



Re-accreditation Inspection of Living Learning English Guardianship Organisation

**27 Portland Square
Bristol
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**INSPECTORS: Sue Duff - Lead Inspector
Renee Ashton - Supporting Inspector**

Head Office Visit – 21st November 2016 – Kate Hargreaves, Managing Director.

The INSPECTION report falls into the following sections:

- 1. GENERAL BACKGROUND TO GUARDIANSHIP ORGANISATION**
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Education

1. GENERAL BACKGROUND TO GUARDIANSHIP ORGANISATION

Kate Hargreaves set up Living Learning English (LLE) over 20 years ago and the company has grown and diversified since that time. It was set up as an English language homestay organisation specialising in individual one-to-one language teaching in the teacher's home for both pupils and business executives. The homestay families were therefore the actual teachers employed by LLE. It seemed a natural move to add a Guardianship Organisation (GO) as the times of year that they were needed would neatly dovetail the two elements of the business. The potential homestay families of overseas pupils studying at boarding schools in England would greatly benefit from the experience and professionalism of the existing homestay families. The guardianship organisation business has grown by word of mouth and personal recommendation over the years, now supporting over 100 pupils in homestays across the country.

The Head Office is based in Bristol which accommodates administrative staff for the English Language teaching as well as for the GO. There are three dedicated Guardianship Managers based at Head Office to support the pupils, parents and schools. The GO has excellent relationships with all its stake holders and specifically with two long term partners / agents based in Russia and the Ukraine. As further development of the business the company is just setting up some on line English courses that pupils can access direct from their own country.

2. LEAD INSPECTOR'S REPORT on Standards based on Stage Two Assessment Frameworks

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

All Criteria Met

The method of displaying the required documentary evidence was in a comprehensively detailed folder in printed format as requested. It was labelled appropriately and examples printed to back up the evidence provided. A comprehensive IT system at Head Office ensures that the documents are not only securely and logically kept but that many of the required steps in the process to ensure safety and security of the pupils are automated with no room for human error. The system is linked between parents, pupils, homestays, schools and third parties such as taxi companies ensuring that the care of an individual pupil is known to all and arrangements are copied across all interested parties. This by no means takes out the personal element of the provision and the care that is provided to each and every individual under the care of LLE.

All the guardianship organisation's documentary evidence was submitted in paper format as requested in a clear, appropriately labelled and well laid out format making it easy to access and inspect the documentation. The guardianship organisation has a complete set of documents as listed in the AEGIS requirements and the focus of each document is always towards the end user with adaptations made to ensure comprehension. The documents are integrated with each other and work well so that all the stakeholders know what is going on and the elements that they need to know. A comprehensive new IT system has been recently implemented giving staff instant access to required information, ensuring pastoral care is paramount and all elements of support are instantly and efficiently available through the ever growing interactive web of the new system.

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

All Criteria Met

The electronic record keeping allows the guardianship organisation to keep ahead of the game in terms of planning and preparation for pupils staying with homestays enabling the process to be smoothly operated. The homestays all have an enhanced DBS check done on them and no third party DBSs are accepted. Two written references are undertaken on the primary carer and ID checks – all recorded within the electronic system. Evidence of all members of the family who are 16 years and older have got DBS checks in addition to the primary carer. When the homestays are initially interviewed there is good information provided on what individual roles and responsibilities there are within the guardianship organisation so they know who they are dealing with for what aspect. There are comprehensive physical checks done on the property in terms of gas safety certificates, car insurance and house insurance and copies of these are scanned and kept on the system in Head Office.

As the two elements of the business dovetail with one another, some aspects of the combined teaching and homestay side of the business are useful for the guardianship side. For example the electronic system allows for a grading system to be used to grade each homestay so that categories can be worked on where necessary. Less than 5% of those who provide accommodation for boarding school pupils only, don't teach on the courses and academic side of the business which is why it is important in this report to make sure that the measures put in place for the academic side of the business are also reflected as positive for the guardians. Not all those homestays who teach and accommodate pupils provide the guardian only service. Understanding how the business operates and integrates its two key elements together is important as there are such great advantages for the guardian organisation side of the business ensuring a high quality of accommodation. In addition to this, almost all the homestay hosts are teachers of EFL themselves and have a great knowledge of schools, academic content and the cultures that the pupils have come from. The homestays are consequently well versed in all the safeguarding issues that surround looking after pupils and are used to the evidence that is needed to ensure their safety and a smooth stay at their houses. All homestays do online Child Protection training and Prevent and evidence of their completion was seen during my visit. Certificates are issued to demonstrate evidence of accomplishment which are also stored electronically against each homestay folder. There is also a dedicated area on the LLE system where the homestays can log on and access key information. These include a You Tube channel where the homestays can get more detailed specialist training. There is also a safeguarding and welfare induction for all homestays before they start on a more personal level.

