

# An announced inspection of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre

November 2011





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## List of abbreviations

<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (teams)
<b>CCTV</b>	Closed Circuit Television
<b>CJCO</b>	Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
<b>CJI</b>	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
<b>CJO</b>	Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
<b>DoJ</b>	Department of Justice
<b>ELC</b>	Education and Learning Centre (in Woodlands JJC)
<b>ETI</b>	Education and Training Inspectorate
<b>JJC</b>	Juvenile Justice Centre
<b>LAC</b>	Looked After Children
<b>NIACRO</b>	Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
<b>NICTS</b>	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
<b>NIHE</b>	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
<b>NIPS</b>	Northern Ireland Prison Service
<b>PACE</b>	Police and Criminal Evidence
<b>PBNI</b>	Probation Board for Northern Ireland
<b>PPANI</b>	Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland
<b>PSNI</b>	Police Service of Northern Ireland
<b>RQIA</b>	Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
<b>SCH</b>	Secure Children's Home
<b>STC</b>	Secure Training Centre
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>YJA</b>	Youth Justice Agency
<b>YJB</b>	Youth Justice Board (in England and Wales)
<b>YOC</b>	Young Offenders Centre
<b>YOI</b>	Young Offender Institution
<b>VCS</b>	Voluntary and Community Sector



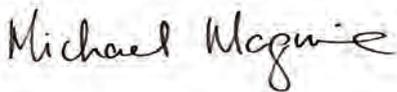
## Chief Inspector's Foreword

This report presents an inspection into the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (the JJC). The Centre is the custodial directorate of the Youth Justice Agency (YJA). While the JJC has a strong childcare ethos it is fundamentally a custodial facility – the only one for children under 18-years-old in Northern Ireland. Children are sent there by the courts, either on remand or on a sentence. Children are also sent to the JJC under Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) provisions, usually overnight or for the weekend until they are produced in court. Although the JJC had 48 places at the time of the inspection, it held 25 children.

Overall, the report is a very positive one which notes the consolidation of professional practice and continued improvements which have been made since the previous inspection. This inspection found that the JJC has continued to provide high levels of care and control to children sent into custody. In addition, standards of healthcare and education were high. Feedback from partner agencies and community providers on the work of the Centre was positive and it was recognised as a model of good practice. The JJC buildings were well maintained and security had been enhanced by extension of closed-circuit television (CCTV) to all communal areas.

The report examines a number of issues which are outside the control of the JJC, but which have a significant impact on the operational environment within which it works. The first is the number of children who are sent there for very short periods of time under PACE arrangements. The second relates to delays within the justice system and the number of young people in the JJC on remand. The final issue concerns the need to transfer 17-year-old boys from the Young Offenders Centre (YOC) at Hydebank Wood to the JJC. This is important on grounds of good practice and value for money. Addressing these issues would greatly facilitate the excellent work of the Centre and provide an overall better service in relation to the custodial care of children in Northern Ireland.

The inspection was led by Tom McGonigle and Rachel Lindsay of CJI. It was undertaken in association with inspection teams from the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). My thanks to all those involved in the inspection process and to staff within the JJC who facilitated the work.



**Dr Michael Maguire**  
Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice  
in Northern Ireland  
November 2011





## Executive Summary

The last Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) report on Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (the JJC) was published in May 2008. It made 38 recommendations of which the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) fully accepted 33, partially accepted five, and published an action plan to implement accordingly.

The JJC had only recently opened when CJI last inspected and in the intervening period it has consolidated its practice. This inspection found that the JJC has continued to provide high levels of care and control to children sent into its custody. It was delivering a good service in close consultation with children and their adult carers. Appropriate governance arrangements had been maintained and management practices were strengthened. There had been no escapes since the last inspection and considerable effort was being invested in addressing children's offending behaviour.

There had been some positive developments in the child custody system since 2008 and Inspectors found:

- the JJC had become the default location for all girls aged under 18-years-old;
- the age profile of its population had changed. Some 25% of the children admitted were 17-years-old at the time of our inspection; and
- collaboration with Social Services had also improved and this appears to have reduced inappropriate admissions. However, a better response is required from some Social Services Trusts to support the work of the JJC.

There were several examples of progress within internal JJC management and practice. These included:

- a significant reduction in the use of force;
- continued investment in staff training and development, and high numbers of staff had qualified in relevant disciplines;
- the appointment of a Deputy Director of Social Work and part-time Forensic Psychiatrist;
- improved performance management - overtime and sick leave were reduced and there was closer managerial control over annual leave and night staff deployment;
- better management information systems;
- new JJC rules had been published and were more fit-for-purpose;
- children's file recording had improved; and
- monthly monitoring visits by the Office of Social Services and bi-annual unannounced CJI inspections had been initiated.

Standards of healthcare and education were high though Inspectors were concerned about professional isolation of healthcare and education personnel. Feedback from partner agencies and community providers about the JJC was positive and it was recognised as a model of good practice. Senior personnel were invited to advise on the design of new Secure Children's Homes (SCH) in England and the Republic of Ireland, and were also represented on the England and



Wales Restraint Management Board. The JJC buildings were well-maintained and security had been enhanced by the extension of closed-circuit television (CCTV) to all communal areas.

Inspectors were therefore satisfied the JJC was fulfilling its legislative remit to '*Protect the public by accommodating children ordered to be detained therein in a safe, secure and caring environment; and work to reintegrate children into the community ...*'. Despite this the inspection also raises major issues. These are outwith the JJC and the YJA, and are not to do with its operational management or care and control of children held there. Rather they are systemic matters around the high numbers of children being sent to the JJC for very short periods on foot of Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) proceedings, the impact of delay and the location of 17-year-old boys who require custody. These issues are not new. They are already being addressed to varying degrees, but there is scope for further progress and we make recommendations only accordingly. Things are better in some respects than the child custody arrangements in England and Wales, but it should be possible to further improve the position in the small Northern Ireland jurisdiction.

The JJC service comes at a very high financial cost, but it is impossible to accurately relate costs to re-offending levels since there have been so few sentenced children and re-offending data is limited. For the majority of children who are sent there yet never receive a sentence, we can only conclude that the JJC represents a very expensive way to detain them, usually for short periods from which they are unlikely to gain much benefit. It is also anomalous that while there is surplus bed space in the JJC, many 17-year-old boys are held in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre (the YOC) which is ill-equipped to deal with them. This situation begs early implementation of the obvious remedy-transfer of 17-year-old boys from the YOC to the JJC - on grounds of both good practice and value for money.

There will be challenges in the future including budget pressures and changes in the population profile. Measurement of outcomes for children, including their reconviction rates needs to be improved. However, the main challenge is for the wider criminal justice and child care systems to build on the positive collaboration that has begun and ensure the JJC is only used for children who really need to be held in custody.





## Recommendations

### Strategic recommendations

- The YJA should canvass a wide range of options to reduce the number of PACE admissions to the JJC with its criminal justice and Social Services partners and set appropriate targets (*paragraph 1.23*).
- By April 2012 all male children who are sent into custody should be treated equally with female children i.e. their default placement should be Woodlands JJC; and in the interim, the JJC should take a more central role in the YOC planning process for children. This should include chairing the meetings. Terms of Reference should be prepared for these meetings whose primary purpose ought to be to establish the child's suitability for transfer to the JJC, and a robust quality assurance process should be introduced (*paragraph 2.28*).

### Operational recommendations

- The JJC database should be developed to generate more detailed information about the offending profiles and risk levels of children who are sent there. The database should include the number and seriousness of previous convictions as well as current and pending charges; and it should specifically profile the looked-after section of the JJC population (*paragraph 2.2*).
- JJC Managers should use their involvement in the Regional Child Protection Panel and in the individual Trust Child Protection Panels to address strategic and operational issues relating to child protection and safeguarding as they arise (*paragraph 4.17*).
- The teaching staff and instructors should review their teaching and training approaches to provide more opportunities for children to develop the skills needed to become independent learners and to plan, problem solve and apply their knowledge to new situations; (*paragraph 6.7*).
- A safety audit should be carried out by a competent person in relation to the woodwork facility; (*paragraph 6.7*).
- The ELC should continue to develop efficient systems to transfer academic information to other educational providers when children transfer at short notice to ensure the continuity of education provision (*paragraph 6.7*).
- The JJC should fully implement the education recommendations from the last inspection (*paragraph 6.10*).



- Management should facilitate access to professional training for ELC staff as a matter of urgency to develop their awareness and knowledge of the wider educational system, and to keep abreast of current educational developments (*paragraph 6.10*).
- Short-term care plans are developed when appropriate in respect of identified nursing care needs (*paragraph 7.5*).
- Policies and procedures in relation to healthcare should be individualised to the healthcare department and reflect the local procedures applied (*paragraph 7.7*).
- Clinical governance systems should be introduced into the healthcare department to maintain and improve the quality of nursing care provision (*paragraph 7.8*).
- Staff from the healthcare department should consider introduction of the Regional Risk Assessment tool and a Care Programme Approach to the management of mental health to ensure continuity of care and a standardised approach for children (*paragraph 7.15*).
- The Regional Infection Prevention and Control Manual should be adopted by the JJC and regular awareness training in infection prevention and control should be provided for all staff (*paragraph 7.23*).
- Work to replace the decked areas outside the houses should be expedited to ensure there is a suitable slip resistant surface and brought to completion prior to the end of 2011 (*paragraph 8.3*).
- Fire resisting doors which are required to remain open for operational or other reasons are fitted with automatic self-closing devices which are linked to the fire alarm and detection system, for example swing free closers or magnetic hold-open detents. Particular attention should be given to doors of rooms which are considered to present an increased fire hazard and which are subject to high volumes of use on a daily basis, such as the laundry, kitchen etc. (*paragraph 8.9*).
- During future decorative upgrading or refurbishment of bedrooms in the JJC, electrical sockets are relocated to a position similar to that in House 2 to reduce the need for trailing electrical extension leads (*paragraph 8.11*).





Section



# Inspection Report



## CHAPTER 1:

# Introduction



- 1.1 Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (the JJC) is the custodial directorate of the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) which also has two other operational directorates - Community Services and Youth Conferencing. The YJA is sponsored by the Department of Justice (DoJ) as a 'next steps' agency with its own Management Board that includes the Woodlands Director.
- 1.2 The Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (CJCO) provides the legislative basis for the JJC's operation. The Order is modelled on international best practice, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which states that: *'deprivation of liberty should be avoided wherever possible and alternative disposals provided;*<sup>1</sup> and also three sets of United Nations (UN) rules and guidelines which provide for:
- protection of juveniles deprived of their liberty;
  - prevention of juvenile delinquency; and
  - administration of juvenile justice.
- 1.3 The CJCO is therefore premised on the expectation that only serious or persistent child offenders should be sent to custody. It includes provisions for diverting children from court and from custody, and the maximum custodial sentence that can normally be imposed is two years.
- 1.4 While the JJC had a strong childcare ethos, it was fundamentally a custodial facility - the only one for children in Northern Ireland. It moved into new purpose-built accommodation at Bangor in January 2007, comprised of six self-contained living units clustered around an education area. Eight of the 48 places were reserved for girls, and on the basis of established occupancy levels it was staffed for 36 children.
- 1.5 Children could be sent to the JJC by criminal courts, either on remand or on a sentence. The JJC had to accept any child who was sent there by a criminal court, and there was no right to exclude nor option to assess suitability. The other route was for children to be sent there on foot of Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) admissions by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) - this was usually overnight or during a weekend until they could be produced in court.

