

**INSPECTION OF THE
JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE
(NORTHERN IRELAND)
OCTOBER 2004**

Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
A better justice system for all



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18 - 25 OCTOBER 2004**

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INSPECTION OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE, OCTOBER 2004

FOREWORD

The Juvenile Justice Centre accommodates up to 34 young people charged or convicted of offences, some of whom are among the most needy, challenging and difficult offending young people in Northern Ireland. It is intended to be the last resort for the courts, the police and social services faced with young people for whom there is no alternative to custody.

The challenges of managing an establishment like this, ensuring the safety of the young people and of the staff and providing a caring and beneficial regime, are immense. These young people may have committed serious offences, but at the same time they are still young people, so precautions must all the time be taken to safeguard everyone from violence and harm. There must always be alertness to the possibility of abuse by staff and the potential danger of unfair allegations of such abuse. The maintenance of protection and the upholding of rights and good order must be facilitated by clear and effective procedures for child protection and complaints, a culture of openness, a regular daily structure of education, activities and also a system that encourages, recognises and rewards achievement and stable behaviour and relationships.

Over the past year the Centre's new Director and staff have had to establish and manage the amalgamation of two Juvenile Justice Centres into one, located on the Rathgael site. This has been achieved after the move of the bulk of young people and staff from the unsatisfactory prison-style accommodation at Lisnevin, where the surroundings and culture were very different. They now are occupying a cluster of buildings providing accommodation and amenities in the refurbished Centre in Bangor. However, this is an interim solution, and the plan is to replace the existing Centre with a complete re-build in approximately two years' time.

It is much to the credit of the Director and of his managers and staff that this report is strongly positive. My overall conclusion is that the young people in the JJC are well cared for in a pleasant and stimulating environment. This report commends the progress that has been made at the Centre and the good work the management and staff are doing, while recognising that this represents only one stage on a journey, and that there is further to go.

The cost of a facility like this is high in relation to the small number of young people concerned. But it is easy to see why, faced with all the risks noted above, the Youth Justice Agency feels obliged to shoulder these costs. Some of the current expense is transitional and relates to the layout of the current accommodation. It must be the aim to ensure that the new buildings are designed to enable the Centre to offer the same degree of safety and to continue to benefit the young people through good quality services and programmes while keeping the closest possible eye on running costs.

There has been no full inspection since 1999 or significant appraisal apart from the NI Human Rights Commission's report "In Our Care" and an SSI report in 2002 reviewing the effectiveness of the Juvenile Justice Centre Order. However, there have been unannounced inspection visits by SSI on a quarterly basis throughout that period. There have also been regular weekly visits carried out by the Independent Representation scheme run by NIACRO.

This inspection was led on my behalf by Ronnie Orr of the Social Services Inspectorate for Northern Ireland, supported by a multi-disciplinary team from education, health estates, medicine and human rights, as well as another Inspector experienced in youth justice. I am grateful to all of them, and to the Director of the Centre, the staff and the young people for their co-operation.

KIT CHIVERS
Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - REPORT OF THE INSPECTION OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE (NI) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Juvenile Justice Centre for Northern Ireland

The current Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) is an interim arrangement which resulted from the renovation and refurbishment of existing accommodation at Bangor and the closure of Lisnevin. Having become operational in October 2003, it will continue to be used until a new purpose designed Centre is constructed on the same site. The aim is to have this completed in 2006.

The Director, managers, staff and young people are to be congratulated for the successful formation of the single Centre in Bangor. The new Director and the staff have managed effectively to combine two staff groups together. A new dimension for many has been the need to integrate a small and intermittent number of girls alongside a majority of boys. They have increased the culture of listening to the young people and are proactively encouraging them to achieve educational and practical rewards as the means to prevent offending.

Security

There is a preoccupation with security and considerable caution when young people are traversing the grounds between buildings, or indeed using outdoor space for recreation. But there are excellent indoor recreation amenities and the staff of the Centre try to counteract the atmosphere of tight control by arranging special events such as a Fun Day, "Stars in Their Eyes", soccer matches and visits by politicians and sports personalities.

Young People with serious emotional needs

Young people with emotional and mental health problems are a particular concern. Those who are now eligible to be placed at the age of 17 and who are considered to be vulnerable, especially girls, should be the subject of individual assessment of need, risk and compatibility. It would be problematic, however, if the numbers of 17 year olds were disproportionate. A separate secure unit for young people aged 17 should be considered, catering particularly for those with emotional disturbance and mental health needs.

Staff Training and Supervision

The Agency has embarked on a Training Needs Assessment and it was good to find staff recognising the importance of training. Training is agreed with each staff member, depending on their training profile and the requirements of the Centre. Both new staff and existing staff receive regular training in child management techniques, using both de-escalation and physical restraint. This is delivered by the Centre's own teams of instructors, involving 12 accredited trainers

Staff supervision is still variable but it remains a core requirement. Staff are assured of regular sessions which have a joint agenda, are recorded and the resulting action mutually agreed and reviewed. The frequency should be monthly and it should be monitored and subject to regular reporting at the Management Board.

Not all first line managers hold a recognised qualification. In-house training in supervisory management is taking place as a priority and the opportunity for secondment to a fast track 2-year social work course should continue to be made available to one or two staff each year.

Staff Overtime and Absence

Overtime working and sickness absence are being focused on. The main cause of overtime levels was to provide cover for colleagues on sickness absence or holiday. But absence can also be due to trauma experienced in work or due to allegations of assault or abuse against a child. Management recognises that such staff need advice and support.

Care of the Young People - Assessment and Planning

Assessment and planning are improving, but are not yet fully consistent. Some review meetings are not held and when held do not always have adequate preparation, nor are all the relevant people notified to attend. The process of review and particularly the pre-discharge review is crucial to making the transition as smooth as possible.

The file records showed considerable effort being made to work with the young person both at a key worker level and in education and they also confirmed that the young person was regularly consulted. Aptitude for keeping good records varies. The tendency is to store too much narrative material. More concise chronological information and an emphasis on analysis would be helpful.

The Young Person's Experience of Custody

The young person's typical day starts at 8.00 am followed by school, then homework or programmes up until teatime at 5.30pm. As well as computer games and television or table tennis in each House Unit there is a selection and rota of activities each evening, taken up on a house by house basis. The living space is somewhat cramped, but there is a Youth Club, a swimming pool, sport and fitness opportunities, which are excellent amenities.

Bedtime is 9.30pm, but this can be varied for individuals depending on how far up they are on the Progressive Regime. The Progressive Regime is a system of incentives and rewards ranging from "bronze" to "platinum". Each young person enters the Centre at "silver" and their level thereafter within the range is discussed in a meeting each week.

Safeguarding Young People

All the young people spoken to said that they “felt safe and that the situation was always under control”. Many of the young people said that the first person they would speak to if they had a problem was their key worker. The incidence of child protection complaints, which were usually related to incidents of control and restraint, had significantly reduced. This is attributed to the reliance by staff on improved de-escalation and child management techniques and the opportunity to address issues in regular, sometimes daily meetings between young people and staff.

Discussion with staff highlighted the need, however, for more independence in the process of dealing with child protection allegations. It is expected that the draft Child Protection Procedures and Complaints Charter, which are in process of consultation, will address the plan to include people with the specific remit to oversee referrals from an independent stand point. The young people have access to various people to voice their concerns, notably the “Independent Representatives” provided by NIACRO who are volunteers and who visit weekly.

The Impact of Remand and referrals by the Police

The majority of young people placed in the JJC are there on remand awaiting appearance in court or bail, whichever happens first. In the period from January 2004 to September 2004, in addition to 150 being placed on remand, there were 153 admissions under PACE, which generally means an overnight stay. Roughly half were given bail and the other half (72) returned on remand. Taken together this represents a very high level of turnover. Out of a total of 334 over the period there were 31 young people committed on a Juvenile Justice Centre Order, which represents only 9% overall and 14% of those remanded. The number who are released on bail prompts questions about whether custody is being used as a last resort.

The best remedy would be to reduce the amount of remand by ensuring that young people have a fair and prompt court hearing. Otherwise custody becomes a misuse of a highly expensive remedy and may unnecessarily ‘criminalise’ a child as well as denying their basic right to liberty.

Education

Over the period of one year the Education Department has produced a well led and developed curriculum with an increased emphasis on vocational work and improved links with former schools or placements back in the community. The issues needing further consideration are:

- the role and value added by Care staff accompanying the young people in school hours;
- how to gain input from educational psychology; and
- fostering even stronger links with the Education and Library Board, if not pursuing full integration.

Tackling Offending Behaviour

Staff and the young people spoke for the most part positively about the programmes in which they were engaged. It was generally held that programmes that would promote skills for addiction-free daily living were vitally important and useful for the young person. It is important that programmes run at the Centre are presented for accreditation and independently evaluated. It is essential that recidivism rates are monitored over a number of years to gauge how well they work at preventing offending.

Key partners in this approach are parents and representatives of other agencies in the community. The importance of contact with parents extends beyond phone calls and visits to the Centre. Their presence at review meetings is seen to be vitally important. The staff also appreciate that if the young person is to make the most of the opportunities after release from custody, then engaging the support of Community Services projects, Probation Service and social services best begins when they are in custody.

Health Care

Many young people who come into custody have not accessed Health Care sufficiently. They receive good attention from the nursing, dental, medical and psychology practitioners while in the Centre. Some reinforcement, particularly with mental health skills, would be helpful. A further service needed is assessment of need at the point of release and the promotion of uptake and follow-up of these services when the young people are back in the community.

