

Prison Visits – HMYOI Isis

Summary of Harris Review Visit

This summary reflects the experience and observation of the members of the Harris Review that visited the establishment on 1st December 2014. They do not reflect changes that have happened since that date.

Background

Type of prison	HMP/YOI Isis holds sentenced young adults and category C offenders who are under the age of 30
Operational Capacity	622
Details of relevant self-inflicted deaths	None within scope
Governor	Grahame Hawkings
Harris Review members on Visit	Philip Leach, Matilda MacAttram and Graham Mackenzie
Date of visit	1 st December 2014

Meeting with Governor

- Prison was opened in 2010 as a training prison and was resourced in line with the principles of LEAN and so Benchmarking did not materially reduce the overall headcount. Currently, the Prison is operating 40 full-time equivalent officers down on their Benchmark threshold (25 due to outstanding vacancies and 15 on long-term sick).
- The Prison has been on restricted regime since September 2013 and is usually on patrol state from approximately 17.30. This has led to reductions in access to purposeful activity, which has been reduced to the contractual minimum for education in order to meet the contract with A4e.
- The Governor indicated that this was very frustrating, given the nature of the establishment and the rationale behind its development and the enthusiasm he and his team have for delivering activity that will rehabilitate prisoners.
- The Prison has a number of prisoners from different gangs from within London (both Inner and Greater London), which often leads to unique challenges to manage. This is often exacerbated by the presence of TV's on each wing, as well as within prisoners' cells meaning that many prisoners get to see reports on gang related incidents outside the prison almost immediately. The Prison does have officers from Operation Trident

located on the site, who are able to advise immediately and help defuse gang related issues.

- Important whilst working within the resource constraints that Prison staff do not give up on the prisoners. The Prison continues to arrange innovative employment and educational events, where and when possible, including employment fairs and arranging musical events, including appearances by Pimlico Opera. The Prison worked with a Brixton based Film Company, to deliver a series of workshops to develop skills in creative story development and video editing. Their contribution helped create a script that was filmed outside of the prison, but where editing was completed within the workshops within the prison (<http://vimeo.com/60666521>). However, it was recognised that these successes were offset by the length of time that the Prison had been on restricted regime, which limited access to purposeful activity.
- The Prison is currently running clinical trials for those who have been given a diagnosis ADHD, understanding how many prisoners may be undiagnosed and whether through medication prisoners' behaviour can be improved. The Governor also highlighted his own concerns over the number of prisoners who might have undiagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder, either through incidents in the outside world or through observations within the prison estate.
- The Prison has of its own volition investigated the availability of training on mental health awareness for their prison officers, as this is an area where they believe Prison officers need increased training and support. A free accredited course had been procured, as part of a wider educational course and a handful of officers will be commencing the course before the end of the financial year. The course identified by the prison is free, but due to demands on staff time the Panel were informed that it was unlikely that all of the staff who require the training would be able to attend due to resource pressures.

Healthcare and Mental Health

- Healthcare professionals discussed the overall regime; this includes the two medical checks that each prisoner is subject to within their first 24 hours in the Prison.
- Prisoners are able to use the biometric system in order to make appointments; this is the same system that they use to order their meals and to indicate any other basic requirements.
- Healthcare indicated that they did not have a major issue with prisoners not attending for any appointments, however when there are any then they will follow up in order to try and ascertain why the prisoner did not attend. Healthcare did not indicate that there was any issue with Prison Officers being reluctant to unlock and escort prisoners to appointments. The Panel were told that due to resource constraints that appointments could be missed, due to pressures and the need to prioritise resources.
- Mental Health researchers discussed the aims of their research pilot, their initial findings (Out of Committee paper 48 - Presentation on ADHD research at HMP Isis). An initial finding, following the assessment of all

existing prisoners and new intake during period of the pilot, indicates that the proportion of those with ADHD in this age bracket is higher than the general population. This proportion has changed since the increase from 25 to 30 in the maximum age of prisoners accommodated in the prison.

