

Hassockfield Secure Training Centre

Inspection report for Secure Training Centre

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| Inspection date | 29 October 2009 |
| Lead inspector | Linda Christie, HMI |
| Additional inspector(s) | Malcolm Stannard Joan Dennis HMI (shadow) |

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| Type of inspection | Random - unannounced |
| Type of registration | Secure Training Centre |

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| Service address | Hassockfield Secure Training Centre Corbridge Road Medomsley Consett, County Durham DH8 6QY |
| Telephone number | 01207 565600 |
| Email address | twilsonsmith@premier-serco.com |
| Director | Trevor Wilson-Smith |

About this inspection

The purpose of inspection is to provide assurance to the Secretary of State that secure training centres (STCs) 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 STC 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 STC
- 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 a random unannounced inspection carried out in accordance with the service level agreement between the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and Ofsted. The standards used during the inspection were those agreed between the YJB and Ofsted.

The last full inspection was carried out in April 2009 with an interim inspection in October 2008.

A team of 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 (STC) 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 from 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 49 young people were in residence. Young people live in four separate house blocks.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

4. This was an interim unannounced inspection of the centre, intended to assess progress against recommendations made following the last inspection undertaken on 23 April 2009. All the standards included under Every Child Matters outcome staying safe were assessed. A site inspection also took place to review the quality of accommodation, security and building maintenance.
5. The director and his senior management team continue to reflect a strongly child-focused value base. The centre presented as a much calmer environment for young people and staff during this visit than at the time of the last inspection. Young people were involved in purposeful activities throughout the duration of the inspection. Staff provide clear boundaries for behaviour and expectations of young people and appropriately challenge unacceptable language.
6. Although staff are more consistently challenging unacceptable behaviour and concerted efforts are being made to maintain good order and discipline, the number of incidents of disorder has only recently reduced. The impact of the further training for staff and the direction they have received from managers are beginning to be reflected in the reduction in the number of incidents of restraint, but it is too early to measure the full impact of the action taken.
7. Staff reported feeling more confident about their role and work at the centre and had put behind them the concerns they expressed regarding their future during the last inspection. This was linked to the fact that approximately 10

staff were required to take voluntary severance or were made redundant. This was as a result of a decision taken by the YJB to decommission the number of resident places by six, due to the low population levels in the secure estate. Staff morale has significantly improved and the focus is now appropriately on ensuring the best possible outcomes for young people.

8. There is good and transparent multi-disciplinary review of behaviour management and safeguarding through the critical incident review panel. The monitoring of complaints has not been as robust as was previously the case during a period of absence of the staff member usually responsible. Action is being taken by the centre to address this.
9. There has been a more detailed focus on safety and security after several incidents of contraband items being brought into the centre. The appointment of a security officer has resulted in a reduction in restricted items brought into the centre and a regular and comprehensive testing of emergency procedures is being undertaken.

What has been improved since the last inspection?

10. Improvements have been made to respond to the 15 recommendations made during the last key inspection. The three specifically made to improve educational provision related to: reducing the number of interruptions to lessons; enabling more able young people to gain higher education; and installing extractor fans in the design technology workshop. These were not reviewed as part of this inspection, although the director's action plan reflected progress. These recommendations will be reviewed at the next key inspection.
11. Of the other 12 recommendations, 10 have been met. One recommendation remaining relates to the amount of time young people have allocated to make telephone calls to their families. The centre also does not have a system for young people to receive incoming calls. Any changes are likely to require an overhaul of the current telephone system and incentive procedures. The recommendation related to the facilities available to visiting medical practitioners has also yet to be adequately resolved.
12. One of the two recommendations related to being healthy has been addressed and has improved the practice of sharing information with nursing staff.
13. The three recommendations made under staying safe were met, although the training for staff related to managing consistently challenging behaviour has only recently started to have an impact. There are sufficient staff on duty to work directly with young people, at a ratio that is consistently above the contracted minimum staffing levels. An incentive scheme has continued to be evaluated and improved with young people involved in the process.
14. The recommendation related to improving opportunities for life skills training has been addressed. Considerable and effective efforts have been made to ensure that young people have opportunities to develop self-reliance skills. This has become a routine part of their daily life on the units and through the more detailed sessions they have with appropriately trained staff.
15. There were five recommendations made relating to management and organisation. All of these have been dealt with and clarity has been provided about roles, responsibilities and professional boundaries. The recommendations related to training and selection procedures have also been dealt with. The one page summary statement of purpose is appropriately displayed and available to visitors and young people.