The Centre and its Health Care resources can be most challenged when there is a young person who is emotionally disturbed. Particularly, when they are in the upper age range 16 - 17 and decisions are required as to whether the JJC setting or YOC or perhaps a specialist mental health secure unit would be most appropriate. The criteria should be determined more by assessed need rather than by an arbitrary age cut-off point or a previous placement in custody. There should be monitoring of these acute cases and they should be the subject of specific regular reporting to the Management Board and in the Annual Report.

Estimated Cost

No cost figure per young person is provided at this point in time as the baseline can be better established from the financial year 2004/2005 when the Centre has been running on the single site over the entire period.

The Youth Justice Agency as a whole in 2003/2004 cost nearly £13m, of which staff costs were over £8m for 345 people in post. The staff complement for the JJC is 185, but the figures for expenditure are not disaggregated. It would be helpful to have more detailed cost information which would enable appropriate comparisons to be made with other establishments.

INSPECTION OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE - OCTOBER 2004

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Justice (NI) Act 2002 the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland was made responsible for inspecting the Juvenile Justice Centre. For this inspection he engaged the assistance of the Social Services Inspectorate for Northern Ireland, which had previously exercised that responsibility. The JJC is the one remaining custodial unit in Northern Ireland for young people between 10 and 17. The General Aim and the Terms of Reference of the inspection are outlined in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The inspection has taken into account the legislation and rules governing the care and treatment of children and young people¹ who are detained in the Centre. The legislation includes the Criminal Justice (Young people) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, which was implemented in 1999 and the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002². The Inspection Team was also mindful of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and other International Standards, such as the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, "The Beijing Rules", particularly when considering attention paid to Child Protection and the level of consultation with young people about the running of the House Units and the Centre as a whole.

The Legislative Background to Custody Provision

- 1.3 In 1998 the Juvenile Justice Centres replaced the four former Training Schools. Prior to that date, young people who had been found guilty of offences were sent by the courts for semi-determinate periods of between 6 months and 3 years in Training School and shared the accommodation with young people who were placed for care, protection and control and for non-school attendance. The aim of the legislation over the past 9 years, including the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 1996, is to limit the number of young people receiving custodial sentences to those responsible for serious and/or persistent offending i.e.:-
- who commit offence(s) so serious that only a custodial sentence is justified;
 - where the offence is a violent or sexual offence and the public need protection; and
 - where the offender refuses to give consent to a community sentence.

¹ "Children" will throughout the report be referred to as "young people".

² Further information on the "Legislative Basis" can be found at Appendix 2

- 1.4 Otherwise most young offenders are dealt with through Youth Diversion, such as Advice and Warning, restorative cautioning by the police, preventative work under contract by Youth Justice Agency (Community Services) and community based sentences involving Attendance Centres, reparation and instruction in citizenship as well as supervision by Probation Board.
- 1.5 More recently the community based options have been further extended by the implementation of Youth Conferencing. This can be either an alternative to court when a young person accepts their responsibility for their offence, in which case the offender is referred by the Prosecution Service or if the case goes to court, the young person may be referred by the Magistrate after a finding of guilt.
- 1.6 The young people, both boys and girls, who are either ordered to be detained by the courts on remand or on a Juvenile Justice Centre Order (JJCO), are placed in the one remaining Juvenile Justice Centre in Bangor.
- 1.7 The change in legislation has had a marked effect in recent years on reducing the population within the three Juvenile Justice Centres that were in operation during the past 4 years, i.e. Rathgael, St Patrick's and Lisnevin. The latter two closed in 2000 and 2003 respectively. The legislation, therefore, since 1996 has separated the "welfare" and "justice" strands and guided courts towards the use of custody as a last resort and that the period of detention is kept to a minimum. Nonetheless, the young people who are "looked after" and the young people in custody often have similar damage and deprivation in their background. The current rationale for placement requires that the young person should be in a custodial Centre because they were either:-
- i. committed under a Juvenile Justice Centre Order to a fixed period of between three and twelve months in custody followed by a similar period of supervision in the community; or
 - ii. remanded in custody by the courts pending trial or sentence; or
 - iii. remanded by the police under the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Order (Northern Ireland) 1989 (PACE).
- 1.8 The drop in numbers held in custody from 150 young people 10 years ago to an average now of 24 is consistent with Article 37 (b) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which states "... *The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time*". The achievement has been due mainly to two factors. First, an acceptance that the environment of the premises at Lisnevin (a Class "C" prison) was outmoded and unsuitable for young people. Second, the recognition of the need to uphold the principles of both the Juvenile Justice legislation and the Children (NI) Order 1995 to achieve:-
- optimum homeliness with security;
 - constant supervision and care; and

- preparation of the young person through education and life skills to return to the community.

Consistent with Human Rights standards on staff training, this can only be provided by a well managed workforce comprising staff with appropriate skills and qualifications and the resolve and the means to achieve these. Credit must be given to the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), sentencers, Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) and the Juvenile Justice Board (the forerunner of the current Youth Justice Agency) for the significant reduction in the numbers of young people entering and remaining in custody.

- 1.9 The purpose, therefore, of the legislation in relation to custody for young people is to enable the court to deal with and refer only the most serious offenders, through a combination of custody and planned programmes to effect reduction in their offending behaviour. This is to be achieved within a safe, secure and stimulating environment providing care and education for young people.

The Youth Justice Agency

- 1.10 The driving force for change in Youth Justice has been the Criminal Justice Review (March 2000), which recommended the setting up of an Executive Agency of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to bring about change by influencing both the custodial estate and a greater emphasis on diversion and restorative initiatives and new community based Orders. The Youth Justice Agency was established on 1 April 2003 with the Juvenile Justice Centre as one of four directorates. The other three Directorates of the Agency are Community Services, Youth Conferencing and Corporate Services. The aspiration or vision by the Interim Chief Executive in relation to Custody was “the new Bangor secure Centre must be more than just an amalgam of Rathgael and Lisnevin; it must offer quality of regime, education and crime avoidance programmes that would compare with the best in the world.”

The Juvenile Justice Centre

- 1.11 The Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC) accommodates boys and girls aged between 10 and 17 years who have been made subject to Juvenile Justice Centre Orders or who have been remanded in custody by the courts. The Centre was created out of the former Rathgael which had been a Training School and the young people and staff who transferred from Lisnevin in October 2003. The Centre occupies the site in Bangor which was well known as Rathgael. It is situated beside busy traffic routes to Newtownards and Belfast and is screened by mature trees and a perimeter fence. The Centre has extensive grounds and is set out in a cluster of two-storey House Units accommodating up to 8 young people in each. There are separate blocks providing Administration, Reception, Rowan College (school), Catering, Swimming Pool/Youth Club and Sports Hall.
- 1.12 The achievement of bringing together two sets of young people and staff with the different sets of philosophies and practices has been considerable. While the pace of amalgamation was accelerated during September 2003 and this was quite testing, the generation of a single Centre in Bangor has been a remarkable success. The Director, managers, staff and young people are to be congratulated. The stability of the Centre has not happened without planning,

partnership and the encouragement of good practice. The following had a major role in shaping the change:-

- The former Acting Chief Executive and a Custodial Development Team put considerable effort into preparing the staff, the policies and procedures to be operational from October 2003.
- The NIO Project Team who carried out the physical planning and were in charge of the development of “Phase 1”. This involved the renovation of the buildings and the installation of security systems which had not hitherto been apparent at Rathgael as it had been a Centre run on a more “open” regime.
- The new Director of Custodial Services and the staff, who since October 2003 when the current Centre became operational, have managed effectively to combine two staff groups together. This included a new dimension for many i.e. integrating a small and spasmodic number of girls alongside a majority of boys. While this has been largely acceptable it is not without some concerns.
- The Director and staff have also increased the culture of listening to the young people and are proactively encouraging them to achieve educational and practical rewards as the means to prevent offending.

While some of the outdoor amenities and equipment enjoyed at Lisnevin have been missed, a lot of alternatives have been developed at Bangor.

The Inspection

- 1.13 The inspection was carried out under the auspices of the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI). The Inspection Team comprised two inspectors from SSI (Criminal Justice Services Group) and invited inspectors drawn from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), the Department of Health and Social Services’ (DHSSPS) Medical Advisory Group and Health Estates (also DHSSPS) as well as a representative of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC). The Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice also attended. In view of the help from the invited inspector from NIHRC, an independent agency, there was no involvement of a lay assessor. Further details of the team and the objectives of CJINI are included in Appendix 3.³ The fieldwork was undertaken over the period of one week at the end of October 2004.⁴

³ CJINI methodology and general information on inspection is available on the website: www.cjini.gov.uk/chiefinpector.

⁴ There has been no full inspection since 1999 owing to plans to amalgamate the two centres and NIO and SSI agreed that unannounced inspections would suffice until one year after the single centre was in operation.

1.14 The inspectors assessed the services and practices against a combination of the standards. The first were laid down by NIO in the paper 'Statements of Standards and Criteria for Juvenile Justice Centres in Northern Ireland' and the relevant sections of these standards have been added to a second source i.e. the Core Matrix of requirements of the Criminal Justice Inspection (NI) (Appendix 4). The JJC standards were originally commissioned, endorsed and issued by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) at the time the new legislation was implemented in 1999. The JJC standards are in the process of being revised and will incorporate a Service Level Agreement between the Youth Justice Agency (Custodial Services) and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland because of the involvement of probation staff in provision of Pre-sentence Reports (PSRs) and contact with young people during their time in custody and then with those who are discharged to the supervision stage of the JJCO. These revised standards were not ratified in time to be incorporated into the basis of this inspection. The Juvenile Justice Centre Rules are also acknowledged, by NIO, to be in need of revision so as to provide a compatible steer for the standards. The Inspection Team also support this intention. Arrangements are in place for this work to be completed early in 2005 and the Rules will be subject to equality proofing and consultation. Based, therefore, on the 1999 standards paper and the compatible CJINI criteria this inspection focussed on nine aspects of the work of the Centre, namely:-

- Purpose and Function;
- Management and Staffing;
- Assessment, Planning and Review;
- Care of Young People;
- Education and Vocational Training;
- Tackling Offending;
- Health Care;
- Parental Involvement; and
- Premises Safety and Security.

