

Hassockfield Secure Training Centre

Inspection report for Secure Training Centre

Inspection date 07 December 2010

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Additional inspector(s) Linda Christie

Type of inspection Random - unannounced

Type of registration Secure Training Centre

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About this inspection

The purpose of inspection is to provide assurance to the Secretary of State that secure training centres provide an environment that promotes the safety and welfare of young people and that will help prevent children and young people offending in the future, and in particular that:

- the safeguarding of children and young people is effective
- programmes exist to tackle offending behaviour and meet the citizenship and resettlement needs of children and young people
- the performance of the secure training centres provider meets the quality of service expected in the inspections standards
- there is a purposeful regime in which children and young people are encouraged to take part
- there is effective security and control within the secure training centres
- high standards of social care, health care, education and training are provided for children and young people
- the individual needs of children and young people are fully assessed and there are plans for meeting them as far as possible.

The inspection was conducted in accordance with the Statutory Rules inspections of secure training centres made under Section 47 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, and in line with section 37(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which states that: It shall be the principal aim of the youth justice system to prevent offending by children and young persons.

This was an interim unannounced inspection carried out in accordance with the service level agreement between the Youth Justice Board and Ofsted. The standards used during the inspection were those agreed between the Youth Justice Board and Ofsted.

The last full inspection was carried out in 13 May 2010 with an interim inspection in 29 October 2009.

Two social care inspectors spent two days on site reviewing standards and the impact of the service on young people.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Not judged: this aspect of the provision was not judged

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Service Information

Brief description of the service

1. Hassockfield Secure Training Centre is managed by Serco.
2. Hassockfield is situated near the town of Consett in County Durham. It is a purpose-built secure establishment. It offers secure provision for young people aged 12 to 17 years who meet the criteria for custodial sentence or secure remand.
3. The centre caters for up to 58 young people of both genders. During the inspection 34 young people were in residence. Young people live in four separate house blocks.
4. The centre was judged as satisfactory at the key inspection in May 2010.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

5. This is an interim unannounced inspection of the centre, intended to assess progress against recommendations made following the last inspection in May 2010. All standards contained in the Every Child Matters outcome area staying safe were also assessed. An inspection of the site also took place to review the quality of the accommodation, security and building maintenance.
6. Changes to the senior management team have occurred since the last inspection. The deputy director of the centre is seconded from another provision operated by Serco. There is a new head of care and an acting head of the resettlement team. These arrangements for the management of the centre have worked well, with some discernable progress towards implementation of the recommendations made at the last inspection. Many areas of development have however only recently been addressed and it is not yet possible to fully evaluate progress.
7. The atmosphere at the centre was calm and relaxed during the inspection. There are some good appropriate professional relationships between staff and young people and the challenging of inappropriate behaviour has increased. The number of restraints has fluctuated since the last inspection and only recently has there been a marked decrease. A small group of individual young people have accounted for the majority of the restraints which have occurred each month.

8. Although in its infancy leisure activity provision for young people has shown some improvement, with increased planning and staff availability to lead sessions. The arrangements for informal activities on the living units require some further development.
9. A strength of the centre continues to be the excellent transparent working relationship with local child protection services and other external workers. Managers are keen to develop the service offered to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people. Meetings are held with external professionals to examine the practice at the centre and identify areas for development.

What has been improved since the last inspection

10. At the last inspection in May 2010 managers were asked to consider 15 recommendations. Three related to the education provision. Education inspectors recommended that arrangements for self-assessment were revised so that they are part of a regular review of the curriculum, placing more emphasis on the impact of teaching on young people's learning and progress. This recommendation will be reviewed at the next key inspection. An education recommendation that furniture available in the art and design classroom should be improved was looked at during this inspection. A large stock of robust chairs have been purchased and are available in all classrooms, with sufficient for replacement when required.
11. An additional education recommendation was to increase opportunities for mobility trips outside of the centre to help improve young people's understanding of further education options and enhance the delivery of training plans. Young people now have opportunities for mobility outside of the centre, particularly to visit potential education or training placements. This has significantly improved since the last inspection and the recommendation has been met. However, the centre acknowledges that further work is needed to ensure trips outside of the centre are available to all young people who can benefit from these and that they contribute to effective resettlement planning.
12. Improvements have been made in response to nine of the recommendations reviewed during this inspection. One education recommendation was not reviewed. Five recommendations previously made which have not been fully addressed are repeated. These relate to self-administration of medication, clarity of time away recording, vocational provision, activities programmes and telephone contact for young people. One new recommendation has been made as a result of this inspection. This relates to the availability of resources for young people to enjoy leisure and enrichment activities on the residential living units.
13. Managers were recommended to further develop practice in respect of young people being able to self-administer medication subject to risk

assessment. A thorough review has been undertaken and a detailed assessment produced outlining the positive impact of young people having more control over their own medication, but also reflecting the possible risks to safety and security. This document is being considered by the external clinical manager responsible for the head of healthcare. While some progress has been made this recommendation has not yet been fully addressed and is therefore repeated.