### Profile of the children

- 1.6 Improved arrangements which had been introduced since the last inspection meant that the JJC now took all girls under the age of 18 whereas some were

<sup>1</sup> Article 40, UNCRC, UN General Assembly November 1989.



previously sent to the adult women's prison. The fluid nature of the JJC population has meant there might sometimes be only a single girl in the Centre, though this was seldom the case for long. Woodlands had also become the default location for nearly all boys aged under 16-years though, unlike the custodial arrangements for girls, this was not formally introduced. In addition the percentage of 17-year-olds admitted to the JJC had increased steadily from 4% in 2005-06 to 25% in 2010-11.

- 1.7 The steady growth in overall numbers of children being admitted to the JJC is concerning as there is no obvious reason for the increase. The percentage being admitted on sentence was decreasing and the population was in a state of continuous imbalance. There were 411 initial admissions during 2010-11, representing 215 individuals, so several children were admitted more than once.
- 1.8 An average 58% of the JJC population was on remand during 2009-10, and most of these did not subsequently receive custodial sentences. Even in England and Wales, where the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and Government acknowledge custody remands are over-used, the average remand population

was only 25%. The average length of stay for children remanded to the JJC was only 12 days, compared to over six weeks in England and Wales.

- 1.9 The percentage of PACE admissions was increasing steadily. Yet only 116 (45%) of PACE admissions between April 2010 – March 2011 were converted to custodial remands by youth courts; and only 9% of original PACE admissions ultimately resulted in custodial sentences. Most PACE children stayed for less than 24 hours, which begs the value of admitting them to custody in the first place, and it was suggested to Inspectors that JJC placements were used for some of these children in the absence of alternative accommodation when they presented chronic social problems.
- 1.10 The numbers of PACE and remand admissions fluctuated widely each month (between eight – 29 during 2010-11) and there was a seasonal dip in admissions every Christmas.
- 1.11 Violence against the person led to 30% of initial admissions during 2010-11 (the comparable figure for England and Wales was 55%). Theft, criminal damage and (surprisingly) 'offences against the State' were the other main categories. The JJC had only limited data on children's

**Table 1: Total admissions to Woodlands JJC by status**

	Cumulative Total 10 Apr 2010 - 11 Mar 2011	Comparative Total 09 Apr 2009 - 10 Mar 2010	Comparative Total 08 Apr 2008 - 09 Mar 2009
PACE	256	200	120
Remand	255	237	198
Sentence	40 (7%)	37 (8%)	39 (11%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>357</b>



offence profiles, but Managers felt that many children who ended up there were neither persistent nor serious offenders.

1.12 Thirty-seven percent of initial admissions to the JJC in 2010-11 were Looked After Children (LAC) who were subject to a Care Order or voluntarily accommodated by Social Services.

1.13 Fifty-seven percent of admissions were Roman Catholic children and 40% were Protestant.

1.14 The average daily population for 2010-11 was 26, which comprised of:

- 24 boys and two girls; and
- 17 on remand, eight sentenced and one PACE.

1.15 This data suggests that problems which were highlighted in the 2008 inspection still prevailed: there were too many PACE placements, too many LAC admissions and high rates of turnover. These cannot be remedied by the YJA alone. Rather they are structural problems for the wider criminal justice and welfare systems. Concerted work had been initiated with the Health and Social Services Trust and the Health and Social Care Board in relation to LAC children. This needs to continue and more has to be done within the broader criminal justice system.

### **Comparisons with child custody in England and Wales**

1.16 The purpose of child custody in England and Wales was similar to the purpose in Northern Ireland in aiming to balance care of children with preventing offending. Some 6,500 children entered custody annually in England and Wales, though Ministry of Justice statistics

showed there had been a recent reduction in the average daily population – from 2,881 in 2008-09 to 2,418 in 2009-10. There is differentiated provision in England and Wales with three types of custody for children, all commissioned by the YJB. They are:

- Secure Children's Homes (SCHs) – small units for younger children (average age of 14-year-olds) with high staff numbers, focusing on physical, emotional and behavioural needs. Run by local authorities, SCHs are the closest equivalent to the JJC, but differ significantly in that they take non-offenders as well as children who are sent by the criminal courts, on a ratio of roughly two offenders/one care placement. Unlike the JJC, they can refuse placements. A total of 11 SCHs have closed since 2000 due to a cost-cutting drive;
- Secure Training Centres (STCs) – medium-sized units (average age of 15-year-olds) with tailored programmes, and an education and rehabilitation focus. They are run by private operators under Home Office contracts; and
- Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) are larger capacity centres for 15-21-year-olds who are already known to police and the courts. They are run by Her Majesty's Prison Service. YOIs must take all children sent by criminal courts.

1.17 In March 2010 the respective occupancy figures were:

- SCHs - 158;
- STCs - 258;
- YOIs - 1,793; and
- total - 2,209.



This represented an overall 85% occupancy rate of available beds. It is immediately apparent that the majority (81%) of children in England and Wales were held in Prison Service custody. Inspectors have visited some of the establishments in England and can confirm that at the time of this inspection Woodlands JJC provided a much better environment for children, with higher numbers of trained staff than its counterparts.

- 1.18 As in Northern Ireland, many children in custody in England and Wales had previous experience of residential care. A recent report indicated that 27% of boys and 45% of girls held in YOIs reported having been in care at some point.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.19 Distance from home was a greater problem for children in custody in England and Wales. A survey of an English STC which held 77 children showed that 30% were held over 75 miles from their homes, and many were detained more than 200 miles from home. This was unsettling for children, difficult for family and professional visitors, and hampered resettlement prospects. The YJB formerly had a target that at least 90% of children should be placed within 50 miles of their home, but this was abandoned as impractical in 2009.
- 1.20 There is no PACE provision in England and Wales - due not only to distance, but also to costs - and police cells are used to detain children pending their production in court. While it is far from

ideal that children should go to the JJC on foot of PACE proceedings, it is still better than having them detained in police cells.

### Current reforms

- 1.21 YJB research identified that rates of custody varied considerably between local Government areas (1.6%-20.2% in 2008-09). As central Government bears the cost of custodial placements, detention offers local authorities free relief from the pressures of dealing with problematic and often vulnerable children for whom they otherwise have statutory responsibility.
- 1.22 The coalition Government, concerned about these and other issues such as the low conversion rate from remand to sentence, published a Green Paper<sup>3</sup> in December 2010. The Government committed itself to testing how to incentivise local areas to reduce youth offending and exploring how secure accommodation providers could move to a payment by results model. The extracts below from the Green Paper set out some of the relevant thinking.

*Para 246: 'The current remand legislation for children consists of a mixture of different frameworks for deciding where a child is remanded and who pays, depending on the child's age and gender. This needs simplifying. To achieve this we propose to create a single youth remand order for 12-17-year-olds. This would, gradually and with an associated transfer of funding, transfer the full costs of all remand to local authorities...'*

<sup>2</sup> The Care of Looked After Children in Custody, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, May 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Breaking the Cycle - Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders, Ministry of Justice, December 2010.



Para 248: *'Pending the introduction of a single youth remand order, we propose to...make local authorities gradually responsible for the full cost of court ordered secure remand while retaining the central function to place children in secure custodial remand.'*

Para 249: *'We also propose to amend the Bail Act to remove the option of remand for children who would be unlikely to receive a custodial sentence. This would affect the 57% of children on remand who are currently acquitted or receive a community sentence.'*

- 1.23 Consideration had been given to some of these options for reducing PACE admissions in Northern Ireland. Other ideas - such as extending the role of Appropriate Adults (who accompany children during police questioning), and imposing a strict limit on the number of PACE beds - were also contemplated; and the YJA was intending to strengthen its bail support provision. It will be important for Northern Ireland to observe and learn from progress on the Green Paper proposals. **We recommend that the YJA should canvass a wide range of options to reduce the number of PACE admissions to the JJC with its criminal justice and Social Services partners and set appropriate targets.**



## CHAPTER 2:

# Purpose and function

2.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that the goal of rehabilitation should take precedence over the retributive function of criminal justice when dealing with child offenders.<sup>4</sup> In keeping with international legislation and best practice, the underpinning purpose of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) is explicitly to treat child offenders as children first: the Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (CJCO)<sup>5</sup> states *'The Secretary of State may provide Juvenile Justice Centres, that is to say, places in which offenders in respect of whom JJCOs have been made may be detained and given training and education and prepared for their release.'*

2.2 Article 12 of the CJCO presumes in favour of bail unless custodial remand:

- is necessary to protect the public;
- the offence is violent or sexual;
- is one where an adult similarly charged would be liable to 14 years imprisonment or more;
- is committed while the child was already on bail; or
- the child has been found guilty of an arrestable offence within the previous two years.

The JJC did not collate sufficient data to illustrate the current and previous offending profile of their population to

assess the extent to which these criteria were met. Nor did it analyse important data subsets such as reasons for Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) and Looked After Children (LAC) admissions. This is all important information to illustrate compliance with the principle that detention must only be used as a measure of last resort, in line with international standards. **We recommend the JJC database should be developed to generate more detailed information about the offending profiles and risk levels of children who are sent there. The database should include the number and seriousness of previous convictions as well as current and pending charges; and it should specifically profile the looked-after section of the JJC population.**

2.3 New statutory JJC Rules, including a children's version, came into operation in November 2008. These Rules set out provisions for management of the JJC and a Statement of Aims to:

- *'protect the public by accommodating children ordered to be detained therein in a safe, secure and caring environment; and*
- *work to reintegrate children into the community.'*

These aims are underpinned by eight principles which emphasise children's

<sup>4</sup> The UNCRC, General Comment 10.

<sup>5</sup> CJCO 1998, Section 51.



best interests, creation of a positive environment, fair treatment and partnership working. An internal Statement of Purpose and Woodlands Operational Procedures which were published in September 2010 reflected the spirit of the Rules and emphasised the paramount nature of a childcare ethos in the JJC.

- 2.4 While staff worked hard to engage children regardless of their status, and the Centre's childcare ethos was strong, its implementation was rendered difficult by high numbers of PACE admissions, and the short and often unpredictable periods that most children spent in its custody. Delays in progressing children's criminal cases and the interface with residential care were especially challenging. The location for 17-year-old boys who were sent to custody needs to be addressed.