1.15 All of these areas are covered in this report. The relevant standards are set out at the beginning of each section followed by an evaluation of the extent to which the standards have been met. In addition the aspects of "openness, partnership, equality, learning culture and achievement of results" are addressed i.e.:-

- Is the Centre part of an open and accountable organisation?
- Does it operate as within a partnership ethos in a joined-up way with the Criminal Justice and child care systems?
- Does it promote equality and human rights?
- To what extent is it a learning organisation which seeks feedback and effectively manages change?
- Does it deliver performance and outcomes in relation to Government objectives?

1.16 This report is based on:-

- documentation including a self-evaluation report provided for CJINI and SSI prior to and during the inspection;
- stakeholder views both in writing and discussions with representatives of other agencies such as the Probation Board (see Appendix 6);
- discussions with the Director, managers and staff;
- discussions with the young people;
- information taken from questionnaires completed by inspection team members with the young people and their parents;
- examination of the case files and other records held in the Centre; and
- observations made by inspectors over the period of the inspection.

Policy on the Custody of Young People

1.17 In 2002 there had been two reports completed, one on the running of the Juvenile Justice Centres by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) “In Our Care” and the other by the Social Services Inspectorate - a “Review of the Criminal Justice (Children) Order 1998” which examined the impact of the legislation, particularly on those who were sent to the Juvenile Justice Centres on Juvenile Justice Centre Orders (JJCO). The latter were designed to apply to those who were serious and/or persistent offenders.

1.18 The Human Rights Commission’s report “In Our Care” 2002 raised concerns that custody may not always be used as a last resort and also the age of criminal responsibility at 10 years of age remains lower in the UK compared to some other countries in the European Union. It particularly highlighted the disproportionately high number of young people being remanded in custody under Criminal Justice (Children) (NI) 1998 or Police and Criminal Evidence (NI) 1989 (PACE) legislation. Of those young people placed on remand it is estimated that only a small proportion (14 per cent) go on to serve a custodial sentence following conviction. Statistics suggest that many of these young people are granted bail on second or successive applications after spending short periods of under a week in custody. This raises serious doubts as to whether the detention of young people before trial is being limited to exceptional circumstances as required by international instruments and domestic law. In the year 2003 - 2004 there were 184 PACE admissions who usually stayed for less than 24 hours. However, a significant number of these admissions return from a subsequent court hearing under remand charged with criminal offences. While magistrates do take time spent on remand into account when considering sentencing there is undoubtedly a major problem which must be addressed.

- 1.19 Currently, in the view of the Inspectors, too many young people are being pulled further into the juvenile justice system than need to be, by being remanded in custody or sent to the Juvenile Justice Centre under PACE. The drip feed also from the “looked after” care system into justice is particularly worrying. This issue is currently being addressed on a number of fronts, with magistrates, police and managers of the care system being confronted with the problem. In the last few months, after taking legal advice, the management of the Juvenile Justice Centre refused to accept some referrals from the police and did not admit a number of young people under PACE legislation because it considered them to be inappropriate. On the basis that custody should be the last resort the Inspectors support this resolute action as it is in keeping with the intent of PACE legislation and UNCRC Article 37 (b).
- 1.20 Several pieces of research are also underway, such as the “Pathways into Care and Custody Study” and “An Examination of the Final Disposals associated with Young people Remanded into Custody in Northern Ireland”. Hopefully, when they are available during 2005 they will clarify the decision making processes and how some young people are catapulted into secure care and custody and how others are successfully diverted. The objective is to be able to recommend steps that can be taken to reduce inappropriate admissions.
- 1.21 Every effort must be made to avoid delays and to prevent a child being criminalized. While there needs to be some caution in comparing figures with England and Wales and there is no current equivalent here of “fast tracking” cases, the waiting time for such cases to come to prosecution has been halved from 142 days average within the specified target date. It is important to face young people quickly with the consequences of their offending and to develop a sense of personal responsibility. In the absence of cutting down delay young people accused of offending may have less of a feeling of the impact and/or fairness when a court hearing takes place up to one year or more after the event. The Chief Inspector (CJINI) has indicated that during 2005/2006 he intends to undertake a comprehensive review of delay in the criminal justice system. As there is a contemporary evaluation taking place of the Youth Conferencing Service it would be useful also to undertake an examination of the level of understanding and participation in Youth Court of young people either as defendants or witnesses and their parents/carers. Also to examine to what extent a Child Witness Support Service, which is currently largely confined to cases heard at Crown Court, could assist to make court appearance of optimum meaning to a wider group of young people.
- 1.22 Both of the above mentioned previous reports (Paragraph 1.17) confirmed that there were good relationships between the young people and the staff which would be supported even further by:-
- ensuring fully recorded and consistent reviewing and planning for each young person;
 - also ensuring cohesion between the custody and community supervision stages for those who had been committed to custody;

- examining why there were such a large proportion of the young people placed on “PACE” and “remand” as well as there being a disproportionate number of young people from “looked after” care admitted to custody;
- improving access to mental health services for those displaying particularly disturbed or distressed behaviour; and
- up-dating of the complaints and child protection procedures.

These earlier findings have been borne in mind during this inspection.

2. Purpose and Function

Standard

- a. **The Centre has a clear and well understood sense of purpose which fully reflects the vision, goals and values determined for the Juvenile Justice Centre by the Youth Justice Agency and the Northern Ireland Office**
- b. **Is the Centre part of an open and accountable organisation?**
- c. **Equality - Does the Centre promote and safeguard human and young people's rights in an even-handed and non-discriminatory manner?**

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

Sense of Purpose

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan and Business Plan 2004-2007 states - "The aim of the Juvenile Justice Centre is to provide young people sent to custody with a safe and secure environment, to reduce their offending behaviour and successfully reintegrate them into the community by making a positive contribution to their knowledge, life skills and experience. This is achieved through partnership based upon shared standards, protocols and service level agreements."
- 2.2 The Mission Statement endorses this further by underscoring that "young people's needs will be the most important consideration ensuring the highest standards of care. This will be achieved by working to enhance their physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual and educational well-being." As well as meeting "needs" the Agency promises to "strive to protect the Human Rights of all those with whom it comes into contact. Young people will receive the highest standards of care while they are with us and assist their re-integration into the community."
- 2.3 The aim to promote awareness of and develop confidence in the work of the Agency in relation to the public and partners in the criminal justice sector, has been refined into strategic objectives:-
 - in order to prevent offending by young people and to assist their re-integration into the community it involves relevant and planned regimes which prepare young people for a law-abiding life, providing constructive activities including education and training, work experience and programmes specifically aimed at addressing offending behaviour;
 - to maintain an appropriate level of security for young people in our care; and
 - to operate a safe and caring environment across the Agency for young people, staff and the public.

- 2.4 The Corporate Plan for 2004-2007 refers to the capacity for 43 places for boys and girls using 6 residential units. This is likely to be the scale for the new JJC in 2006. The interim Juvenile Justice Centre currently accommodates up to 34 young people aged between 10 and 17 using a cluster of 5 units (Houses 5, 6 and 8 along with a building shared by the Intensive Support Unit and Assessment Unit. The latter have had one Unit Manager to cover the two units and they have gradually become more integrated). There is also an education and skills facility and sports and leisure facilities located within the campus. The House Units offer a more homely environment compared to the Centre at Lisnevin which was originally designed to be a Class "C" prison. Lisnevin, however, did have extensive grounds which were well laid out for vocational training, sport and challenging outdoor pursuits. There have undoubtedly been some significant gains in the renovated buildings, such as giving integrity to smaller groups of young people with their own living quarters and bedrooms, which are a lot less like prison cells. The stairways and corridors are still a lot narrower than would be desirable and the outdoor space does lack some of the fixtures and sports amenities which had been enjoyed in the past, apart from a football pitch and small garden patches.
- 2.5 The total admission number for the up to the inspection, i.e. January to September 2004, was 334 young people (309 boys and 25 girls). Of these 150 were placed on remand, 153 came initially on PACE and 31 committed on a Juvenile Justice Centre Order. In regard to the younger age range of young people aged 10 to 13, the Criminal Justice Review advocated for the closure of Lisnevin in favour of a single site, but preferred to see younger young people who offend seriously to be cared for as "looked after" young people and kept out of custody. However, the number of such young people placed has remained a small proportion of the total admitted over the past few years. In 1999/2000 there were 52 admitted over the 2 year period, representing less than 8% of the total intake. Then this dropped to 11 in 2002 (3%) and up again to 17 or (6%) in 2003. Roughly 70% of these children were from "looked-after" care, a much higher ratio than for older young people who come from children's homes. The Custody Care Order was designed to provide a secure solution to the accommodation needs of these 10 - 13 year old children separate from the upper age range of young offenders. However, the legislation has not been commenced as the creation of a "stand alone" secure Centre for the younger age range could often be under-utilised, as few of these children are sentenced to a JJCO. It is undesirable that the few children who are placed in custody are mixed with older young people. Yet the caution about setting up another custodial unit and how best to work with this numerically small group is appropriate. Currently NIO have commissioned a brief piece of research which is being undertaken by the Youth Justice Agency to examine the needs and most suitable remedies for these younger children whose offending is regarded as "serious and/or persistent".
- 2.6 The current Juvenile Justice Centre is known as Phase 1, as it is an interim arrangement which resulted from the renovation and refurbishment of existing accommodation at Bangor. Having become operational in October 2003, it will continue to be used until Phase 2, a new purpose designed Centre, is constructed on the same site. The aim is to have this completed in 2006.