As an aside, LLE is accredited by AEGIS for its guardian organisation element but also by the British Council for its teaching element. I have read the most recent British Council report which was provided to me (without request) as they also make a cursory observation of the accommodation provided for pupils. It was also undertaken this term and they observe more homestays than AEGIS does. They reported compliance in all areas although they do not check at the same level as AEGIS.

There are four comprehensive handbooks that include all information that the four key stakeholders need to know; Schools, Pupils, Parents and Homestays. These include all the required telephone numbers and all the details needed for compliance. However they are working documents and include all sorts of peripheral details that the end user might want. The pupil handbook specifically has lots of photos and quotes from others who have been with LLE. They are suitably appropriate for the end user and written with a sensitive linguistic approach.

The Head Office acts as the Educational guardian and they work closely with all parties. The office communicates through a variety of means, often text, skype and emails which are all recorded through the database and thus provide a succinct and comprehensive account of all the work undertaken with a particular pupil. Safe Care plans are provided to the homestays which includes some general information about the family but also their school and contacts and any relevant medical data that the homestay would need to know.

There is a comprehensive method for recording homestay visits which are all recorded on the electronic system. There are also specific forms for incidents and accidents which include pupil illness and everything is very detailed in its inclusion. The relationship with

parents is excellent and the office is able to provide some native language speakers to communicate where required with parents. However, much of the communication is undertaken with two specific agents who work extremely closely with LLE and together they provide a bespoke service to each family.

There is a complaints procedure in place and the Managing Director was able to show me evidence of how she had dealt with a few concerns from parents. However, they could not really be deemed complaints in the accurate sense of the word.

The guardian organisation work closely with schools particularly on the travel arrangements area and there is also a comprehensive handbook for schools. They are also on the e-mailing list for over 65 schools so they receive all the information almost on an hourly basis of what is happening at the school. They provide anything that the parents or pupils ask for, within reason, but will always check with parents if there is a direct request from a pupil. An example provided was a pupil asking them to organise a UK mobile phone to be delivered to school. They frequently arrange for birthday cakes to be delivered to school at appropriate times. Details of the 24/7 emergency contact is prevalent in all communication and the detailed schools handbook. There were some lovely photographs showing parents of pupils having supper with the homestay families when they dropped their pupils off at their homes. Parents often have some rather strange requests and evidence was seen of the flexibility of the guardian organisation in meeting some of these demands.

The travel arrangements are meticulously organised and over the weekend the Duty Manager of the guardian organisation (which is operated on a rota basis) has a travel pack which includes all the whereabouts, arrangements and contact details of every pupil that is on the move that weekend. This enables there to be someone at the end of the phone with knowledge of what should be happening at any time. This service is much appreciated by the stakeholders. The general record keeping is excellent with everything being kept in e-folders and all in relational areas that allow automated systems to take over some of the detail allowing the staff to get on with more of the pastoral care and support.

LLE has an excellent HR system which allows the Managing Director to easily keep comprehensive and very detailed HR records. An external system called myhr.com supports the process and the ability of the MD to effectively support and look after their staff and ensures that there is a very low staff turnover. I would not normally mention this in a report but I do feel that the quality of the employment benefits that the company provides its staff ensures the retention of good staff therefore the service that it provides to its stakeholders is continuous and of an excellent quality. The system records training, holidays, PDRs, appraisals and particularly how the company can support its staff to progress as they would wish. They also provide additional benefits such as free yoga which is run at the office on a weekly basis!

The monitoring of individual pupils is comprehensive and alterations are made to accommodate individual needs. The organisation does not undertake any private fostering but does fully understand what they should do if they chose to recruit a pupil in these circumstances. They also have all the appropriate legal documents with Insurance and Data protection.