### Avoidable delay

- 2.5 There are some important consequences of delay in our criminal justice system, especially for children. They include:
- a greater likelihood of re-offending while on bail;
  - staff cannot address offending behaviour before conviction so risks are not reduced;
  - consequences and sanctions have less impact if not promptly applied; and
  - child victims or witnesses' perception of time is different to adults, and their recollection of events as part of evidence may become blurred over time.
- 2.6 CJI inspections have shown that delay has been a perennial problem in

Northern Ireland criminal proceedings, and the situation is particularly poor for children. *'There is a general acceptance...that youths...are more negatively impacted by avoidable delay. The situation in relation to youth summons defendants remains a major concern as performance has not improved and the criminal justice standard is unlikely to be achieved.'*<sup>6</sup> We recommended the criminal justice agencies should develop a joint action plan to address the specific problem of avoidable delay with regard to youth defendant cases. The Youth Justice Agency (YJA) and others subsequently produced an action plan which included various actions (for example, a workshop on youth cases, a review of cases and an increased role for Case Progression Officers). The YJA was contemplating introduction of bail assessments at Saturday courts, and with their partners were also beginning to track prolific offenders and intend to introduce a telephone diversion scheme in one area.

#### Example 1

A child was admitted to the JJC on 21 separate occasions, on remand or PACE, yet had never been sent there on sentence; and

#### Example 2

A persistent and prolific offender who offended while on bail and while subject to court orders and supervision was ultimately given a 10-month Juvenile Justice Centre Order. However he served only one month on sentence due to having already spent so much time on remand.

- 2.7 Data for April - December 2010 shows that cases in the Youth court took on average 119 days from 'date of charge to

<sup>6</sup> Avoidable Delay: A thematic inspection of avoidable delay in the processing of criminal justice cases in Northern Ireland, CJI, June 2010.



date of disposal.’ The average time was longer for youth summons cases which took 252 days from ‘date accused informed by PSNI to date of disposal at court’. These times have remained stubbornly high and compare very unfavourably with the position in England and Wales.

2.8 England and Wales introduced a ‘Persistent Young Offender Pledge’ in 1997, which aimed to halve the time it took to deal with persistent offenders. Within three years ‘date of arrest to date of sentence’ had reduced from 140 days to less than 71 days. This level of performance has been sustained and benefits have accrued for the wider youth caseload.

2.9 The YJA is currently addressing the delay problem with other agencies including the Public Prosecution Service the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNi). The YJA has also introduced a bail support scheme in an attempt to deal with some of the problems caused by excessive delay. CJI is currently undertaking a follow-up inspection on the theme of delay which will address in detail the need for youth cases to receive higher priority in the future.

### **Interface between residential care and the JJC**

2.10 Some good work had been done on the interface between residential care and the JJC since the 2008 inspection. In that year the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety set up a project board to address areas for improvement in residential care, with the aim of reducing admissions to

custody. Woodlands JJC management were involved in this process from the outset and while there remains much to do, a series of practical outcomes had been delivered. They included:

- changes in legislation in 2008 to provide that LAC status should continue when a child enters the JJC, in recognition of fact that the JJC is not a LAC ‘placement.’ This is important because it means community Social Workers must remain involved during a child’s custodial placement and obtain alternative accommodation for their release;
- since April 2010, the JJC has provided monthly reports to Health and Social Care Trust Senior Managers in respect of their LAC who have been admitted to custody, with the aim of agreeing appropriateness of placement and identifying alternatives; and the JJC Deputy Director of Social Work was meeting quarterly with Senior Residential Care Managers to further this agenda;
- untoward incidents in children’s homes - which have often led to children being placed in custody - had to be notified within 72 hours to the Health and Social Care Board and the Office of Social Services. The children’s homes then had to provide an explanation for any child involved who ended up in the JJC;
- three regional guidance documents were produced to assist Social Workers ‘*supporting Looked After Children who are arrested/questioned by police or appear in court on criminal matters;*’ ‘*regional guidance on Police involvement in residential units;*’ and ‘*safeguarding of children missing from home and foster care;*’
- the Health and Social Care Board



commissioned training to support implementation of the guidance. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety allocated £350,000 to develop therapeutic approaches in children's homes, train staff in restorative justice approaches and the Appropriate Adult role; and

- the introduction by some Trusts of specialist multi-disciplinary teams to work with children in residential care was a positive development. Not surprisingly, the best results had been achieved by Social Workers who were accessible and flexible in their approach to children, especially during crises. There is scope to more uniformly apply this approach on a regional basis to ensure detention is used as a measure of last resort.

2.11 While diverse responses were reported from different Trusts, everyone felt that things had improved considerably. An Office of Social Services report for May 2011 provided independent confirmation in respect of the nine LAC who were in the Centre during the monitoring visit. The report stated: *'The picture that emerged regarding the level of engagement between the Trusts residential/field social work staff, young people and their key workers in JJC was a positive one. Mechanisms were clearly in place and operating effectively to ensure the sharing of relevant information. The young people's files contained many important documents which would help inform the effective management of the looked-after-children whilst in custody. Social workers from the Trusts had attended and participated in Initial Planning Meetings hosted by JJC and where possible, combined these meetings with LAC Reviews. Copies of the Trusts' Care Planning arrangements were also available in most of the files.'*

*'Centre staff were largely positive about the level of contact/involvement between Social Services staff and looked-after-children in their care. The young people interviewed... were also aware of the Trusts' plans in relation to their future care.'*

- 2.12 A September 2009 snapshot of the JJC population by the Office of Social Services showed that 11 children (from a total population of 23) were looked after, and seven of them had been living in children's homes prior to being sent to custody. All 11 were assessed as posing a high risk of harm, and almost all presented a high risk of re-offending. Available criminal records showed they had already been convicted of serious offences or had accumulated a list of prior minor offences - which suggested they were all appropriately placed.
- 2.13 JJC Managers suggested there were now very few inappropriate admissions for minor offences by LAC - they could only recall two in the past two years - and also that there were now very few LAC boys under 15-years-old admitted to the JJC. This shows the benefits of a focused, evidence-based approach to a previously intractable problem. There was no data apart from the September 2009 exercise to support this impression and it was unclear if the duration of LAC stays in custody had reduced, hence our recommendation at paragraph 2.2 to improve profiling of the LAC population.

### **JJC or Young Offenders Centre (YOC) for 17-year-old boys?**

- 2.14 The significant progress that has been made since the 2008 inspection in reducing the numbers of male and female children held in adult custody - no girl under 18-years-old has been



admitted to Ash House since April 2008, and only two boys under the age of 16 have been admitted to the YOC since October 2010 - has thrown into sharper focus the fact that boys are still being held at Hydebank Wood YOC.

- 2.15 There were 28 spaces for boys at the YOC. The criminal courts had a degree of discretion in deciding where to send boys who require custody - they usually sent older boys to the YOC if they had already received a custodial sentence within the last two years, or were aged 17-years and due to turn 18-years-old during their current sentence. In extreme circumstances a child who was too difficult in the JJC could be transferred to the YOC, but this had only been done once in the past three years.
- 2.16 The average number of children held in the YOC reduced from 32 in 2005 to 18 in March 2010, and was 19 in March 2011. However there was still a high rate of child committals to the YOC - 92, representing 74 individuals between December 2010 – January 2011. Of this 92:
- 71 were remanded;
  - 14 were sentenced (their sentences averaged six months, with a range of two - 30 months); and
  - seven were fine defaulters, all serving seven days in lieu of fine payment (the JJC could not legally take fine defaulters).
- 2.17 More detailed analysis of the YOC child cohort shows it consisted of mainly 17 ½-year-old boys who had numerous previous admissions to the JJC. Many had multiple court cases ongoing, expected to receive custodial sentences and indicated a personal preference to

be sentenced to the YOC as they assessed there was less likelihood of community supervision – and possibly breach – afterwards. Consequently they were often legally advised to remain at the YOC.

- 2.18 On the other hand, these children were among the most troubled and needy in society. They had a poor regime in the YOC with lengthy periods of lock-up and little opportunity for education or rehabilitative activities. The YOC undertook much less work to address children's offending behaviour than the JJC. The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) was focused on managing an adult population with a custodial rather than parental model, and it has faced significant criticisms of its provision for children.
- 2.19 A quadripartite group (comprising of the NIPS, the YJA, the PBNi and the DoJ) was established and first met in November 2009, the result of a ministerial initiative to review and develop custodial arrangements for all children under the age of 18-years. A series of principles and related actions were identified and implementation commenced centred on four key areas. These were:
- development of a YJA-type case management system in the YOC. This is based on individualised assessments and application of the 'best interests' principle. It commenced in July 2010;
  - engagement with sentencers, Social Services, the PSNI and the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) to reduce PACE and custodial remands, particularly for children from the care system;
  - delivering closer linkages between the YOC and the JJC through staff



placements; and

- a wider review of custodial sentencing arrangements as part of the review of youth justice.

2.20 A subsequent YOC Juvenile Improvement Plan led to 36 recommendations for bettering all aspects of children's regimes and target dates for completion. Practical outcomes of all this activity to date have included:

- a JJC case management model was introduced for children held at the YOC. It was initially led by JJC personnel;
- a new system of planning meetings was developed. It incorporated a risk assessment process and a decision about best placement for the child. If appropriate, recommendations would be made to court for a change of location from the YOC to the JJC;
- although it contravened the spirit of the UNCRC, children held at the YOC were allowed - with parental consent - to mix with young adult prisoners so that more opportunities could be provided for them;
- some YOC Managers and staff undertook placements at the JJC to learn about their approach to managing children in custody; and
- the YJA Bail Support Scheme was extended to the YOC.

2.21 A total of 33 planning meetings were held between July 2010 - March 2011. They led to nine recommendations for transfer to JJC, all of which were granted by courts. Inspectors heard about readily-apparent benefits of transfers from the YOC, for example a child's reading age increased by three levels within a short space of time (not surprising as the JJC provided 25 hours

education per week compared to two hours at the YOC); another was removed from the risk of physical assault by fellow prisoners and his self-esteem increased; and bereavement counselling was provided at the JJC for a boy who had been using drugs to cope with his grief while in the YOC.

2.22 However by September 2010, there were concerns about levels of NIPS engagement, frequent staff changes on the YOC children's landings, and inaccurate and incomplete information contained on YOC children's files. JJC staff had initially been co-chairing planning meetings, but relaxed this '*due to the growing confidence of YOC staff.*' It was not at all clear to Inspectors that the YJA had the '*overall co-ordinating role for all under 18-year-old offenders*' which was the Minister's expressed wish when the process was commencing.