Openness and Accountability

- 2.7 A Framework Document for the Agency was issued in March 2003 setting out the Agency's policies, key performance indicators and its accountability to Minister and the NIO. The NIO used regularly to provide valuable statistics and in keeping with "openness", the figures and trends of admissions and the backgrounds of young people need again to be generally made available on a quarterly basis. Partly, this is as an assurance that custody, as a consequence of legislation including Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Article 37 of the UN Convention and Rules 1 & 2 of the UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty 1990, is used as the last resort and does not pull in young people who are culturally, socially or ethnically over-represented.
- 2.8 The Youth Justice Agency's Annual Report and Accounts should also provide figures showing the trends of admissions and an analysis of where the young people are coming from and a breakdown of the running costs specific to the Centre. It is good that in the year 2003-2004 that the Agency met 8 out of 9 key performance targets and all of its development targets. These related to the major achievement of the establishment of and move into a unified Juvenile Justice Centre (JJC), ensuring the safety of individuals, the appointment of Training Co-ordinator, the establishment of a Bail Supervision and Support Scheme and the refinement of several policies. The latter included Health and Safety, Risk of Suicide, Drug Strategy and Action Plan and a training needs assessment undertaken.
- 2.9 The Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer and supported in that capacity by the Director of Corporate Services. Executive managers in each Directorate are expected to maintain an effective system of internal control in order to meet the targets and objectives. The key financial target, as recorded in the Annual Report, was achieved as the Agency stayed within Budget. The Agency as a whole in 2003/2004 cost nearly £13m, of which staff costs were over £8m for 345 people in post. These, however, are not disaggregated and it would be helpful to know how each Directorate is costed and what figure can be worked out for per capita cost within custody.
- 2.10 The Management Board, which is made up of the Chief Executive and the four Directors, is required to report on performance targets. This is done on a quarterly basis and there is monitoring of serious incidents, such as escapes, and when necessary to inform the Minister. It is good to note the plan to appoint a non-executive Director this year and a second by 2006. This will add an element of independence and if it was seen to be beneficial it would be helpful for them to have had organisational experience at a senior level in both business and social care.
- 2.11 One of the targets has been the setting of a baseline such as the level of re-conviction by young people leaving custody. It is quite right to measure and seek to reduce re-offending especially by those who enter and re-enter the Centre. However, the proportion who are sentenced to a JJCO is small. It will be important to set the base line and measure progress on those who can be returned home sooner due to effectiveness of bail support and how they are kept out of custody in the future. This will be in keeping with International Standards and Rules.

Neighbourhood and Locality Interface

2.12 The Youth Justice Agency Corporate Plan for 2004 - 2007 recognised the “need for the Agency to develop a communication strategy to advertise successes, develop public awareness of existing practice and new initiatives..”. This is also needed at a local level. The plans for the new Juvenile Justice Centre including the process of gaining planning permission were bound to prompt questions from the surrounding neighbourhood and area. The JJC has a considerable impact in the North Down area as an employer and consumer of goods and services. Therefore, when the location of the new Centre was being considered the Council were keen to see the investment remain in the present locality. More recently, however, there have been representations to members of the Council and the local Member of Parliament which question the risks rather than recognise the benefits of the Centre. It is good to note that a meeting with local residents has taken place to address some of their concerns. The relationship with the immediate community needs to be progressed further to promote understanding of the service being provided. This can be attempted through a Website, newspaper articles, open days, a local network of “Friends & Colleagues” and holding an Annual Stakeholder Meeting.

Openness to Visitors

2.13 It is understood and expected that the Centre must be secure. The present composition of buildings, however, makes this all too apparent. The prevalence of locked doors requiring multiple sets of keys will, to a considerable extent, be designed out of the new Centre. While currently the preoccupation with security is inevitable, the staff of the Centre do try to counteract the isolation and omnipresence of supervision and escorting by having special events. Some of these, such as a Fun Day, soccer matches and visits by politicians and sports personalities bring fresh faces around the Centre and confirms that people are interested. The continuation of this trend is to be encouraged.

2.14 NIACRO currently holds the responsibility for providing the Independent Representation Scheme. The Independent Representatives (IRs) are volunteers who are trained by NIACRO, including in Child Protection. They listen to the views of the young people and make these views known to staff or management. The experience of the IRs can be variable between the different House Units. In some there is an arrangement, which often occurred in the past in Lisnevin, whereby the IR was provided with a room and the young people advised by staff that they were available to them, if they wanted to go and see them. In other units the IR was expected to mingle and make themselves known to the young people who could take the opportunity to raise issues if they so wished. The second approach would be preferred by the Inspectors as it is more natural and casual. Young people must also be told that they can speak to the IR more privately if they prefer. This is an indicator of an evolving culture and the fact that staff are bringing experience of different practices when they are appointed to the Centre.

- 2.15 The House Units are undoubtedly more homely, but when they are at or near capacity with 8 young people, the accommodation and the staff are stretched. The facility for family visiting also becomes more problematic (see Chapter 9 “Family Involvement”). The Inspectors were told that simultaneous visits are awkward and a professional visitor spoke of the disruption of people coming through the dining area when they were speaking with the young person. It is, therefore, good to learn of the additional role agreed with NIACRO for their assistance in encouraging enhanced family visiting, which will be beneficial. NIACRO already has valuable experience in promoting “child-centred” visiting in prisons.

Young people’s Views

- 2.16 Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child points out that every child must be facilitated to express their views freely in all matters, and having those views given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. The Statement of Standards and Criteria for Juvenile Justice Centres is also clear that “Young people and their families/carers are fully consulted about important decisions which affect their lives”. The introduction of morning meetings for young people is, therefore, in keeping with the UN Convention as this allows for consultation and the expression of things on the young people’s minds and for the planning of activities and events. One example of effective improvement was the heed paid to the young people’s views, which were also endorsed by NIACRO and SSI, specifically about the ventilation problem in warm weather. This led to the restoration of access to the pivot windows which the young people could again control in their own rooms. Often the topics are more leisure-orientated and about availability of play station games. The Inspectors noted that the staff were often generous from their own pockets to hire or purchase games and films. Other more serious topics are raised and these will be discussed later in the report. These relate to the need to incorporate the young person’s views as part of the recording and monitoring of incidents and separations.
- 2.17 One significant example of a young person having influence on major decisions is the inclusion of a young man, a recent former resident, to work alongside the Project Team and provide his views on what is needed for the new Centre.

Equality - Promoting and Safeguarding Young people’s Rights

- 2.18 The Criminal Justice Review placed a very strong emphasis on putting its recommendations in the context of human rights. The Human Rights Act 1998 formally incorporates ECHR into domestic law by making it unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with a convention right. However, while not binding, the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency 1990 (the Riyadh Guidelines); the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice 1985 (the Beijing Rules); and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty 1990 all underwrite the full range of juvenile justice issues.

2.19 While many would agree that youth justice services have become more child-Centred there are some involved with representing young people's rights who have felt that Juvenile Justice Policy has not gone far enough. This reflects the view that the NIO has not been consistent in terminology, if not intent, by referring, in the Justice (NI) Act 2002 to the "welfare" of the child rather than "giving primary consideration to the best interest of the child" as stated in Article 3.1 of the UNCRC. The NIO and the Youth Justice Agency are obliged to continually endeavour to balance the protection of the public, the needs of the victim and welfare of offending young people. In practice, and in draft policies that are entering a consultation process prior to full introduction during 2005, they aim to protect young people and uphold their right, amongst others, to have their views heard and to make complaints. This is consistent with the principle of the child's best interests. There are various important aspects of policy that influence the way that the rights of young people and others are treated in regard to:-

- "Looked after" care backgrounds (see paragraph 1.17);
- Gender and how best to care for the small number of girls;
- Different ethnic and cultural backgrounds;
- Sexual orientation;
- Age profile and meeting the needs of vulnerable 17 year olds;
- Religious affiliation and observance; and
- Sectarianism.

Gender - Custody Provision for Girls

2.20 Over 80% of juveniles cautioned and also those prosecuted are male. Girls, while more often coming to the attention of the police in recent years, are still only a small proportion. Mostly their offending is due to reacting to past trauma, perceived arbitrary limits or of an acquisitive nature and girls are, therefore, more liable to receive a community sanction. Very few come into custody, or if they do will not remain there long.

2.21 House 5 is designated as a mixed unit and there is an appropriate gender ratio of female staff. While a majority of girls and boys are content to live in a mixed gender house there are a small number who are thoroughly uncomfortable. This analysis is examined in further detail in a separate report commissioned by the NIO, "Custody for Girls", which is to be completed early in 2005. In essence, both in the short term as well as the long term the option of single gender accommodation must be available to be provided when required. Phase 2 new-build will certainly have this option. It will, however, be more difficult in the interim to establish distinct living space as some girls, either because of behaviour or incompatibility, have been moved from House 5 to the ISU. The ISU is less well suited for mixed gender, although expedient. There are privacy and personal hygiene issues, such as going in and out of the shower area and girls having their periods that need to be addressed.

