

Prison Visits – HMYOI Brinsford

Summary of Harris Review Visit

This summary reflects the experience and observation of the members of the Harris Review that visited the establishment on 25th July 2014. They do not reflect changes that have happened since that date.

Background

Type of prison	HMYOI Brinsford is a young offender institution holding sentenced, un-sentenced and remanded young male adults.
Operational capacity	577
Attendees	Stephen Cragg QC, Matilda MacAttram, Richard Shepherd Tom Shaw
Details of relevant self-inflicted deaths	Two – in scope
	7th July 2009
	22nd October 2009
Relevant health care provision	South Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent NHS Partnership Trust
Date of Visit	25 th July 2014

Governor (Russ Trent)

- Mr Trent described how he was asked to become governor of Brinsford in November 2013 following the HMIP report and that his new senior team were all one grade higher than the previous team. He thought that the previous regime lacked leadership. He was keen to emphasise the recent visit of Frances Crook, two days prior to the Review visiting, and that she was impressed by the progress made.
- Link to article written by Frances Crook after visiting Brinsford <http://www.howardleague.org/francescrookblog/rocketscience/>
- Mr Trent discussed how he had prioritised safety and first night procedures, and that there is now a dedicated first night centre away from the rest of the YOI. Mr Trent outlined his plan for a 'cared straight' approach, which accommodated 'prisoners in need' alongside paid peer mentors and 'stabilisers' (people who are categorised as being low risk and on short sentences).
- Mr Trent felt that good staff-prisoner relationships were key to identifying risk and that he spends as much time as possible walking around the YOI and interacting with officers and young adults to get a sense of the environment. Dedicated staff should be

supported with an effective peer mentoring scheme. He considered bullying as his primary concern and was keen to address this.

Listeners

- The Listeners thought they received sufficient support from the Samaritans volunteers and most of the calls they received were for genuine reasons. Listener suites were being constructed, and the Listeners thought this would create a better atmosphere in which to answer their calls. There was concern that some officers appeared to not support the Listener scheme and could be slow in responding to calls. The Listeners thought that changes to the day-to-day prison regime could be particularly difficult for vulnerable young adults and if there were insufficient staff, due to staff sickness or other reasons, activities can be dropped and the young adults are locked in their cells. They are locked in cells for 13 hours a day from Monday to Friday and for 16 hours a day at the weekend. All young adults expressed anguish at the heat and lack of ventilation of the cells and how uncomfortable they were. Some Prisoners indicated that this was one of the reasons that so many of the windows within this estate were broken – simply so that people could get some air.

Potential Observations

Reception

- A new arrival will have a 10 minute private interview with a member of staff to find out any urgent issues or any risks of self-harm. A nurse will also speak with a prisoner and seek to find any issues. If staff are aware of known risk factors then they would seek to discuss them further during the reception process.
- Staff on reception also had CCTV body cameras that they could turn on and off at will; they said it was a resource used in case of incidents to record and ensure there was a clear record of what happened.

First Nights

- Prisoners were supported by peer mentors to complete forms and were offered phone calls to relatives etc. early on. Peer support is also offered for drug and alcohol recovery and affected young adults will complete a 2 week course.

Induction

- The supported living unit contains the prisoners in need, peer mentors and stabilisers. The peer mentors each support two (it could be more) prisoners in need and offer advice and support. The average stay in the First Night Centre for a prisoner in need is about 3 days. Staff said that paperwork generally arrives on time and that they encourage family support. Any concerns raised by family members are referred to the safeguarding teams.

Safer Custody

- All identified incidents are recorded. Staff will complete a 213 form and conduct an interview with the young adult following any incident of self-harm. A report is produced at the end of every month detailing all incidents and any patterns or concerns can be

identified. There were 32 open ACCTs at the time of the panel visits, with the average length being 4 weeks, the longest being three months.

- Each ACCT has a single designated case manager which staff believe has led to big improvements. On average one case manager will lead on two ACCTs at any one time. There is a weekly multi-disciplinary meeting with DARS, Safer Custody and Health to discuss all ACCT cases. There is a hotline for the safer custody unit to receive calls from concerned families. There are no safer cells.

Health Unit

- The unit used to be particularly violent but this has calmed down under the new leadership. The unit has 11 cells, which was described as ample capacity with young adults able to remain as long as needed. There are two constant watch cells.
- The health unit follow up any self-harm incidents (form 213) to assess injury. The health unit must obtain the young adult's permission to obtain information on the Mental Health history. The staff did not identify any prisoners that they felt should not be in prison, stating that if there is a need to transfer a young adult out of prison it can be done very quickly.
- There was one prisoner in the health unit who was waiting to be transferred out to a psychiatric unit as staff at this unit said he was very unwell at the time of our visit.

Segregation

- Young adults on ACCT can be monitored hourly and they will be moved elsewhere if they considered to be particularly vulnerable so they can be better supported.

Hygiene

- While the Panel observed that the grounds and gardens throughout the estate were kept to a good standard, the Panel did observe that there was a need for improvement in the levels of hygiene and cleanliness inside some areas of the prison establishment.