Inspectors observed a YOC planning meeting. It was very well attended, but did not appear to have any Terms of Reference and discussion about possible transfer only came after sentence planning - entirely predicated on the child remaining in the YOC - was completed.

At face value the child (a 17-year-old remandee who was out of control at home and in custody for the first time) was a classic case who could have benefitted from being placed in the JJC. However he was content to be in the YOC, had the support of a benign Class Officer and his mother found the YOC was more accessible for visiting, so he remained there.

2.23 The YOC planning process was really no more than a harm reduction initiative



which tinkered with a fundamentally flawed system. There were no set criteria for children to be moved, and the 'best interests' principle was too nebulous and immeasurable. Irrespective of longer term developments about the location for all children under 18-years-old the current planning process needs to be improved.

2.24 The law governing admission to, or transfer between the JJC and the YOC, outlines that all girls aged less than 18-years should be sent to the JJC because there is no appropriate accommodation for them at Ash House Women's Prison. This important legislative change was introduced in the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 (CJO) in recognition of Northern Ireland's responsibilities under UNCRC Article 37(c) which states that every child in custody should be separated from adults. The legislative change followed the withdrawal of the UK Government's former reservation on Article 37(c). The relevant provisions were not gender-specific but applied particularly to girls because otherwise they could not be separated from adult prisoners. However, the view has also been expressed to Inspectors that accommodating boys in Hydebank Wood YOC continues to violate Article 37(c), especially when they share activities and education with young adults, even if parental consent is provided.

2.25 Quadripartite members considered the possibility of the JJC becoming the default location for all remanded children during 2010. Indeed the group went as far as preparing instructions for legislative drafting, but because there are implications for three pieces of legislation - Article 13 of the Criminal

Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (CJCO), Schedule 12 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 and Article 96 of the CJO 2008 - ultimately they concluded it was not possible within existing legislative arrangements.

2.26 A NICTS circular (*'New Arrangement for Juveniles on first Remand in Hydebank Wood YOC'* 3/2011) was introduced to facilitate the assessment process from March 2011 onwards. While helpful in increasing awareness of JJC placements for 17-year-old boys, this circular consolidated the current position by recognising the YOC as their initial placement.

2.27 Inspectors recognise the legal and practical impediments to placing all under 18-year-old boys in the JJC, including a risk of destabilising it or creating unmanageable pressure of numbers. It is Northern Ireland's only such facility and any proposals for change must also take account of staffing levels and the need to retain capacity for up to eight girls.

2.28 However, none of these are insurmountable. In our opinion the current pragmatic approach of sharing the child custody population between the JJC and the YOC is unsustainable on several counts such as:

- the JJC has already shown that it can cope with the growing number of 17-year-olds, including grave offenders, without undue disruption;
- there is inherent gender discrimination in automatically detaining female, but not male children at the JJC;
- the JJC is a very costly and under-used facility which provides far superior childcare to the YOC, and



proper planning should enable children to be safely placed there as the default location for child custody; and

- children who are expected to reach the age of 18 while in custody could still benefit from being placed in the JJC until their birthday.

**We recommend that by April 2012 all male children who are sent into custody should be treated equally with female children i.e. their default placement should be Woodlands JJC; and in the interim, the JJC should take a more central role in the YOC planning process for children. This should include chairing the meetings. Terms of Reference should be prepared for these meetings whose primary purpose ought to be to establish the child's suitability for transfer to the JJC, and a robust quality assurance process should be introduced.**

## JJC costs

2.29 Custody is always an expensive option, especially child custody because of the high numbers of professionally-qualified staff required. Unlike the Secure Children's Homes (SCHs) and the Secure Training Centres (STCs) which could sell beds and take non-offenders as well as offenders, the JJC was awarded a block grant (£7,200,000 of the YJA's total budget of £21,300,000 in 2010-11), and thereafter had to accept any child sent by the courts. Although staffed for an operational capacity of 36 children, the JJC must always be able to accommodate 48, including eight girls. It will have to contribute to overall YJA efficiency savings of 11.4% over the next four years.

2.30 JJC Managers had worked hard on the costs within their control since the last inspection. A small number of posts had been suppressed and efficiencies created by measures such as changes to the annual leave policy, an introduction of independent occupational health and new night supervision arrangements. A formerly heavy dependence on overtime to cover sickness, annual leave, training and vacant posts had been addressed and the overtime budget was reduced from £661,000 in 2007-08 to £240,000 in 2011-12. Non-pay costs had been fairly static at £1,500,000 per annum in each of the last three financial years.

2.31 There are two distinct ways to consider JJC costs - cost per place which is based on provision of 48 places; and cost per occupant which is based on actual occupancy levels and is beyond the JJC's control. Both sets of costs include education, health care and escorting; and both merit scrutiny, especially in light of debate about relocating boys from the YOC to the JJC.

2.32 Actual occupancy has nearly always been comfortably within limits and the JJC's operational capacity of 36 has been exceeded in only three months out of 33 between April 2008 - December 2010. Daily occupancy has ranged from between 19 – 39 during the same period, and consequently the cost per place and cost per occupant are significantly different. When combined with unpredictable and predominantly short periods of residence, this erratic pattern makes it difficult to deploy staff and resources efficiently. Table 2 therefore shows that costs per occupant are almost 80% more expensive than costs per place.

**Table 2: JJC costs 2007-2011**

Year	Cost per place	Places	Total cost	Average number of occupants	Cost per Occupant	Cost per Occupant/ Cost per Place
2010-11	£150,745	48	£7,235,760	27	£267,991	178%
2009-10	£158,410	48	£7,603,680	27	£281,618	178%
2008-09	£163,885	48	£7,866,480	27	£291,351	178%
2007-08	£155,855	48	£7,481,040	32	£233,783	150%

2.33 Hydebank Wood YOCs cost per occupant was £132,904 in 2009-10<sup>6</sup>. Some other annual costs - based on contract and agreed bed prices between the YJB and providers - are also relevant.

They are:

- SCHs - £215,000;
- STCs - £160,000; and
- YOIs - £60,000.<sup>7</sup>

This means that SCHs costs per occupant (based on 75% occupancy) are broadly similar to the JJC costs.

2.34 Comparative costs need to be viewed with caution as funding arrangements, counting rules and operating environments differ and do not take account of matters such as case complexity. Nonetheless when the JJC's spare capacity and high cost per occupant are considered along with a regime that is far superior to that of the YOC, then the argument for sending all children who require custody to the JJC seems irrefutable.

<sup>6</sup> Inspection of the NIPS Corporate Governance, CJI, December 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Hansard, House of Commons, 15 October 2009.



## CHAPTER 3:

# Management and staffing



- 3.1 At the time of this inspection, the Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) had 149 staff of whom 49% were male and 51% female. There had been 48 leavers and 24 new appointees since the facility opened in 2007. This represented considerable refreshment of the staff pool though was lower than turnover rates in Secure Childrens Homes (SCHs) or Secure Training Centres (STCs) in England and Wales. Religious composition of the JJC workforce, including new starts and leavers, was being monitored and showed an improved balance since 2008.
- 3.2 Governance arrangements remained good with an appropriate management structure and policy framework, clear reporting lines, financial checks and balances and independent audit arrangements. The full range of corporate documentation from daily logs through to the complaints register and Management Board minutes were up-to-date and relevant. The JJC business formed a significant element of Youth Justice Agency (YJA) Management Board monthly meetings and minutes showed that it was properly overseen. A former non-compliance with the JJC rules had been remedied and unannounced monthly monitoring visits by the Office of Social Services were now taking place, plus biannual unannounced inspections by the Inspectorate. The findings of these visits were invariably positive.
- 3.3 The JJC had taken several steps to consolidate its management and staffing since the last inspection. A three-tier system of management cover was in place to provide support and accountability at all times from trained and experienced Managers, and also to provide appropriate contact points for external agencies.
- 3.4 A Deputy Director of Social Work was appointed in 2008 and this has proven beneficial in strengthening management of the Centre. A residential unit was closed and staff transferred internally when numbers of children dropped. The night care service and management of annual leave were reviewed in order to better meet the needs of the Centre. These reviews were formally negotiated with trade unions and approved by the YJA Management Board. Their outcomes presented some challenges for staff, but they improved levels of cover during key periods when the previous practice was to automatically utilise overtime at considerable extra cost.
- 3.5 Significant emphasis was placed on professionalising the staff group through



training and enhancing qualification levels. By March 2011 over 90% of Senior and Junior Managers were professionally qualified Social Workers. The qualified cadre included all Unit Managers and their deputies. Another 12 staff were pending qualification in social work and a further six held Youth and Community Diplomas. The Unit Managers were also qualified to assess National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) candidates and a total of 56 residential workers had completed Level 3 NVQ in Youth Justice and 17 were pending qualification. In addition, 12 had completed Level 4 NVQ in Youth Justice and five were pending. The NVQ external verifier reported in November 2010 that the JJC was a *“very well managed Centre...effective policies are in place...it is fully compliant...”*

- 3.6 There were no current disciplinary proceedings at the time of this inspection. Four disciplinary hearings had been concluded and one grievance lodged since the last inspection.
- 3.7 There were good levels of interaction among the various disciplines within the JJC. Its staff were more closely involved than previously with other YJA Directorates and there had been several staff exchanges. The other operational Directorates - Community Services and Youth Conferencing - are to be integrated by December 2011 and it is anticipated that this will free up staff to fill vacancies within the JJC workforce.
- 3.8 There was ample evidence of communication processes operating effectively within the JJC. Inspectors read minutes and observed several meetings such as team meetings, heads of service, administrative staff and

morning planning meetings. All dealt with relevant issues and had appropriate levels of delegated authority. We saw staff supervision notes and appraisals that demonstrated proper levels of support and accountability being exercised. Staff confirmed they received supervision at least once every six weeks as well as annual appraisals.

- 3.9 The JJC had contracts with providers from the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to deliver specific services in the Centre. These included the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) who ran an employability scheme, an independent representation scheme run by Opportunity Youth and the Duke of Edinburgh's/Endeavour Award. The JJC said these were going well and pointed out benefits beyond the immediate service that was being provided, especially by bringing external visitors into the JJC, something which is always important in a secure residential setting.

### Management of leave

- 3.10 High levels of sick leave had been problematic in the past for JJC Managers and the Senior Management Team had regular access to audit material that illustrated an untenable situation. A total of 4,643 days were lost between April 2008 - March 2009 representing a rate of 28.22 days per member of staff. During January - March 2010, the rate had improved, but was still very high at 21.9 days. At that stage, following detailed planning and negotiation, Centre Management introduced a new Management of Leave policy. There was immediate improvement: between April - December 2010 the sick leave rate dropped to 12.56 days per member of



staff. Notwithstanding this reduction, Managers were still able to cite 50 examples where short notice leave requests by staff were able to be granted while needs of the business were met.