2.22 There is a predominantly male presence in the JJC and the nature and pattern of activities reflects this. An effort has been made to provide a separate activity slot for girls and they have a specific place on the activities rota. Girls can take advantage of this or mix with their house group in the activity if they prefer. There is a need to further focus on the range of alternative activities for girls and to review whether they should have a wider choice. International standards state that girls in custody should

get special attention. Ideally girls should have choice of whether or not to mix in activities as well as accommodation. While it has not always been comfortable to have girls together in House 5 because of clashes of personality, it is generally better if there is more than one girl in the Centre. There are, however, periods of time when there are no girls at all and at other times only one. It is not a desirable or healthy situation to have the recurring pattern of up to 30 boys and one girl.

- 2.23 Most girls who were interviewed in the fieldwork for both “Girls in Custody” and for this inspection were content to mix in the school setting and a good proportion of recreation activities. However, there was one girl who was vehemently opposed to sharing with boys. It is acknowledged by the girl, who was full of praise for the staff, that they had tried valiantly to build in as much sole attention and care as possible, but they could not provide the separation she wanted and she continually felt uncomfortable. This young woman had also been pregnant but left the Centre before the date of confinement. Had she remained longer, the Centre would have found it difficult to provide the necessary amenities. Despite the spasmodic and variable need to accommodate girls it is recommended that there is the facility to provide and to staff a distinct unit on an “as and when basis” during the lifespan of the interim Centre.

Age Range

- 2.24 The opportunity exists at present for young people who reach the age of 17 during their sentence (JJCO) or remand to remain until the period is completed. There have been exceptions such as a girl, previously mentioned, who persuaded her solicitor to gain a transfer to the former YOC section of HMP Maghaberry. Some boys have been transferred to YOC Hydebank Wood upon conviction for particularly heinous crimes. However, others have been transferred because they have been too challenging for the nature of the regime.
- 2.25 In 2003 there were 13 young people under the age of 16 in YOC Hydebank Wood. Some of these will have been sent there directly by the court. However, the fact that 12 were subsequently bailed would raise questions as to why they were not considered for the JJC.
- 2.26 One young person who was resident in the JJC at the time of the inspection was aged 17¹/₂, from a Traveller background and subject to particular health problems. Although the Justice Act 2002 will allow for “vulnerable” young people of 17 to be placed in the JJC, the criteria of eligibility will rule out any who have previously been placed in custody or who are over 17¹/₂. The Inspector also interviewed three girls aged 17, who had previously been in the JJC, when they were in the YOC HMP Maghaberry, at the time it was still used for women. These young women had complex needs and had already sustained a lot of emotional and physical damage during their lives. One in particular was often punished for damage and assault and was regularly in solitary confinement and consequently in a low and suicidal state. Another girl needed specialist disclosure counselling but this had not been provided because the child protection implications had been outside the prison officers’ awareness and competence. The Human Rights Commission’s report “The Hurt Inside” also highlighted, among other concerns, that 17 year old girls in HMP Maghaberry were not benefiting from any special facilities or policies. It is not being suggested that all 17 year olds should be placed in the JJC as such would skew the purpose and nature of the Centre

considerably and it is unlikely that there would be sufficient space. However, the appropriateness of placement, specifically for girls, should be the subject of individual assessment of need, risk and compatibility. Perhaps it may be necessary, in keeping with International Children's Rights standards, to have a completely separate unit for young people aged 17 catering particularly for those with emotional disturbance and mental health needs. The feasibility of this would need to be monitored and examined over the next two years and could lead to a potential need for change in legislation.

Ethnicity

- 2.27 Staff in House 5 and Centre Management are to be congratulated for coping and succeeding to care for a Romanian girl through a sharp learning curve. Staff told Inspectors that they also wanted to know more about Traveller culture. Good initiative has been demonstrated, therefore, in role play training in anti-oppressive practice and contact with the Traveller Movement to achieve greater competence in working with young people from a Travelling background. Links have also been made with Multi-Cultural Resource Centre. Management, when monitoring the backgrounds of those admitted, should pay attention to the ratio of young people from the Traveller community and compare it to those from the settled community, as the numbers admitted could be disproportionately high.
- 2.28 A black staff member has experienced racial harassment from young people. It will be good if the management and staff can successfully keep "race hate" out of the Centre as well as has been achieved with sectarianism.
- 2.29 One of the Chaplains has introduced the concept of responsibility to the developing countries to the young people by inviting a speaker with experience in Africa in establishing sources of clean water.

Sexual Orientation

- 2.30 Staff interviewed were unanimous that the environment would not be positive for young gay and lesbian people and they spoke of a high level of homophobia among young people. One staff member said that during anger management young people often said that the thing that makes them most angry is 'gays'. Staff said that they dealt with the issue by softly tackling the young person's prejudice. The issue of care of young gay and lesbian people needs to be focused on as part of the equality work. Advice can be gained from a range of support groups.
- 2.31 It is good that newly recruited staff are assessed in relation to their attitudes to gays and lesbians. Similar efforts would be recommended with the wider staff group in regard to sexual orientation. On-going training, as well as attitude surveys, in relation to Section 75 should be a priority.

Religious Affiliation and Observation

- 2.32 Consultation about the desire by young people for religious services takes place each week. According to some staff there are young people who would wish to have a Sunday Service and Mass. There is no regular practice of services of worship but some young people have used the opportunity to have confession. An annual Carol Service and Sing Along has been the only formal religious event. The amount of interest is, therefore, not fully known but it would be important to find out. Spiritual well-being is one of the factors which the Centre is expected to consider. There is an important sensitivity to be exercised to avoid, on the one hand, that religious observance is perceived as obligatory or even a route to favourable treatment. The Chaplains are both very attentive at a pastoral level and mix with the young people and staff very well.
- 2.33 In preparation for the new Juvenile Justice Centre there should be awareness of other religions and an assurance that when the need arises the different faiths will be able to co-operate in the use of suitable rooms which have been suitably dedicated for spiritual purpose. Monitoring is required of anti-oppressive practice and equality in relation not only to religious affiliation and to religious observation, but of sexual orientation and ethnicity.

The Divided Community

- 2.34 The Centre has been very successful, as stated briefly earlier, in keeping sectarianism out of the equation both for young people and staff. The attraction to all sections of the community to work in the youth justice system and the appointments subsequently made has been demonstrated in the records kept by Corporate Services (see table in paragraph 3.7). It will also be important to monitor the background and locality of the young people admitted and what this might suggest in the targeting of prevention initiatives. Part of this monitoring should also identify if the young person has been subject to paramilitary threat or “punishment” attack.

3. **Management and Staffing**

Standard

- a. **The Centre has sufficient trained staff to achieve the goals set by the Northern Ireland Office.**
- b. **Staff are properly and economically managed to enable them to work effectively as a multi-disciplinary team and with other partners to operate the Centre to the standards required.**
- c. **Human Resources practices guarantee no discrimination in recruitment, supervision or with grievances, disciplinary action or promotion**
- d. **There are regular surveys of staff attitudes and values and results are acted upon**

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

Structure and Level of Staffing

- 3.1 The Centre is managed by a Director and two senior managers who are in charge of Operations and Education. Both managers can deputise for the Director in his absence. There is also a manager who has been designated to oversee the Bail Support, the intake of young people and the programmes to tackle offending behaviour. This involves a link with courts and magistrates and other agencies, ensuring that young people are admitted with proper authority and that alternatives, which would have permitted Bail, have been fully considered and utilised.
- 3.2 There will be a new structure as a consequence of the “Change Management” programme which, in the lead up to the new Centre, recognises the need to release the Director from a proportion of the day to day management issues in order to focus on more strategic and planning requirements. A Deputy Director and Head of Social Work will be appointed to reinforce the management team.

Training Provision and Training Needs

- 3.3 The Strategic aim in relation to staffing promises to “respect and value staff and develop their potential in order to enhance quality of service delivered by the Agency”. The Agency has embarked on a Training Needs Assessment and it was good to find staff recognising the importance of training and to identify a greater emphasis on staff training than was the case at the time of previous inspection. Some, however, would like to see a change in organisation and time tabling as the 10th week sequence is rather inflexible and meant that staff could not take up some of the training options they were interested in. Resources were also mentioned. There is a clear process whereby staff request training, initially through the line manager and then the training manager. Training would be agreed depending on the training profile of the staff member and the needs of the Centre.

- 3.4 Newly appointed staff have a 6 week induction period, including shadowing of other staff in the House Units and assistance from Operations staff. There are also meetings with colleagues in other parts of the Youth Justice Agency. Both for new staff and existing staff there is regular training in child management techniques using both de-escalation and physical restraint. This is delivered by the Centre's own teams of instructors involving 12 accredited trainers. Increasingly training courses are being organised on an Agency-wide basis. This is good for the transfer of knowledge and skills across the Agency and creating a more cohesive workforce.
- 3.5 The new NVQ in Youth Justice has been introduced and all Unit Managers and some of the Team Leaders are being trained with the aim of having 12 Assessors to a ratio of 24 candidates. In relation to staff currently in training there are:-
- 3 near completion of NVQ 3;
 - 5 in the final year of the Diploma in Social Work (Employment Route);
 - 2 in second year of the Diploma in Social Work;
 - 1 in the fast track of the Degree in Social Work;
 - 1 at the Portfolio stage of the Post Qualifying Award;
 - 2 in the process of Post Qualifying training; and
 - several staff are working for certificates to supervise fitness and swimming facilities.

