

Corporate Parenting Panel

28 February 2020

Aycliffe Secure Centre - Annual Update



Report of Selwyn Morgans, Centre Manager, Aycliffe Secure Centre, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to inform members of the philosophy and aims of Aycliffe Secure Centre and to reflect on key events of 2019 and service developments for 2020.

Executive summary

2. Aycliffe Secure Centre provides secure accommodation for young people across England and Wales in a purpose-built state-of-the-art Centre.
3. The Centre has achieved an excellent Ofsted report and findings of OUTSTANDING in all areas. This has also been backed up by the Special Recognition award from Durham County Council.
4. The Centre has challenges to address regarding staff attendance and supporting staff in a challenging environment.

Recommendation(s)

5. The Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to note the content of this report and the progress made at the centre over the last year.

Background

6. Aycliffe Secure Centre provides accommodation for up to 38 young people, 8 of whom are sentenced or remanded by the Youth Custody Service (YCS); 30 places are for young people accommodated for their own or others' safety under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 (known as welfare placements) and are commissioned by local authorities.
7. The background and needs of all young people are usually very similar, irrespective of their legal order, and therefore the living accommodation, education and socialisation for all young people are determined on the risk assessment of the individual and the current group. Young people are not placed on a specific house, solely according to whether they are Welfare or Custody. The Centre operates a single sex house for girls and one for boys, where it is deemed appropriate to be in a single sex group. The remaining three houses' gender are decided by the market demands on referrals.
8. We admit young people from a range of local authorities across the country and typically very few young people are from the local area.
9. The Centre operates 5 houses set within a large complex which includes a fully equipped school. The school facilities include a library, art and crafts room, classrooms with interactive whiteboards, an IT suite, recording studio, music room and science room. School also provides vocational training and has specialist facilities: Hair and Beauty Salon, Motor Vehicle Garage, Bricklaying, Plumbing etc.
10. In school, young people are educated in single sex groups, based on research into the differing learning styles of boys and girls. There are daily after school clubs, run by education staff, where sharing is permissible depending upon behaviour and risk assessment.
11. There are 4 houses which take a maximum of 8 young people with a minimum staffing ration of one staff member to two young people. Durham House can take up to 6 young people and has much higher staffing ratios of almost one to one staffing (5 staff to 6 young people). The houses are named after castles in County Durham: Walworth, Barnard, Lumley, Auckland and Durham. The centre employs a multi-disciplinary team of approx. 160 staff.
12. Aycliffe Secure Centre was opened in 2011, as a state-of-the-art secure provision. It is a large, bright, airy and modern facility designed to manage vulnerable young people. It is the biggest Secure Children's Home in the country. There are over 300 cameras in the building which operate 24/7 – excluding bedrooms and bathrooms.
13. Doors weigh 26 stone and are operated by an electronic fob. The fobs are individualised to each staff member and record every time it is used. The centre has comprehensive CCTV systems. A private security company

observe all cameras, monitoring of CCTV, the secure external perimeter, hand out and collect keys, radios and alarms and provide reception duties out of hours.

14. All staff undergo a three-week induction programme which includes a week of de-escalation and restraint techniques; this is an assessed course and must be passed. Refresher training is a 2-day course and occurs every six months. All incidents of physical intervention are reviewed by senior and duty managers, alongside a nurse, the following working day.
15. Every young person in the Centre is on a 15-minute check. Risk assessment will determine more frequent checks which are 5-minute or enhanced checks. Constant observation can be provided for short periods. Each child has defined volumetric control, i.e. what can be allowed in a bedroom. All checks are derived from the risk assessment plan which is agreed and reviewed at Multi-Agency Team Around the Child (MATAC) meetings. These meetings are scheduled to take place every two weeks, unless there are changes to the behaviour and risk of the young person. In this case an extraordinary MATAC will be called, or, depending on the risk identified, a Suicide and Self-Harm or Risk to Life (SHARL) meeting is called. A senior manager from the Centre must always attend these meetings as well as all agency representatives.

Philosophy

16. The philosophy underpinning care in the Centre is “Exceptional Parenting”; that means:
 - (a) being there for young people through challenging and positive times;
 - (b) not judging or condemning, but being supportive, protective, encouraging, patient and loving.
17. We believe that “Every Interaction Counts”; which means from the moment we wake young people up to the time we say good night.
18. We aim to instil hope, drive, confidence and empathy. We achieve this through valuing, respecting and modelling behaviour. As exceptional parents, we aim to be consistent, fair, approachable, humorous and compassionate. It is being able to say “no”, it is never giving up; each day is a new day and we go again.
19. Young people resident in Aycliffe Secure Centre are not “inmates”, “prisoners” or “naughty young people”, they are “young people” – young people who may have experienced some or all of the following:
 - (a) trauma

- (b) ridicule
- (c) violence
- (d) rape / sexual abuse
- (e) extreme poverty
- (f) manipulation
- (g) trafficking
- (h) lack of opportunity
- (i) poor diet
- (j) poor parenting
- (k) abusive relationships
- (l) rejection
- (m) poor identity