The effectiveness of the service

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

16. All aspects of the being healthy outcome were inspected in full during the last key inspection in April 2009. This outcome area was judged as good and inspectors found nothing to suggest that there have been any failings in relation to these standards.
17. Two recommendations were made under this outcome area. One was related to the sharing of an annual audit report carried out by the external manager for the healthcare service with nursing staff. This has been dealt with and nursing staff have regular opportunities to meet with their external manager from Serco Health.
18. The other issue raised was in relation to the facilities used by the GP and other medical practitioners when meeting with young people. The healthcare centre is constructed in such a way that noise travels very easily. The acoustics are poor and even with the door closed conversations can be overheard. Staff make every effort to maintain a discreet distance from the door, and have been reminded about this again recently, but even normal level conversations can be heard outside the room.
19. The director said it is impossible to identify another room for young people to meet with medical practitioners. He confirmed he will once again seek to find a solution, perhaps sound proofing the door, if that is possible.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

20. Young people are not removed from association unfairly or inappropriately. The centre's behavioural management policy clearly sets out the occasions when separation may be used. Good records are held of any instance of separation occurring and these are monitored by managers and externally as part of the critical incident review panel agenda. There has been a decrease in the amount of single separations occurring each month at the centre since the last inspection in April 2009, which is commensurate with the trainee population during that period.
21. A recommendation was made at the last inspection that training should be made available to staff to enable them to confidently and competently manage young people's behaviours. All staff at the centre have recently undergone training in the use of the amended therapeutic crisis intervention techniques, as well as taking part in a bespoke course looking at ways of dealing with behaviours through negotiation and diffusion. Staff members are now more positive about the different ways of working with young people and confident in challenging any negative behaviour exhibited.
22. Good written guidance is available to staff on the use of restraint. Staff are aware that restraint should be used as a last resort, having exhausted all negotiation techniques. The numbers of restraints occurring have decreased since July 2009 and show a marked decrease for September 2009, also commensurate with occupancy levels. This was the period immediately after staff had completed their revised therapeutic crisis intervention training. Records are held of all restraints and these are monitored on a daily basis by a duty director. All incidents of restraint are considered by the monthly critical incident review panel, which provides good external monitoring. Staff members who may be required to use physical restraint receive initial training in correct techniques and refresher training on an annual basis.
23. A new shift pattern for staff was introduced at the end of June 2009. This, coupled with the temporary closure of one living unit has enabled the managers to ensure appropriate numbers of staff are available to provide supervision and support to young people. There is a future staff deployment plan in place for all units which allows for absences through sickness or training whilst still allowing required staffing levels to be maintained. The level of sickness leave amongst some staff has been addressed by managers and the human resources department and has resulted in a reduction in days lost to illness. The level of staffing available at the time of the inspection is sufficient and allows for additional individual work to take place with the young people.