14. Managers were recommended to ensure that young people were routinely offered the opportunity to record their comments in relation to a sanction. Action has been taken to address this matter. A new sanction record form is now in use which enables managers to track sanctions given and ensure that young people are able to state their views following any event. This means that any comments obtained are done so when the young person has had the opportunity to think about the event and may be in a calmer state.
15. Clarification of the recording process for young people taking time away in their room was previously recommended. Work has been undertaken by managers at the centre to look at how recording of these occurrences may have more clarity. However, no new system of recording has yet been implemented. This recommendation is therefore repeated.
16. The centre has shown a commitment to ensuring there are sufficient staff to enable the planned enrichment activity programme to take place outside of school periods. Prior to changes in the shift patterns for residential care staff some staff were paid to deliver sessions during early evening periods. The changes have resulted in more staff being available during periods when activities take place. Senior managers have also recently established a permanent position of activities coordinator, whose role it is to take a lead on the development and delivery of the activities programmes. This is already having a positive impact on the organisation and delivery of planned sessions.
17. A recommendation to tailor the programme of activities to the interests of the young people has not yet been fully addressed. Young people are now more consistently consulted about the enrichment programmes, but evidence of impact at this stage of development is difficult to judge. This recommendation is therefore repeated.
18. Although young people have opportunities to sign-up to organised activities they have very little access to games and meaningful activities while spending more informal time in the living units. The two main activities observed during the inspection were young people watching television and playing pool.
19. At the last inspection young people were not consistently having one-to-one sessions with their key worker to the agreed frequency. This has now improved and all sessions are now very closely monitored by managers and

performance management statistics are produced and reviewed on a regular basis by relevant senior managers. An additional improvement in this respect is that careful consideration is given to the allocation of key workers to individual young people. This is considered as part of the internal reviewing process. The most appropriate staff member is allocated to work with a young person and they are supported by the allocated case manager. This recommendation has been well met.

20. A recommendation was made to ensure young people receive an appropriate programme that prepares them for the next stage of education, training or employment. This specifically related to opportunities for vocational and work experience. Although there are more internal opportunities for young people to participate in work experience, there has been little change in the external vocational and work-experience opportunities. Some previous arrangements have ceased to be available and new contacts are in the process of being made. These are potentially good projects for young people to put something back into the community and to learn about jobs and training. However, this recommendation is repeated as insufficient progress has been made in relation to community vocational opportunities.
21. Senior managers were recommended to ensure that the number of custodial staff working directly with young people is at all times sufficient to promote all aspects of their care and safety. The centre has not received additional funding to increase staffing levels, but a major review of the shift pattern for custodial staff has been carried out. A revised shift system is now in place that provides additional staff during busy periods, such as early evenings when activities are taking place, bedtime periods and weekends. The introduction of this new shift pattern is very new, having commenced on the 31 October 2010. During the inspection there were sufficient staff working with the groups of young people. However, the number of residents at 34 is much lower than the capacity number of 58 young people. The impact of the changes to shift patterns and the deployment of staff will continue to be monitored during future inspections.
22. Senior and middle managers are now more consistently providing a presence on the residential living units. There is evidence that they visit the units and check certain aspects of the environment and practice with young people. Staff and young people confirm they see more of senior managers. Care staff are very positive about the support from the unit managers and house block managers.
23. Managers were recommended to ensure that staff at all levels receive appropriate formal supervision. There has been improvement in this respect in that care staff are more consistently receiving six-weekly supervision. There were a couple of exceptions in the records examined, but satisfactory progress has been made in this respect.

