



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

Children's Home Inspection Report
IN047255
28 October 2025

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1.0 Service information

Service Type: Children's Home Provider Type: Health and Social Care Trust Located within: Western Health and Social Care Trust	Manager status: Registered
Brief description of how the service operates: This home is registered as a small children's home as defined in <u>The Minimum Standards for Children's Homes (Department of Health) (2023)</u>. The young people living in this home may have had traumatic experiences and have been assessed as in need of residential care. The home has a condition on its registration to enable it to accommodate a limited number of children who have been assessed as having intellectual needs/disability and in need of medium to long term residential care. Children and young people will be referred to collectively as young people throughout the remainder of this report.	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 28 October 2025, from 10:20am to 12.50pm. The inspection was completed by a pharmacist inspector, and focused on medicines management within the home.

The inspection was undertaken to evidence how medicines are managed in relation to the regulations and standards and to determine if the home is delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and is well led in relation to medicines management. The areas for improvement identified at the last care inspection were carried forward for review at the next inspection.

Mostly satisfactory arrangements were in place for the safe management of medicines. Medicines were stored securely. There were effective auditing processes in place to ensure that staff were trained and competent to manage medicines and medicines were administered as

prescribed. However, improvements were necessary in relation to controlled drug records, care plans and monitoring the room temperature in the medicines storage area.

Whilst areas for improvement were identified, there was evidence that young people were being administered their medicines as prescribed.

Details of the inspection findings, including areas for improvement carried forward for review at the next inspection, and new areas for improvement identified, can be found in the main body of this report and in the quality improvement plan (QIP) (Section 4.0).

RQIA would like to thank the staff for their assistance throughout the inspection.

3.0 The inspection

3.1 How we inspect

RQIA's inspections form part of our ongoing assessment of the quality of services. Our reports reflect how the home was performing against the regulations and standards, at the time of our inspection, highlighting both good practice and any areas for improvement. It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure compliance with legislation, standards and best practice, and to address any deficits identified during our inspections.

To prepare for this inspection information held by RQIA about this home was reviewed. This included previous areas for improvement identified, registration information, and any other written or verbal information received from young people, relatives, staff or the commissioning trust.

Throughout the inspection process, inspectors seek the views of those living, working and visiting the home; and review/examine a sample of records to evidence how the home is performing in relation to the regulations and standards.

3.2 What people told us about the service and their quality of life

Staff expressed satisfaction with how the home was managed. They also said that they had the appropriate training to look after young people and meet their needs. They said that the team communicated well and the management team were readily available to discuss any issues and concerns should they arise.

Staff advised that they were familiar with how each young person liked to take their medicines. They said medication rounds were tailored to respect each young person's preferences, needs and timing requirements.

RQIA did not receive any completed questionnaires or responses to the staff survey following the inspection.

3.3 Inspection findings

3.3.1 What arrangements are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately prescribed, monitored and reviewed?

Young people should be registered with a general practitioner (GP) to ensure that they receive appropriate medical care when they need it. At times young peoples' needs may change and therefore their medicines should be regularly monitored and reviewed. This is usually done by a GP, a pharmacist or during a hospital admission.

Young people were registered with a GP and medicines were dispensed by the community pharmacist.

Personal medication records were in place for each young person. These are records used to list all of the prescribed medicines, with details of how and when they should be administered. It is important that these records accurately reflect the most recent prescription to ensure that medicines are administered as prescribed and because they may be used by other healthcare professionals, for example, at medication reviews or hospital appointments.

The personal medication records reviewed were accurate and up to date. In line with best practice, a second member of staff had checked and signed the personal medication records when they were written, and updated to confirm that they were accurate.

Copies of prescriptions/hospital discharge letters were retained so that any entry on the personal medication record could be checked against the prescription.

All young people should have care plans which detail their specific care needs and how the care is to be delivered. In relation to medicines these may include care plans for the management of distressed reactions, pain, modified diets, refusals etc.

Young people may refuse to take their medication; care plans should be in place to direct staff on what action to take should this occur. Care plans to direct care when young people refuse medicines were not in place. An area for improvement was identified.

3.3.2 What arrangements are in place to ensure that medicines are supplied on time, stored safely and disposed of appropriately?

Medicine stock levels must be checked on a regular basis and new stock must be ordered on time. This ensures that the young person's medicines are available for administration as prescribed. It is important that they are stored safely and securely so that there is no unauthorised access and disposed of promptly to ensure that a discontinued medicine is not administered in error.

Records reviewed showed that medicines were available for administration when young people required them. Staff advised that they had a good relationship with the community pharmacist and that medicines were supplied in a timely manner.

The medicine storage cabinet was observed to be securely locked to prevent any unauthorised access. It was tidy and organised so that medicines belonging to each young person could be easily located. However, the temperature of the medicine storage area was not monitored and recorded to ensure that medicines were stored appropriately. An area for improvement was identified.

Satisfactory arrangements were in place for the storage of controlled drugs and safe disposal of medicines.

3.3.3 What arrangements are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately administered within the home?

It is important to have a clear record of which medicines have been administered to young people to ensure that they are receiving the correct prescribed treatment.

