AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF WOODLANDS JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE

June 2018
AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF
WOODLANDS JUVENILE
JUSTICE CENTRE

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Section 49(2) of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 (as amended by paragraph 7(2) of Schedule 13 to The Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010) by the Department of Justice.

June 2018
Contents

List of abbreviations 4

Chief Inspector’s Foreword 5

Executive Summary 6

Recommendations 8

Inspection Report

Chapter 1 Introduction 10

Chapter 2 Profile of the children 12

Chapter 3 Governance, management, staffing and costs 18

Chapter 4 Care of children 25

Chapter 5 Addressing offending behaviour 34

Chapter 6 Education and vocational training 36

Chapter 7 Healthcare and health promotion 41

Chapter 8 Premises, security and safety 54

Appendix

Appendix 1 Terms of reference 58
**List of abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAT</td>
<td>Comprehensive Health Assessment Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJCO</td>
<td>Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJI</td>
<td>Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSE</td>
<td>Child Sexual Exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAISY</td>
<td>Drug and Alcohol Intervention Services for Young People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoH</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoJ</td>
<td>Department of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Education Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOTAS</td>
<td>Education Other Than At School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETI</td>
<td>Education and Training Inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSCB</td>
<td>Health and Social Care Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPC</td>
<td>Infection Prevention Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJC</td>
<td>Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Looked After Child/Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMPR</td>
<td>Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIAO</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Audit Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICTS</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NITC</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Teachers' Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOMS</td>
<td>National Offender Management Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACE</td>
<td>Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCC</td>
<td>Personal Control in Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPANI</td>
<td>Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPE</td>
<td>Protective Personal Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPS</td>
<td>Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSNI</td>
<td>Police Service of Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQIA</td>
<td>Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBNI</td>
<td>Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEHSCT</td>
<td>South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCI</td>
<td>Therapeutic Crisis Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCRC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VES</td>
<td>Voluntary Exit Scheme (of the Northern Ireland Civil Service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YJA</td>
<td>Youth Justice Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOI</td>
<td>Young Offenders Institution (in England and Wales)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fewer children are entering the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland and this is to be both welcomed and expected as early intervention programmes and diversionary schemes take hold. For a small number of children who offend, custody remains the only effective means of keeping them safe and delivering a progressive, child-centred regime.

This cyclical inspection of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (the JJC) confirms that it remains the ‘jewel in the crown’ for the Department of Justice (DoJ) and is the envy of neighbouring jurisdictions. The small number of children are mostly admitted as a result of their offending behaviour in the community or when in the care of the State. Most benefit from the specialist and individual care provided during their time at Woodlands, but many reoffend on their release and are brought back.

Despite the absence of political leadership, I would urge both Departments to publish the Review and after appropriate consultation, take the necessary decisions as soon as possible.

This inspection was led by Tom McGonigle with support from the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). My sincere thanks to all who supported their work.

Brendan McGuigan
Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland
June 2018
The last inspection of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre (the JJC) was undertaken by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) in September 2014 and the report published in May 2015. It made four strategic recommendations for improvement in relation to bail, the regime, education and healthcare. The Youth Justice Agency (YJA) accepted these recommendations and published a detailed action plan to implement them.

There had been good progress in relation to the strategic recommendations. Inspectors found that:

- bail arrangements had improved, though they continue to require attention;
- the regime had been redesigned to include 17-year-olds and they were being successfully managed by the Centre;
- responsibility for education had been transferred as recommended in the last inspection with the JJC designated as an Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Centre in May 2016. The Education Authority and a vocational education provider had begun to deliver education in September 2017; and
- although efforts to transfer healthcare provision to a Health and Social Care Trust had been unsuccessful, the JJC had made its own arrangements which have proved effective.

The JJC population was steadily declining - it was 15% less in 2016-17 than in the previous financial year. At the time of this inspection, there were only 15 children in the Centre. This trend was positive insofar as it suggested Northern Ireland was diverting some difficult children from custody and managing them in the community.

However other population trends were less satisfactory. The proportions of Looked after Children (LAC) and those sent to the JJC on Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (PACE) proceedings had both increased since the last inspection. PACE admissions were often of questionable value since 50% were released within 24 hours.

The JJC was still being used when no alternative accommodation was available for children with complex needs and challenging behaviour. Yet the offending profiles of the current group were not significant. Some had no previous
convictions and the others were mainly petty,
persistent offenders who had breached the terms
of their bail and/or probation orders. Several
children had numerous repeat admissions.
These factors were beyond the JJC’s control and
represented inappropriate use of a facility which
cost around £8 million per year.

Management remained effective, collaboration
with external agencies was good and a number
of detailed policies were in place. Despite budget
cuts and a 26% reduction in staff, morale was
better than in 2015 and staff attendance levels
had improved.

A significant childcare ethos prevailed and
standards of healthcare were generally good. The
building was well-maintained, security measures
were effective and at the time of writing, there
had been no escapes since the last inspection.

While there is always room for improvement,
this inspection found the JJC was essentially
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…."

High costs and high reoffending rates are
common features of custodial facilities for
children in any developed society. The JJC was
very expensive and outcome data showed it had
little impact on the one year proven reoffending
rate. However the quality of comparator
provision also needs to be considered.

The Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and
Wales in their Annual Report for 2016-17 was
very critical of all seven children’s establishments
that he inspected:

“We reached the conclusion that there was
not a single establishment that we inspected in
England and Wales in which it was safe to
hold children…. The current state of affairs is
dangerous, counterproductive and will inevitably
end in tragedy unless urgent corrective action is
taken…. ”

The same cannot be said of the JJC where
practice was of a good standard. It is imperative
that the progress which has been achieved in
Northern Ireland’s child custody provision over
the past 10 years be maintained.

There is a significant degree of commonality
between the JJC and Lakewood Secure Care
Centre in terms of their populations, staffing
and high operating costs. They are less than
one mile apart and the similarities suggest that
closer alignment between the JJC and Lakewood
would improve the care of children and provide
better value for money and shared costs. This is
the direction of travel proposed by a Review of
Secure Care and Regional Specialist Children’s
Services by the Departments of Justice and
Health which is ongoing.

Given the fact that the JJC has been consistently
under-occupied and the high fixed costs, it
seems eminently sensible that the YJA should
actively support the proposal for closer
alignment. This will require a vision for secure
care, structure, legislation and resources to
appropriately address the needs of children who
require care and custody in Northern Ireland, a
review of relevant Health and Justice legislative
frameworks, plus strong leadership at local level.

1 HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2016-17 available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/