One member of staff spoke of her intention to undertake a 3 year Diploma in Youth and Community Work and hopes to be supported by day release for one day per week. The Training Manager also foresees the new Open University Degree in Social Work as an attractive proposition for the circumstances of a number of staff.

- 3.6 Staff are taking personal development seriously and almost all staff felt that access to opportunities was good. Management confidence in the changes that have been developing is demonstrated in the goal of working towards "Investors in People". Having a skills mix is practical and desirable and there is a richness that comes when people with social work, probation, nursing and youth work/teaching backgrounds combine together. There are standards of supervisory management to be upheld and for comparison there is a requirement for managers of Residential Child Care in Social Services to have a social work qualification. It is, therefore, important that this expectation continues also for Unit Managers in Youth Justice. It should also be the aspiration for Team Leaders and any who are unqualified must be enabled to achieve NVQ level 4 in the first instance and, thereafter, be encouraged to proceed to secondment to a fast track 2-year social work course. It is good that this will still be made available to one or two staff each year.

- 3.7 There is a need for more staff training in relation to the mental health needs of the young people and dealing with self harm and suicide prevention. This is supported by the recent report on the state of CAMHS within secure care and custody.⁵ This recommends enablement and support for practitioner care staff to meet the mental health needs of the young people rather than over-reliance on a stretched psychiatry service. The psychologist has provided helpful training in awareness of young people who display sexually harmful behaviour. One of the House Units had four out of seven young people in this category at one point in time. The staff in the Unit worked hard to preserve confidentiality and undertake the necessary vigilance and supervision.
- 3.8 Child protection was also identified as an area where more training is necessary and this is scheduled to commence with the introduction of revised procedures after the consultation stage has concluded.
- 3.9 Some staff, who had been newly placed in roles such as key worker or Unit Manager felt that they could benefit from training on the specific role they were now performing e.g. on staff supervision, and record-keeping. "Effective Manager" courses, which were purpose designed for Youth Justice Agency first line managers, commenced in November 2004 and have been completed. More training for Team Leaders is scheduled. Overall staff reported that training was getting into gear and the Director and the Training Manager were promoting NVQ and various practical skills. The Director had covered the absence of a Unit Manager in one of the House Units for several weeks and demonstrated a good model of regular supervision which was in considerable depth. Both he and the Team Leaders in the Unit agreed the recorded action, which was jointly signed off.

Properly Managed Staff

- 3.10 Good communication with employees and effective working relationships with Trade Unions are the starting point for running a service well. To this end there are regular meetings between Trade Union representatives and managers. The Agency also publishes a regular magazine which is circulated to staff and other interested people. While this must take some organisation it is an important factor for staff who see their work being recognised, displayed and valued. Importantly also, the young people feature in the publication, an example being the hand over of cartoon murals to a young people's hospital that had been painted by young people from the JJC. This is a commendable approach by the Agency and must be encouraged to be consolidated.

⁵ DHSSPS Working Group chaired by Dr Ian McMaster "Young People in Regional Care Centres and Youth Justice".

- 3.11 The staffing policies will have an influence on costs, as absences will be looked at more closely. Also staff will be channelled to appropriate supports when required. This and the application for Investors in People (IIP) should bolster staff morale and impact on turnover. Another element which would inform this process is the performance management system being introduced so that there are personal development plans.
- 3.12 Effective communication from senior management through to House Unit level is valued. The chief example is the meeting for Unit Managers and representatives of education, administration, operational, ancillary and health care staff with the Director. This is held on a daily basis and reviews the main events and issues of the past 24 hours and anticipating what is required in the next 24. This entails:-
- being aware of any incidents requiring separation and/or restraint or transfer between Units;
 - reviewing the maintenance of “close observations” of volatile and vulnerable young people and the steps taken to safely manage the Centre;
 - allowing for the staffing complement to be deployed according to needs, such as changes in occupancy and the demands of escorting young people to courts and video link.

The main statistics and points of information are minuted and circulated to Unit Managers, Education and Operations immediately after the Communications meeting ends.

Equality and Equal Opportunity

- 3.13 Staff attitudes are also crucial to their acceptance of the aims, objectives and culture of the organisation and the Centre itself. They also need to be confident of management support and supervision. Staff views on equality are important and a questionnaire which gauges their job satisfaction and compatibility with Section 75, sought on an anonymous basis, would be timely during the run-up and preparation for the new-build Centre.
- 3.14 Concerns have been raised in the past about the imbalance of the workforce and the location of the JJC in a predominantly Protestant area. The current staff complement is 185. At the same time the majority of young people come from a Roman Catholic background. The fact that the Agency is applying for IIP status is an important indicator of confidence in management practice such as equality and the level of staff morale. The Agency, overall, is keeping an eye to its duty as an employer to achieve and maintain a balanced workforce in terms of religious affiliation. The recruitment during 2003-2004 showed that out of the staff recruited:-

Number Processed	Religious Background	Number Recruited
145	Protestant	4
77	Roman Catholic	10
34	Non-specified	1
Gender		
186	Male	5
34	Female	10

This is a positive outcome in terms of increasing representation where it has been below par. It will need, however, to be reported in future not just for the whole workforce but as a breakdown of each Directorate.

Staff Deployment

- 3.15 The deployment of staff is a continual juggling act for the Director, Unit Managers and Team Leaders. The cover required at Unit Manager level, when the Centre was two managers short over the past summer, resulted in the Director managing the two jobs at the one time. While, it is useful to do this on a periodic basis by choice and for the benefit to the Centre, it is not sustainable in this longer period. It is to the credit of the Director and the other managers and staff in that House Unit and the Centre as a whole that the episode passed smoothly, but required tremendous additional effort. The number of staff on a typical day or evening shift is 4 per House Unit (one of whom will be the Team Leader or a care worker acting as a Team Leader) In addition there will be the Unit Manager. The team will look after a group of up to 8 young people. In addition there is always a team covering the operations side of the work. There are 3 Day managers in Operations, each with a specific area of responsibility i.e. Security, Maintenance and Domestic Services and who manage a staff group of 20 who work 3 per shift.
- 3.16 In the past the day time staff and Night Staff had little dealings with each other, apart from the nightly handover and the same again in the early morning. There were few expectations other than of “minding” the young people and tending to requests for use of toilets. Now, the more careful deployment of the team according to skills, training and team building is counteracting this marginalisation. Night staff now have more interaction with the young people, particularly those whose stage on the progressive regime allows them to stay up later. Night staff also now have access to records and files and have a much greater understanding of the needs of the young people.

Staff Supervision

- 3.17 Establishment of regular supervision has been an important goal and appreciated by staff. Frequency, however for some staff, is still variable but the Inspectors were assured that this remains a core requirement and staff will be assured of regular sessions which have a joint agenda, are recorded and the resulting action mutually agreed and reviewed. The frequency should be monthly and be monitored and subject to regular reporting at the Management Board.
- 3.18 Not all first line managers hold a recognised qualification. For purposes of supervision team members, who are qualified practitioners, will be provided with professional supervision by another Team Leader or Unit Manager.

Overtime - Staff Cover

- 3.20 As part of the accountability of the Chief Executive and the Management Board there has been a review of the overtime at the JJC. Owing to the result of a claim for unfair allocation of overtime and following an audit of financial procedures there have been changes to the process of allocation and administration of overtime. The differential between rates of overtime payment for teachers as compared to care workers has been regularised and there is now a flat rate. Initially there was a reaction by some staff helping with evening activities because they were being paid less than in the past. This is no longer the case and they are adjusting to working side by side and getting the same rate.
- 3.21 Staff within units often find themselves working double shifts of over 14 hours without sufficient break. If there is a run of several days off this may not be so taxing. However, if asked to work extra to cover for staff who are off it can be draining.
- 3.22 The staff complement for each House Unit has now been expanded from 10 to 12 staff and this will give more flexibility. Also the contract with a private firm to take young people to and from court is being reviewed and consultation is to take place with operational staff to seek the most effective and economic way to manage the demand on staff who have to accompany the escorts.

Monitoring Absence

- 3.23 A Management of Attendance Policy came into operation on 1 July 2004. This system will have prompts or triggers to monitor sick leave over a 12- month rolling period and will identify trends that management can explore and address. The cause of overtime levels was often to provide cover for colleagues on sickness absence or holiday.
- 3.24 Sometimes the reason for absence can also be due to trauma experienced in work or due to allegations of assault or abuse against a child. Management and Corporate Services recognise these staff are eligible for advice and support. Currently they can choose to ask the Trade Union for help and/or Staff Care who can provide confidential support. Corporate Services would see a potential value in being linked to the NIO Staff Welfare Service. Staff who experience assault have the prerogative to make a complaint to the police. The option of restorative practices, such as cautioning or conferencing will also be available, as well as court hearing in serious cases.

Recruitment

- 3.25 As stated elsewhere in this report there is specific monitoring by Corporate Services of the gender and religious background of the staff in the JJC. Certainly as regards appointing new staff this factor, while also monitored by Corporate Services, does not influence appointments. It is also good to note the practice whereby candidates are asked to participate in two interviews, the first is the criteria based model and then followed by a “Warner” interview which looks at the suitability from background experiences and personality aptitude. So far this has proved helpful as it led to the discovery of an undeclared disciplinary matter which had resulted in a dismissal by a previous employer.
- 3.26 There should also be discussion with staff who are leaving the Centre and Agency, i.e. exit interviews. The career progression of individuals is something to be celebrated as well as establishing the reasons why some staff leave which can be informative and help alter management and supervisory practice. The retention of trained staff should be monitored and reported on a year by year basis.