2. INFORMATION TO THE HOMESTAY

All Criteria met

There is good communication between the homestays and the guardian organisation. Because almost all of the homestays are also the teachers that the company uses for its home teaching courses they are well versed in the requirements of looking after pupils. They are also very knowledgeable about schools and how they work and know the systems that the pupils are going to be entering so are able to support them even more. The comprehensive homestay handbook that is provided gives any back up information that any member of the homestay can get information from it if their host needs it. The contract between the homestay and the guardian organisation covers everything that it needs to and is all e-signed using a company which provides this service. This method ensures that both parties have the detail to hand electronically and the homestay isn't relying on pieces of paper.

There are additional stipulations that the guardian organisation place on the arrangements that are over and above what the minimum AEGIS expectations are. For example, they only permit two years difference in age of pupils in one homestay if they are placing two pupils in the same house. Pupils are never required to share a room. Everything that is required is within the contract and / or the homestay handbook but as the homestays are also teachers, their professional understanding of most of the issues and situations is good. The student care folder that is provided to the homestay is comprehensive and the integrated IT system allows reports to be run on any pupil which provides up to date information and if anything has changed since the last issue of a plan. Also reports can be run by subject as well as by pupil so that the guardian organisation can collectively organise aspects if necessary.

The host families don't have direct contact with the parents of the pupils as the communication is undertaken at head office. If parents would like to meet homestay families then that can be arranged and is encouraged but they don't have parental details of everyone who comes to stay with them as a matter of course.

3. INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOMESTAY

All criteria met

Comprehensive information is gathered about the homestay, over and above the AEGIS minimum requirements. This is because almost all of their main carers within the homestays are teachers on LLE's academic programme so they obviously need more detailed professional information about them as well. Also, the pupils engaged on their academic programme will be living and working within the home so it is essential that the details they gather are correct. DBS checks are undertaken on all host family residents aged sixteen and over and all the files are maintained and recorded within the electronic system. The contracts and details of homestay training as well as all the details of insurance (car and home), gas certificates and other mandatory items are all kept on the files at Head Office. They also include information about pets as whilst there are some who do not like animals there are families who specifically request that there should be animals as it makes them feel more at home, particularly for the younger pupils.

4. INFORMATION FROM THE GUARDIANSHIP ORGANISATION TO THE PARENTS

All criteria met

The agreement between the parents and guardianship organisation is clearly written and covers all the AEGIS requirements. The contracts are all undertaken through a specialised organisation called 'signable.co.uk' which allows contracts to be signed by the paragraph on line through their system. This is particularly useful when working with families on the other side of the world. The signed copies are kept on the pupils' e-files in head office. There is a comprehensive parents' handbook which covers all aspects that parents would want to know. Parents are copied on all the details relating to their children, travel arrangements or any other engagements that they are involved in. The integrated electronic system allows this to happen automatically so there is no chance of them being missed out of the loop. There is also a good selection of foreign languages spoken at head office which helps both parents and pupils with communication during their initial discussions with the office.

5. INFORMATION FROM PARENTS TO THE GUARDIANSHIP ORGANISATION

All criteria met

All registration documentation is collected, collated and stored securely. As detailed in the AEGIS framework, the organisation is thorough in its demands that parents provide all the information that is asked for. They include a photograph of the pupil and the profiles that the guardian organisation put together are really comprehensive. As they know their homestays well as most of them are teachers and also have full and detailed profiles held, it allows a more effective match to be made of pupil and homestay as the details gathered on both are over and above the minimum required. The homestays do not get the details of the parents as a matter of course as the communication should be through head office and not with the individual homestays. There are deviations from this if requested by both parties. Much of the communication from parents comes through the agents depending on the level of English held by the parents of the pupils. The guardian organisation is clear about what they pass onto the school and what should come direct from parents and there are clear delineations. Parents are however encouraged by the guardian organisation to provide all the information needed to ensure the safe care of their child but they are not always as forthcoming as they ought to be.

6. INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE STUDENT BY THE GUARDIANSHIPSHIP ORGANISATION

All criteria met

The pupils are all provided with a comprehensive pupil handbook which covers the generic things that anyone would need to know. There is also a pupil agreement called a code of conduct that is very specific about the 'do's and don'ts' of life in the homestay which they are required to sign and is gone through with the pupil. Basics such as respect, timely attendance, photography, inform if ill and many other areas are covered in it. In addition there is a Home File that is provided by the guardian organisation for the homestay with the pupil as the end user. It is for the homestay to complete it with specific details relating to the home and local area such as wifi codes, access to parts of the house, meal information, laundry arrangements, local transport information and many more areas that would be

useful for a new pupil. It also includes all the numbers for emergencies; both the guardian organisation office details and their 24/7 contact phone details as well as 999.

7. INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE SCHOOL BY THE GUARDIANSHIP ORGANISATION

All criteria met

There is a school handbook provided by the guardianship organisation to the school and then there is a framework for the particular individuals at a school. E.g. details of what the matron would need to know as they are often the main transport arrangers within a school. The travel arrangements are meticulously organised and all taxi companies have travel service agreements which ensure safeguarding is at the forefront of any decisions made. The taxi companies sometimes just drop off / collect but can also help with check-in and can accompany the pupils (usually younger ones) to the departure gates. The professional understanding of boarding schools and the environment that the pupils are living in by the guardianship organisation has helped the business become a well-established and respected operator in this sector.

8. CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SCHOOL

All criteria met

There was detailed evidence on the day of my visit of two-way correspondence via email which made it apparent that the guardianship organisation office and staff have established an excellent rapport with the staff at the various schools. Pastoral care and its management between the guardianship organisation and school is always at the forefront of the communication and the care surrounding each pupil is comprehensive. The relationship works best once the schools have given the guardianship organisation the appropriate names of the contacts for each pupil, their house, housemaster / mistress, matron etc. This enables the office to ensure they are always dealing with the most applicable individual in any school.

3. SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENT

LEAD INSPECTOR: SUE DUFF

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT FULL ACCREDITATION

STATEMENT SUMMARISING THE REASONS FOR JUDGEMENT

This organisation has been running for over 20 years with the Managing Director having been involved with the teaching and care of overseas pupils for many years before that. The careful management of the diversification of the business into a guardianship organisation has been successful with the growth occurring through word of mouth and personal recommendation. The two sides of the business are mutually beneficial both in practice and in organisation. Almost all of the homestays used have a trained ESL teacher as the Lead which is incredibly fortuitous for the pupil as they understand the linguistic and cultural difficulties the young people in their care may face. LLE now looks after over 100 pupils in homestays across the country.

The electronic system that the organisation now uses ensures that the best possible care can be taken of the pupils as much of the logistical side of the business is now automated freeing up time for the important areas of safeguarding and pastoral care ensuring that all are happy. The communication with all stakeholders is excellent and undertaken according to what has been requested by the parents. Although it is an automated system it permits flexibility for each and every pupil and the organisation prides itself on the service it provides the individual, particularly in placing them with a suitable and appropriate homestay where they will mutually benefit.

The comprehensive coverage by the Supporting Inspector produced feedback from the stakeholders that was overwhelmingly positive in meeting its aims. A wider range of interviews would always be a positive addition with larger guardianship organisations but the fact that the homestays were so engaging and were able to provide such comprehensive input into the interviews was an excellent example of how well everyone works together. Relationships at every level of the organisation are important to the Managing Director from the original agent abroad to the pupil within an individual homestay. The detail that goes into it all is paramount in ensuring these relationships remain positive ones.

All documentation and policies are well presented and clearly written with the end user in mind and have all the required detail in them together with helpful additional information. The file for inspection was meticulous in its arrangement and many random checks on all electronic records evidenced that the excellent practice permeated through the organisation.

Safeguarding is understood throughout the guardianship organisation and is evident in all of its paperwork and dealings with various stakeholders. Office staff, and homestay 16+ family members in homestays are all included in the comprehensive checking.

4. CONCLUSION

Living Learning English is a good organisation and provides an excellent service to overseas pupils. On the basis of visits to Head Office, various stakeholders, questionnaires, paperwork evidenced, both electronically and written, this guardianship organisation is fully compliant with the AEGIS framework.

Accreditation was confirmed by the AEGIS Board of Trustees on the 18th January 2017.

The next re-accreditation inspection will be due in December 2020.

Living Learning English may use any statements from the summary of judgement contained in this report within their marketing or publicity materials, but such statements must be placed in context, stated in full and include reference to the AEGIS accreditation inspection report December 2016.