

## Prison Visits – HMP&YOI Swinfen Hall

### Summary of Harris Review Visit

This summary reflects the experience and observation of the members of the Harris Review that visited the establishment on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014. They do not reflect changes that have happened since that date.

### **Background**

Type of prison	HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall is a Category C training prison taking young adults aged 18 to 25 serving three and a half years up to and including life. It has recently undergone significant expansion.
Operational Capacity	654
Details of relevant self-inflicted deaths	1 in scope
	29th June 2009
Governor	Teresa Clark
Harris Review on Visit	Dinesh Maganty, Richard Shepherd, Stephen Cragg, Deborah Browne
Date of Visit	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2014

### Meeting with Governor

- Swinfen Hall provides an integrated regime for 18-25 year olds. Rather than accepting new 21-24 year olds, the prison would prefer to hold on to their existing 21 year olds rather than moving them to adult institutions.
- Teresa Clark felt that having young adults over 21 accepted is an issue. Adults don't like coming in – it looks and feels like a YOI to them and they prefer to be in a prison. Because young adults are not categorised until they are 21, they find it very difficult if, when they are categorised at 21, they are moved to a Category B prison which is very different to a YOI regime.
- Swinfen Hall does not have a separate sex offender wing or a vulnerable person's wing. Sex offenders are integrated, unless their 'cover is blown'. Usually this works well, although sometimes it gets uncomfortable.
- There are sometimes problems with Family Visits because many of the young adults housed at the Prison live outside the local area. They

can 'accumulate visits', but dealing with this can be difficult because of population pressures.

- Swinfen hall has mostly single cells, although there is some doubling.
- There is some particular work being done with Personality Disorder young adults with Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust.
- There are a number of the inmates who are prolific self harmers at Swinfen Hall. It was noted that self harm went up over the summer months.
- Teresa gave an example of a young adult on Sex Offender Treatment programme. He got to a difficult point in his treatment this summer, after being at Swinfen Hall for a long time. He has been on constant supervision all summer, and staff were finding it difficult to get him through this difficult point.
- Teresa feels that constant supervision isn't effective. The focus is on people who want you to focus on them. Perhaps while they are doing that they are not noticing people who are really distressed. Some prisoners are manipulating staff so that they have someone there with them.
- Prison staff are very concerned about the opinion of mental health staff. If someone says 'needs to be on constant supervision', staff are afraid to take them off. They know that the consequences of that decision are that ultimately the staff member could be asked to stand in a coroner's court and asked to explain their decision. Staff at Swinfen have already been through a difficult time at a coroner's inquest.
- Teresa feels the new IEP scheme works well. It gets the idea out that behaviours will be tackled.
- Swinfen is also working on transitions. They have a number of prisoners who come up from the under 18 estate. Not so long ago an 18 year old who had just transferred tried to commit suicide. At that age, they are very young and haven't got their heads around their sentence. They don't look any different to other prisoners, however they can really struggle. As a very young adult, they could be facing a very lengthy sentence.
- Stephen Cragg pointed out that the IMB report called for an improvement in take up of classes, saying that they were only at 63% capacity. Teresa felt it was difficult to monitor progress with education and said that providers are not good at self-reporting. There seems to have been an improvement – the latest OFSTED report is good.
- Teresa was concerned about purposeful activity when she was appointed as governor. The budget had been cut, but she has since negotiated further funding. However, more still needs to be done around teaching and vocational training. Swinfen Hall is currently gearing up for more work contracts, as well as procuring some new contracts. But it is difficult to get these contracts. Getting more prisoners in to work is important.
- Swinfen Hall has more staff now, but there are still shortages. Immediately following benchmarking, the number of staff the institution had dropped from 343 to 301, but then was negotiated back up to 311. Teresa thinks staff numbers on the wings is ok. It is a bit tight, but they are working hard to manage with it. There is a shortage at management level.