Staff Attitudes and Communication

- 3.27 The nature of business and frequency of discussion in staff meeting was assessed in two of the House Units. Over the summer months the meetings were taking place in one of the units on a once per month basis and considered topics such as:-
- Violence in video/DVDs;
 - Decisions to drop young people to bronze award;
 - Expectations of the Inspection;
 - Health & Safety e.g. glass bottles vs. plastic and cutlery checks;
 - Buildings and fabric;
 - Supervising breakfast;
 - Prohibiting the “Double Embrace” hold; and
 - Dealing with young people’s money.
- 3.28 Just as regular supervision is vital to encouraging the development, capacity and work satisfaction of the individual, so also is the team meeting for sharing information, ensuring uniform direction and building team identity and cohesion. The shift system and the timetable of work with the young people can make the timing of a team meeting difficult. But to ensure communication flows efficiently the meetings should be weekly and certainly no less than one per fortnight.
- 3.29 There are other groups meeting on a weekly basis with specific remits:-
- Senior Management Team - concerned with more strategic issues e.g. the Service Level Agreement with the Probation Board and staffing.
 - Operations Team Meeting - Youth Court liaison, training and staffing.
 - Tactical Meeting - Progressive regime, painting, cleaning, availability of razors.

By these various groupings and the efforts to link the Centre more closely with colleagues in Probation, Youth Courts, Community Services and Youth Conferencing the relative isolation of custodial care is diminishing. The young people and staff have a good story to tell of their past year's effort and are communicating this in a more confident and proactive manner.

4. **Assessment, Planning and Review**

Standard

- a. **There is a full assessment of each young person's individual needs and problems and a flexible, individual action plan for meeting as many of those needs and for tackling as many of the problems as possible and for directing remedial attention to offending behaviour.**
- b. **The progress of each young person is closely monitored, recorded and regularly reviewed.**
- c. **The Centre provides meaningful statistics about its operational performance, demonstration value for money**
- d. **The Centre benchmarks performance with setting targets and measures progress**

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

Assessment and Planning

- 4.1 Previous inspections have commented that assessment and reviews are not sufficiently compliant with international standards nor consistently applied within the Juvenile Justice Centre. The study of case records shows that the picture is changing for the better, but is not yet fully consistent. Some review meetings are not held and when held do not always have adequate preparation nor are all the relevant people notified to attend. The process of review and particularly the pre-discharge review is crucial to making the transition as smooth as possible. Parents, however, have been attending reviews more consistently than professionals. One staff member recalled the very poor representation of other agencies in Lisnevin and that improvements are taking place. The advent of a Service Level Agreement with the Probation Board is a guarantee of mutual contact which ensures notification of reviews and the contact between the Probation Officer and the sentenced young person prior to their release. The Unit Managers are taking responsibility to chair reviews and Team Leaders act as Case managers to ensure that the initial/risk assessment and then comprehensive assessment are completed. Also, the input from educational liaison and the involvement of mentors all bode well for the future. The Bail Support initiative is hopefully going to lead more young people to be returned to the community sooner than in the past. One of the young people released on bail and then placed in "remand fostering" was later acquitted at court. This endorses the principle of "custody being a last resort". The bail support project uses a version of ASSETT as an assessment tool. This is the approach used by the Youth Justice Board in England and it would be desirable if agencies across youth justice in Northern Ireland would consider and agree to use the same programme and also make it compatible with other services for children.
- 4.2 The shift system does not allow good continuity, and appointing one "key worker" for each young person has proved insufficient. There is now a "Case Manager", usually a Team Leader and a lead worker as well as a co-worker. Staff and young people feel happier that "there is always someone on shift that they can identify with". The Unit

Manager is responsible for chairing review meetings, holding the plans and reading files. Inspectors interviewed staff, team leaders and care workers about their responsibilities with their “key” child as part of ‘case studies’. They heard positive accounts of the process of assessing the needs of each individual young person. Staff spoke of involving the young person in the process of making plans. The difficulties of planning for release were highlighted by staff and in particular in identifying suitable accommodation. One member of staff commented that it was difficult to be positive about a young person’s prospects “when social workers were showing you accommodation which would be unfit for a dog to live in!” The prospect of homelessness for this group of young people is a pressing problem, especially in relation to supported accommodation suitable for under-18s. This was illustrated during the week of the inspection when the charges were dropped in relation to one young person and the Centre agreed to him remaining overnight because no accommodation could be found for him.

- 4.3 There was also frustration expressed about not having enough capacity to assess and plan consistently and promptly. It was suggested that having a social worker available 9.00am to 5.00pm would facilitate this task. However, this would possibly undermine the effort and struggle to extend and reinforce the skills and confidence of the care workers. A return to the past to a reliance on social workers for these skills would relegate the care worker’s role to that of “minders” and “activities co-ordinators”. One member of staff, commenting on the comparison with Lisnevin, said that there he had felt like a “bouncer”. Perhaps this debate needs to be re-opened, but the needs of young people are better met by the general workforce being skilled to deliver a range of assessment, planning, family work and programmes. Assistance, however, from colleagues from Community Services and PBNi would act as a catalyst to this developing.
- 4.4 Originally, the adjoining units for Assessment and Intensive Support had distinct roles. The former in providing assessment of young people who were new to the Centre before being allocated to a House Unit and the latter for those who presented the need for closer supervision and a higher ratio of care staff. They could be moved to ISU from other House Units or directly upon admission because of predicted risks. Over the past year there has been a fusion of the roles. There have always been young people admitted directly to House Units, where assessments are duly carried out.
- 4.5 Some young people have remained in the ISU for long periods. Often this has been determined by the gravity of their alleged offence and the longer wait for the trial to take place. A study of files of some of these young people confirmed the complexity of their needs and the potential harm to self and others. One parent and one young person, however, have mounted a Judicial Review about the merits of moving the boy within the Centre from a House Unit to the ISU. While the Inspector and staff consider the placement was necessary, it does demonstrate the importance of being clear about the purpose and duration of stay and that it is proportionate and fair. It is recommended that the management review the purpose and criteria for the use of the Assessment and Intensive Support Units and that the Placements meeting is clear about the benefits to the young person and why he/she cannot be placed in an ordinary House Unit.

Case Examples

A boy of 16, with a background in care and previous convictions and 3 previous remands had been on the current remand for nearly 2 months. He had also been on probation and was hoping to get Bail. He was content that PBNi would provide a fair report for court. However, he told the Inspector that he had received no visits from a Probation officer. This boy stated that he got on well with staff, was well received and informed at the time of induction. It, however, was quite a while before his natural parents knew that he was in custody and began visiting. He admitted having a problem with addiction and confirmed he was receiving help through a programme and also medication. Having had previous admissions the boy was aware of different practice between House Units e.g. he was not allowed hot drinks in the current unit in which he was placed. Interestingly, while unlike other young people this boy could not suggest anything he liked about the Centre, he said it was better than the Children's Home, apart that is from the loss of freedom and the ban on smoking.

A boy of 17, who was sentenced to 12 months Juvenile Justice Centre Order commented on being "down in the dumps" and withdrawn for about a week after admission, but was then able to mix. With 5 months served he was looking forward to home leave prior to being discharged. He quipped that there were "loads of activities" in the Centre as the Inspectors were visiting. He did comment that the staff in the Centre were helping him to look at ways of stopping offending.

A girl, aged 14, reported that she was awaiting a court appearance and had been visited by a Probation Officer, who was preparing a Pre-sentence Report. She felt that the process had been well explained and she expected the report to be fair.

- 4.6 The main group of young people are those placed on remand, where it is difficult to predict the length of stay. As they have not been found guilty this poses a problem of how to engage them in any depth of work to tackle their alleged offending and to improve their prospects as citizens. These young people are just as much in need of assessment and a work plan to meet their needs. Increasingly, management and staff have recognised the limited opportunity to help these young people prevent offending in the future. Therefore, while not permitted to focus on any un-adjudicated charges, it has been possible to start work on issues such as "anti-bullying", drugs awareness and the effects of car crime. One approach, although not favoured by all members of the Inspection Team, would be to seek the co-operation from courts to identify those young offenders and their families who would accept a set period of remand to enable assessment and formulate plans for education and other programmes. Such loss of liberty should not be treated lightly but it would allow the court, the family and agencies involved a greater prospect of the work being handed over seamlessly, when the young person is released, either informally or endorsed through a conferencing plan or a community-based Order. Such an approach would have to be based upon a change in legislation. A Task Group might usefully look at this suggestion and at ways of making more impact on those remanded to custody.

A boy, aged 14, was on remand and placed in the ISU and had also been in a young people's home, which he had preferred. He had been in custody 10 times since the age of 11 and said most staff were "O.K.". He was visited regularly by the Probation Officer and had been content that their reporting had been fair. When asked about the helpfulness of the contact, the boy stated that "She has to see me". The only thing he enjoyed about the Centre was the education and he wanted to get back into mainstream school when discharged, as he admitted missing a lot due to truancy. The boy felt that the Centre was too strict with not enough time outdoors, compared to Lisnevin. This boy attended his review meeting but did not participate much and found it strange to have a number of people talking about him. He, however, accepted the decisions made.

A girl reported being invited to attend the end of her review 10 days after admission. There were representatives present from the young people's home, Community Services Project, education, Social Services and the Juvenile Justice Centre. Her recollections also indicated that she did not like her key worker but got on well with other staff. Also she did not see a copy of the PSR, but was confident that it was accurate.

There were other examples of young people interviewed who reported varying experience of the opportunity and willingness to participate. A 16-year-old boy said that he had been in the Centre for six weeks and while he had a key worker he reported that there had been no report by PBNI, nor a review held. Another 16-year-old boy, who would not attend his review, asked instead that his key worker would state his intention to get a place in a FE College.

