The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

Children's Home Inspection Report

IN048883

4 December 2025

Information on legislation and standards underpinning inspections can be found on our website https://www.rqia.org.uk/

1.0 Service information

Service Type: Children's Home **Provider Type:** Health and Social Care Trust **Located within:** – Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	**Manager status:** Registered
Brief description of how the service operates: The children living in this home have had adverse childhood experiences which has resulted in them requiring residential care. Children and young people will be referred to collectively as young people throughout the remainder of this report. Since the last inspection, the provider has submitted an application to RQIA to make a change to the registration of this service to amend the age range of young people who can be cared for in this service. This application remains under review at the time of writing this report. .	

2.0 Inspection summary

An unannounced inspection took place on 4 December 2025 between 9.50 a.m and 18.15 p.m. The inspection was conducted by a care inspector. The inspection concluded on 30 December 2025 following submission of additional information post inspection.

The inspection assessed progress with all areas for improvement identified during the last care inspection and to determine if the home was delivering safe, effective and compassionate care and if the service was well led. Two areas for improvement identified at the last care inspection were assessed as met in relation to staff training and young people's meetings.

The inspection process also sought to assess an application to RQIA to vary the Statement of Purpose (SOP) for this service to amend the age range of young people who could be cared for in this service. This application remains under review at the time of writing this report, however, the inspection findings provided assurance there were robust arrangements in place to facilitate this change to the SOP.

There was evidence of positive regard and a caring approach by staff; they spoke compassionately about the young people, and evidenced a commitment to ensuring there was meaningful engagement with young people who were enabled to contribute to all aspects of their care.

There were no areas of improvement identified during this inspection.

The inspector concluded there was safe, effective and compassionate care delivered in the home and the home was well led by the management team.

3.0 How we inspect

RQIA's inspections form part of our ongoing assessment of the quality of services. Our reports reflect how they were performing 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.

In preparation for this inspection, a range of information about the service was reviewed to help plan the inspection.

A range of documents were examined to determine that effective systems were in place to manage the home and deliver safe care.

RQIA inspectors seek to speak with young people, their relatives/carers, visitors and staff for their opinion on the quality of care and their experience of living, visiting or working in this home.

Information was provided to young people, relatives/carers, staff and other stakeholders on how they could provide feedback on the quality of care and support in this home.

The findings of the inspection were discussed with the person in charge at the conclusion of the inspection.

4.0 What people told us about the service

The inspector spoke with young people, staff, and the management team. There was also communication with a senior manager post inspection.

Young people described positive relationships with staff and confirmed that staff listened to them, offered support and guidance, and encouraged their participation in meetings and forums related to decisions about their care. However they also identified some areas of dissatisfaction. These matters were raised with the management team and senior manager and it was agreed they would address the specific concerns raised by the young people and ensure a satisfactory resolution was reached.

Feedback from the management team provided assurances that a young person centred, rights-based and trauma informed approach was embedded in the service and staff were committed to providing safe and effective care for all young people. Staff reported challenges in responding to the complex and diverse needs of the young people living in the home, particularly at times of crisis. These challenges were compounded by the inability of staff to avail of psychological support services to support them in their roles, in order to best meet the therapeutic needs of the young people. This feedback was shared with the person in charge and senior manager and is discussed further in Section 5.2.2.

Discussion with staff confirmed they had access to good support from the management team and that there were formal and informal mechanisms in place to enable staff to raise issues or concerns with the management team. They also noted an open, transparent, and reflective culture was promoted within the home.

No feedback was received by RQIA via questionnaires or electronic survey post inspection.

5.0 The inspection

5.1 What has this service done to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since last inspection?

Areas for improvement from the last inspection on 6 December 2025		
Action required to ensure compliance with The Minimum Standards for Children's Homes (Department of Health) (2023)		**Validation of compliance**
Area for Improvement 1 **Ref:** Standard 16 **Stated:** First time **To be completed by:** 29 January 2025	The registered person shall ensure there are robust governance and escalation arrangements in place to ensure effective oversight and monitoring of compliance rates in staff training.	**Met**
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: This area of improvement was met.	
Area for improvement 2 **Ref:** Standard 1 **Stated:** First time **To be completed by:** 29 January 2025	The responsible person shall ensure that young people's meetings take place regularly, minutes are recorded in a timely manner and reviewed at the next meeting to evidence young people are receiving feedback on issues raised. The minutes should be made available for inspection.	**Met**
	Action taken as confirmed during the inspection: This area of improvement was met.	

