

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Report**

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| Committee/Panel: | The Children and Families Advisory Panel |
| Date: | 31 January 2017 |
| Title: | Annual Update On Swanwick Lodge |
| Reference: | 8074 |
| Report From: | Director of Children's Services |

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The appendix to this report is not for publication as it contains exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972, being Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). Further, it is considered that, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing this information. While there may be a public interest in disclosing this information, namely to provide assurances regarding the management of risk, it is felt that, on balance, this is outweighed by other factors in favour of maintaining the exemption, namely that the information could impact adversely on referrals to Swanwick Lodge from placing authorities and is, therefore, commercially sensitive.

1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Children and Families Advisory Panel with an update regarding the operation and development of Swanwick Lodge Secure Children's Home.

2. Contextual information

2.1 Swanwick Lodge is a Secure Children's Home with 16 approved places for young people of either gender aged 10 to 17 years who are deemed to be at such a significant risk of harm to themselves that they need to be secured for their own safety. This provision is made under section 25 of the Children Act (1989). The service is a national resource, (hence, only one young person accommodated at the time of writing originates from Hampshire), and it comprises of two eight bedded living units, a school and a range of support services, including health.

2.2 Four beds were previously offered under a block contract to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for young people who were remanded or sentenced to custody. In the best interests of children, HCC did not seek an extension to the contract when it

expired on 1.4.16 in the light of concerns regarding the appropriateness of admissions made by contractual obligation rather than through local placement matching. The change to an all welfare facility also offered a degree of financial certainty for the council given the increased national demand for welfare placements (since October 2014) and simultaneous reductions in the youth custody population and beds commissioned nationally by the YJB for 'young offenders'.

3. Finance

3.1 At the time of writing the number of beds available at the home is reduced from 16 to 12 while managers recruit to, or cover by other means, seven unfilled posts. The time-scale for returning to full capacity is solely recruitment dependent and, based on current projections; it is likely that all 16 beds will be in operation by the end of the financial year.

3.2 In December 2016 the Children's Services Departmental Management Team agreed an increase in bed price to compensate for lost revenue resulting from the reduction in beds and to improve the budget position for 2017/18. The increase takes account of high demand for placements and aligns HCC with other provider's pricing models.

4. Performance

4.1 Swanwick Lodge was judged 'Good' for the third time in succession in May 2016 and an interim Ofsted inspection conducted in November 2016 found that the service had "sustained effectiveness". The judgements were made in respect of both the overall effectiveness of the care and the education provided and recent findings were reached with reference to the new Children's Home's Regulations and Quality Standards (2015).

4.2 The improved performance since early 2014 (when the service was judged to be 'Inadequate') has involved a substantial turnover of staff and management, with many of the former being recruited in September 2015, and an extensive revision of procedures, practice and monitoring arrangements.

5. Key issues

5.1 Complexity of need

5.2 In May 2016 HCC established a National Commissioning Welfare Unit to coordinate and broker welfare placements made in Secure Children's Homes in England on behalf of all Local Authorities. Whilst a national and regional profile of young people requiring secure care is emerging (for the first time) from data collected by the unit, local evidence suggests that, in recent years, the needs of such young people have become increasingly complex and their behaviours increasingly challenging. In particular, self-harming behaviours (often requiring restraint), substance misuse/ dependencies and significant mental health difficulties related, in some cases, to sexual exploitation have become relatively common areas of need among those who are admitted.

5.3 In addition, although difficult to evidence without the forthcoming overview from the commissioning unit, the drive to reduce the use of youth custody coupled with recent unexpected capacity issues within the youth justice secure estate (Medway) appears to have led to an increase in the proportion of male young people who are referred for welfare reasons but who have serious offending histories and display extremely challenging behaviours.

5.4 The increased complexity of need and risks (and improvements in recording and monitoring) lies behind a notable increase in incidents within the home in recent years, (from 109 in 2012 to over 400 in 2016), and measures taken to reduce risks (including the use of physical restraint). The generally upward trend in incidents is a national phenomenon and, as illustrated below, steps have been taken locally to ensure that young people and staff continue to receive appropriate support.

5.5 Help & Protection

5.6 Developments and initiatives taken to ensure that the service remains responsive to the changing needs of young people include the following:

- Working with colleagues to recruit staff with the necessary resilience and diverse backgrounds, qualifications, ethnicity, and interests to reflect the diverse needs of young people;
- Re-commissioning the physical and mental health provision available (October 2015) in conjunction with NHS England so that the support reflects the findings of the last Health Needs Assessment (April 2015) and is available without formal referral pathways and outside 'office hours';
- Promoting a health care model that emphasises the role of residential staff in helping to create stability and trust, so that young people are then able to engage with specialist interventions where needed;
- Re-commissioning Pillars of Parenting consultations following the change of health provider in order to ensure that staff are confident in the application of this evidence based model of intervention;
- Commissioning bespoke training in restorative approaches with a view to building a restorative culture so that young people are able to learn how their behaviour affects others and can repair the harm caused (72% of residential and educational staff are trained to date);
- Employing a Child Sexual Exploitation worker attached to the county-wide multi-agency team for Missing, Exploited and Trafficked children to provide direct support to children and training for staff;
- Building staff resilience and service capacity (bed availability) by ensuring that staff receive good quality regular supervision and that they can access post-incident support from a psychologist;
- Re-establishing links with the police at an appropriate level (Chief Inspector) to maximise the support given;
- Reaching an agreement with the police that, where incidents require police assistance, debriefing will be managed jointly.

5.7 Following an unannounced visit In April 2016 the Office of the Children's Commissioner was "*impressed with the thought and planning that had underpinned changes at Swanwick Lodge*" to improve performance and meet the needs of young

people and equally “*impressed with the efforts that had been expended on trying to establish a skilled and diverse workforce*”.

