



Health Information and Quality Authority

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

INSPECTION OF A CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL UNIT IN THE HSE SOUTH

Inspection Report ID Number: 661

Fieldwork Date: 11 October 2013

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Inspection Period: 15

Centre ID Number: 372

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1. Introduction

The Health Information and Quality Authority carried out an unannounced themed inspection of a children's residential unit in the Health Service Executive (HSE) South on 11 October 2013. Patrick Bergin, Susan Geary and Aoife Lenihan conducted the inspection under Section 69 (2) of the Child Care Act, 1991 as amended by the Child Care (Amendment) Act 2011. The centre was last inspected on 26 February to 28 February 2013 (Report ID 619). These reports are available on the Authority website www.hiqa.ie.

The centre is located on the outskirts of a large town and comprised of a large campus style facility, with four separate units which provide residential care for up to 20 children. The campus included a purpose-built school, a swimming pool and gymnasium, administration buildings, and extensive grounds which were used for various activities e.g. soccer pitches and horse stables.

The inspection was an unannounced inspection triggered by anonymous information received by the Authority pertaining to the care and welfare of the children in the centre.

1.1 Methodology

The inspector's judgements are based on evidence verified from several sources gathered through direct observation, interviews with the centre manager, the centre deputy manager, 2 unit managers, school principal and three child care staff and one social worker. Telephone interviews were conducted with one social worker.

The inspectors also had access to the following documents:

- The centre's statement of purpose and function
- The young people's care plans and care files
- Census of young people
- Administrative records
- Details of significant incidents August/September/October 2013.

1.2 Acknowledgements

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of those involved in this inspection.

1.3 Management structure

The centre had six unit managers who reported to the deputy director and the resident manager who was in place as the director of the centre was on release to undertake a review of children's residential services in the HSE South. The resident manager reported to the regional project manager in the first instance, while the area manager held overall responsibility for the service and in turn reported to the HSE South Services Manager.

2. Summary of Findings

In the February 2013 inspection, the Authority found that overall the centre achieved compliance with the national standards and regulations for children's residential centres. However, the recommendations made related to the purpose and function, suitable placements and admissions, statutory care plan reviews, social work role, contact with families, managing behaviour and restraint, absence without authority and safeguarding and child protection.

In August 2013, the Authority sought assurances from the services director and the area manager that the purpose and function of the centre would be revised to reflect the service provided in the centre. A statement of purpose and function was issued to the Authority on 1 October 2013. However, this new statement was not sufficient to meet the standards.

This inspection was triggered after the Authority received unsolicited information from an anonymous source pertaining to the behaviour management approach in the centre. The inspection was undertaken to determine whether the care and welfare of the children was appropriate. At the time of the inspection there were 10 young people living in the centre and another three were attending the on-site school.

Inspectors met with the area manager on 21 October 2013 and correspondence was issued to the services director on 23 October 2013 seeking assurances in regard to the behaviour management approach and the statement of purpose and function of the centre.

The Authority found that the compliance with the purpose and function, suitable placements and admissions and managing challenging behaviour required significant improvement. The behaviour management approaches used in the centre was reviewed and inspectors found that some of these approaches were not in line with the purpose and function of the centre or the centre policies.

Inspectors were concerned about the behaviour management approach and in particular the use of the 'time away' approach used in the centre. The Authority issued correspondence to the service director following the inspection seeking assurance that the centre refrain from using their 'time away' approach and comply with HSE managing behaviour policies.

Statement of Purpose and Function

The statement of purpose and function did not accurately describe the centre and the manner in which care was provided. Following the February 2013 inspection, the Authority requested that the HSE review the statement of purpose and function of the centre by the end of September 2013. The Authority were informed by the service director in August 2013 that a national review of children's residential centres was underway; however, it was agreed that in the interim, a clear purpose and function of the services in the centre needed to be established.

On 1 October 2013, the Authority received the revised statement of purpose and function for the centre. Inspectors reviewed the document and the inspection of October 2013 was informed by it. A subsequent meeting informed the area manager

that the statement of purpose and function did not address some of the core issues required including:

- The admission criteria of children to the centre
- The assessment process for children referred to the centre including consideration of the impact of the placement on the child and their assessed needs
- The key policies which are in place to support the child's placement.