- Since the start of the treatment programme, there has been a reduction in the levels of violence and there has been an improvement in the overall level of behaviour. It was not clear however, whether the researchers were able to exclusively ascribe these results to their approach, given the existence of the restricted regime.

Potential Observations

Reception processes

- Panel observed the Reception processes; majority of Prisoners arriving are transfers from other custodial establishments and not direct from Court. Isis does not accept prisoners from other establishments on open ACCTs, except in exceptional circumstances. Currently within the Prison there are seven prisoners on an open ACCT, two of who were transferred into the prison from another establishment.
- Although not prominent behind the reception counter, there were posters displaying information on safer custody and listeners further along the reception area, near to the Healthcare rooms.

First Night Unit (Induction Wing)

- Panel visited the Induction wing of the Prison to observe processes and to scrutinise availability of information that would support new prisoners. The Unit currently has three prisoners on an open ACCT.
- Panel observed prominent display of the Listener poster, together with other information provided as part of the Safer Custody arrangements. All new Prisoners are provided with a structured seven day induction programme, which encompasses healthcare, mental health, education, exercise, employment and chaplaincy so that by the end of the week the prisoner has been made aware of all of the facilities available.
- Panel was informed that although at present all prisoners in the Induction Wing have a named personal officer, this is likely to change in the foreseeable future in order to accommodate issues arising from the staff shortfall, as against their benchmark threshold. Prisoners instead will be supervised by a team of officers, rather than an individual.
- Panel met with some of the prisoners, including some of the Peer mentors and Listeners, who highlighted their concerns over consistency in officers supporting them, being locked up in their cells for significant length of time and the lack of any purposeful activity.
- Panel were shown the dedicated cells for prisoners on their first night, which were on the ground floor and therefore were closer to the officer's room in order to enable more frequent access and observation.

Safer cell

- All of the cells in the Prison have been designed to be as safe as possible, however it was accepted that no cell can ever be safe.
- Panel viewed a couple of the cells to consider and review the design and layout. No immediate issues of concern were highlighted.
- On each spur of the wing there were two cells which had been combined in order to provide a space for the listeners to meet with prisoners and discuss matters.

Education

- Panel met with representatives from A4e who provide education facilities at the Prison. There were approximately ten prisoners working in one of the class rooms, specifically on IT related training courses, with another classroom for catering skills had a similar number.
- The teachers were proud of what they were able to achieve and discussed a handful of success stories, including 20 prisoners who were either completing Open University courses or had previously completed them. They often encouraged former prisoners to come back into the Prison in order to try and encourage and engage with serving prisoners.
- Panel did also observe the impact of the restricted regime through the fact that of the dozen or so class rooms located on the first floor, two were reasonably well populated, whilst two more had one or two prisoners in for specialist courses, while others areas that should have had full classes were empty
- Panel also visited the library and observed a fully stocked library, which included fiction, non-fiction as well as appropriate research material to support any relevant educational course. Panel also met with four of the Prisoners in order to discuss with them their concerns and understand their thoughts, which ranged from the quality of the education, access to the services given the amount of hours they were locked up in their cell as well as their concern over the relevance of the courses to any future job opportunities when they are eventually released.

Workshops

- As well as visiting the Education spaces, the Panel also observed some of the workshops including painting and decoration, together with bicycle repair and maintenance. At the time of the visit, there were no prisoners within the bicycle repair workshop, which was in part due to the regime and also the availability of suitable bikes to repair. The Prison was working on developing further working arrangements with the local Police and the Mayor of London's office in order to secure appropriate resources.
- During the Panel's visit to the painting and decoration workshop, the Panel had an opportunity to meet with a handful of prisoners who were participating in order to ascertain how engaging the courses were. Many were of the view that although it did provide them with an opportunity to get out of their cells, much of what they were doing was quite mundane and

routine and could not be described as 'purposeful' or providing any training that could be seen as relevant for the outside.

