



Inspection Report on

Aran Hall School

Dolgellau

Date of Publication

9 August 2018

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Description of the service

Aran Hall is a 52 week independent residential special school and children's home for children and young people (thereafter referred to as young people). Aran Hall is registered to accommodate 20 young people of both genders between the ages of 11 and 19 years. It provides education, care and therapy for young people who have a range of learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders and associated challenging behaviours. Mr Brian Jones is the responsible individual with Mr Andy Pryer-Smith the registered manager. At the time of the inspection, there were 10 young people living at Aran Hall.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

We found that young people living at Aran Hall have their needs met in terms of their wellbeing, care and support, safety and environment. There are detailed assessments which identify and manage risks. There are assessments that identify aspirational goals and bite size steps which support young people to comfortably reach their objectives. Young people are involved in planning their care and activities. Their voice is respected and listened to from various professional platforms. Support is readily available from members of staff who have received relevant training in order to work proficiently with young people and in turn, know them well to potentially identify any triggers in their behaviour to avoid conflicting situations. Members of staff are provided with regular 1:1 supervision sessions, annual appraisals and new members of staff are supported by shadowing experienced members of staff so they are equipped with a good level of understanding and knowledge of what the service and looking after young people involves. Leadership and management are effective and they have a clear vision for the future of the service and a comprehensive overview of the monitoring and running of the children's home.

2. Improvements

Since the previous inspection:

- The service has recruited 12 new members of staff due to service expansion;
- The houses that accommodate young people have been painted and decorated to a good standard;
- Previously unused units / quarters of the property have been renovated in preparation for new young people being admitted to the service;
- The service identified that 75% of the staff workforce are fluent Welsh speakers with the other 25% having some understanding of Welsh and those who could not speak or understand Welsh were encouraged to learn the language.
- The service has introduced Welsh versions of the statement of purpose and young people's handbook.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We did not identify any breaches in regulation during this inspection. We made three good practice recommendations relating to the following themes; wellbeing, care and support and leadership and management.

1. Well-being

Summary

Young people are safe at Aran Hall. They have various platforms to voice their concerns, wishes and feelings to ensure they are listened to. They are able to take part in various activities they choose to follow to keep as fit and healthy as possible. Young people are settled and comfortable with staff who know them well and give consistent care that promotes their health and wellbeing.

Our findings

Young people feel safe at Aran Hall. We received ten young people's questionnaires that confirmed they were happy and felt safe. In addition, some young people's questionnaires evidenced that if they were to feel unsafe at any point or their freedom was being restricted they would inform a member of staff, the manager of the home, their social worker or independent listener for Tros Gynnal. To further support this, one young person commented within their questionnaire about whom to contact should they feel worried "*I would speak to my keyworker if I was concerned about anything or not being allowed to do something*" whilst another young person wrote "*I would speak to Andy about my concerns if I felt unsafe or not allowed to do stuff*". We read within three young people's files they were visited regularly by Tros Gynnal who acted as independent advocates on their behalf. The independent listener further ensured that young people's concerns, voices, wishes and feelings were respected. Furthermore, we read that young people were visited on a regular basis by their social workers and in addition to these were also visited by independent reviewing officers' (IRO) prior to their looked after children's (LAC) reviews. We established that young people were seen regularly by relevant health professionals, for example, consultant clinical psychologist, consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist, speech and language therapist, who were working with them to support with their development and wellbeing. We spoke with a health professional who told us they were trained to analyse young people's behaviours and could potentially identify through any behaviours exhibited if young people were feeling worried or concerned about anything. We spoke with all young

people who lived at Aran Hall and together with our observations of interactions between young people and members of staff concluded they behaved and conversed in a manner that suggested they were safe at Aran Hall. Young people have various social platforms to voice their concerns independently from Aran Hall to ensure they remain safe.