The Authority again requested that the HSE provide a statement of purpose and function which at minimum defines the current service to be provided in the centre, by 11 November 2013.

Managing behaviour and restraint

Some of the centre's managing behaviour practices and policies were out of date and impacted negatively on children's rights. The centre had a behaviour modification ratings system which had been in place since the early 1990s. This consisted of a rating system which provided opportunities for children to earn points to allow them, for example, to stay up later at night, earn extra pocket money and or be allocated chores. The benefit of this system was most evident when children cooperated with the rating system; however, when children were displaying challenging behaviour the rating system was less successful. While there was evidence that this system was regularly reviewed, inspectors were concerned that it was not effective or in line with modern child care practices. The inspectors recommend that the behaviour management policies and practices are reviewed and this include research into the use of the 'rating system' in place in the centre.

The centre operated a 'Time Away' procedure and used 'Management of Serious and Immediate Risk (section 13)' policies. Aspects of this policy derived from 'Best Practice Guidelines in the Use of Physical Restraint (Child Care: Residential Care Units) 2006 developed by the Children Acts Advisory Board. The policy had been in place for a number of years. 'Section 13' relates to the physical intervention during a time of crisis and the guidelines make reference to preventing a young person from leaving the residential unit. Within the guidelines, this is deemed only necessary in exceptional circumstances when a child is placed at imminent and serious risk by being absent without permission.

Inspectors reviewed the use of 'Time Away' following the return of children to the centre for the month of September 2013. During the inspection, inspectors reviewed seven incidents recorded as significant events relating to five children. The majority of these incidents related to a specific period in September 2013 when a number of incidents occurred together, involving a number of young people engaging in aggressive and threatening behaviour, suspected substance misuse and general disruption to the centre and other young people's placements.

The use of 'Time Away' had a negative impact on children. From the documents reviewed and interviews conducted, inspectors found that on each occasion children were placed in 'time away' in a cell-type environment situated in each unit. Inspectors found that in some instances, children returned to the centre voluntarily following an incident of challenging behaviour. On their return they were then informed that they were being placed in 'Time Away'. On some occasions this

intervention triggered acting out behaviour and children had to be restrained to ensure compliance with the decision to be placed in 'Time Away'.

While the centre had an internal system in place to review these types of significant incidents, inspectors found that there was no learning or improvements noted from the use of 'time away' in these instances. The term 'time away' is used in many child care settings including children's residential centres. It can describe when a child takes time out of their standard routine to reflect on an issue by going for a walk, sitting in their bedroom, going for a drive in a car to reflect on or resolve a particular issue. In some instances the child may be on their own or in the company of an adult. In this case, the procedure was used to place children in 'single separation'.

The physical space in which children were placed was not suitable. There was no furniture, windows were locked and there was a viewing panel on the door. The door was locked or exit was prevented by a staff member. Inspectors found the room to be stark and bare. From a review of the significant incidents in September 2013, the use of 'time away' lasted up to two and a half hours. Inspectors recommend that 'Time Away' practiced in the centre cease immediately and that only approved behaviour management policies and practices are undertaken which are in line with modern care practices and research.

Following a review of the behaviour management of one particular child who was placed in 'time away' in the months leading up to this inspection, inspectors were concerned about the impact of the approach used by the centre on the child. The Authority sought an immediate assurance from the area manager and the service director that the child would not be placed in 'Time Away' again and that a review would be undertaken of the impact of the practice on the child. The inspectors requested that an alternative approach be put in place to assist the child manage their behaviour. The area manager provided verbal assurances on 21 October 2013 that the 'Time Away' intervention with this child would end immediately. Written confirmation on this assurance was subsequently received by the Authority on 31 October 2013.

Inspectors were concerned that the misinterpretation of the policy resulted in the routine use in the centre of the 'section 13' policy and 'time away' policy as a mechanism of managing challenging behaviour. The difference between challenging behaviour and imminent and serious risk was not considered by the staff in implementing the practice and risk assessments had not been carried out. Inspectors recommend that as part of the centre's review of the managing behaviour policy the use of 'section 13' as referenced in the guidelines is reviewed and the policy amended to reflect up-to-date child care practices informed by research.