20. The role of staff at Aycliffe is to see the child / young person in the presenting behaviour. We deliver this within the context of an “abnormal environment”. No one chooses to be locked up which is why the physical environment is so important – high safety and security within a “homely environment”. We work to bring as much “normality” as possible. We do this through structured days, with purpose, good food and healthy sleep patterns. We ensure physical health needs are met on arrival and throughout their time at Aycliffe. Staff are engaging, building trust and confidence and “emotionally connecting” with the young people and this is supported by the mental health service.
21. As the young person settles and grows, they become more involved in understanding their own issues and care needs and all the time we are helping the young person shift their identity to a more positive outlook.

Mental Health Services

22. The Centre is supported to care for young people with complex needs, through an in-reach Mental / Emotional Health Team called the Kolvin Service. Kolvin is part of Cumbria, Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW) and the service is commissioned through NHS England.

23. The Kolvin Service is an adolescent forensic mental health service that provides services for young people residing within Aycliffe Secure Centre Secure Children's Home (SCH). The aim of the provision is to ensure that young people are provided with specialist formulation, assessment and interventions responsive to their presenting needs.
24. The Kolvin Service staff structure at ASC involves specialist input from psychologists, psychiatry, nursing staff, occupational therapy and speech and language professionals.
25. The Kolvin Service can provide, where indicated, assessments and interventions related to:
 - (a) Challenging behaviour and forensic issues;
 - (b) Emotional dysregulation/developmental trauma;
 - (c) Neurodevelopmental conditions;
 - (d) Presenting mental health conditions.
26. The Kolvin Service also has links to a range of specialist services across CNTW and nationally, including the Complex Neurodevelopment Disorder Service (CNDS) and the national Adolescent Medium Secure Network.
27. The Kolvin Service also collaboratively leads on implementation of the SECURE STAIRS framework at ASC. This role involves development of:
 - (a) staff training and development
 - (b) reflective practice and debriefing processes
 - (c) formulation
 - (d) young people's participation
 - (e) research, audit & development.

Physical Health Team

28. The Centre is also supported in caring for young people by the physical health team, which is from County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT).
29. The nursing team oversees the physical health needs of all young people from researching previous health information to immunisation and promoting healthy lifestyles. The nurses review all young people involved in restraint to check for injuries, also to collect their views on the restraint.

30. The team is fully integrated into the Centre and ensure GP and dental appointments (*the Centre has its own fully equipped dental suite*) are provided.

Key Events of 2019

31. We had a very busy year in 2019 and some of the key events are as follows:
- (a) Full Ofsted Inspection - September 2019 – Outstanding in all areas
 - (b) Coroner's Court Outcome – July 2019 - positive comments about the Centre and work undertaken
 - (c) Inspiring People 2019 Awards – the Centre won a Special Recognition Award which was awarded by the Leader of the Council / Chief Executive;
 - (d) Continued Expansion of new employment in the Centre;
 - (i) Additional Residential Workers and Senior Residential Workers
 - (ii) Formation of a new Interventions Team
 - (e) Integration of our Secure STAIRS project which is a national innovative way of working incorporating Mental Health Services into the secure estate to provide mental health support to young people and staff working in a challenging environment.
 - (f) Development of the Listening Service for Staff;
 - (i) The continued services of psychotherapist to oversee the Listening Service
 - (ii) Provision of immediate counselling of staff
 - (g) Restructure of school creating a Deputy Head Teacher post and integrating teaching in core subjects;
 - (h) Continued development of the physical site with successful bidding for Department of Education grant
 - (i) Governance Boards for Health and Care and School Governance;
 - (j) Transfer of Facilities to Direct Services, increasing the ownership of Durham County Council in improving the environment;

- (k) Maintaining Investing in Children status;
- (l) Members of the Kolvin and physical health speaking at national conference about their work at Aycliffe;
- (m) Summer barbecue, Christmas celebration, football team continuing to win!

Service Priorities for 2020

32. 2020 is shaping up to be another busy year for the centre. Some of our key service priorities are as follows:
- (a) Continued high levels of performance to maintain OUTSTANDING;
 - (b) Further support to improve staff attendance at work;
 - (c) Widening the “Offer” to young people and families and opening the transitions house;
 - (d) Preparing for the “Welfare Contract” in 2021.

Conclusion

33. Aycliffe Secure Centre has enjoyed a very positive year and is well placed to continually develop and sustain achievement in 2020.

Background papers

None

Other useful documents

- (a) <http://www.durham.gov.uk/aycliffesecurecentre>
- (b) <http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/22277/Aycliffe-Secure-Centre-judged-outstanding-in-all-areas>

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

The centre continues to bid for DfE funding to improve the physical environment

Consultation

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

The centre is currently recruiting Residential Workers and Senior Residential Workers

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

None