We established that young people are supported to ensure their views are heard regardless of their disability. We communicated with one young person who had social difficulties and observed good interactions between members of staff and the young person to support them to get their views across. For example, we observed members of staff supporting them in communicating their views to us by providing words for the young person to connect their sentences and the young person would nod to agree or disagree if the words were correct or not. Equally, another young person who was happy to talk to us about their hobbies and interest was supported by staff in reminding them of points of references to maintain the conversation regarding a protected building within Gwynedd they were interested in. In addition to this, we read evidence within the manager's records that one young person was actively involved in the reviewing of Aran Hall's statement of purpose and handbook for young people. To further support this, we observed an exchange of conversation between the manager of Aran Hall and the young person involved in the reviewing of the handbook whereby the young person made relevant comments to further improve the handbook and set a time and date aside in order to review the document with the manager. We read three young people's (LAC) review records and found they had been consulted with prior to the meetings. For example, those who had writing and hand dexterity difficulties had been supported to get their views recorded on relevant documents by members of staff who had consulted with them prior to the meetings to ensure their views were captured. One young person commented within their LAC review document that *"Everyone is nice to me here and staff help me with everyday tasks"* whilst another commented *"Staff help me sort out contact with my family, I have lots of home visits to see my family and I like this"*. We found that the information within young people's files and records was wide-ranging but also exhaustive. We recommended that the service considers providing a succinct and short summary of each young person at the beginning of their file as this would allow the reader a quick snapshot of each young person. Furthermore, we ascertained that when young people transitioned from the service, their development tracking from their starting points to the current position was not captured. We recommended that the service recorded the work carried out with young people,

training that staff had completed to support certain needs and behaviours and the therapy models of support the service had implemented be included within the transition documentation to celebrate young people's achievements. Young people are supported with their communication and consulted with regarding their wellbeing.

Young people are encouraged to keep active, fit and healthy. We found within files young people participated in their chosen activity of interests. For example, we read that one young person enjoyed playing football and they were supported by members of staff to undertake this activity wherever possible. Whilst another young person was not as enthusiastic on recreational activities as the other young people in placement but enjoyed playing with Jigsaws, cooking, walking and listening to their favourite music. We compared the three young people's questionnaires with their files and found the information within both matched their interests and hobbies and this further confirmed that information within young people's files was current and individual choice respected. We discussed with young people about their hobbies and interests and some told us they enjoyed going for long walks, shopping for food, visiting historic castles and places of interest, watching the Football World Cup 2018 on the television and chatting to their friends, families and members of staff at Aran Hall. We saw pictures of young people displayed on the notice board carrying out their chosen interests and hobbies which further confirmed that activities took place both within the premises and outside in the community. Young people get to carry out the activities they wish to take part in and are important to them.

Young people are settled, comfortable with staff who know them well and give consistent care that enhances their confidence. We spoke with young people about the staff team that supported them in their everyday lives and they told us they were happy with the care team. For example, young people commented both verbally and within their questionnaires they had good working relationships with staff due to the mixture of male and female members of staff and some being younger / older which allowed for different professional relationships and subject conversations. To further support this, young people's comments within their questionnaires, all of which were complimentarily regarding staff members further confirmed what they had told us verbally. One young person commented within their questionnaire "*Staff get the job done well*" and "*Staff help me when they see I am struggling with something*" whilst another commented "*My key worker is a good listener*". We ascertained within young people's files that members of staff arranged and promoted

for young people to have contact with family members and relevant individuals either face to face or on the telephone / internet. To further support this, we read within a young person's questionnaire that they were happy with this arrangement "*my key worker sorts out contact, makes decisions that are right for me, having asked me first so that I can speak to my family when I want to*". Young people have trusting relationships with staff who care for them and have their best interest at the forefront of the service.

2. Care and Support

Summary

Young people have good relationships with members of staff. The majority of staff are qualified, and all staff receive the relevant training to support young people's behaviours and specific needs. Young people's risk assessments ensure they are kept safe internally and externally and they are actively involved in their care and support management plans. Young people have the opportunity to learn and speak Welsh, although all are from English Local Authorities the active offer of the Welsh language continues.

Our findings

Young people have up-to-date assessments to ensure individual risks are identified and managed safely. We found within young people's files there were current risk assessments that identified risky behaviours and traits and the safe working practices required in order to potentially eliminate those behaviours to manage young people safely and support them in unlearning risky behaviours. We identified that risk assessments were updated when a young person exhibited additionally risky behaviours. After each incident, they were updated and all members of staff were required to read and sign the assessment and other relevant documents that linked to risk assessment to confirm they had understood the risks and what was required of them. Young people's risks are managed, monitored and there are safe working practices for staff to implement.

Young people are involved in the running of the home and have opportunities to learn through working on site or in the community. We read within young people's files they had ample opportunities to develop work-related skills in line with their behaviours and needs. For example, young people helped with the maintenance of the premises such as the garden areas whilst some undertook external work within the community and were supported by staff to achieve good outcomes. Likewise, there were opportunities for young people to, where appropriate, undertake training courses at the local college to continue develop their skills and knowledge. We read when young people worked within the

premises and / or accessed the community, there were comprehensive risk assessments that ensured the safety of young people, members of staff and the public. Young people are involved in planning and making decisions about their lives.