3. Next steps

The Authority will report its findings in relation to the residential centre to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

A complete action plan by the HSE has been attached to this report. The Authority will continue to monitor the centre's compliance with standards and regulations and report its findings.

4. Summary of recommendations:

1. The HSE South should submit a revised statement of purpose and function of the centre to the Authority by 11 November 2013 addressing the core issues including:
 - The admission criteria of children to the centre
 - The assessment process for children referred to the centre including consideration of the impact of the placement on the child and their assessed needs
 - The key policies which are in place to support the child's placement.
2. The HSE South should review the behaviour management policies and practices including research into the use of the 'rating system' in place in the centre.
3. The HSE should ensure that 'time away' practiced in the centre ceases immediately and that only approved behaviour management policies and practices are undertaken which are in line with modern care practices and research.
4. The HSE should ensure that an identified child would not be placed in 'time away' and that a review is undertaken of the impact of the practice on the child.
5. The HSE should ensure that an alternative approach be put in place to assist an identified child to manage his behaviour and that written confirmation on recommendation 5 and 6 are provided to the Authority by 30 October 2013.
6. The HSE should review the centre's managing behaviour policy, the use of 'section 13' and ensure the policy is amended to reflect up-to-date child care practices informed by research.



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ACTION PLAN

Regulation Directorate

Action Plan for Inspection No. 661

Centre ID: 372
HSE Area: HSE South

No.	Recommendation	Action to be taken	Person Responsible	Implementation Date
1	<p>The HSE South should submit a revised statement of purpose and function of the centre to the Authority by 11 November 2013 addressing the core issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The admission criteria of children to the centre ▪ The assessment process for children referred to the centre including consideration of the impact of the placement on the child and their assessed needs ▪ The key policies which are in place to support the child's placement. 	Completed	Regional Director Area Manager Resident Manager	11 November 11 2013
2	The HSE South should review the behaviour management policies and practices including research into the use of the 'rating system' in place in the centre.	Review of behaviour management policies will take place. ACT's Service has been requested to undertake same.	Area Manager Resident Manager	30 January 2014
3	The HSE should ensure that 'time away' practiced in the centre ceases immediately and that only approved behaviour management policies and practices are undertaken which are in line with modern care practices and research.	Practice has ceased pending outcome of review.	Area Manager Resident Manager	Practice has ceased pending outcome of review.

Regulation Directorate

Action Plan for Inspection No. 661

Centre ID: 65
HSE Area: HSE South

No.	Recommendation	Action to be taken	Person Responsible	Implementation Date
4	The HSE should ensure that an identified child would not be placed in 'time away' and that a review is undertaken of the impact of the practice on the child.	<p>Time Away is not in use as instructed by Regional Director pending review of practice.</p> <p>Independent review has commenced on the identified young person.</p> <p>Schedule of meetings/interviews has been established with the centre.</p>	Area Manager Resident Manager	Review commencement date 13 November 2013 Final Report due on 12 December 2013
5	The HSE should ensure that an alternative approach be put in place to assist an identified child to manage his behaviour and that written confirmation on recommendation 5 and 6 are provided to the Authority by 30 October 2013.	<p>The identified young person is subject to monthly Statutory Care Reviews in line with National Policy.</p> <p>All aspects of this young person's care including management of behaviour are addressed as part of this process.</p> <p>The outcome of the clinical review will inform any changes made to the behaviour management approach.</p>	Centre Manager Key worker Social Worker	15 January 2014

Regulation Directorate

Action Plan for Inspection No. 661

Centre ID: 65
HSE Area: HSE South

No.	Recommendation	Action to be taken	Person Responsible	Implementation Date
6	The HSE should review the centre's managing behaviour policy, the use of 'section 13' and ensure the policy is amended to reflect up-to-date child care practices informed by research.	Review of centre's managing behaviour policy scheduled to be completed by January 2014. As per Action 2	Area Manager	30 January 2014