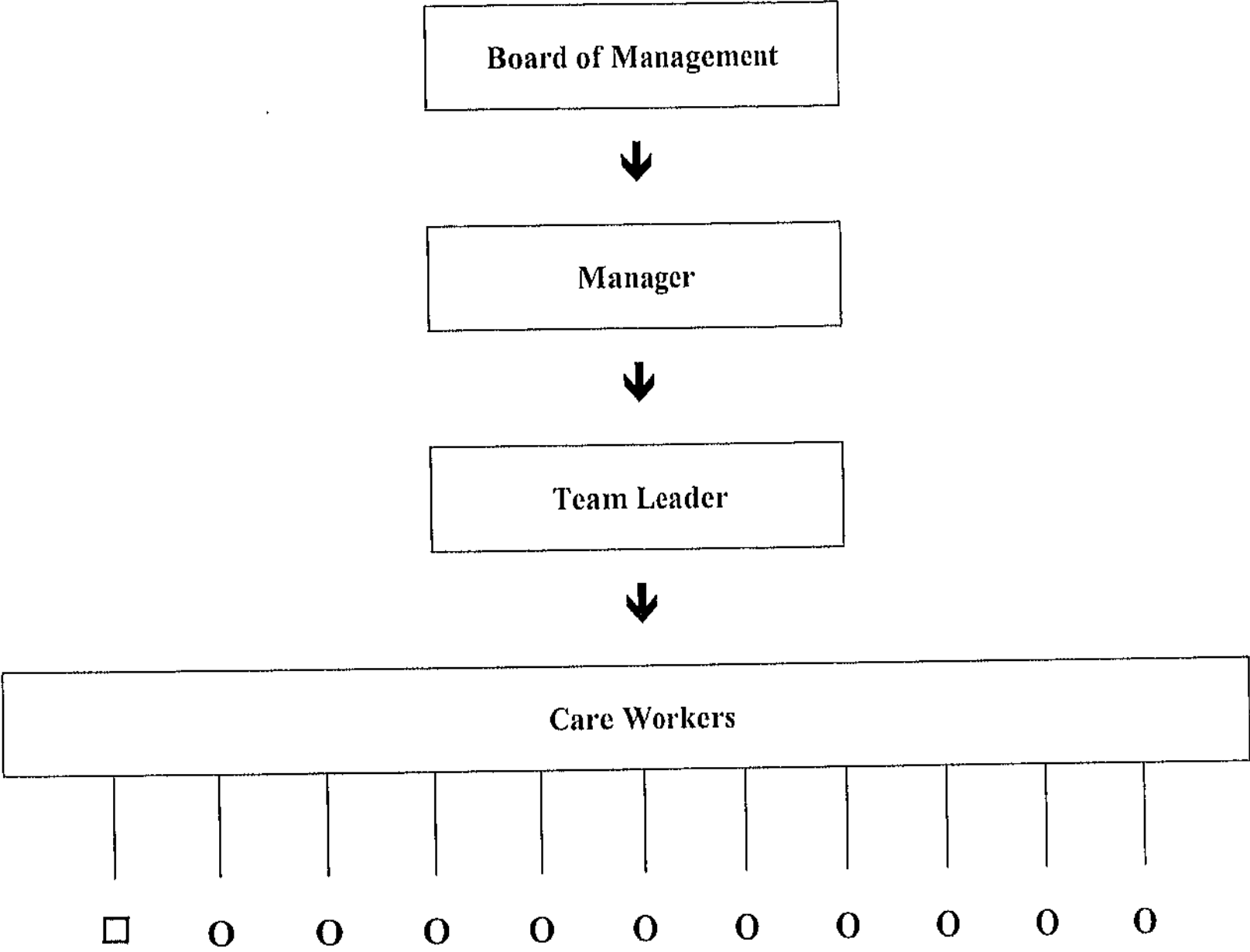
- ♦ Fire book.
- ♦ Children's meeting book.
- ♦ Staff meeting minutes
- ♦ Case files.