Young people are involved in making decisions about their health, care and support. We observed young people's interactions with members of staff and ascertained they received timely, appropriate person centred care from a staff team who responded appropriately to their needs and wants. For example, one young person who had just returned from school told a member of staff that they were tired and asked politely if they could have a drink, we observed a member of staff make the young person a drink straightaway and this demonstrated timely care. To further support this, we read LAC review records for the same young person, and they had commented that staff were also responsive to their needs and respected their requirements. In addition to this, we read that a young person had shared with staff they were concerned about a health issue they had with their skin and we found that a Doctor's appointment had been arranged and attended. As a result of this, the young person received prescription medication to support their skin problem. Young people commented within their questionnaires they had weekly house meetings to discuss issues they had encountered over the past week. Young people commented they felt listened to by staff as issues brought to the meetings were addressed in a timely manner. We also read that young people were considered individually within staff team meetings. Young people's files demonstrate they are fully involved in making decisions about their lives, the way in which they are cared for and supported.

Young people have access to a service that is able to provide an active offer of the Welsh language. At the time of inspection there were no Welsh speaking young people in placement and all young people were from English Local Authorities. We learned that should young people be admitted to the service who could speak Welsh; the current staff team would be able to meet their linguistic needs. To further support this, we were provided with a document that evidenced 75% of the staff team employed at Aran Hall were able to speak Welsh fluently with the remaining 25% having either some knowledge of Welsh and / or basic understanding of the language, or were learning Welsh. We ascertained through speaking with staff that young people took an interest in the language to the extent that one young person had specifically asked to attend an external Welsh language training course so that they could converse in the official language of the country

they were living in. Whilst young people's linguistic needs were met, we also learned their religious needs were met. For example, where young people practiced their religious beliefs by praying and attending a place of worship, staff supported and encouraged them to do so. We also read that staff ensured when shopping for food, that the correct dietary requirements were purchased to respect young people's beliefs and religion. In addition, we learned that members of staff transported young people to their places of worship so that they could practice their beliefs. Young people can receive a service in Welsh, and are encouraged to learn Welsh to promote and enhance their understanding of the Welsh language and culture and their religious beliefs are respected.

Young people have qualified and competent staff team that care and support them in their everyday tasks. We ascertained from a training and qualification document there were sufficient numbers of staff qualified to care and support young people. Additionally, there were on each shift within the core team, staff who were qualified and a minority of staff who were not qualified and the unqualified staff were supported in their learning. Conversely, there were relatively new members of staff that were recently recruited and they were either awaiting their probationary period to successfully end before enrolling on a qualification and / or were currently working towards their qualification and / or waiting their certificate of achievement. Each new member of staff, regardless of their qualification status, was supported by a qualified member of staff to ensure they were supervised accordingly and had opportunities to learn and practice according to the policies and procedures of the service. Questionnaires returned to the CIW by members of staff commented that they were happy with their work *"I enjoy my work, working with young people, and the staff to young people ratio is good"* whilst another read *"all staff want the best for young people"*. All members of staff were registered with the Social Care Wales and had attended the following mandatory training to refresh their knowledge and understanding; Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding Children, First Aid, Food Hygiene, Autism, Handling Medication, Fire Safety, Autism Awareness. We looked at three staff members files, including one new member of staff and found they contained all of the information required as per regulations. Young people can be assured that staff are recruited, vetted and receive training appropriate to undertake their roles.

3. Environment

Summary

Young people are cared for in an environment that is safe and meets their assessed needs. We were shown around the premises and had the opportunity to speak with young people in groups and individually and see them in their environment. Overall, the environment is well-maintained, homely and clean. It provided communal areas of sufficient size and personalised private spaces. Young people have safe enclosed outdoor spaces they can use for recreational and or relaxing purposes.