- 3.11 Inspectors spoke with all grades of staff and Managers and their trade union representatives. Some had difficulty with the more rigorous management of attendance and sick leave. However overall comments were positive and long-serving staff compared Woodlands JJC favourably to the former training school system within which they worked. They outlined good managerial support, clear communication and expectations, ample training and development opportunities, and recognised benefits of the JJC's design which provided a much safer working environment.



## CHAPTER 4:

# Care of children



- 4.1 Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) placed strong emphasis on meeting the needs of children. It states that it will operate *'safe, secure and caring environments that address the needs of the child whilst reducing the risk to and from others...The Centre contributes to the aim of reducing offending behaviour by delivering a co-ordinated and consistent programme of interventions aimed at challenging children about their attitudes, thinking, behaviours and consequences of their offending behaviour'* (Woodlands Operational Procedures). Consequently the JJC Operational Procedures and Statement of Purpose are linked to the Northern Ireland Strategy for Children 2006-16.
- 4.2 The benefits of a well-trained staff group are apparent in Table 3 below. Physical Control in Care and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training have been provided for all staff who have face-to-face contact with children, and there has been a significant reduction in the use of force since 2007, with the aim of removing institutional responses to poor behaviour and self-harm.
- 4.3 Woodlands physical restraint rates compared favourably with other UK rates. It had a rate of 0.06 for April - November 2010 whereas the Secure Childrens Home (SCH) average during the same period was 0.56; the Secure Training Centre (STC) rate was 0.33; and the Young Offenders Institution (YOI) rate was 0.13. Closer analysis shows that 61% of Woodlands restraints took place after 3.30pm and 82% were to prevent injury. The JJC Management Team shared this data with staff and encouraged exploration of reasons and methods of reducing the incidents even further.
- 4.4 The 2010 increase in self-harm levels was considered to be a result of increased numbers of children being sent to the JJC, of whom more were arriving under influence of substances, such as methadone. Twelve self-harm incidents were deemed serious, and involved two attempted hangings, one overdose and nine cases of deep cutting. The incidents that were deemed to be less serious included superficial cutting and wall/door punching.

**Table 3: Woodlands JJC physical restraint, self-harm, accident and assault incidents 2007-10**

Year	Restraint	Self-harm	Accidents	Assaults
2007	204	57	72	33
2008	63	31	51	13
2009	69	31	60	9
2010	35	78	44	2



## Regime

- 4.5 Basic matters such as food and laundry were of a high standard in the JJC. Menu choices were provided, special dietary requirements were met and a high level of personal hygiene was facilitated. Residential areas were comfortably furnished and all areas were clean and tidy when we inspected. Children had the opportunity to personalise bedrooms to varying extents depending on their regime level and risk assessments.
- 4.6 Part of the JJC's approach was provision of an incentive-based regime which allowed children to earn privileges - which could also be forfeited in the event of misbehaviour. Children confirmed to Inspectors that they understood the system - a four-tier regime of bronze, silver, gold and platinum levels, with commensurate privileges - and felt it was fairly applied. Weekly announcements of regime progress were eagerly anticipated and there was good buy-in from children. Infractions were met with reasonable penalties and restoration of privileges could be quickly earned. For example, the usual penalty for possession of cigarettes would be a 24-hour reduction to bronze levels; and if necessary a member of staff would be located in the Visits Room to prevent trafficking of contraband.
- 4.7 There were 699 single separations during 2010, a decline of 29% on the 2009 figure. These entailed children being temporarily separated from others in their residential group, normally by going to their bedroom. Single separations were often requested by children themselves as they knew it

could help defuse tensions. There were 1,025 sanctions in 2010, 13% less than 2009. The majority (76%) of sanctions entailed an adverse report, and the next most commonly-applied were early bed and temporary reduction in regime level. There were no indications of differentiation on gender, religious or other grounds in any aspect of life in the JJC.

## Assessment, planning and case file recording

- 4.8 Considerable effort was invested in planning for children's stay in the Centre and in preparation for their release. Files reflected high levels of activity and children confirmed they were closely involved in developing their plans. They knew their key workers and reported that progress was regularly reviewed.
- 4.9 An early planning meeting was held for all children who arrived at the Centre. They and their families, statutory agencies and community workers were all invited to participate. These meetings were comprehensive and dealt with every aspect of the child's life in the Centre and in the community to develop a Custody and Community Plan. A meeting observed by Inspectors was comprehensive, including identification of support that could be given to the child's mother while he was in custody and after release. Assessment and planning were not static and files indicated regular updating of assessments.
- 4.10 The JJC established a working group to revamp children's filing systems after the last inspection. This led to a new system being introduced in March 2010. Layout and structure were changed to ensure

key information was accessible and retrievable. Management began to audit files and feedback on this process had become a standard element of the staff supervision process.

- 4.11 Inspectors viewed 12 children's files in different residential units. They were clearly structured, comprehensive and easier to follow than when we last inspected. All statutory documents were present and there was evidence of planning and management audit. The file of a remanded child who was also on the Child Protection Register was laid out as follows:

**Section 1** contained all relevant admission information, including the Care Plan, profile of the child and risk assessments. A Risk Management Plan was completed on the day of admission and an Individual Crisis Management Plan was completed the day after admission.

**Section 2** contained assessments, Care Plans and reviews. These were appropriate and provided the focus for staff to work with the child.

**Section 3** contained daily records relating to the residential unit.

**Section 4** included records of keyworker sessions and of the child's attendance at group sessions.

**Section 5** contained records of incidents, including restraints and single separation.

**Section 6** related to Social Services. Despite this child being looked after

and being on the Child Protection Register there was no information on file relating to his Looked After Children (LAC) Care Plan or his status on the Register. This was a significant deficit that directly impinged on the Centre's capacity to effectively plan for the child's discharge – which could be at very short notice as the child was on remand.

**Section 7** contained pertinent medical and health related information.

**Section 8** contained miscellaneous information.

### Child protection/safeguarding

- 4.12 The YJA's child protection protocols were updated after the 2008 inspection in order to comply with regional guidance outlined in 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children.' These protocols will be updated again when the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland commences operation later in 2011. During 2010 all residential staff received updated child protection training, and all Unit Managers and Deputy Directors undertook designated safeguarding officer training. It was clear during the inspection that the principles of professional training were well-embedded and formed part of the ethos of the Centre.
- 4.13 Both the JJC and the YJA were represented at appropriate levels on Northern Ireland's child protection structures. The YJA Chief Executive sat on the Regional Child Protection Committee, while Assistant Directors sat on each Trust's child protection



panel. Woodlands Deputy Director of Social Work was a member of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust Protection Panel. This level of strategic engagement was useful and it will be important for Woodlands to retain high level input into new arrangements following establishment of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.

4.14 There were clear guidelines for managing child protection concerns and these were available in each residential unit. They outlined staff responsibilities at every stage of the process. A quarterly safeguarding report was provided to the YJA Management Board. Inspectors were told there had been 20 safeguarding referrals from Woodlands under Area Child Protection Committee procedures during 2009-10. Seven of these related to incidents (all allegations of child on child assaults) within Woodlands and the remainder predated the child's arrival at the Centre. There were no allegations of inappropriate staff conduct that led to safeguarding referrals.

4.15 None of the safeguarding cases referred by the JJC had yet gone to case conference. Inspectors reviewed all referrals between January-March 2011, involving nine referrals to four Trust Gateway teams. The breakdown of reasons were:

- two allegations of assault by the police during the admission process;
- three allegations that the child was under paramilitary threat;
- three allegations that the child had been assaulted by a Carer whilst living in the community; and
- one allegation of a child being involved in inappropriate sexual activity.

4.16 In each case JJC personnel complied fully with their own agency policy and procedures, and also with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's co-operating to Safeguard Children procedures and with the Area Child Protection Committees' regional policy and procedures. However, it was concerning that in only two cases did the Trusts respond in line with the agreed procedures, to which they were also required to adhere. The remaining referrals were not acknowledged by the two Trusts involved. Each of these cases was therefore escalated by Inspectors to Senior Managers in the relevant Trust for clarification and action.

4.17 Failures to respond were routinely followed up in writing by Woodlands Managers and shared with Senior Trust Managers at formal meetings, and with the YJA Management Board on a quarterly basis. When other statutory providers failed to fulfil their responsibilities it was impossible for the JJC to operate to optimum effect, and there are few other apparent avenues for the JJC or the YJA to improve this situation. **We recommend JJC Managers should use their involvement in the Regional Child Protection Panel and in the individual Trust Child Protection Panels to address strategic and operational issues relating to child protection and safeguarding as they arise.**

4.18 In addition to dealing with current child protection concerns, JJC Management had also taken the initiative to deal with historical allegations of child abuse that came to their attention. This was partly due to the fact that the JJC archives contain all records from the old training



school system. Protocols were established and bi-monthly meetings commenced with senior PSNI and South Eastern Trust officials to deal with new referrals and review ongoing cases.

## Religion

4.19 A local minister had been lead chaplain to the JJC for a number of years and he was supported by a priest. They visited the Centre on average once per week and at specific times such as Easter and Christmas. The chaplains emphasised their pastoral role and were sensitive to the children's right to decline formal religious activity. Children were provided with a child-friendly devotional booklet which they could read in their own rooms. The lead chaplain had also begun to develop links with community religious organisations who engaged with children in the Centre, and the JJC was described as "excellent" in terms of facilitating access.

## Family and other relationships

4.20 A list of appropriate contacts was identified with each child when they arrived at the JJC. Children were allowed to make one free telephone call each day, and could make a second call at a fixed cost. Staff monitored children's phone calls when necessary and letters were required to be opened in front of staff. Children were encouraged to maintain contact with family members, particularly where relationships were strained, and Inspectors heard examples of flexibility. For example, in one case where the mother of a child was diagnosed with cancer, staff facilitated telephone calls over lunchtime and in the evenings for the child to check on her welfare.

4.21 Family visits were available at the end of the school day and at weekends. Accommodation was provided for families who had to travel longer distances and wished to stay overnight, though it was not often used. When child protection or security concerns were evident, staff supervised visits directly and visitors were made aware of this.

4.22 A Family Links project provided support for parents and carers whose child was in the Centre. The group aimed to encourage parents to be more active in dealing with their child's problems and to help them develop the skills to do so. Parents usually stayed with the group for 10 weeks. In an imaginative approach therapeutic crisis intervention training (initially provided for staff to help them defuse tense situations in the Centre) was provided to parents in the support group to help them cope when their children returned home. Family group conferencing was also undertaken to help resolve domestic difficulties between children and their family members.

4.23 Sentenced children could avail of home leave as their release dates approached - it might be used to visit move-on accommodation such as a new children's home or a hostel. Each period of home leave was risk-assessed, and venues, dates and times were tailored to individual circumstances.

4.24 Many children - particularly those seeking bail or approaching a trial date - were in regular contact with their legal advisors. Most of this contact was undertaken by video link at the end of the school day and staff also had frequent contact with solicitors on behalf of children.