24. Further revision and amendment of the incentive scheme have taken place. The scheme incorporates rewards for attainment and progress both in education and care disciplines. Consultation with young people was undertaken in relation to the operation of the scheme and the thresholds for the awarding of individual rewards. Young people are positive about the system and feel it shows clearly what is expected of them. There are appeal procedures in place for young people to follow should they feel they have been discriminated against in the awarding of points. An interim review of the scheme has been carried out and a further full review is planned for the end of the year.
25. Young people's privacy and dignity are well promoted. Staff members have recently been reminded of the need to ensure confidentiality is respected with regard to all information and specific confidentiality training is being provided as part of the 12 week in-service training.
26. Upon admission to the centre all young people receive good in-depth assessment covering all aspects of their needs. A thorough risk assessment is conducted which is informed by the information available from placing agencies. This assessment is updated on a regular basis and discussed in multi-disciplinary meetings, ensuring that any risk of self harm or behaviour which may endanger others is identified and addressed.
27. Young people are made aware of their rights and responsibilities whilst at the centre. There is good written information available in the admission pack and key workers and advocates orally reinforce this.
28. The centre has an excellent relationship with the local safeguarding children board and the police child protection service. A comprehensive child protection procedure which contains details of local working arrangements is in place. Staff members receive thorough guidance and training on the procedures to be followed to ensure protection for young people.
29. Review of records demonstrated that safeguarding referrals are made appropriately. There was one exception when an issue raised by a young person's parent was not referred. This was fully investigated internally by managers who confirmed that the young person and the parent were satisfied and no further action was necessary. However, the centre did not follow its own protocol in this respect. Managers subsequently recognised that this should also have been referred to the local authority safeguarding services. This was the only occasion noted when the centre's protocol for referral to local safeguarding services was not rigorously followed to ensure young people are appropriately protected.
30. Young people are aware of, and have easy access to, the centre's complaints procedure. As with other aspects of the service this procedure is under regular review to ensure its effectiveness. Young people are happy

that concerns are dealt with but often would like a quicker response. All complaints made are acknowledged, and responses to any complaints are generally made in a timely manner. However, the process used to investigate and conclude administration of complaints can sometimes mean that information to be fed back to a young person can be delayed. This is particularly the case if complaints are referred to the local safeguarding team for investigation. Managers are not systematically keeping young people informed at the different stages of the process resulting in the concerns expressed by young people regarding delays. This can create difficult situations when staff working with young people are unaware that they have not been informed. Some of the written responses to young people can be overly formal in their nature.

31. Good arrangements for advocacy are in place. Independent advocates regularly visit the centre and young people are able to meet with them as a group or in private. Written information regarding advocacy is made available and posters which include pictures of the advocates and visiting times are displayed in the living units. Young people can contact the advocates by telephone and through a helpline, which they can access in private. Issues can also be raised at the young person's consultation meetings held at the centre.
32. There are good communication structures in place to ensure that parents and carers are informed of any significant event affecting a young person. Key workers and case managers have regular contact to update parents on the day to day events and development of their child.
33. An effective system is in place which protects young people from bullying. There is a zero tolerance policy and a staged approach is taken to dealing with any episodes. A written procedure is available for staff guidance and records of any intervention are kept, which are monitored at a multi-disciplinary meeting.
34. Young people, staff and visitors are kept safe by good and improving safety and security measures. The centre has recently achieved the British Safety Council five star award, which included the Sword of Honour. Senior managers decided to establish the post of security officer and a staff member, at middle management level, has taken an active role in improving even further the safety and security procedures. There is an ongoing and robust testing of the emergency response plans, including those that involve external agencies such as the fire service and police.
35. There has been an increase in the CCTV system with four additional cameras being placed in significant areas such as the dining room. However, there are still areas of the three original house blocks that do not have adequate CCTV coverage. These are corridor areas through which young people enter and exit the house blocks, often in groups. These are areas where there is the potential for incidents, including bullying.

36. Young people are kept safe by improved procedures to ensure restricted items are not brought into the centre. They are made aware of the reasons for personal searches and restrictions of what property can be brought into the centre. Staff are well trained in carrying out such procedures and practice in this respect is monitored. A reduction of incidents has taken place as a result.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

Education

The provision was not judged.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

Welfare

The provision was not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

37. All standards under the positive contribution outcome area were inspected in full during the last inspection in April 2009. That inspection found that all standards were met and services in this respect were judged as good.
38. The only recommendation made was in relation to the amount of time young people have to make telephone calls from the centre to their families. Practice in relation to the use of telephones has not changed since the centre opened ten years ago, but a number of young people and their parents said they were not satisfied with the amount of time allocated for those on the lower incentive levels. Parents also said they cannot call in to the centre and have to rely upon their child contacting them to have a conversation with them.
39. Managers and staff feel that the amount of time available for young people is appropriate. Those on the lower level can have five minutes a day, which is increased as they work their way through the incentive levels. Managers and staff believe that it is an incentive for young people to co-operate with the routines of the day and manage their behaviour in order to receive more telephone contact time. Managers are also very concerned at how the centre could manage incoming calls, particularly as it would be difficult to ascertain the caller's identity. Young people often have restrictions upon their contact with others particularly co-defendants.
40. The director and his team intend to explore this matter further and to consider the time allocated and the issue of incoming calls. The telephone system is likely to require upgrading to allow for such a change in practice.