Our findings

Young people's accommodation provides them with opportunities to achieve and learn to become independent. We saw there were newly fitted kitchens and appliances within some of the houses which encouraged young people to learn self care skills. Also, there were large tables to allow staff and young people to sit together for a meal and have conversations. We were provided with a tour of the premises and were told by members of staff and young people they enjoyed the newly refurbished areas as it inspired them to cook together and this in turn, supported young people's self care skills. We read records relating to the health and safety of the premises and the maintenance of each house which evidenced effective management and issues being resolved immediately. There was a maintenance team based at Aran Hall which dealt with internal and external issues and damages. Staff members questionnaires confirmed that issues were resolved straightaway "*There is quick attention to works or damage*" and "*the maintenance team are effective and address problems fast*" in addressing materialistic or structural problems. We were shown around young people's bedrooms by the young people themselves and found they were clean and tidy and decorated to their individual taste. Young people told us they felt motivated to learn to cook and do things for themselves due to their environment / home being new, fresh and refurbished. Young people's learning is promoted with the facilities that are available to them within their individual environment.

Young people feel valued and have sufficient space both indoor and outdoor to relax and take time out from their peers. We found there was sufficient space within young people's bedrooms so that they could relax, take time out or play games. Young people had added posters and pictures of their interests, family members and relevant individuals to their bedroom walls to personalise and familiarise their environment. We saw that the sitting and lounge areas of each house encouraged young people to sit together if they wanted and there were communal areas to play pool and watch television or just sit and have chats. We were shown around the enclosed outside areas, the tall fencing deterred young people from absencing and placing themselves at risk of harm outside of the premises. There were different parts to the large lawned gardens that promoted physical activity such as a basketball court, polytunnel, tables and chairs to sit and relax. The environment was welcoming, clean and relaxing and had many interesting parts to follow hobbies and interests. We examined the Fire Log book and found the testing of the fire alarm was completed weekly by staff. The servicing of the lighting was completed by an external company along with the fire extinguishers and these were completed regularly. Returned questionnaires by young people in relation to their environment confirmed they were happy with the comfort and furnishings and the environment that they lived in. There were sufficient internal offices and rooms that were not used often but catered for meetings and for young people to see their families, visitors or health professionals. Young people had access to furniture, equipment and materials that were appropriate, risk assessed according to their behaviours and traits. Young people are cared for in an environment which supports their learning and the skills required in order to function within a homely environment.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The statement of purpose and young people's handbook provides information to best inform them what the service entails. Young people have confidence in that when issues are raised they will be listened to and these will be addressed in due course. The service is monitored effectively in order to develop year on year. Members of staff are assessed at interview stage, recruited, vetted, inducted and supported thereafter effectively.

Our findings

Aran Hall has a comprehensive statement of purpose and young people's handbook that provides an accurate picture of the service. We read the statement of purpose that was available in both Welsh and English and found the information was current and met the requirements of regulation. We read young people's handbook that was available in both Welsh and English and established the information was user friendly and informed young people of their rights and who to contact should they be concerned about anything. We ascertained through reading records that young people had been provided a copy of both documents upon admission to the service and had signed and dated to confirm. Young people are informed and have all of the information to best support them understand the care and support available to them.

Young people know how to raise concerns. Young people's questionnaires returned to the CIW confirmed they were aware of how to raise concerns and issues. Young people declared they would speak to members of staff, keyworkers, teachers at the school or the manager of the home and this demonstrated they had good awareness of who to speak to or contact. Regulation 32 (visits by an independent person) also confirmed that young people were consulted with during these visits and were provided with opportunities to share any concerns. Staff questionnaires returned to the CIW confirmed internal issues between staff members were managed swiftly by management in order to ensure that

outcomes for young people were not impacted. Young people can be assured that concerns are managed effectively.

We learned that members of staff at all levels are supported in their roles. We spoke to a new member of staff who told us their induction programme for their role was robust and supportive towards their learning and understanding. They received twice monthly 1:1 supervision sessions, shadowing experience by qualified staff members and the opportunity to work with different young people to support their leaning and knowledge of a range of learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders and associated challenging behaviours. Furthermore, they had had the opportunity to meet the entire staff team including the management of the service and had discussions with relevant specialist professionals to help their understanding of the service and what the care package involved. To further support the staff members comments, we read their staff files and the information and records within those files confirmed what they had told us verbally. We examined three staff files and found they had been recruited and vetted safely. We found that all the required documentation was in place to meet regulation. In addition, new staff had followed a programme of induction training and worked on 'shadow shifts' before they joined the staff rota. Initial training took place when a member of staff started work and additional and refresher training was provided for staff on a rolling programme. The management team reviewed staff training needs regularly and a programme of staff training was in place to ensure that staff certificates were current and on file. We read 1:1 supervision records for members of staff and identified these sessions were reflective and personal, with the recording of the discussions allowing them to track their development over a period of time. We were told by management there had been 12 new members of staff recruited since the last inspection and this was a result of an expansion in the service in order to potentially admit more young people to achieve their registration. Young people can be assured that appropriate individuals are assessed at interview stage, recruited, vetted, inducted to work and support them in their lives.