Staff have access to their personal files but most staff do not request to see them. The staff we spoke to say they didn't feel the need to see their files, but knew, if they wanted, they were available for them and would have no problem asking for them.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES REQUIRING ACTION

- ♦ The current *Statement of Purpose and Function* be expanded to include the age requirement for children and young people suitable for this Centre.
- ♦ The current Statement of Purpose and Function document should be dated and any subsequent reviews of documents dated as well. (Done September 2000).
- ♦ That plans to provide single rooms for all children be addressed as soon as possible.
- ♦ Items arising out of checklist drawn up by the Fire and Safety Officer.
 1. A full L.1 fire alarm system to be installed in the centre.
 2. Smoke alarms to be put in each bedroom. (Done September 2000)
 3. The provision of some means of fire exit for the second floor needs to be made.
 4. All windows to be double glazed.
 5. No double adapters to be used in the house.
- ♦ A Fire and Safety statement to be drawn up and this document to be dated. (Done September 2000).
- ♦ 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*. Social work team leaders must ensure that children or young people with no allocated social worker have a written care plan.
- ♦ That the regularised format for review as outlined by agency policy and the *Child Care Regulations, 1995*, be adhered to by both the Centre and the Area Health Board.
- ♦ The Centre draw up an admission policy in accordance with *Child Protection and Policy Guidelines*.
- ♦ The supervision and visiting of children residing at The Drive by social work staff must comply with the *Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, 1995 part IV, Section 24(1)*.
- ♦ That a policy on preparation for leaving care and aftercare, be included in The Cottage Home *Child Protection Policy and Guidelines*.
- ♦ The Area Health Board must comply with the regulations on aftercare as set out in the *Child Care Act, 1991, Part VI, Section 45*.
- ♦ More emphasis requires to be placed on the individual needs of children to recognise their cultural identity, and to actively encourage participation in cultural events.
- ♦ The booklet *What do we do here?* be dated. (Done September 2000)
- ♦ A standard complaint sheet be drawn up and to be used to record all complaints and responses to the complaint.
- ♦ That The Drive revise its smoking policy. (Done September 2000)
- ♦ That TCI policy and guidelines are included in policy document.
- ♦ Sanctions to be recorded separately, not just in the daily diaries. (Done September 2000).

APPENDIX 1: STAFFING STRUCTURE OF THE DRIVE CHILDREN’S CENTRE



- 1 Student**
- 1 Domestic**
- 1 Part-time maintenance**

APPENDIX 2: CHILDREN RESIDING IN THE DRIVE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Gender	Age	Legal Status	Status of siblings	Time in current placement
Female	16.11	Voluntary care	Previously in voluntary care	2 years
Male	10.7	Voluntary care	3 siblings in foster care One sibling with father	2 years
Male	9.2	Care Order	One sibling adopted One previously in care One in foster care.	2 years
Male	11.9	Care Order	Same as above sibling group	2 years
Male	4.8	Care Order	Same as above	2 years
Female	10.6	Care Order	Same as above	2 years

APPENDIX 3: STAFF

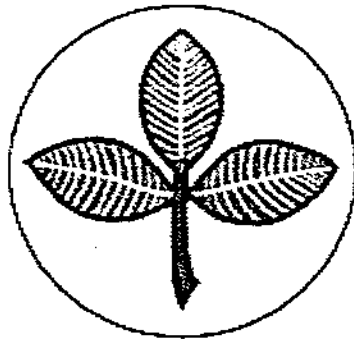
Position	Qualification	Employment status	Time in Centre
Manager Male	♦ National Diploma in Child Care 1992	Permanent	2.7 years
Team Leader Male	♦ Degree Psychology 1996 ♦ Occupational Therapy 1998	Permanent	0.4 years
Assistant Houseparent Male	♦ National Certificate in Applied Social Studies in Social Care 1996	Permanent	1.11 years
Assistant Houseparent Female	♦ National Diploma in Applied Social Studies in Social Care 1997	Permanent	2.5 years
Assistant Houseparent Female	♦ B.A. in Applied Social Studies in Social Care 1997	Permanent	2.4 years
Assistant Houseparent Female	♦ N.C.E.A. Diploma in Montessori Teaching 1986 ♦ A.M.I. (Age 3-6) Montessori College 1990 ♦ N.C.E.A. Diploma in Front Line Management (Supervision) 1998	Permanent	2.4 years
Assistant Houseparent Female	♦ Child Studies and Play 1998	Permanent	9.7 years
Assistant Houseparent Female	♦ No formal qualifications	Permanent	2.0 years
Assistant Houseparent Female	♦ City and Guilds Childcare 0-7yrs 1997	Permanent	4.7 years
Assistant Houseparent Female	♦ B.A. in Applied Social Studies in Social Care 1997	Permanent	2.0 years

