

Prison Visits – HMP Leeds

Summary of Harris Review Visit

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

Background

Type of prison	HMP Leeds is a category B local prison and was built in 1847. It accepts adult males from the West Yorkshire Courts.
Operational Capacity	1212
Details of relevant self-inflicted deaths	One within scope
Governor	Susan Kennedy (not present during time of visit)
Harris Review members on Visit	Richard Shepherd, Graham Towl and Graham Mackenzie
Date of visit	16 th December 2014

Meeting with Deputy Governor

- Panel Members met with the Deputy Governor to discuss issues relating to self-inflicted death and benchmarking;
- He observed that Leeds benefitted from having a team of dedicated and stable Listeners working in the Prison, which provided consistency in dealings with vulnerable prisoners. This stable nature was due in part to their sentence and the type of Prison establishment Leeds was;
- Leeds is looking to improve the quality of the ACCT process through greater scrutiny of forms and also through the involvement of Chaplaincy in the ACCT process itself, something that has not routinely been happening to date;
- Although he did not have hard facts to support, he felt that about 80% of prisoners in Leeds had combinations of mental health, social, or drug and alcohol related issues, often undiagnosed before arriving in custody;
- Demographic of those Prisoners in Leeds (e.g. age and sentence) means that many do not have difficulty in discussing their vulnerability with others, however younger prisoners might not be so open;
- Often there are issues relating to those who are from outside the Yorkshire area. Many have no familial connections and struggle without the regular

contact, while those on remand will have often spent many hours in the Prison escort van travelling around until a free prison space can be found;

- Leeds commenced local training for all Supervising Officers in December, entitled Safe, Secure and Decent, which aims to instil in Officers an ethos about how best to manage, engage and support Prisoners;
- Detached duty raises concerns for officers, especially for those deployed in the South-East. Often officers will compress their hours, so that they can complete their deployment sooner, whilst still completing their required hours;
- Detached duty also raises concerns over the Officer/Prisoner relationship, as inevitably those officers deployed to other custodial establishments have reduced local knowledge, which limits their ability to assist prisoners;
- Leeds is currently on FULL regime, enabling Prisoners to access all facilities and services, including for example association and gym.

Meeting with Safer Custody Team

- Leeds currently has 41 open ACCTs, out of a total prison population of 1206;
- Implications of the Benchmarking exercise at Leeds has been different than many other establishments, as they continue to be over-resourced. However, this means that many of their 'excess' staff are required to be deployed to other establishments – it is planned that 19 will be deployed across the estate in January;
- Arising from the Benchmarking, many are also new to their roles and are inexperienced at managing ACCT process. This has meant that many of the case notes are being rushed or are overlooked, while some give little thought to the development of suitable care maps;
- In order to address these issues they have introduced a number of local initiatives to mitigate the risk associated with officers inexperienced with ACCT forms and processes:
 - All ACCT cases are reviewed by the SCT as part of a quality assurance approach, and issues highlighted and brought to the attention of the responsible officer to action (see Annex A), and
 - Local refresher courses for all Officers on the ACCT process itself because there is no national refresher course, as compared with annual refresher courses on Control & Restraint.
- One of their cases of self-harm occurred at the City Magistrates court; however, no information was received from the Court or Prisoner Escort Company; instead it was the Prisoner who informed their case manager.
- Contribution towards an open ACCT or opening up of an ACCT should also be available to Court custody officers and Prisoner Escort employees. Equally, it was felt that greater sharing of information between CJS agencies would be beneficial for all parties.

Discussion with Adult Listeners

- Panel members met with six of the listeners within the prison, all of whom were clearly identifiable as Listeners through their badges and branded t-

shirts and jumpers – there are approximately 20 prisoners for every Listener;

- Leeds prison only has prisoners aged 21 and over, the Listeners as a group felt that the introduction of young adults into this mix would be disruptive and not beneficial;
- They felt that many young adults would prefer to prove themselves against the older prisoners and would more likely want ‘tough it out’ rather than admit to being vulnerable;
- There is often a fear and concern that prisoners will be bullied by others if they ask to speak to a Listener;
- They were clear that it was important for there to be consistency in Prison officers on the wings so that good relationships could be built up with the prisoners;
- The Listeners were not aware of any Officers who were overtly negative towards them and the scheme; however, they did know which officers were amenable to requests and who they could talk to;
- They felt that not enough training, awareness or support was provided to cope with the mental health needs of prisoners, either through one-to-one support or in-house prisoner services;
- The process for a prisoner to be seen and assessed after the identification of potential vulnerability, can be too slow and often takes between 2 or 3 weeks before they can be seen by a mental health professional;
- They felt that the distribution within custodial establishments of the new narcotics, such as ‘spice’, were also a catalyst for some of those with mental health issues. Many prisoners do not understand the nature of the narcotic, as compared to the more common cannabis and do not realise its potency.

Potential Observations

Reception processes

- Panel observed the Reception processes; Prison received three vans while the Panel were present from both Magistrates and Crown Court – more had arrived earlier in the afternoon and the Prison were expecting a one or two later on in the evening;
- The Reception area is spread over a number of rooms, however the main reception area is quite limited in space, with a number of holding cells off to the side;
- Information leaflets relating to safer custody and the Listener scheme were not immediately visible behind the Reception desk, however they were located in other rooms within the complex and so Prisoners would have been aware of the schemes;
- The process appeared very professional and measured, each of the Prisoners was treated with respect and allocated the same length of time to talk through their arrival;
- There were a handful of trusted Prisoners, including a Listener, present in the Reception complex, who were able to interact with the new arrivals;

- Many off those the Panel actively observed were either returning from a day at Court, and so the process was relatively quick, or were regular re-offenders who were known to many of the Prison Officers present. Only one or two were new to Prison or Leeds and so the Officers walked through the process with care and diligence.
- One prisoner was returning from Police questioning had no PER record of his stay at the police station and complained that he had not been fed.
- There was a very strong smell of cooked bacon throughout the reception suite that may / might have caused offence to some religious groups. However none of the prisoners who were observed were from those religious groups no-one formally complained.

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;
- Prison often has issue with the documentation received from the Courts, especially the lack of PNC data. This causes problems as information about a Prisoners previous convictions can assist in determining where to house a Prisoner and whether they can share a cell.
- Not all Prison Officers have access to the PNC (access is severely restricted and monitored by the Police) and so there is often a delay;
- Information posters relating to the safer custody and Listener schemes were prominently displayed on information boards between the food counter and the shower room;
- Panel observed one of the safer cells and observed similar safety issues relating to the access to and length of the aerial cable running into the back of the TV, together with the power cables for both the TV and the kettle, all three were long enough to be made into a tourniquet.

Annex A – HMP Leeds Deficiency Notice

Date:	Wing:
The following ACCT was quality checked by the Safer Custody Department on the above date.	
Prisoner Name & Number:	
THE ISSUES BELOW REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.	
Actions must be taken where a mandatory time scale has not been met. The member of staff responsible must be identified, recorded below and advised	
Deficiency:	Actions Taken:

I confirm that the above has been addressed.

Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	