24. Effective and efficient systems are now in place to ensure maintenance requirements are addressed immediately. There is a major redecoration and improvement programme underway in the residential living units. Managers at all levels have procedures in place that they are expected to follow to monitor the quality of the fabric of the buildings and the response time for dealing with any issues raised by young people. Effective systems are also in place to ensure any equipment needed for young people is purchased quickly and any broken are replaced as appropriate.
25. The arrangements for young people to have telephone contact with their parents or carers have been reviewed and an improved telephone system sourced. Careful consideration has been given to choosing the most appropriate telephone system, which when installed, will provide opportunities for young people to receive incoming calls, for the first time, from approved telephone numbers. The upgraded telephone system is in the process of being commissioned but not yet installed. This is planned for later in December 2010. The recommendation is therefore repeated.

The effectiveness of the service

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

26. There are well-embedded and robust procedures in place to ensure health and safety are considered in all aspects of the centre's practice. Effective and efficient monitoring systems are implemented by a nominated health and safety manager. The centre has continued to be awarded the British Safety Council Five Star award. This recognition is given after a detailed three-day assessment carried out by external health and safety auditors.
27. The centre has continued to improve its focus on all aspects of security. The position of a dedicated security manager has been permanently established. There are good written procedures and guidelines available to staff that are regularly tested, reviewed and revised as appropriate. Monthly live testing of emergency response plans is conducted, many of which include external emergency services. Good partnership and consultation arrangements continue to exist with local emergency services.
28. The security manager produces a report after every test which reflects the findings from the process. This informs further training for staff and improvements in procedural guidance and practice. All relevant senior managers are trained to 'silver command' level in dealing with serious incidents. All staff receive regular refresher training in security and health and safety procedures.
29. A recent thorough independent audit of all security measures has taken place at the centre. The report of the visit highlighted some areas for improvement which are in the process of being addressed. Some require procedural clarification. This includes practice in relation to searching and the locking of bedrooms doors.
30. Managers have recently reviewed and revised the policy and procedural guidance on the searching of young people at the centre. This is in response to the Youth Justice Board's recent review of searching and suggestions that secure establishments move to a more risk-led approach to full searching of young people. Young people are now only subjected to a full personal search when they are admitted if there is intelligence to suggest that they may be attempting to smuggle something into the centre. This is a very recently established procedure and it is too early to judge if the change is having an impact on the number of restricted items brought into the centre.
31. Staff ensure young people are made aware of the reasons for personal searches and searches of their personal items. Staff are well trained in carrying out such procedures, and practice in this respect is monitored. Young people are kept safe by procedures to ensure restricted items are not

brought into the centre, but this is done as much as possible to preserve their dignity. There is an effective and efficient procedure in place for the random searching of staff.

32. Young people are not locked in their rooms inappropriately and there has been a slight decrease in the use of single separation since the last inspection. Comprehensive monitoring records are completed on all occurrences of separation. Auditing of these records continues to be undertaken with closed circuit television recordings used to check their accuracy. If a young person should request to spend time in their room, this is enabled and an appropriate record made.
33. Time away from the group continues to be used positively as part of therapeutic crisis intervention techniques. Young people are encouraged to take time out in their room to think about their behaviour and ensure it is at an acceptable level when they rejoin the group. Even though young people are able to leave their bedroom upon request when they feel ready, this time away continues to be recorded as a separation. Some development has been undertaken to clarify the recording of these events, however, no new system of recording or associated guidance for staff has yet been implemented. This means that over-recording of these events continues.
34. There are good professional and appropriate relationships in place between young people and staff, who themselves are guided by behaviour management policies and procedures. The process of challenging inappropriate behaviour has improved since the last inspection and staff are more confident in their practice.
35. A multidisciplinary scheme, 'supporting positive behaviour' has now been in place for six months. On a daily basis all behaviour management occurrences are reviewed, with any actions required to be taken to support a young person being allocated to specific staff members. This system of monitoring helps to ensure that a bullying or safeguarding issue is less likely to be overlooked.
36. Interventions allocated to be undertaken under the supporting positive behaviour scheme are targeted on three levels. These range from verbal interaction with a young person to a formal support plan being initiated. All plans are reviewed weekly to ensure they continue to offer support. Monthly meetings are held which include all disciplines at the centre to review the effectiveness of the scheme and consider collated data on plans which have been implemented.
37. Young people are encouraged to display positive behaviour by the centre's incentive scheme. This enables them to earn rewards for consistent positive interactions. Comprehensive information is made available to young people about the workings of the scheme and they understand how it works. While the information is not available in different formats, staff explain the

workings of the scheme to each young person. The scheme can also be tailored to meet the needs of young people who are finding it difficult to achieve. A recent review of the scheme was undertaken to ensure it remains effective.