A sample of the medicines administration records was reviewed. Most of the records were found to have been accurately completed. A small number of missed signatures were brought to the attention of the manager for ongoing monitoring. Records were filed once completed and were readily retrievable for audit/review.

Controlled drugs are medicines which are subject to strict legal controls and legislation. They commonly include strong pain killers. The receipt, administration and disposal of controlled drugs should be recorded in the controlled drug record book. Records for the receipt of controlled drugs were not recorded in the controlled drug record book. In addition, entries made in the controlled drug record book did not detail the strength, formulation or quantity administered. An area for improvement was identified. The audit trails completed at the inspection indicated that controlled drugs were administered as prescribed.

Management and staff audited the management and administration of medicines on a regular basis within the home. There was evidence that the findings of the audits had been discussed with staff, and addressed. The date of opening was not always recorded on medicines to facilitate audit and disposal at expiry, this was discussed with the manager for ongoing vigilance.

3.3.4 What arrangements are in place to ensure that medicines are safely managed during transfer of care?

Young people who use medicines may follow a pathway of care that can involve both health and social care services. It is important that medicines are not considered in isolation, but as an integral part of the pathway, and at each step. Problems with the supply of medicines and how information is transferred put people at increased risk of harm when they change from one healthcare setting to another.

The admission process for young people new to the home or returning to the home after receiving hospital care was reviewed. Staff advised that robust arrangements were in place to ensure that they were provided with a current list of the young person's medicines and this was shared with the GP and community pharmacist as required.

3.3.5 What arrangements are in place to ensure that staff can identify, report and learn from adverse incidents?

Occasionally medicines incidents occur within homes. It is important that there are systems in place which quickly identify that an incident has occurred so that action can be taken to prevent a recurrence and that staff can learn from the incident. A robust audit system will help staff to identify medicine related incidents.

Management and staff were familiar with the type of incidents that should be reported. The medicine related incidents which had been reported to RQIA since the last inspection were discussed. There was evidence that the incidents had been reported to the prescriber for guidance, investigated and the learning shared with staff in order to prevent a recurrence.

The audits completed at the inspection indicated that medicines were being administered as prescribed.

3.3.6 What measures are in place to ensure that staff in the home are qualified, competent and sufficiently experienced and supported to manage medicines safely?

To ensure that young people are well looked after and receive their medicines appropriately, staff who administer medicines to young people must be appropriately trained. The registered person has a responsibility to check that staff are competent in managing medicines and that they are supported. Policies and procedures should be up to date and readily available for staff reference.

There were records in place to show that staff responsible for medicines management had been trained and deemed competent. Medicines management policies and procedures were in place.

4.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

Areas for improvement have been identified where action is required to ensure compliance with Standards.

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of Areas for Improvement	1*	4*

* the total number of areas for improvement includes two which are carried forward for review at the next inspection.

Areas for improvement and details of the Quality Improvement Plan were discussed with the registered manager as part of the inspection process. The timescales for completion commence from the date of inspection.

Quality Improvement Plan	
Action required to ensure compliance with The Children's Homes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005	
Area for improvement 1 Ref: Regulation 31 Stated: First time To be completed by: 20 February 2025	The responsible person shall ensure that the service has a current fire risk assessment in place and maintain evidence that the actions arising as a result of the assessment are actioned.
	Action required to ensure compliance with this regulation was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0
Action required to ensure compliance with The Minimum Standards for Children's Homes (Department of Health) (2023)	
Area for improvement 1 Ref: Appendix 1, Standard 1 Stated: First time To be completed by: 28 October 2025	The registered person shall ensure that care plans are in place for young people with specific medication needs; this area for improvement is made in relation to young people who refuse their medicines. Ref: 3.3.1
	Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: This has been actioned- resident who was prescribed controlled drug on an as and when needed/required basis has been discontinued.
Area for improvement 2 Ref: Appendix 1, Standard 3 Stated: First time To be completed by: 28 October 2025	The registered person shall ensure that the temperature of the medicines storage area is monitored and recorded daily. Corrective action should be taken if the temperature is outside of the required range. Ref: 3.3.2
	Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: Book created for monitoring the temperature of area is now in place and signed daily with corrective action to regulate temperature of storage area.

Area for improvement 3 Ref: Appendix 1, Standard 4 Stated: First time To be completed by: 28 October 2025	The registered person shall ensure that records of receipt of controlled drugs are maintained in the controlled drugs record book, and that entries detail the formulation, strength and quantity of medicine administered. Ref: 3.3.3 Response by registered person detailing the actions taken: Controlled drug record book has been amended to include further details as requested.
Area for improvement 4 Ref: Standard 22.2 Stated: First time To be completed by: 6 March 2025	The registered person shall ensure a review of the transport arrangements is carried out to assess the transport needs of the home; taking in to consideration the number of young people accommodated, and ensuring sufficient availability of transport to meet the needs of the young people, and the service. Action required to ensure compliance with this standard was not reviewed as part of this inspection and this is carried forward to the next inspection. Ref: 2.0



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