

Prison Visit – HMYOI Glen Parva

Summary of Harris Review Visit

This summary reflects the experience and observation of the members of the Harris Review that visited the establishment on 9th of October 2014. They do not reflect changes that have happened since that date.

Background

Type of prison	HMYOI Glen Parva is a young offender institution holding sentenced, un-sentenced and remanded young male adults aged 18–21.
Operational Capacity	808
Details of relevant self-inflicted deaths	Nine – in scope
	4th July 2007
	2nd June 2009
	24th May 2010
	25th December 2010
	16th May 2011
	19th November 2011
	13th December 2011
	18th April 2013
29th September 2013	
Governor	Alison Clark
Harris Review members on Visit	Lord Toby Harris, Deborah Browne, Graham Mackenzie (apologies Graham Towl)
Date of visit	9 th October 2014

Meeting with Governor

- There is a lot of concern about the number of self-inflicted deaths at the prison.
- The inquest of a death in scope had just taken place in September this year. This had a big impact on the staff who were involved, including the governor. The governor shared a circular with the Review that she collated for staff, that provided staff more detail about the tragedy and the lessons that staff needed to learn from it. Arguably the young man should not have been in prison.
- ACCTs have doubled recently, because staff members have become very risk adverse. This is putting a lot of strain on staff resources, and is

particularly difficult to manage because of the number of young adults who are on ACCT from when they arrive. It has been necessary on occasion, because of having such high numbers on ACCT, to ask population management not to transfer additional prisoners who are being monitored through ACCT to Glen Parva. Unfortunately this has not always been possible.

- ACCT process is not ideal. It is time consuming and difficult to navigate. Implementation of ACCT can be seen as being about observation rather than engagement with prisoners. The best way to get people to stop self-harming is to have staff who know them, talk to them and can pick up mood changes. Issues relating to understanding of the individual prisoners needs and being able to provide consistency of support and guidance. Glen Parva has had some challenges with ensuring consistent staffing due to staff shortages, which has impacted on the ability to provide consistent support.
- Some prisoners can be concerned that an ACCT form identifies a prisoner as being vulnerable, this is something young adult men want to avoid.
- Prison has recently been benchmarked, which has increased the number of prison officers working at the prison. However, there have been staff shortages whilst the recruitment process has been ongoing. Due to the process that they went through (including VEDs etc.), they have lost staff. Sickness had also increased, which was having an impact on available resources
- The prison has tried to use innovative recruitment methods to try to attract new staff, including signs outside the prison, and a campaign involving social media, which attracted a lot of applications.
- Overall, there was a reduction in staffing (between 20 & 30 in total) across all departments in the prison.
- It is difficult to have one person who owns responsibility for the ACCT, particularly with these staff shortages, so that there is a lack of continuity in day to day contact. In theory it would be the personal officers and the offender supervisor; the prison has recently changed its systems so that the offender supervisors are now ACCT case managers for the prisoners they are supervising.
- There will be 2 offender supervisors per unit. Ratio for Supervisor Officer to prisoners, 1:40 is manageable. While a high caseload means more paperwork, it should be more about personal relationships.
- Alison believes that young adults have low expectations of themselves and their environment. Older prisoners would be less tolerant of poor equipment, poor clothing etc. – they would challenge it and force the prison to respond. Young adults care less about their living conditions and don't complain. So, while Glen Parva are restricting the regime to deal with current staff shortages and the high number of young adults on ACCT, young adults are more accepting of this than older adults would be at another prison. The environment is not invested in, and the reality is the situation is worse for these vulnerable young men. There needs to be a more holistic view to well-being.