4.25 Social Workers and Probation Officers frequently visited the Centre to meet children for whom they had responsibility. In addition staff had regular contact with Social Workers in respect of ongoing care and child protection matters, particularly immediately after a child arrived. Children who were required to attend police interviews were collected and transported by Police Officers and Inspectors saw evidence of the relevant authorisation in their files.

4.26 When children were attending court they were transported by a private contractor. Our inspection of court custody and prisoner escorting arrangements found that provision was satisfactory for children who were being taken to and from courts.<sup>8</sup>

### Complaints and representation

4.27 Following the 2008 inspection the JJC updated its complaints policy. The different stages of the complaints procedure were clarified and explained to children; and parents/carers were now being notified when their child made a complaint.

4.28 Children were provided with a child-friendly copy of the complaints procedure on arrival at the Centre. A total of 10 complaints were recorded between October 2010 - March 2011, of which five had been resolved at Stage 1 and the remainder at Stage 2. Each residential unit had its own complaints folder where original complaint forms were logged, and summary details were provided centrally for monitoring purposes.

4.29 Most complaints were minor in nature and appeared to have been dealt with appropriately. Inspectors saw forms signed by children to confirm they felt the complaint had been dealt with satisfactorily. We also saw a more serious allegation which had been escalated to the Director and had involved written correspondence with the parent and the child's solicitor. Complaints featured as a standing item at Senior Management Team meetings, thus highlighting their importance and ensuring issues could be addressed quickly and lessons learned and shared. The YJA Management Board also received complaints data and analysis on a quarterly basis.

4.30 The YJA retained an Independent Complaints Reviewer who visits the Centre regularly to review the effectiveness of their internal complaints procedure. Her latest report highlighted issues which were of concern to children but had not always been raised as formal complaints, for example property maintenance issues and smoking withdrawal problems. The report made sensible recommendations for resolving these issues and we would advocate the Centre should adopt them.

### Comparison with England and Wales

4.31 Two reports that are useful for comparison purposes were issued by OFSTED, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills in 2010: *'Transition through Detention and Custody'* and *'Admission and Discharge from Secure Accommodation.'* They pointed out that there was an insufficient number and range of

<sup>8</sup> An inspection of Court Custody and Prisoner Escorting Arrangements, CJI, August 2010.



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appropriate secure placements in England and Wales. Good information was provided in respect of children who were sent into secure placements for welfare reasons, but only limited information was provided for child offenders.

4.32 Short sentences and high turnover rates created similar problems to Northern Ireland and it was difficult to prepare children for release. SCH pre-release provision was generally good, but in the STCs and YOIs it was deemed insufficient. Voluntary organisations provided some support but did so independently of other services and funding for their projects was often short-term. There were difficulties in finding accommodation which had a negative impact on children's opportunities for education and training. Victim work was insufficient as was quality assurance of the impact of the work of Youth Offending Teams. There were variations in the quality of services provided by different child custody facilities. Some local authorities failed to meet their obligations to support and resettle children and it was not uncommon for children to be discharged without having appropriate education or training guaranteed.



## CHAPTER 5:

# Addressing offending behaviour



- 5.1 The aim of the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) is to *'reduce youth crime and build confidence in the youth justice system.'* While the Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) has a strong childcare ethos it also has a significant role in managing criminal behaviour and contributing to crime reduction. The generic data are not encouraging in this respect as a plethora of research shows high levels of recidivism among children who have been in custody: for example, the Government has recently pointed out that *'75% of offenders sentenced to youth custody re-offend within a year...'*<sup>9</sup>
- 5.2 Good information is an important prerequisite to addressing offending behaviour. The JJC was beginning to capture offence profiles at point of admission, though still had work to do in this area. There was insufficient data to illustrate previous convictions, numbers of pending charges or risk levels at point of entry and our recommendation at paragraph 2.2 aims to address this deficit.
- 5.3 It was virtually impossible for the JJC to intervene effectively with children admitted on PACE who only stayed for short periods of time and who might leave unpredictably if bail was granted. Opportunities to address offending behaviour were further limited in the case of remanded children as staff could not risk prejudicing forthcoming court cases by discussing pending charges. Nonetheless they were creative in building upon previous work that children had undertaken.
- 5.4 Only a small minority of children in the JJC were assessed as posing high risks of harm to others. Regional Risk Panels were established in 2009 to provide a structure for managing the risks posed by these children. This was useful as it allowed the JJC to make referrals to Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland (PPANI, which do not normally deal with children) and three cases had been referred to date.
- 5.5 Despite the limitations, offending behaviour was addressed both in a generic manner by programmes which addressed issues relevant to the majority of children (for example, alcohol and drugs, making choices about crime); and by programmes that were specific to the offences of which individual children were convicted, for example car crime or fire setting. Offending programmes were delivered in groups during the school day and in individual keywork sessions.

<sup>9</sup> Ministerial foreword to the Green Paper 'Breaking the Cycle - Effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of Offenders', Ministry of Justice, December 2010.



5.6 The 2008 inspection recommended that the JJC should deliver:

- more consistent timetabling arrangements;
- an appropriate training and development schedule to enable staff to deliver programmes more confidently;
- a prospectus of core programmes for all children; and
- methodology to measure the long-term effectiveness of programmes.

Work had subsequently been undertaken to plan and deliver programmes in a more structured way and programmes delivered during the school day had been organised thematically into five areas. They are:

- anti-substance misuse;
- anti-offending;
- social and life skills;
- emotional, physical and mental health; and
- citizenship.

5.7 The programmes had been built into the school timetable to ensure that every child completed a 40 minute group session on each school day. This had overcome resistance by children who considered programmes were additional to education and therefore a source of complaint. Residential staff also expressed greater confidence about programme delivery. Some had been involved in designing new programmes and they felt better trained to deliver programmes than when we last inspected, especially when paired with experienced facilitators.

5.8 Some programmes were accredited, for example by the Open College Network and the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance. Programme delivery was

undertaken on a multi-disciplinary basis with input from care workers, health staff and external agencies such as the PSNI, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Opportunity Youth and drug and alcohol workers. The group programmes had recently been internally evaluated. Consideration was being given as to how their delivery could fit better within the education schedule and there is scope to improve involvement of teachers in programme delivery.

5.9 Every child was expected to complete individual programmes including Victim Awareness and Crime Pics within four weeks of admission to the JJC. In some cases, remanded children could undertake specific programmes if they and their legal advisor were agreeable.

5.10 While there was substantial input to address children's offending behaviour, measurement of outcomes was more difficult and consequently less developed. Local efforts were being made to obtain feedback from children about their experience of the JJC at point of discharge and arrangements had been made to share progress with other YJA Directorates after children were released.

5.11 The key indicator of re-offending rates was unavailable for the majority of children who spent time in the JJC on remand or on PACE admission. Valid re-offending research could only be undertaken in respect of the very small number of sentenced children. A piece of research which had been conducted in respect of 2006 discharges showed that, of the 31 sentenced children who were discharged from the JJC that year, 77.4% re-offended within one year, and



52% within a month of being discharged. A total of 75% of this cohort already had more than nine previous convictions which indicated they were in the group that was most likely to re-offend. A more recent publication in relation to 2007 discharges<sup>10</sup> did not calculate re-offending rates due to small numbers, but it provides an overall youth re-offending rate of 71.7% after discharge from custody; and 58.5% re-offending within six months of discharge. This data needs to be interpreted with caution given the small numbers involved, but it does not differ from wider UK findings and is unlikely to be far off the mark.

- 5.12 As the JJC was unable to access re-offending data once children left the Centre, it had recently commissioned a piece of longitudinal research to explore transition and resettlement patterns of children who had spent time there. This will require a number of years to demonstrate substantive findings. In the meantime we would expect the recommendation to compile a more detailed database of children's offence profiles and should begin to yield some useful data in the important area of re-offending.

### **Bail supervision and support**

- 5.13 The YJA had a Bail Supervision and Support Scheme which assisted children to successfully complete their period on bail. The Scheme comprised two staff who received daily notification of new admissions to the Centre and undertook an assessment to ascertain the child's bail status and prospects. They dealt with problem areas such as accommodation, education and training,

counselling and drug and alcohol services. If bail was approved then the YJA supervised the arrangements. This included addressing any non-compliance which could ultimately lead to the child being remanded back into custody.

- 5.14 There has been a longstanding shortage of supported accommodation and remand fostering placements in Northern Ireland, making it more difficult to develop robust and intensive bail packages. Between October 2010 - March 2011 there were 96 remands to the JJC, of whom 81 had a bail assessment commenced. Outcomes were as follows:
- 16 children did not apply for bail;
  - five had no appropriate bail address;
  - 37 were admitted to bail without the requirement for a bail supervision programme;
  - nine did not want the service;
  - 14 were admitted to bail subject to a bail supervision programme. Of these:
    - three young people were re-admitted to custody for breach of bail;
    - six completed their bail programme successfully; and
    - five programmes were ongoing at the time of inspection.

- 5.15 The Bail Support and Supervision Scheme was independently evaluated in 2006<sup>11</sup>. The report concluded that the scheme *'makes a positive contribution to the youth justice system in Northern Ireland. Feedback from stakeholders, children, parents and remand foster carers has been very complimentary and it is apparent that the service is valued by a wide range of beneficiaries.'*

<sup>10</sup> Northern Ireland Youth Re-offending – Results from the 2007 cohort, NISRA, June 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Northern Ireland Office Research and Statistical Series No: 13, Evaluation of the Bail Support and Supervision Scheme, September 2006.



5.16 An imaginative Bail Pilot Project was being designed by one children's home to address high numbers of Looked After Children being admitted to custody. The pilot aims to involve residential staff working with the police, the courts, the YJA Bail Support Scheme, Social Services and others to ensure the test for remand in custody of children takes full cognisance of their individual circumstances as well as being in compliance with children's rights standards.