5.8 Safeguarding

5.9 The use of physical restraint continues to be reported to and scrutinised by the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board via the Quality Assurance Subcommittee (in addition to Ofsted and the Independent regulation 44 Visitor).

5.10 Contrary to the general upward trend, during the first two quarters of 2016/17 there was a 34% reduction in violent incidents and a related 43% reduction in restraints compared with the previous six months. (Data for the third quarter is being collected at the time of writing).

5.11 The proportion of incidents resulting in restraint also reduced (80% compared with 90% during the preceding 6 months). ‘Under-use’ was considered and discounted and the reduction is, instead, related to growing levels of skill and confidence amongst recently appointed staff in de-escalating challenging behaviours. Restraints also continue to be very brief (97% of restraints during the first two quarters lasted no more than 5 minutes) and the least restrictive interventions continue to be used in the majority of cases.

5.12 Similarly, over the same period incidents of self-harm decreased (33 compared with 101 previously) and this is attributed to the support provided (including an assertive embedded new health provider) rather than a change in the resident profile as, notably, a significant proportion of young people referred with histories of self-injurious behaviours did not self-harm as frequently or at all following admission.

5.13 No child protection enquiries have been initiated in respect of children living at the home since November 2015 (when a child made an unsubstantiated allegation about an agency worker).

5.14 Complaints by young people continue to be closely monitored. The number received during the first two quarters of 2016/17 increased (from 12 in the preceding six months to 33) and common themes were largely domestic in nature and being treated differently (in accordance with needs and risks). Rather than deterioration in the quality of care the increase is seen as evidence of young people’s ease of access to the complaints process. The management and resolution of complaints has also been cited as an area of good practice by the Independent Visitor.

5.15 Premises

5.16 The communal areas and bedrooms were refurbished and redecorated during 2015/16 and remain in an acceptable condition.

5.17 Projects to improve the facilities and living and learning environments for young people that are grant funded by the Department for Education (DfE) include the following:

- A drama studio (new build) – by autumn 2017;
- A school inclusion room - part of the above project; and
- Two multi-purpose meeting rooms for family and professional visits – by autumn 2017

5.18 The drama studio will provide a range of leisure and vocational training opportunities for young people, (in areas such as dance, music, and lighting) which, together with a recently completed 'salon' (also funded by the DfE) will meet a recommendation from Ofsted regarding the need to broaden the school curriculum in light of the raised participation age. This project will also include a school inclusion room which will reduce the need for children who display disruptive behaviours within a class setting to be 'sent home'.

5.19 At the time of writing, a bid is being prepared in response to an invitation from the DfE to upgrade the home's CCTV system and that will be followed by a bid during 2017/18 to modernise the training kitchen for young people.

6. Future direction

6.1 Locally, the challenge for Swanwick is to ensure that the home is fully occupied and remains responsive to the needs of young people and that a Good Ofsted grading (at least) is maintained.

6.2 In terms of national developments, NHS England is working with the DfE, YJB and Secure Children's Homes to implement an 'Integrated Framework' for the secure estate (known as 'Secure Stairs'). The purpose of this project is to support settings across the secure estate to identify and deliver effective practice. This represents something of a milestone for the Secure Children's Homes sector which has typically been guarded against sharing practice for 'commercial reasons'.

6.3 In October 2015, the government commissioned Sir Martin Narey to conduct an independent review of Residential Child Care in England. The report was published in July 2016 and, at the time of writing; the government has yet to respond to the resultant recommendations. Sir Martin made very positive reference to his visit to Swanwick Lodge as part of his review, identifying conscientiousness and dedication amongst the staff team.

6.4 The main focus of the review was the cost of providing residential care. With regard to secure accommodation, a recommendation is made that the DfE ensure that Local Authorities come together to drive down welfare placement costs to the level achieved by the YJB or that the DfE commissions beds from the centre alongside the YJB. However, Sir Martin did not acknowledge that the costs achieved by the YJB are made through block contracting which, as indicated earlier, can compromise the 'Care Planning Standard' (Children's Home's Regulations) which requires registered managers to evidence that individual children are appropriately matched to the home and the services available. Moreover, given the risk of providers (including HCC) withdrawing from the market in the advent of reduced revenue it seems unlikely that the DfE would pursue a reduction in prices for the foreseeable future.

6.5 Notwithstanding the risks entailed in regional or central commissioning from a provider's perspective, the (interim) National Commissioning Unit represents the first step towards the possibility of joined commissioning arrangements between the YJB, NHS England and, in respect of welfare placements, the DfE or an alternative. A joined, coordinated approach could help ensure that young people can access the right support suited to their needs at the right time and can transition easily between services when necessary. In addition to a more efficient use of resources/ beds, it may even result in or at least further illustrate the need for a reconfiguration of the youth justice, mental health and welfare secure estates based on commonalities among young people who require secure care rather than differences in how their emotional and behavioural difficulties manifest.

8. Conclusion

8.1 As illustrated, Swanwick Lodge continues to develop in keeping with the changing needs of young people and regulatory requirements. The financial and other investment by the DfE in particular is considerable and reflects the value of this resource and the DfE's confidence in the provider.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the update on Swanwick Lodge.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

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| Hampshire safer and more secure for all: | Yes |
| Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate): | |
| Maximising well-being: | Yes |
| Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate): | |
| Enhancing our quality of place: | Yes |
| Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate): | |

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

Residential Care in England -
Report of Sir Martin Narey's independent
review of children's residential care (July
2016)

[Children's residential care in England -
Publications - GOV.UK](#)