- Staff need to be able to show the young men that someone still cares about them. The majority of staff at Glen Parva are doing their best in difficult circumstances but in some cases there are staff who do not have the motivation or skills.
- Often a challenge to identify those who are vulnerable against those who simply are seeking additional support/assistance. Staff might not have time to notice a withdrawn individual who is not causing trouble. Some young adults engage in risky behaviour, but they don't really want to commit suicide. Others are hiding their vulnerability. Alison gave the example of a young man who was bullying and prickly, but when he got assaulted by another prisoner, he sat on the ground sobbing for his mother.
- At present, resource pressures mean that prisoners are not always engaged in purposeful activity. Approximately 140 prisoners were 'unemployed' at the time of the visit.
- Prisoners likely to spend 2 out of 3 of the sessions where they should be outside their cells locked in their cells due to the restricted regime that impacts on the ability of staff to interact with prisoners.
- There is a crisis or an 'at risk' line at Glen Parva, where families or friends could feasibly phone in with their concerns about someone; it is found however, that despite attempts to publicise it, families are often unaware of it.
- Glen Parva have a new system whereby anyone who knows the person and says they are vulnerable can lead to an ACCT being opened. Alison wants a system whereby they can ask a young adult if they are happy for staff to speak to the family about them.
- Recent experience raised concern over nature of the inquest process, including too many lawyers representing Public authorities which Alison feels can be unhelpful to families and not publicly present well.
- Bullying within the prison is an issue that is being tackled in various ways.
- Bullying is often related to debt. Borrowing is a big problem with young adults who find it difficult to plan and anticipate their ability to pay back. It is possible for someone to find they have inherited debt from previous prisoner in cell.
- The Listeners Scheme is excellent, but it is more difficult with young adults because there is a peer pressure element, with prisoners less likely to seek support from their peers.
- Trying to use IEP scheme to deal with bullying, with a zero tolerance of this type of behaviour.
- Nature of this age group means that some aged 19 or 20 are not as mature as those of a younger age, not simple measure based on their age – emotional maturity. It is often better if they are mixed with older adults. It is calmer, there is more opportunities for mentoring and they learn more about being an adult. But some young adults are very vulnerable and may need a different approach. The focus should be on maturity.

- Believes that it is the responsibility of the Governor (or if not available their deputy) to personally engage with family of young adult who has died.

Healthcare

- Health staff members come from a mixture of health and mental health backgrounds, with a number of sessional workers. During the day there is always a mixture of health and mental health workers on duty, but at night it could only be one or the other.
- Health staff are involved in ACCT process, and there is always health staff at the first and last ACCT meetings.
- On average, takes about 20 minutes for assessment for first timers to the prison, but this is if there are no issues.
- At reception unit, staff try to identify patients who have substance misuse issues as well as mental health problems. They will make follow up appointments as necessary, but patients don't always show up for these.
- Sometimes patients don't show up because they prefer to do other things (for example go to the gym rather than see the optician). Prisoners have reported that they don't show up because officers don't unlock them for their appointments.¹
- Theoretically, these young men have better access to health services than they normally would on the outside and there was a perception to some that prison officers resented the ease of access to medical services available to prisoners and so deliberately mis-record prisoners as no longer requiring appointment.
- In-Reach staff resorted to fetching prisoners to reduce number of 'did not attend', still 25% DNA rate, which is an issue as services paid per patient and not per day. There have been examples where 'refused' was recorded, but the prisoner stated he was never approached to be taken to the appointment.
- Because there is no 'free-flow' at Glen Parva, patients have to be escorted by prison officers to appointments. Previously had two dedicated prison officers to collect prisoners for appointments, now, due to changes in policy and reduced resources, there is a perception in health care that it is whoever is on duty.
- Staff need to be educated about the importance of health care and appointments for prisoners.
- 'Safer custody' should have dedicated, experienced staff. At the moment there is no consistency. Each day there should be staff with the right skills.
- Issue over provision of health services and fact primary and secondary services split between two Health trusts, can lead to issues between management and overall responsibility
- There is a problem with data sharing, both between prisons and to medical services outside upon release. There are too many different systems holding records, these are not compatible with each other.

¹ The Prison later told us that these incidents are always investigated.

- A letter is provided for prisoners to share with their GP on release, when they don't have an existing GP to which records can be sent, but the difficulty is that they do not always register.
- The at risk alert is a key document alerting prison staff of concerns (police or relatives) that have been raised.
- There needs to be less temptation in cells. Some young people with mental health issues, or who are feeling distressed, will find it harder to ignore the bars or the potential ligature points. More use of strong (anti-rip) clothing should be considered. This will give the young adults the space to manage their stress in another way.
- Ultimately question comes down to what are the goals for young adults in custody?