Helping children achieve economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

41. The life skills provision at the centre is good and continues to develop. The independent training flat is now fully operational and well used to help young people acquire basic living skills, such shopping, cooking, household chores, consumer rights and housing options.
42. There is an effective multi-disciplinary approach to developing young people's abilities to look after themselves and learn a range of life skills. Each young person is assessed to establish their level of coping skills with practical tasks. A personal plan is produced with clear objectives for each individual young person, if they wish to participate in the life skills programme. A number of residential care staff, who are appropriately trained, work through a range of programmes with the young people. All work is appropriately assessed and evaluated to measure progress and ensure effective outcomes.
43. Staff on the living units are also encouraged to teach young people how to carry out the unit chores to a good standard. Once instruction is given regarding a particular chore, for example cleaning tables hygienically, this is recorded and signed off by staff as having been done to a high standard. Young people have benefited from this practice, with increased cooperation on the units and development of skills.

Management

The provision is satisfactory.

44. Leadership and management at the centre are good with some strong aspects, such as the processes in place to consult with staff and young people.
45. Good efforts have been made to ensure that staff are aware of the different roles and responsibilities of managers at all levels in the centre. Staff are now clear about which manager to go to for advice and authorisation for particular aspects of the service. This further enhances consistency and effective communication. Young people are well supported by staff who are themselves clear about their responsibilities.
46. The role of the house block managers has continued to improve and residential care staff are much more positive about the support they receive from these managers. The living units are now more consistently maintained and there is an obvious sense of responsibility and ownership for the quality of the facilities and accommodation in these areas. Staff also confirm an improvement in the frequency of supervision and the quality of communication across the centre.
47. Senior managers who have a daily role as duty directors are expected as part of their duties to walk through the living units when staff and young people are present. This is evidently not routine practice, as reported by staff and young people.
48. Effective action has been taken to ensure that all staff are aware of the professional boundaries for their role. The efforts made to tackle the issue of staff discussing private and confidential information about other colleagues with young people has already produced tangible results. Staff have been reminded in a number of ways of their duty to maintain confidentiality and privacy in relation to other colleagues as well as young people. They are in the process of receiving training and all staff have been asked to re-sign Serco's confidentiality policy and the Official Secrets Act.
49. Although there was no previous evidence that staff inappropriately shared information about young people, staff have been reminded that conversations can at times be overheard. They are therefore more mindful and cautious when having conversations about young people.
50. A good procedure is now in place for supervisors to inform the training manager of any specific training or development needs of individual staff members. The process ensures that individual training needs as identified are consistently shared with the training manager, and action is taken to address the training or development shortfall, as appropriate. This process

has further enhanced what is already a very good focus on staff training and development.

51. There is a thorough selection and vetting of all staff working with young people at the centre. Although a process was already established for the human resources department and the YJB monitor to review the outcome of vetting for new staff, including seeing references, this has been improved further. The director now sees all references and Criminal Records Bureau checks and formally confirms the decision to appoint a staff member.
52. The centre's one page statement of purpose, referred to as a 'charter' is now displayed in certain areas of the site, including the reception and visitors centre. A copy is also included in the more detailed statement of purpose document, which is available to staff, young people's families and professionals. Young people have a user friendly version which is included in their guide to the centre.

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">• ensure the facilities available for visiting professionals to carry out medical consultations with young people provide an appropriate level of privacy (Being healthy/Staying safe - Standards 2 - 18) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• review the process for dealing with complaints raised by young people to ensure that a prompt response is received by them and they are kept informed at each stage of an investigation process (Staying safe - Standard 10) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• consider expanding the closed circuit television system to include the entrance corridor areas in the three original house blocks (Staying safe - Standards 1 & 4) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• review the arrangements for young people to have telephone contact with their parents or carers (Positive contribution - Standard 19). |