- Panel also observed the barbering workshop, which was also fully populated. This was felt to be because the cutting of hair was a skill that was beneficial both inside and outside of the prison.

Segregation Unit

- The Panel also visited the Segregation Unit in order to observe the processes operated, as well the vulnerable cells and the cells for prisoners taking part in a 'dirty protest'. At the time of the visit there were eight prisoners in segregation, none of whom were there because they were seen as being vulnerable or requiring 24 hour observation. All of those in the unit were there because of their violence either towards other prisoners or towards Prison Officials.
- Panel were shown the information board located within the main office, which detailed the name of the prisoner, their original offence, details of any gang affiliations, reasons for their being housed within the segregation unit, details of when the adjudication took place and their eventual punishment. The board also detailed the numbers of Prison Officers needed to be in place in order to unlock the cell for their own safety. The Panel were made aware that there were three of the prisoners on the segregation unit who were subject to 3-man unlock procedures. This was problematic for most of the afternoons, because due to shortages of resources, there were only ever two officers on the unit during the afternoon shift, meaning that if ever there was an emergency (e.g. 'Code Blue') then they would either have to enter at their own risk or wait for a suitable officer to arrive.

Chaplaincy

- Panel met with some of the officers based within the Chaplaincy at Isis to discuss the support that they provide both to the families of prisoners, to the prisoners themselves and their changing role within the ACCT process. Mother Simpson re-iterated the information that she had provided to the Panel at her earlier appearance and discussed the nature and frequency of the services provided by Chaplaincy in order to cater for the spiritual requirements of the prisoners. Details of the services and the religions practised at Isis are outlined at Annex A, while details of the ethnicity of the prisoners (as at February 2014) is outlined within the HMIP Unannounced inspection of February 2014¹

¹ <http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/08/Isis-Web-2014.pdf>

Annex A – Information concerning services provided by Chaplaincy

The following information was provided by Mother Susie Simpson the Managing Chaplain at Isis.

Breakdown of religion at HMP/YOI Isis 2014

Religion	October	November	December
Agnostic	1	1	0
Atheist	1	1	1
Buddhist	3	3	3
Christian	94	98	99
C of E	56	57	56
Eastern Orthodox	4	4	4
Hindu	3	3	4
Jehovah's witness	1	0	1
Methodist	1	1	1
Mormon	0	0	1
Muslim	246	259	259
Nil	77	83	84
Russian Orthodox	1	1	0
Pentecostal	4	4	4
Rastafarian	0	1	0
Roman Catholic	96	99	98
Russian Orthodox	0	1	0
7th Day Adventist	1	1	1
Sikh	3	4	4
Sunni Muslim	1	1	0

Corporate/group worship at Isis

Religion	Time and frequency	Venue	Number attending (approx.)
Muslim	1 hour weekly	Gym	170
Roman Catholic (including Orthodox)	1 hour weekly	Large multi-faith room	25
Church of England/Free Church	1 hour weekly	Large multi-faith room	70
Sikh	2.75 hours weekly	Small multi-faith room	4
Hindu	2.75 hours weekly	Small multi-faith room	3
Buddhist	2.75 hours weekly	Small multi-faith room	3
Jehovah's Witness	2 hours weekly	Small multi-faith room	1
Jewish	2 hours ad hoc	Small multi-faith room	1

Details of Chaplaincy Support

HMYOI Isis employs the following:

- Full time Church of England and Managing chaplain
- Full time Muslim chaplain
- Full time RC chaplain
- Half time Muslim chaplain
- Half time Free Church chaplain (Pentecostal)

HMYOI Isis also employs the following as sessional chaplains;

- 2 days per week Church of England
- 1 day per week Muslim chaplain
- 1 day per week Pentecostal chaplain
- 1 session per week Sikh chaplain
- 1 session per week Hindu chaplain
- 1 session per week Buddhist chaplain
- 1 session per week Jehovah's Witness chaplain, and
- Ad hoc Jewish chaplain