- Following benchmarking, they have moved to a full time day – it had been a half day. They had association in the afternoon instead of the evening. However, there are still about 30% locked up during the day. They are trying to improve this. Sometimes it is not about staffing, it is sometimes about prisoners resisting going to work.
- More is being done now to identify Care Leavers, but at the moment it is still difficult to identify who they are. Many don't want to be identified in that way.
- As with most health issues, Teresa feels that resources available for health and mental health depend on where you are placed in custody. Sometimes there are resources, and sometimes there are not. Counselling services are funded through the health services, but Teresa feels that something more like psychotherapy might be more appropriate in some cases. These services are good for those involved, but they are only very small numbers.
- Teresa felt that the Chaplaincy service in the prison is excellent. The multi-disciplinary team try to pick up the 'quiet' young people that others miss.

### **Visit to Chaplaincy**

- Chaplaincy is brought in whenever it is felt it would be useful. It tends to be pastoral rather than faith based support, and staff, whatever their faith, they all receive training for this.
- Notes taken by members of the Chaplaincy team on the wing about when things are not quite right are always followed up. Detailed Chaplaincy notebooks and a journal are kept. Information is logged in this way, and some of it is put on CNOMIS. Chaplaincy staff also participate in ACCT reviews when called on to do so by staff.
- The weekly Safer Custody meeting includes a representative from chaplaincy as well as other staff that work with the prisoners.
- Chaplaincy are involved throughout custodial sentence. They visit first night prisoners and also look to establish links with the community, local to where the young adult will live before they leave the prison.
- Good links with community, with over 100 volunteers involved. Some volunteers visit vulnerable young adults who might not have other visitors.
- There is an anonymous direct 'safety line', which anyone can use to call into the prison, but it tends to be used more for safety rather than for SID or self harm concerns.

### **B-wing First Night and Induction Unit**

- Because of population pressures, the first night wing is also a residential wing; however, other occupants are always chosen with care.
- Staff felt that a lot is known about how to make a ligature, and if they want to do it, it is sometimes difficult for staff to do anything about it.
- People are put on ACCT for talking about self-harming or for actually self-harming, but not for quietly thinking about it.

- There was a discussion about the implications of putting people on ACCT because of their mood rather than because of talk about self-harm.

### **Complex Needs Unit – Dr Lad**

- Dr Lad talked to us about the new D & E wings that are being re-opened in October to deal specifically with complex needs. This unit will have extra officers (normally it is one staff member to 30 prisoners; here it will be 1 to 15). The unit is jointly funded by NOMS and NHS England to focus on high risk individuals.
- They will be supported in a way so they don't need to be put on ACCT – if the environment is good enough, they shouldn't need to be on ACCT. They will all have a support plan to set out how this will work. Sometimes ACCT is opened for the wrong people.
- Dr Lad would like to see a review of policy on how and when to open ACCT.
- The wing will be to provide extra support for those with complex needs – but they need to focus on long term prisoners (4 yrs to lifers). If someone does not have a bed on the wing, the staff can still provide advice on the wings.
- Dr Lad explained the principles of PIPE – Psychologically Informed Planned Environment. People from chaotic backgrounds and up-bringing are given a normalising experience. It will help them move away from being institutionalised. This is a new way for the prison to deal with those who can soak up a vast amount of resources. It means that instead of being on constant observation, young adults will be worked with to help them develop skills to cope. It is about weaning them off a high level of dependency.
- At this age, mental health care is about looking at emerging trends because most young adults are often too young to meet the diagnostic criteria for things like personality disorders.

### **Health Care**

- There are resource issues around providing sufficient mental health care. There are also issues for the prisoners, including fear of bullying if they are seen to be supported for mental health issues.
- It takes 1-2 months to get to see a counsellor. The counselling team includes counsellors, psychotherapists and CBT therapists.
- Bullying is dealt with by the violence reduction team. Sometimes people need to be relocated outside of a wing or even the prison.