38. Formal sanctions continue to be used only where necessary and are relevant to the misdemeanour. There has been a commendable further increase in the use of restorative practice techniques, such as reparation and mediation. This enables young people to develop a better understanding of the consequences of their actions. The record sheets used for detailing any sanctions issued have been reviewed. They now enable young people to add their comments to the record as much as two to three days later. This allows views to be stated when the young person is calmer and ensures that they are more relevant and considered.
39. Written procedural guidance and a centre policy on the use of physical restraint are available. There are clear statements within the guidance that restraint is to be used as a last resort only. All staff who may have to use physical restraint are trained in the techniques and receive regular refresher training. Staff members also undertake therapeutic crisis intervention training which provides them with information on using diffusion and diversion techniques. Since the last inspection the numbers of restraints occurring on a monthly basis have risen with the highest totals experienced in August and September 2010. During these two months, a group of five young people who displayed particularly challenging behaviour were involved in multiple restraints. These accounted for almost 30% of the total occurrences. Restraints in October 2010 were at the lowest level since the last inspection in May.
40. Behaviour management data is collated on a monthly basis. As well as informing and developing practice at the centre, this information is also provided to a monthly critical incident review panel. The panel is made up of internal and external professionals and allows a transparent review of practice including safeguarding to occur. The director of the centre has recognised the need to ensure consistent attendance by external professionals and that the panel remain effective in challenging practice.
41. The complaints system at the centre continues to work well and offers a formal route for young people to raise issues. Young people know how to access the procedure, and receive a response in extremely short timescales, which have recently been reduced further. An appeals process is available should young people be unhappy with the response received. The introduction of 'grumbles books' onto the living units enables young people to raise concerns informally without having to resort to the complaints system. There has been a reduction in the number of formal issues raised since their introduction. There is good internal and external monitoring of the books, including by the independent advocates.

42. Independent advocates undertake regular visits to the centre and all young people are able to talk with them should they wish. Advocacy representation can also be accessed by telephone helplines or a written request. Advocates state that recent lower numbers of young people at the centre has enabled them to spend longer periods with each young person. The advocates state that they are able to raise any outstanding issues with the management team at the centre and are confident that matters will be dealt with. The access available to advocacy and the complaints system allows young people to be sure that they can confidently raise concerns and they will be listened to.
43. An effective anti-bullying programme is in place which helps to protect young people, who are informed of a zero-tolerance approach at the centre. Written policies and guidance are available for staff members, who are also required to undertake relevant training. Tracking logs are set up when any bullying is suspected, and the multidisciplinary morning meeting which looks at all incidents, helps to ensure any possible bullying is identified. Young people are well protected from bullying.
44. Child protection and safeguarding practice at the centre remains robust and effective. Staff members across all disciplines at the centre receive training which is supplemented by comprehensive written procedures. All allegations and disclosures are referred to the local children and young persons' services. An initial meeting which is attended by the police is held for every allegation and the young person involved is spoken with. Closed circuit recording of any incident is able to be viewed by external professionals when appropriate and advice regarding the appropriateness of practice can be given. Child protection arrangements in place at the centre help to protect the welfare of young people.
45. All young people undergo a multidisciplinary assessment when they arrive at the centre. This identifies any areas of vulnerability or potential for self-harm. Individual risk management plans are put in place and these are reviewed on a regular basis. Staff members undertake self-harm recognition training which helps them to ensure that young people are comprehensively protected from any self-harming behaviour or that which may be perpetuated by others.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

Education

The provision is not judged.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

Welfare

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Helping children achieve economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Management

The provision is not judged.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to the Director of the secure training centre unless otherwise stated.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• further develop the centre's self-administration policy and practice to provide young people with the opportunity to manage their own medication in a safe supportive environment (Being healthy-standard 2) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• clarify the recording process of instances of young people taking time away in their room (Staying safe-standard 16) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• investigate how the programme of activities can be tailored so that it meets the interests of the young people (Enjoying and achieving-standard 7) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improve the range of leisure and enrichment activities available for young people when they have free time on the residential living units (Enjoying and achieving – standard 8) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure young people receive an appropriate programme that prepares them for the next stage of education, training or employment; specifically provide more opportunities for young people to participate in vocational and work experience (Economic wellbeing-standards 2/5) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• install as soon as possible an upgraded telephone system to improve the arrangements for young people to have contact with their parents or carers (Positive contribution – standard 19) |