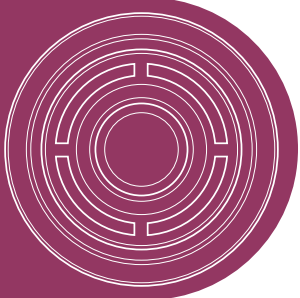


AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF WOODLANDS JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE

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



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List of abbreviations

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CHAT	Comprehensive Health Assessment Tool
CJCO	Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
CJI	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DAISY	Drug and Alcohol Intervention Services for Young People
DoH	Department of Health
DoJ	Department of Justice
EA	Education Authority
EOTAS	Education Other Than At School
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
HSCB	Health and Social Care Board
IPC	Infection Prevention Control
JJC	Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre
LAC	Looked After Child/Children
MMPR	Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICTS	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
NITC	Northern Ireland Teachers' Council
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 placement
PCC	Personal Control in Care
PPANI	Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland
PPE	Protective Personal Equipment
PPS	Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RQIA	Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
SBNI	Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland
SEHSCT	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
TCI	Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
UK	United Kingdom
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
VES	Voluntary Exit Scheme (of the Northern Ireland Civil Service)
YJA	Youth Justice Agency
YOI	Young Offenders Institution (in England and Wales)



Chief Inspector's Foreword

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.

With a declining population and the availability of highly trained staff in an excellent facility, it is entirely appropriate that a Review of Secure Care and Regional Specialist Children's Services is currently underway with both the Departments of Justice and Health recognising the benefits of closer alignment; I would therefore be entirely supportive of the proposal to repurpose the JJC.

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.

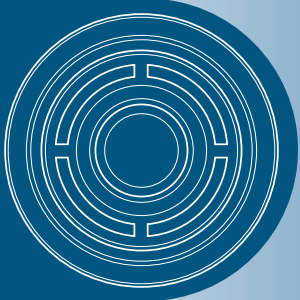
This inspection was led by Tom McGonigle with support from the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). My sincere thanks to all who supported their work.

Brendan McGuigan
Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice
in Northern Ireland

June 2018

Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
a better justice system for all





Executive Summary

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:

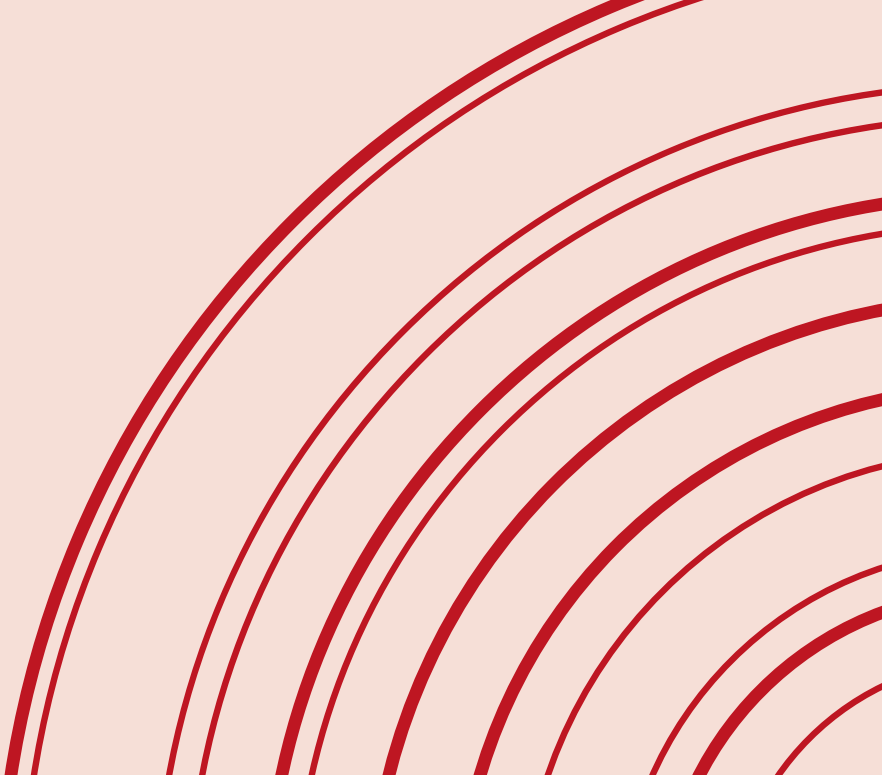
*"We reached the conclusion that there was not a single establishment that we inspected in England and Wales in which it was safe to hold children.... The current state of affairs is dangerous, counterproductive and will inevitably end in tragedy unless urgent corrective action is taken..."*¹

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/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629719/hmip-annual-report-2016-17.pdf



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