### **Officers on Segregation Unit**

- Don't get many with a history of being self-harmers in segregation. At present, with 10 on their list, only one has self harmed, and this is in the past and not recently. It is more likely to be about violence.
- However, they recently found someone who was just about to attempt suicide. Officers found him standing on the toilet with a noose around his neck, ready to jump. He was not on an ACCT, but was a bit

shocked after having being brought into Segregation. It was not what he expected.

## **Meeting with Young Adults**

### *Listeners*

- Listener's scheme not currently working well. They had concerns about the length of time between when someone asked to see a listener and when the listener was brought to see the person. It could be many hours.
- Felt that a key problem was how staff used them, because there were lots of trained Listeners. They felt that staff chose to give out the Samaritans phone rather than use the Listeners. If someone asked to see a Listener at night, the staff often chose to wait until the morning. People are also told to wait until association when they ask to speak to Listeners, but new people in particular don't know who the Listeners are.
- Some lads will apply to be a Listener simply so that they don't have to be on basic privileges.

### *Larger Group of Young Adults*

- One thing they would like to see changed is the amount of time spent outside their cell. There is a rotation where some full wings are locked up for the entire weekend.
- There are not enough jobs. If they don't apply for jobs when they are told to, then they risk being dropped down to basic IEP. It doesn't seem to matter what skills they are trying to develop or how it fits with what else they have done.
- One young adult said how he applied for a job he wanted, but got put on another. He felt he was being put on silly or boring work just so he was on work. But it wasn't relevant to him.
- It would help if there was more appropriate education provision. One young adult explained how he could complete the entire set of education courses offered within 12 weeks. After that, he had the option of doing an Open University course, but only if he could afford to put sufficient money towards it himself.
- Some young adults we spoke to complained about Swinfen Hall being a mixture of older young adults and younger young adults. They said there were a lot of younger adults on C and E wings, and the adult wings were calmer and more mature. They said they were tired of being 'stuck with kids' and felt that the young average age of the prison meant that more people were behaving like kids. They said that Swinfen Hall does not have the better influence of more mature adults. One young adult said he didn't understand why all young adults were not categorised together with more mature Cat C prisoners. An older member of this group said, however, that he didn't want to be mixed with younger adults – he found them too difficult.
- Some young adults, particularly those on indeterminate sentences, do not have any incentive to 'act their age'. They are not focussed on improving themselves and being released.

- 'Red-bands' are supposed to have more freedom to move around, but it was felt that this was not currently being allowed.
- They wanted to be treated like adults.
- Concern was expressed about the gym, with young adults saying there was a drop in the number of times they were allowed to use the gym. It had been up to 5 or 6 times a week, and this dropped to once a week. In the last few weeks, it has been more again. They complained to the governor, but they felt the staff were not being honest with her.
- They said there needs to be more communication between governors and staff.
- There were complaints about 'canteen' going up in price, but they were not being paid more.
- The young adults complained about how a recent self-inflicted death was dealt with. They said that the staff painted the wing and put extra shower gels in the cell after the young person died, so that, they suggested, when the young adult's mother came to see the cell, she would feel he was being taken care of.
- Young adults were clearly moved by this death, and explained how he killed himself the day before mother's day. He was due to be released.
- It was felt that counselling was not available enough. Someone needs to be available to talk over problems with prisoners. It was questioned why there were not more mental health workers available. The prison had a capacity of 650, but there were very few mental health workers. One young man gave an example of how it took nine weeks for him to see a mental health nurse.
- Most young adults just want to get on with the routine and their jobs etc. But little things are made very hard. An example was given of having to ask for a cup for his tea every day for a week until he got one.
- One young adult said he would like more letters to be sent from home. A letter stays with you, a phone call is short.
- There were complaints that staff keep telling them they are 'short staffed', but they see them just sitting around and talking.
- Some of the young adults felt that the staff saw behaviour that gets you put on an ACCT as attention seeking. But no-one sits down and talks to them and finds out why they are looking for attention. Yes, some people are self harming to get attention, but the officers need to check it out a bit more. Sit down and have a little chat, and also talk to the person's mates. They understood that it was hard for the officers to judge who is looking for attention and who has a real problem. Officers need more training to understand what is going on. Some officers want to help you, but they don't have the right training.
- The young men we spoke to thought that some deaths were accidental. They felt that it was easy to be attention seeking and not mean to kill yourself, but the knot was too tight or something. If someone hasn't got the mentality to be able to sit in a room by themselves and not self harm, then they shouldn't be sitting by themselves. Often it was about maturity, but they felt that frustration also causes self-harm.
- If you have mental health issues, then not having TV is a big problem. Some people just find it difficult to cope.