APPENDIX 4: FEEDBACK GIVEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE

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



Registration and Inspection Service



Northern Area Health Board
Bord Sláinte an Limistéir Thuaidh

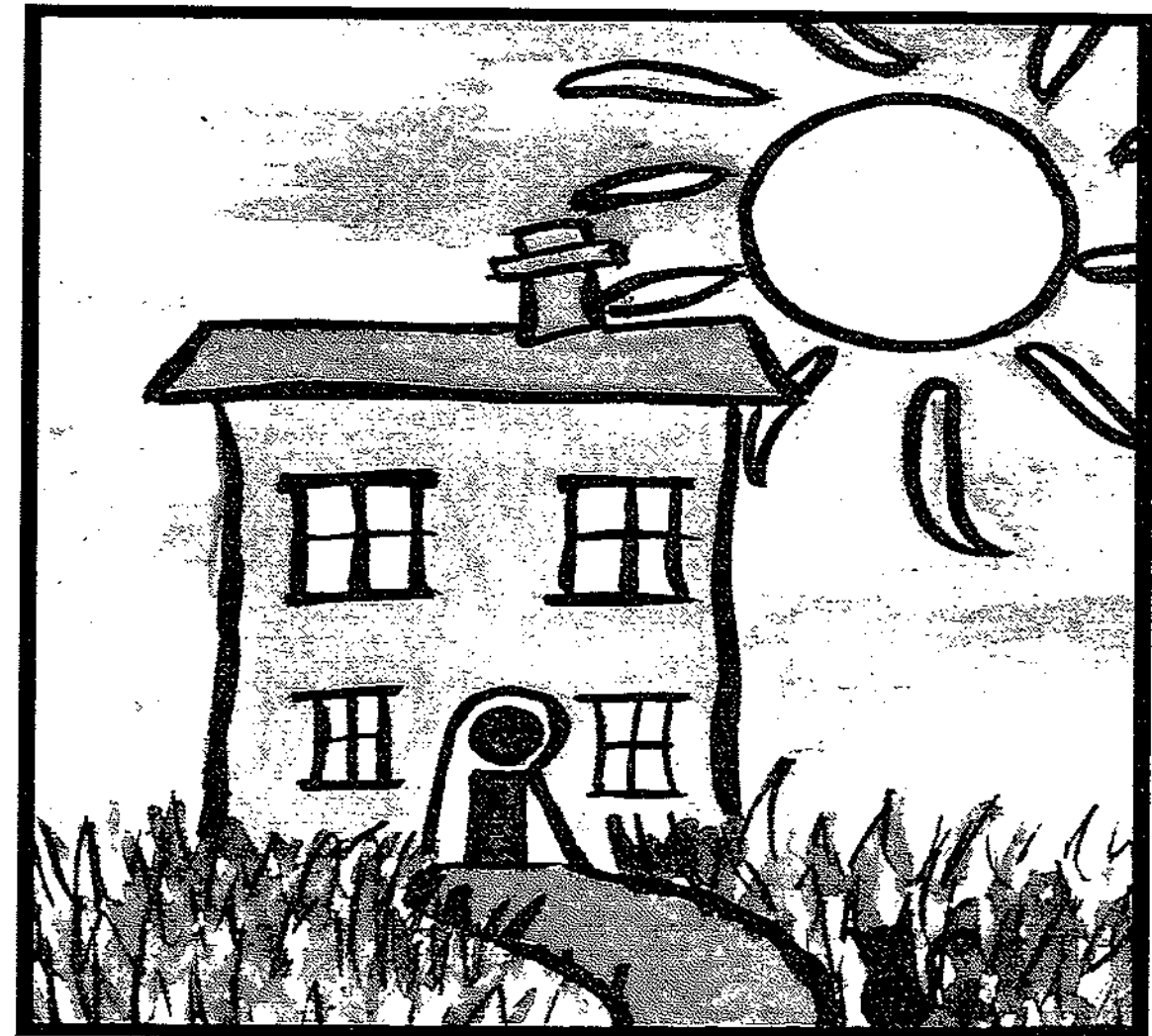
If you have any questions about any of this, please talk to your
key worker or your social worker.

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

Sharon McLoughlin or Orla McKeon at 838 71 22.

Registration and Inspection Service

Inspection Feedback for Young People at
The Drive Children's Centre.



The Drive Children's Centre was visited in May 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 The Drive Children's Centre

You said that:

- ◆ You like living in The Drive
- ◆ The staff in The Drive care about you
- ◆ Your views and opinions are listened to
- ◆ Your family and friends are made welcome
- ◆ You feel safe living in The Drive

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

- ◆ Having to share a bedroom
- ◆ You do not always understand the role of your social worker

What the inspection found

- ◆ The Drive 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 quiet room is good, so you can see your parents and visitors in private and make phonecalls in private

Some things that we are suggesting

- ◆ That each young person has their own room
- ◆ That older young people be given more responsibility
- ◆ That individual choice about your cultural identity is taken more into consideration