## CHAPTER 6:

# Education and vocational training

- 6.1 The education provision in Woodlands Education and Learning Centre (ELC) was good. The ELC provided an organised and structured environment which created good opportunities for children to develop their social and educational skills.
- 6.2 All children in Woodlands are required to attend education irrespective of their age or status. A total of 25 hours of education were provided each week to all children, focusing on literacy, numeracy and a range of vocational and occupational skills. During the inspection children reported appreciation for the work of their teachers and instructors. Most of the children engaged well in the lessons, and the working relationships between them, teachers and instructors were excellent, characterised by an ethos of care, respect and support. The data provided by the ELC showed that 96% of the children were satisfied with the education provided to them.
- 6.3 At the time of the inspection, 52% of children in the ELC had statements of educational need, and only 8% had attended post-primary education for substantive periods of time. In addition, 65% had attended education other than at school provision, and all had histories of non-attendance or disrupted schooling. Consequently, the majority of children in the ELC had complex educational needs, with low levels of attainment in comparison to most children of similar ages. The majority of children who attended the ELC for eight consecutive weeks or more achieved well, with 83% gaining one level in literacy and 50% gaining one level in numeracy. In December 2010 all of the children gained accreditation in four unit awards through the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.
- 6.4 The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance unit awards could be accredited after eight weeks of study and provide motivation for reluctant learners to build upon, and to progress to study the essential skills of numeracy and literacy at appropriate levels. The personal development programme units provided opportunities to gain qualifications accredited by the Open College Network.
- 6.5 There was a comprehensive system of baseline assessment and good use was made of a range of computer and paper-based testing methods to determine the ability of the children, and to plan comprehensive individual programmes for them. The teachers used the available resources well, but there were insufficient ICT resources such as



interactive whiteboards in classrooms to enhance the children's learning experiences. The teachers worked hard to engage the children, many of whom had a negative experience of school, and who were often placed in the ELC and attended lessons, at very short notice. Children also often left the Centre with little or no notice, and were frequently removed for court appearances and other activities. In addition, children were sometimes working on important coursework when they were granted permission by courts to leave the JJC and return home, and as a result continued their education with other providers. This caused problems for the children as their coursework was often not forwarded quickly enough to the new education provider to ensure good continuity of education.

- 6.6 The children were well supported by their teachers. The teaching in most lessons was well planned and structured with appropriate pace; the content was related to their interests and supported the work they were completing in vocational subjects. The planning was well matched to the pupils' ability with good use of stimulus material to engage and motivate. There were effective individual learning plans which informed the teaching and which focused appropriately on the children's needs. In a minority of lessons however, the teaching was over-directed and the children were provided with few opportunities to develop the skills needed to become independent learners. While the teachers took every opportunity to encourage and motivate the children, this could be further developed by empowering them to take responsibility for their own work and become more independent.

- 6.7 There were good opportunities for children to participate in vocational subjects such as woodwork, home economics, pottery and vehicle maintenance. The children enjoyed their experiences in the vocational subjects and engaged well with the instructors to complete the tasks. However they had few opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in new situations, or determine how to continue their interests upon leaving the ELC. The woodwork room was well-equipped and the children's work was completed to a good standard, but the facility did not comply with the health and safety standards required for a post-primary school. **We recommend that the teaching staff and instructors should review their teaching and training approaches to provide more opportunities for children to develop the skills needed to become independent learners and to plan, problem solve and apply their knowledge to new situations; a safety audit should be carried out by a competent person in relation to the woodwork facility; and the ELC should continue to develop efficient systems to transfer academic information to other educational providers when children transfer at short notice to ensure the continuity of education provision.**

- 6.8 The quality of leadership and management of the ELC was good. The Deputy Director of Education and Head of School had a strategic vision for the ELC and had developed a positive and supportive culture with a curriculum that was well planned to meet the children's needs. There were effective plans to develop the ELC further to



provide a broader curriculum and improved support for the children. This included a move to a faculty structure, introduction of further occupational courses, reading partnerships and mentoring programmes. Management had demonstrated the capacity to continue to further improve the provision.

6.9 Since the last inspection there had been a number of new developments. There were now opportunities for staff to discuss their classroom practice to facilitate a more balanced focus on developing children's learning and appropriate accreditation. There were further plans to increase the accreditation opportunities available in occupational studies, to include hair and beauty, digital technology, bricklaying and childcare, and to develop the programmes and faculty model to create greater opportunities for group work, and develop children's spoken communication skills.

6.10 Teaching staff had attended training by appropriate examination boards in terms of the administration and implementation of the essential skills courses at levels one and two. The ELC/JJC had not however developed robust links with the Education and Library Boards to support children on their exit from Woodlands as recommended in the last inspection report. The JJC had established a formal approach to data collation with the use of a new computerised database (Oasis). This system had just been recently installed and the work to make it fully operational was ongoing to analyse data that will inform self-evaluation and quality improvement, which can be identified and highlighted within and

beyond the Centre. The ELC teachers had been able to access very limited professional training to develop their awareness and knowledge of the wider mainstream educational system. **We recommend the JJC should fully implement the education recommendations from the last inspection; and management should facilitate access to professional training for ELC staff as a matter of urgency to develop their awareness and knowledge of the wider educational system, and to keep abreast of current educational developments.**



## CHAPTER 7:

# Healthcare and health promotion



- 7.1 Inspectors sought to ensure that the Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) met the following two standards which are consistently measured in residential childcare provision:
- all children will be provided with healthcare to National Health Service Standards, and with health education; and
  - the JJC works with other agencies to ensure that its health, education and care service is seamless.

The extent to which the criteria were met is as follows.

### Health assessment

- 7.2 Healthcare staff were informed of the admission of all children to the JJC, and all children received a healthcare examination at point of admission or within 24 hours of arrival. The examination focused both on the child's physical health and emotional and mental health, to ensure appropriate risk management arrangements were in place in relation to suicide and self-harm. In addition to the initial healthcare assessment, a mental health screen was undertaken, and if issues were identified a more in depth mental health assessment was completed.
- 7.3 Many of the children who entered the JJC were in poor physical and mental health as they had limited access to, and

uptake of healthcare services in their own community. The healthcare interventions and health promotion provided within the JJC were vital for these children.

- 7.4 Healthcare staff liaised with the child's General Practitioner and other relevant professionals with whom they had contact prior to admission. Following the initial health assessment, information in relation to risk of self-harm or suicide, along with any identified healthcare needs such as drug/alcohol use were immediately referred to residential staff and teachers, and the information was retained within the child's care plan. Care plans had been reviewed and developed to ensure that information in relation to healthcare was easily accessible to all relevant staff. Healthcare staff attended the daily meetings and a handover in relation to significant healthcare issues was provided to the duty manager at the end of the evening shift which provided valuable information and ensured continuity of care.
- 7.5 A nursing care plan (case record) in relation to each child was retained within the healthcare department. Nursing care plans were not constructed in respect of a recognised model of nursing and the plans we viewed did not contain information to



inform and guide nursing staff in relation to specific issues, for example, there was no short-term care plan for wound management in place. Where a specific need has been identified, the care plan should identify the desired outcomes, the nursing care interventions required and the frequency of evaluation required. **We recommend that short-term care plans are developed when appropriate in respect of identified nursing care needs.**

### Primary care

7.6 The JJC employed four full-time registered nurses who possessed a mental health qualification and a part-time registered nurse who held a general nursing qualification. One of the mental health nurses was currently on a period of absence. The nurses were deployed on a shift basis and a nursing service was provided to children from 8.00am to 9.30pm each day. Each of the nurses had areas of expertise which included infection control, sexual health, domestic violence and eating disorders. Nursing staff contributed to delivery of education programmes where a healthcare theme provided the focus.

7.7 Although the JJC policies and procedures had been reviewed in 2010 there was an outstanding need to ensure that policies and procedures are individualised to reflect local practices in the healthcare department. This is especially relevant in the areas of medicine administration which should contain guidance for staff as to the actual procedures undertaken, record keeping and maintenance of case files for children. **We recommend that policies and procedures in relation**

**to healthcare should be individualised to the healthcare department and reflect the local procedures applied.**

7.8 Nursing staff displayed a professional and dedicated approach to their work, which was child-centered in every respect. They currently received supervision from their line manager - the Deputy Director of Education - and arrangements had been put in place for them to receive clinical supervision from the psychiatrist. Healthcare staff considered there was a gap in relation to their professional development which the current supervision arrangements did not fully meet. They felt professionally isolated at times and considered liaison/supervision with registered nurses working in a similar area of practice, at their own level or a more senior position, would enhance their professional development and ensure they remain professionally up-to-date. Despite the improvements in staffing provision, clinical governance and quality assurance systems and processes were still not in place. There was no evidence of professional leadership, service user feedback, risk management processes, continuous professional development, clinical audit or team meetings. **We recommend that clinical governance systems should be introduced into the healthcare department to maintain and improve the quality of nursing care provision.**

7.9 The JJC used the services of a local practice and a doctor visited the healthcare department on a weekly basis. A confidential consultation was provided in the treatment room of the department. The general practitioner



(GP)/doctor visited the JJC during the inspection and new admissions and children who had requested to see the GP were brought to the healthcare department in an organised and confidential manner. The GP was satisfied with the current arrangements for the management of healthcare within the JJC and with the level of information and support provided by the nursing team. The only issue that was raised pertained to occasional time constraints due to the number of children who required to be seen. The GPs also provided an out-of-hours service and would see children at their practice in an emergency.

- 7.10 A fully-equipped dental suite was located within the healthcare department. A dentist and dental nurse visited the JJC on a fortnightly basis, and all children had ready access to dental treatment as they no longer had to leave the centre to receive it. Other allied health professionals also visited the JJC when required. These included community physiotherapists and opticians.

### Secondary care

- 7.11 If emergency care was required children attended the Accident and Emergency Department at the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald. The JJC also had access to the Minor Injury Unit at both Bangor and Ards Community Hospitals. Healthcare staff had forged links with the local hospitals which was useful as visits by the children to outside facilities could create staffing challenges and security issues for the JJC. Advance liaison with hospital staff ensured the visits could be facilitated in an efficient manner. When difficulties arose in terms of children leaving the JJC, a domiciliary

visit was arranged if possible.

### Child and adolescent mental health

- 7.12 Children in custody have complex alcohol, drugs and mental health problems which can make them particularly vulnerable. Mental health services within the JJC had been further developed since the last inspection and the services of a child and adolescent psychiatrist had been engaged. The psychiatrist worked closely with nursing staff and the visiting GPs to ensure a comprehensive and individualised service was provided to meet the healthcare needs of each child. The psychiatrist operated from the healthcare department and was available to review children in the Centre three days a week. Nursing and residential staff all identified engagement of the psychiatrist as a positive addition to the healthcare team. Staff now had prompt access to this valuable service, and assessment and treatment of the children could commence immediately.
- 7.13 The psychiatrist identified several challenges faced by the healthcare team including the availability of only limited information in relation to children at the time of admission, including their mental health history; increased accessibility and usage of 'legal high' drugs in the community; and difficulty in establishing what drugs had actually been taken to enable a meaningful detoxification programme to be commenced.
- 7.14 The JJC also employed a clinical psychologist who provided a therapeutic service in relation to stress, unresolved trauma and problems associated with alcohol and drugs.