Aran Hall is effectively monitored and efforts are made to improve the service. The annual quality of care report provided an overview of how the service had improved over the previous year and what was required in order to further improve the service over the next twelve months. For example, the report identified the need to continue to refurbish other areas of the premises in order to potentially admit more young people so that their

maximum number of young people they were registered for could be achieved. Furthermore, the report evidenced the manager had audited the files of each young person together with their care plans and risk assessments to identify any patterns and trends in behaviours to better understand potential triggers' and how best to eliminate those behaviours. As a result, the service had therein revised their internal working policies in line with the young people's behaviours and needs to drive improvements, safe and good outcomes for young people. We read the following policies and found they had been recently updated and the service followed them suitably; behaviour management, prevention of bullying, health and safety, safeguarding, and admission, discipline & exclusion. The service had commissioned an independent person to review the care work and to advice on potential improvements and a report had been published with findings. In response to the report, the manager had completed an action plan that demonstrated what arrangements had been undertaken in response to the findings. For example, one of the findings within the report identified the need for a balance between homely and a professional environment for young people. The action plan by the manager confirmed that young people's houses had been refurbished in line with the independent professionals' findings. To further support this, we visited young people's houses and found they had been refurbished with the finding of the report being at the forefront of the redecoration and renovation works as we saw a balance between homely and a professional environment. We read the terms and conditions of contract between Aran Hall and Local authorities and found the document required perusal from a legal individual in order to improve the agreement. We recommended that the service included within the document a section for local authorities to sign they agreed and understood the specific working policies, practices and procedures implemented in order to safeguard young people. Young people can be assured that their overall needs are being considered and respected and advice provided to the service will be addressed to ensure their safety.

Young people are protected by a robust system that takes advice from external professional services / agencies. We read the complaints book and found that concerns shared by young people had been managed appropriately to the level of risks and dangers that were apparent. We read that advice and support had been sought by the social services and an outcome had been achieved in order to safeguard young people. Young people can be assured that Aran Hall seek advice from professionals within safeguarding

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

At the previous inspection, the percentage of qualified staff totalled to 66% and this was recorded as a non compliance matter. However, as there was no evidence to support that the breach in regulation negatively impacted on young people's outcomes a non compliance notice was not issued.

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

In order to further improve the service we recommended the following:

- To consider having a snapshot overview of each young person's current situation at the beginning of their working files;
- To consider having a short summary report of young people's starting points when they were first admitted to the home to the present day, so to track their development upon transition;
- To consider having a more specific terms and condition of contract that lays down the working policies and procedures that are implemented to best care, support and safeguard young people.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our inspection programme and was carried out by one Inspector. We inspected the service on 21 June 2018 between 9:00am – 5:00pm.

The following methods were used in order to complete this report:

- We spoke with the young people being looked after by the service;
- We spoke with the responsible individual;
- We spoke with the registered manager;
- We spoke with 10 members of the care staff team;
- We spoke with the head master of the school;
- We spoke with the deputy head of care;
- We spoke with the Head of Human Resources Department.

We looked at a wide range of documents and records and these included:

- Three young people's case files and records;
- Three files for members of the care staff team;
- Other records maintained in the home e.g. fire safety
- Supervision and training records for three members of staff;
- 2018 / 2019 training matrix for members of the care staff team;
- Young people's last three team meeting minutes;
- Annual quality of care report for 2017 / 2018;
- Statement of purpose for the service;
- Children's booklet / guide to being looked after by the service;
- Looked after children (LAC review) documents for three young people;
- 10 young people's questionnaires returned to the CIW;
- 10 staff questionnaires returned to the CIW;
- Quarterly Newsletter dated Easter 2018;
- Estyn report completed 2018;

- Quality assurance report for past three months and
- We also considered information about the service held by CIW. This included the previous inspection report, concerns, meetings and notifications since that time.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Home
Registered Person	Aran Hall School Ltd (Senad Group)
Registered Manager(s)	Andy Pryer-Smith
Registered maximum number of places	20
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	20/10/2016
Dates of this Inspection visit(s)	21/06/2018
Operating Language of the service	Bilingual
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	Yes
Additional Information:	