5.2 Inspection findings

5.2.1 How does the service ensure young people are getting the right care at the right time?

A strong commitment to delivering high quality care to the young people on a consistent basis was evident. However there was evidence that staffing pressures within the home were having an impact of staff morale. Young people also identified, at times, staffing levels impacted their ability to avail of activities outside the home, however discussions with the management team assured they were cited on this matter and mitigations were in place. A sampling of the rota further evidenced staff taking on additional shifts, as routine, and the use of bank staff to supplement the rota. This was discussed with the senior manager post inspection who provided assurance recruitment was ongoing and that robust monitoring and oversight of the rota was in place to ensure no adverse impact on staff wellbeing or the overall quality of care.

Discussion with staff and a sample of records provided assurances that staff operated a strong value base, which was young person centred and human-rights led; the use of restrictive practices was considered by staff to be a last resort and implemented only when necessary and proportion to the risk of harm if not action taken.

Young people should receive care where they can develop, thrive and reach their full potential. Decision making with respect of admissions to a children's home therefore need to be supported by a sound understanding of young people's needs, which are then accurately matched to what the service can offer. This assessment process should consider how the introduction of a new young person might impact upon the safety and wellbeing of young people already living in the home, and the potential risks that the group dynamic may pose. Effective and timely preparation can reduce any potential adverse impacts upon the young people and staff; and can lead to successful integration and increased likelihood of the young person developing a sense of belonging to their new home.

The provider had made progress with respect to transitions processes since the last inspection. Discussion with staff, a senior manager and a review of available documents evidenced a clear, well-informed and robust process was in place. Additionally, there was evidence that consideration was given to the impact of a change to the current group dynamic on young people in a thorough and considered manner. However evidence was not available to demonstrate that effective preparation had been undertaken with staff and young people to prepare for a pending change in a timely manner. Advice was given that records should reflect the preparation process in a matter that reflected young people and staff needs. Progress in this area will be reviewed through inspection activity.

Discussion with staff, young people and a review of team meeting minute's evidenced a team focused on meeting the holistic needs of the young people and to ensuring the day to day lived experience of young people is informed by effective care and risk planning. Furthermore, effective leadership and a commitment to staff and service improvement, supported by a trained staff team, contributed to the delivery of timely access to a range of multidisciplinary supports and services.

Discussion with the management team and a review of the complaints documentation assured that a process was in place to respond to complaints and concerns in a robust and timely manner. Advice was provided in respect of recording the outcome of reviews to further strengthen these processes.

5.2.2 How does the service ensure staff have the necessary training and support to meet the needs of the young people?

Feedback from the management team and staff demonstrated a commitment to providing individualized care. They had a robust awareness of the competing needs within the group and were proactive in their attempts to reduce any adverse impact as a result.

Young people's needs are multi-faceted, as such a range of supports and service are required to enable them to grow and develop. Discussion with staff, the management team and a review of available records provided assurance staff had access to and were compliant with training needed to meet the needs of the young people. Where required, staff engaged with multidisciplinary professionals and specialist services to ensure young people's holistic needs were assessed and met. Feedback from staff and a review of the home environment also evidenced a commitment to using a range of creative and sensory interventions to deliver trauma-responsive and young person-centred care.

However, concerns were raised by staff about their ability to avail of the psychological services, to support them to meet the therapeutic needs of the young people in their care, in line with the Northern Ireland Framework for Integrated Therapeutic Care (NIFTC). Discussion with the senior manager provided assurance they were cited on this concern; and that a plan was in place to resolve the matter. Progress in this area will be reviewed during future inspection activity.

Young people thrive in an environment where they have a sense of belonging and have age-appropriate autonomy over their lives. A strong advocacy model was evident throughout the service. Discussion with staff, young people and a review of minutes from team and young people meetings demonstrated meaningful dialogue and regular engagement with the young people to enable them to contribute to their day to day care within the home. Evidence was also available that outcomes, in response to young people's expressed wishes, feelings and needs, were achieved in a timely matter. Advice was given as to how to further maximise young people's contribution to their care in the home.

5.2.3 Does the service ensure that the home environment meets the needs of the young people?

The home was warm and welcoming and young people had been supported by staff to decorate for the festive period and their artwork was on display in the home. Young people were also supported and encouraged to personalise and look after their bedrooms. This approach had contributed to the young people's sense of ownership over their own home.

Whilst there was some evident of damage to the environment, assurance was provided the matter had been reported so that remedial actions could be taken.

6.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

This inspection resulted in no areas for improvement being identified. Findings of the inspection were discussed with person in charge, manager and senior manager as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.

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