7.15 Another challenge involved access to specialist services and drug programmes following discharge from the JJC. Continuity of healthcare services for children is vital, as is timely and efficient referral for children who require services when they are released. Healthcare staff faced particular challenges in liaising effectively with community-based Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service teams (CAMHS) including access to relevant notes. This was often not helped due to a lack of compliance by children in attending appointments made with the CAMHS teams after discharge. **We recommend that staff from the healthcare department should consider introduction of the Regional Risk Assessment tool and a Care Programme Approach to the management of mental health to ensure continuity of care and a standardised approach for children.**

### Self-harm and risk of suicide

7.16 If a self-harm or suicide risk was identified upon admission or at any subsequent stage, then children were also assessed by the psychiatrist. The risk assessment informed each child's individual crisis management plan. Children who were identified as being at risk were closely observed and written protocols were located in their plan to document their care management. The JJC had good communication processes to ensure all relevant personnel were aware of the children at risk and the interventions necessary to maintain their safety. Staff were diligent in implementing the protocols and knowledgeable about the levels of observation children required. Observation procedures were specified within the JJC policies and procedures

manual, and healthcare staff maintained a high level of input, including clinical observations when there was an identified need, for example during detoxification programmes.

### Health promotion

7.17 Health promotion was accorded high priority at the JJC and the programmes co-ordinator included health promotion and health education in the menu. These included topics such as citizenship, alcohol and drugs, life and social skills, as well as addressing themes such as depression, domestic violence and cancer awareness.

7.18 Residential staff worked with children on an individual basis to promote personal hygiene, and if appropriate to continue individual and group programmes about topics such as drug and alcohol abuse and sexual health. Residential staff promoted healthy lifestyles in their routine engagement with children, encouraging healthy eating and physical education in the evenings within the residential settings. Each house was allocated a time at the physical education centre which had a swimming pool and a gymnasium. The residential staff actively engaged children in enjoyable physical activities, setting personal goals and encouraging those with a natural aptitude to achieve awards.

7.19 The JJC applied a no smoking policy throughout the facility and healthcare staff would assist with smoking cessation if required. Cigarettes, tobacco and other illegal substances were confiscated at the point of admission and there were regular searches of children's bedrooms to ensure adherence to the policy. Most



children adapted surprisingly quickly to the no smoking arrangements following admission and residential staff usually did not find it difficult to implement the rule.

### First aid

7.20 All JJC staff received training in first aid. This included residential staff, teachers and ancillary staff. Residential staff had undertaken first aid training to St John Ambulance level and staff who supervised children in the swimming pool had all received first response training. The staff rostering process aimed to ensure that adequate numbers of first aiders were always on duty. Fully-equipped first aid boxes were widely available and a defibrillator was located in the medical department, with twelve staff trained in its use.

### Infection control

7.21 Infection prevention and control had been progressed within the JJC since the last inspection and one of the registered nurses had developed this as an area of personal expertise. An infection control policy was in place. Despite this there was still an apparent gap in the knowledge of some staff who did not recognise the need for standard precautions to be in place. Staff had received training in relation to swine flu which is to be commended, but not all transferred this knowledge to other areas of risk.

7.22 Residential staff advised that considerable investment had been made in the provision of Personal Protective Equipment for staff within the house units. Not all staff were aware of the location of gloves or emergency packs

and again some staff did not display understanding of good infection control practices. There was no specific policy available in relation to the management of laundry.

7.23 Staff within the healthcare department did not decontaminate equipment between use with individual children, and paper towels were not in use in high risk areas such as the toilet located in the medical department, or in staff toilets. The medical fridge temperatures were not being tested on a daily basis. Given the deficits identified, the Regional Infection Prevention and Control Manual should be adopted as the infection control policy for the JJC. There should also be regular awareness training in standard precautions provided for all staff due to the risk of blood borne viruses and communicable disease among the accommodated population. **We recommend that the Regional Infection Prevention and Control Manual should be adopted by the JJC and regular awareness training in infection prevention and control should be provided for all staff.**

### Medicine administration and home remedies

7.24 Administration of medicines at the JJC had been reviewed and a policy was in place. Children were brought to the healthcare department individually and their medications were administered by the duty nurse in the treatment room. The administration of medicines policy should also contain procedural guidance to reflect medicine administration arrangements within the healthcare department.

7.25 Increases in nurse staffing means that



secondary dispensing no longer occurred within the JJC as a registered nurse was on duty throughout the day. A small number of home remedy medications were available to the Duty Manager at night should a child require pain relief or linctus for a sore throat. The healthcare staff handover to the Duty Manager included all the evening medications that had been administered to children.

- 7.26 The nurses were occasionally required to administer medications in the house units if a child was unable to visit the healthcare department for example, because they were on close supervision regimes or detoxification programmes. This system worked well.
- 7.27 Arrangements were in place with a local pharmacy for delivery of medications to the JJC. Individual prescription records were held for each child. Medications including controlled drugs were stored appropriately in a locked cabinet within the medical department's treatment room. A small supply of medication was given to the child at the point of discharge prior to them seeing their GP in the community.

### **Access to healthcare and accommodation at discharge**

- 7.28 As was the case when we last inspected, healthcare staff were still concerned about interruptions to children's healthcare once they were discharged from the JJC. Planning systems were in place and staff liaised with appropriate professionals and agencies prior to discharge. However gaps still existed in terms of in-patient places for released children with mental health needs and a lack of provision for forensic mental health and hostel places for children who

were identified as vulnerable. While many children were motivated to accept help when they were in the JJC, healthcare staff were concerned about delays in obtaining services for children with newly-diagnosed mental health needs and also in ensuring their compliance in attending appointments.

### **Children's views**

- 7.29 The children commented very positively in relation to the healthcare provided. They found healthcare staff were very approachable and responsive to their requests for treatment or to discuss concerns. Healthcare staff were observed to have a good rapport with children and reported that children often disclosed issues of concern to them while attending the healthcare department.
- 7.30 There was only one child who raised an issue of concern in relation to the length of time he had to wait to see the psychiatrist. This was immediately addressed by the nurse on duty who advised he would deal with the issue on the child's behalf.
- 7.31 During the inspection, a boy who sustained an injury in the physical education department was treated promptly in the healthcare department and visited the next day for review of his wound; and a girl who asked to see the healthcare staff following admission was immediately taken for a chat with the nurse on duty. Other children who requested to see a doctor confirmed they were brought to healthcare on the day of his/her's visit. During a consultation with the doctor a girl asked the male nurse to leave the room so that she could have a private conversation, and he immediately obliged.

## CHAPTER 8:

# Premises, security and safety

8.1 Unlike a prison, the Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) was designed as a centre for group living, with small residential units in which children feel safe. The final design resulted from collaboration between a specialist team and the end users. A detailed client brief and user specification delivered a building that can facilitate best practice in the care of some very difficult children. The physical fabric was constructed to minimise risk and operational practices are carefully considered and regularly reviewed for the same reason. For example:

- ligature points have been removed in bedroom design;
- there is extensive internal camera cover and night staff do not carry keys to bedrooms (these are held by the Duty Manager). These features have significantly reduced previous levels of allegations;
- the JJC is a technical building, incorporating high levels of electronics which record each time a door or viewing panel has been opened and by whom;
- each bedroom has ensuite provision. This reduces traditional bullying and confrontation risks of institutional shower blocks;
- movement of children is centrally coordinated to keep rivals apart and

reduce friction;

- personal searching is limited to pat down, but drugs testing equipment is available; and
- 60% of court hearings are conducted by video link which reduces the security risks of transporting children out of the Centre and minimises disruption to their education.

8.2 Woodlands had remained significantly unaltered or extended since the previous inspection report of May 2008. The building comprised a 7,000m<sup>2</sup> facility that housed up to 48 children within six eight-bed residential units integrated with a range of support facilities. These included:

- educational facilities;
- recreational and sports facilities including swimming pool, gym, and an outdoor astro-turf pitch;
- spacious outdoor leisure areas within courtyards;
- a medical centre, including dental suite;
- main kitchen;
- main laundry;
- visitors' accommodation; and
- court video link facilities.

The JJC presented in good condition and was well maintained in line with current standards and good practice.



## Recommendations from the 2008 inspection report

- 8.3 All recommendations made in the inspection report of May 2008 were largely complied with. Remedial works to address the slippery surfaces to decked areas outside the houses had been planned for completion within the coming months. It was indicated that the decking is to be replaced which will present a greater level of slip resistance and durability. The maintenance of these areas was ongoing and staff were aware of the risk of slipping associated with the surfaces. **We recommend that work to replace the decked areas outside the houses should be expedited to ensure there is a suitable slip resistant surface and brought to completion prior to the end of 2011.**

## General maintenance

- 8.4 The management of general maintenance at the Centre was found to be of a high standard. Since the previous inspection the planning, monitoring and recording systems had been significantly enhanced by the use of computer-based systems. Documentation to support the maintenance procedures was well presented and comprehensive. This included records of ongoing fault reporting and subsequent remedial actions.
- 8.5 The decorative condition of the Centre has remained in reasonable condition. Paintwork in need of upgrading is attended to on an ongoing basis by the in-house maintenance personnel.
- 8.6 The concrete surfaces to the central courtyard showed signs of spalling

probably due to the severe frost in the past winter. It was understood that works are planned to repair the surfaces in the near future.

## Water safety

- 8.7 Water safety control measures were well established at the JJC. The legionellae risk assessment had been subjected to review at appropriate intervals and monitoring of the domestic water system was undertaken to reduce the risk of bacteria growth. The control of hot water temperature to safe levels was also ongoing in line with current standards and good practice.

## Ventilation

- 8.8 Records indicated that the ventilation system was maintained in line with current standards and good practice. Following the recommendation in the 2008 report equipment had been installed to monitor the ventilation rate to bedrooms. This was recorded at regular intervals by maintenance personnel.

## Fire safety

- 8.9 The fire risk assessment had been subjected to review at appropriate intervals and the findings had been given due attention. Records indicated that staff fire safety training was ongoing in the Centre by a specialist fire safety adviser. Several fire resisting doors in the utility area of the Centre were found to be propped open at the time of inspection. **We recommend that fire resisting doors which are required to remain open for operational or other reasons are fitted with automatic self-closing**



devices which are linked to the fire alarm and detection system, for example swing free closers or magnetic hold-open detents. Particular attention should be given to doors of rooms which are considered to present an increased fire hazard and which are subject to high volumes of use on a daily basis, such as the laundry, kitchen etc.

### Security and safety

- 8.10 Security and safety had remained as a key priority at the Centre. Comprehensive risk assessments had been developed since the last inspection to reduce the risk from unauthorised use of sharp tools and implements. Work to complete these assessments was ongoing and they are to be continuously reviewed to reflect the changing levels of risk which present at the JJC.
- 8.11 During recent decorative refurbishment of bedrooms in House 2, works were undertaken to relocate electrical sockets to a position which negated the need for trailing electrical extension leads. We suggest the remaining bedrooms in the Centre would benefit from similar measures. **We recommend that during future decorative upgrading or refurbishment of bedrooms in the JJC, electrical sockets are relocated to a position similar to that in House 2 to reduce the need for trailing electrical extension leads.**



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