

School Care Accommodation Services: Glencruitten Hostel

1. Summary

- 1.1** This report summarises the hostel's history including the recent audit and the corrective action. The report also comments on the quality of care and support as well as the close working relationship with Oban High School.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** That this report is noted.

3. The Hostel

- 3.1** The Council provides a registered school care accommodation service at the Glencruitten Hostel. The Hostel Manager is managed by the Service Manager (Children and Families). The hostel provides accommodation for children and young people from the outlying districts and islands (Mull, Iona, Lismore, Colonsay and Coll). The hostel accommodates up to eighty five children and young people which is the maximum number the hostel is registered for.
- 3.2** The majority of the young people are accommodated by the Council because of the distance they live from Oban High School and the travel times involved. Most the young people return home at the weekends. During the winter months the young people from Coll and Colonsay travel home on Saturday and return on Sunday. The hostel also supports pupils with occasional weekend accommodation enabling them to participate in sports activities.
- 3.1** Historically (2008) concerns were raised regarding the hostel and the educational support available to hostel residents. There were also concerns about discipline within hostel and the behaviour of hostel residents. Care and education reviews were undertaken which led to change of management and a closer working relationship between the school and the Children and Families Service. An improvement plan was drawn up and implemented which has delivered a greatly improved service. The improvements are reflected in the satisfaction ratings of the young people and their families. This

approach has continued under the management of Mr Neil Mitchell who was appointed Hostel Manager in May 2012.

4. Recent audit

- 4.1** At around the time of Mr Mitchell's appointment an audit was requested by the Service Manager. The audit reported in the autumn having identified a number of departures of procedure pre-dating Mr Mitchell's appointment in respect to the imprest, fund accounts and payroll.
- 4.2** Corrective steps have since been taken through the provision of financial training for staff and the establishment of clear procedures within the hostel. These arrangements are reviewed by the Service Manager every six months.

5. Care and Support

- 5.1** The Care Inspectorate regularly inspect the hostel and have independently confirmed that the young people are safe and well looked after. This has also been born out in recent surveys of the young people and their families who have variously graded the hostel 'Good', 'Very Good' and 'Excellent'. There have been no formal complaints in the past year.
- 5.2** Hostel care staff are registering with the Scottish Social Services Council and are being supported to achieve the necessary qualifications where applicable. This includes SVQ level 3 (Health and Social Care Children and Young People) for the majority of staff and SCQF level 9 professional development in the Leadership and Management of Care Services for the Officer in Charge and the Hostel Manager.
- 5.3** The Hostel Manager, at times accompanied by the Head of Service (Children and Families) and the Head Teacher of Oban High School, has visited several of our island communities to meet with parents. Improvements to our catering provision suggested by some parents in May/June have been met and no issues regarding the quality of care and support were raised during the autumn visits.

6. Links with Oban High School

- 6.1** The majority parents see the role of the hostel to be to facilitate the education of their children away from home, whilst ensuring that their care and welfare remains paramount within a hostel environment: an environment that should be "homely and caring, yet educational and orderly". The Hostel Manager attends school parent council meetings and provides parents with regular reports on the hostel.
- 6.2** The Hostel Manager meets regularly with the Head Teacher at Oban High School to share information and address any matters arising. Regular contact is also had between Hostel staff and the school attendance officer and Principal Teachers of Guidance and Subject Departments. The Hostel Manager (and keyworker where appropriate) attend a monthly partners'

meeting at Oban High School to share information and seek support strategies for specific young people. In addition to working with the school, other agencies may also be involved.

- 6.3** The hostel team support our young people with their homework and study in several ways: this ranges from additional literacy support such as paired reading suggested by the support department through to making study plans with senior pupils. The Hostel Manager offers and provides support for young people with their university, college and employment applications and liaises with school where required.
- 6.4** The Hostel and school work well together: Joint Planning meetings with parents and young people have ensured we meet the needs of young people. Joint training in the use of 'click & go' has helped keyworkers to identify and support pupils during 1-1 meetings. Senior staff from the Hostel also accompany the Primary 7 Transition visits organised by Oban High School. The Hostel is used as a location for the provision of special arrangement during SQA exams and for music practical examinations.

7. Educational outcomes

- 7.1** All of the young people who left Oban High School and the hostel in the summer of 2012 went forward into positive destinations. Over 40% went on to university with the remainder going into further education at college and one pupil into employment with a trainee position in outdoor education.
- 7.2** Young people from the Hostel were represented at all academic levels at the Oban High School senior prize giving in 2012. This included: two Advanced Higher prizes; two higher prizes; Intermediate 2 and Intermediate 1 prizes; The Cunningham Irvine Memorial Cup for Photography and a selection of awards totalling over 160 hours for community voluntary work.
- 7.3** The educational opportunities for young people staying at the Hostel are the same as those provided for all pupils at Oban High School, the breadth of which can be seen in the Oban High School Area Committee Report on Achievement 2012. In terms of statistical analysis by the end of S6, attainment results were very high with 63 % gaining 5+ level 6 or better (Higher or Advanced Higher) and 54% 1+ level 7 (Advanced Higher).

8. Comparison with the Dunoon Hostel

- 8.1** Both the Glencruitten and Dunoon Hostels are managed by the Children and Families Service. Both hostels are able to draw on the knowledge and experience of the Children and Families Service in the provision of high quality care. In addition to accommodating more young people, the main difference between the hostels is that Glencruitten accommodates young people six nights per week as opposed to four at Dunoon. Both hostels are in regular contact with one another and undertake training together as well as share good practice.

9. Conclusion

9.1 In conclusion, the concerns raised in 2008 regarding discipline and education provision for the hostel residents have been addressed and the hostel continues to work towards excellence. Young people attending the hostel can achieve well both academically and vocationally. The structure and ethos at the Hostel has a positive impact on young people who are being well looked after in a homely environment.

10. Recommendation

10.1 That this report is noted.

11. Implications

11.1	Policy	None
11.2	Financial	None
11.3	Personnel	None
11.4	Equalities Impact Assessment	None
11.5	Legal	None

For further information, please contact:

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