Discussion with Young Adult 'Listeners'

- General feeling is that the prison Listeners' Scheme is 'not working', not enough resources are being put into it. It is more likely now officers don't know you and don't treat them with respect.
- Governor and senior managers don't know how things work, officers change behaviour when Governor or inspectors come to visit
- Work programme is aimed more at helping the Prison out and less about helping prisoners to develop marketable skills outside, main objective is to keep people busy
- Education and college, pitched at the wrong age group, again aimed to keep them busy and not help develop marketable skills. One young adult commented it is "like a kid's school", and so he quit because he didn't like school anyway. They wanted qualifications that they could use on the outside.
- All indicated that they were not aware of their sentence plan.
- Some of the officers don't respect or appreciate the role of the listeners and tend not to be pro-active in communicating existence or promoting the support can be provided - overall attitude amongst some officers is unacceptable, especially if request made late at night, some examples of delayed action following requests
- It was felt that it would be easier to show respect to officers, if officers showed respect back. Staff turned a blind eye to some bullying and rule breaking if it was done by someone they had a good relationship with.
- It was felt that staff shortages and the fact that new staff kept being brought in from other prisons meant that staff did not know the regime or the common practices of this institution. Staff shortages also meant that the staff that you are used and might have built up relationships with are taken off your wing.
- It is important to have a chance to chat to officers and some officers are much better at this than others. Some are rude and don't want to talk to you.
- Sometimes the only way you get heard is to play up.

- It was felt that the enhanced regime of the IEP scheme was not sufficiently rewarding for good behaviour. There wasn't that much difference to standard.
- Concerns over the visiting time and when prisoners are released from their cells, not released in advance of the start of visiting times and so they lose time. It was felt that due to shortage of staff, they were unlocked from cell very late before a visit (e.g. being taken from cell at 2pm, but visit is supposed to start at 2pm, and it will take time before they get there and get seated with family etc.). They missed out on precious family time.
- One young adult described in detail the ordeal his family had to go through in order to visit him, and it was frustrating for all of them when the visit was so short after travelling so far. He also complained that his elderly grandmother found it very difficult to see him in high visibility prison clothes. He said if there were more staff on duty, they wouldn't need to wear clothes that stand out so much.
- Concerns raised over the 'first night' regime and especially the length of time spent locked up in the cells, as well as the awareness of the listener scheme – prisoners are only made aware if an ACCT is opened, not pro-actively informed and first night listener not in reception, but in the unit.
- Many young adults raised concern about the time they are being forced to spend in their cell. An example was of how they were 'banged up' for 23 hours for two days in a row. One young adult said this "fries your head".
- It was felt that there was not enough time spent in the gym, especially over recent weeks.
- It was felt that the "governors don't know how the unit is run", and there needed to be more communication between governors and staff.
- General feeling is that clothing regime doesn't work and could easily allow prisoners to wear own clothes.
- Currently listeners do not have anything that denotes them in the role, either t-shirts or tabards, making it difficult to make new prisoners aware of their existence or location when required

Segregation Unit

- This unit provides dedicated support, including a Violence Reduction Programme that has been developed by staff. However, changes in resources have impacted ability to provide services and not able to deliver to the same level as previously
- They use a range of videos, DVD's and interactive programmes acquired from their own research on-line or from alternate sources, e.g. Strathclyde Police
- Not all officers would be able to undertake these duties, requires an understanding of how to work with this age group together with ability to communicate to group and to teach/educate them.
- The unit requires time, resources, people and commitment. But the young adults respond to the extra talking, rapport that is built up. There is notable violence reduction. An example was given of someone who went from

being referred for violence reduction to being cleared for ROTL within 4 months.

- Any programme delivered within Prison needs to be aligned with anything that is delivered post-sentence, through the new arrangements otherwise any learning/education might be lost.

Potential Observations

Reception processes

- Not immediately able to spot any signs advertising the listener/Samaritan scheme within the prison or the services provided
- Listener scheme only communicated once ACCT completed, designated first night listener not present in reception, but waiting for prisoners in the unit

First Night Unit

- We met a Listener waiting in the unit, who we had already met earlier with the group of Listeners. He introduced himself, but felt that officers did not always make new prisoners aware of his existence or his role

Safer cell

- We expressed concern over location of the portable television in the cell; it was not bolted to the wall and was at waist height. Also aerial cable was easily removed from both the back of the unit and the wall, and was just long enough to wrap around a neck

Education

- Dedicated education building, not clear level of courses provided, nor was there any indication that courses would lead to recognisable external qualification; however, curriculum had a variety of courses available