- They described how staff would give them sweets and biscuits to do something for them.
- The IEP scheme can be used in a negative way, although theoretically it was felt it could be a positive thing. Often you are not told why you have a 'negative'. On the other hand, having a 'positive' did not always lead to anything good. There was no reward for good behaviour.

## Meeting with Individual Prisoners

### 'A'

- A, who was put on ACCT in July and has been on constant watch until recently. He is not happy to have been taken off.
- A explained to us that he prefers being on constant observation rather than any other type. He can't 'settle' if someone is coming to see him every 15 or 30 minutes, but he can settle down if someone is just sitting there with him
- He has been in prison for 5 years and is reaching the end of his sentence. He told us that health care could be done differently and that there was no consistency with how it was done.
- He felt the staff are really good at Swinfen Hall. He has more concerns about the staff in health care, and they told him what he was feeling was 'just anxiety'.
- He doesn't know how else staff could support him.
- A sees the new D wing as a positive step. He wants to get as much help as possible to help him get ready for release. He doesn't want to be seen to be visiting the hospital, but he thinks he should have been put on a special wing sooner (he is nearly finished his 5 years). He is looking forward to going home to live with his family (parents and sister).
- He dealt with psychiatrists on the outside too, and he thinks they haven't helped him much.
- A thinks a lot of people with mental health issues are just being sent to prison. There needs to be more things like the complex needs unit in prisons.

### 'S'

- S had been on an ACCT. He felt ACCT was more of a hassle than a positive thing. He thought it would mean a lot more support, but the support didn't come. It really just means that they check you are alive and "make sure their job is safe".
- S said he would really like "someone to talk to when I've got issues and that". He said that it felt that when he told someone that he felt like self-harming, they just walked off. He said staff don't stop and talk, and often don't even check the cell, especially during the day. He explained that some days he doesn't want to speak, but if you ask for support then they should be there to speak to you.
- He doesn't think a care map does what it says it should. He said that most things on the care map were "just stupid". He should get a job and contact his family, but these things do not necessarily help when

he is in a low mood. He doesn't know what *should* be on it, but just being able to sit and talk to someone would help.

- S explained that he gets on with his prison officers now, so he can ask for a chat, but not everyone can. Sometimes he would like officers to be more assertive with him, but other times "I need someone to be softly, softly." He doesn't think counselling helps him, but it does help to talk to officers.
- S disagreed with some of the things young adults had said when we met them in the bigger group (he had been part of that too). He said compared to other institutions, Swinfen Hall was "quite decent to be fair". He said that some officers take it to heart if someone self-harms on their shift, but you could be checked a hundred times an hour and if you want to, you'll find a way. He said officers "need to keep us alive by talking to us and finding out what the problem is."

### 'C'

- C was in segregation and is hoping to be put on D & E wings (Complex Needs Unit) when it opens. C said he finds it too much on the normal wings, and can usually only do 2 -3 months there. He said "I like it quiet" and "sometimes I get stressed and it goes to the point where I actually self-harm".
- He finds that talking can help and he feels with psychological input things will get better.
- C felt that radio and books were important.

### 'J'

- J said he deserved to be in segregation. He said when he comes to seg he feels relaxed.
- He said there is nothing good about it, but he doesn't get distressed about coming to seg like other people on the wing. When he got into a fight, he knew it would mean going to seg, but he did it anyhow.