- 4.10 It is important to consider these views as reflecting varying perceptions and to balance these with the statement made by staff who were seeing their "key" young person up to 3 or 4 times per week, sharing their file recording and also working with them in groups on specific programmes on anti-bullying, "More than Statistics" and anti-offending, "Copping On".

File Recording

- 4.11 Only a few files were viewed due to the time available. It was apparent that a lot of thought and effort has gone into providing a sectionalised and comprehensive folder for each child. Given the complexity of the background and the re-admission rate of some of the young people some files could not be contained in one single folder.

4.12 The file is organised in numbered sections:-

- Initial Assessment and Risk or Crisis Management Plan;
- Detailed Assessment;
- Admission Sheet & Basic Data;
- Previous Admission Data;
- Further Risk Assessment;
- Crime Pics (“Offending is Not the Only Choice”)
- Useful Contacts;
- Monthly Summary;
- Records of Visits;
- Progressive Regime Report Cards;
- Daily Records Sheets;
- Close Observation Records;
- Legal status e.g. Remand Warrant;
- Escort sheets (Court and hospital visits)
- Records of Phone Calls;
- Training Plan for the Young Person;
- Records of Case Reviews and other meetings about the young person;
- “Looked after” Child (LAC) Review Documents;
- Health and Hygiene and Exercise Regime;
- Education (Rowan College) Report;
- Self Injury Reports;
- Separation and Physical Restraint Forms; and
- Records of Searches.

4.13 The files read by the Inspectors were not only well structured, but showed considerable effort being made to work with the young person both at a key worker level, in education and confirmed that the young person was regularly consulted. There were legal documents, risk assessment, psychology notes, records of removals and copies of most reviews. One file on a sentenced young person showed that there was a detailed assessment completed and a review held within 5 days and a copy of the PSR was held. But while there was a record of a second review two months later there were no minutes of the first one or copy of a plan of work. Although the young person signed a copy of the assessment it is not clear whether he attended the reviews. The parent was invited but sent an apology. There were daily entries and monthly summaries up to 3 weeks prior to the inspection. There were entries about the young person attending programmes on tackling offending and on “healthy living” but no idea of frequency of sessions with a key worker. The file was bulky and contained a lot of information. There was no doubt that there was work being done but it was difficult to see all the evidence. Therefore, while the Team Leaders are known to make up some of the deficit in skills in recording among members of Care Staff by doing some of the recording on their behalf, it has been recognised that there is a training need. The Inspectors understand that courses to help staff keep effective records are planned as a priority.

- 4.14 The Inspectors can confirm that file recording has been tightening up with Team Leaders and Unit Managers giving encouragement and also support where needed. Aptitude for keeping good records varies. The tendency, therefore, is to store a lot of narrative which creates volume. More concise chronological information and an emphasis on analysis would be helpful.
- 4.15 Certain routine tasks are essential in each House Unit and were seen to be faithfully recorded:-
- The Daily Log Book - with entries about appointments, events/incidents, visits, medication and general functioning and atmosphere of the House Unit. This is viewed by staff of both day and night shifts and is used for “handover” briefing. It is suggested that this record should be regularly endorsed by the Unit Manager and could also be initialled by any senior manager or inspector who completes an unannounced visit.
 - The Night Staff maintain a record of the sleeping and room occupancy and note the times when lights go out, observation frequency and comments are added and also when young people are facilitated to use the toilet.
 - A Progressive Regime Book is held in each House Unit and decisions are made weekly in discussion with individuals and the group.
 - An “Any Issues” Diary allows the young people to prepare the agenda for “Residents’ Meetings”. The topics included - “Number One” hair cuts, mattresses, windows/ventilation, magazines, progressive regime and shower gel. These are all real and important issues to the young people and it is good that there is a forum to explore whether and how they can be resolved.
- 4.19 The Director and staff have experienced a “roller coaster” with so much change within one year. The quality of child care has been improving steadily despite lacking a full complement of staff. This is borne out by the comments of professionals in contact from other agencies and by young people some of whom have indicated they do not want to leave. The momentum of change has been well managed by a senior management team and will be further reinforced by the addition of the Deputy Director. This team, together with the consultants and the Phase 2 project Team in NIO are completing a Scoping Plan which will endeavour to have the combination of the culture, the policies and the practicalities fully in place before taking up the new accommodation.

5. Care Of Young People

Standard

- a. **Day-to-day care is of good quality and is provided by staff who can relate effectively to the young people, in a way which takes into account their individual needs.**
- b. **Priority is given to equality, human rights and child protection which safeguards and actively promotes their welfare.**
- c. **Young people whose conduct is unacceptable are dealt with using positive and fair sanctions.**
- d. **Young people are given every opportunity and encouragement to re-establish, maintain and strengthen contacts with their family, friends and significant others outside the Centre.**
- e. **Families are encouraged to assist their child to participate actively in such programmes at the Centre as are deemed appropriate. The Centre's admission procedure is positive and encouraging, not overbearing and intimidating.**
- f. **There is an induction programme which is designed to establish positive relationships and co-operation with young people, to help them to adjust to life in the Centre and to set clear expectations about their behaviour whilst in the Centre and after release.**

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

The Care Provided

"In carrying out its duties the Youth Justice Agency will strive to protect the human rights of all those with whom it comes into contact. Young people will receive the highest standards of care while they are with us."

Youth Justice Agency Corporate and Business Plan 2004 - 2007

- 5.1 The House Units provide a group living situation which is more self-contained and where a sense of belonging and investment in good relationships is more assured since the amalgamation. The common rooms and recreation rooms generally offer sufficient space, although when occupancy reaches the optimum of 8 young people it can be intense and claustrophobic. In most House Units there is a mixture of arm chairs and sofas, the latter add to a semblance of homeliness. The bedrooms are adequate in size and varied in shape, although this means that some are more easy to supervise than others.
- 5.2 One young person, who was interviewed, admitted to being "a handful" upon arrival. The nursing staff on carrying out an immediate medical confirmed that "substances" had been taken, so the room opposite the Night Staff was allocated to her. Observation, however, is as discrete as possible as staff have taken the initiative to place curtains on

the outside of the viewing window on the bedroom doors. This is only parted for routine checks. The introduction of key fobs with a soft light beam, now used by night staff across the Centre, allows them to observe that the young people are alright and avoids the intrusiveness of turning on the room light.

- 5.3 The young people described a typical day which starts before 8.00am when the young person has a shower followed by breakfast of cereal and toast. Some said that they had a meeting of young people and staff each morning, others said it was weekly. School starts at 9.10am and the young people are escorted back for a break between 10.30 and 11.00am. They go back to school up to 12.15pm when they come back for lunch time. There is a 45 minute “chill out” or a group programme until 1.00pm when lunch arrives. The afternoon session at school lasts from 2.00pm to 3.20pm. Up until teatime at 5.30pm there are computer games and television or table tennis. Homework has also been introduced into this slot. In the evening there is a selection and rota of activities taken up on a house by house basis. Bedtime is 9.30pm but this can be varied for individuals depending on how far up they are on the Progressive Regime.
- 5.4 The quality of food was generally acceptable, although there was comment about it being “mass produced” and a high frequency of chips, burgers and fried potatoes. The Catering Manager has been given a budget to provide a variety of fruit and she had tried to increase the frequency of favourites such as lasagne. Some in House 5 felt that being at the end of the delivery route had an effect on the quality. The system of delivery from the central kitchen using heated trolleys, however, appears generally acceptable. The occasional treat such as a chinese take-away was popular. The Inspectors visits to House Units coincided on a couple of occasions with mealtimes and they noted that the choice of second helpings was offered and taken up. The involvement of a young person to help with setting and clearing tables on a rota basis was good for the establishment of responsibility, trust and additional reward. There is access to the kitchen under supervision, no longer as in Lisnevin, is food served from behind a heavy metal grill. This gave a greater sense of normal living. Vigilance has to remain high, however, and behaviour was well monitored by having a staff member at each table in the dining room and cutlery carefully counted on return.
- 5.5 House 4, which is on the floor above the Administration Staff and Health Care offices, has not been brought into use as accommodation because: (1) the main access for young people is from an outside set of steps; and (2) the room dimensions are smaller than other units. This makes it suitable only for short stay, such as overnight accommodation on PACE. However, in the view of the Inspectors, particularly when the numbers are high in the rest of the Centre, it would be desirable to have an extra resource whenever there are young people who are distressed or feel particularly vulnerable. This may occur when a young person, such as another girl from a different ethnic background is admitted, who feels that she needs respite from a mixed unit. This would be more preferable than the prospect of the young person moving to the YOC or a psychiatric unit, which have occurred in the past. The innovation of a separate sitting room for girls in House 5 has gone a good part of the way to meeting girls’ wishes.

Protection

- 5.6 One of the strategic aims for 2004-2007 is to establish a baseline and subsequently reduce the number of young people and staff who are injured non-accidentally by 2% and 3% respectively. The number of complaints of child abuse or assault has in fact fallen. This may be linked to the fact that previously many child protection complaints were related to incidents of control and restraint which have also significantly reduced. Discussion with a Unit Manager highlighted the need for more independence in the process of dealing with child protection allegations. Also the need for support for the young person making the allegation throughout the process. The need for an “independent person” to monitor the process of the complaint was identified. This is not a new concept as in the Review carried out by SSI in 2001 there had been a similar role envisaged to be undertaken by a representative of a large voluntary organisation with skill and capacity in this area. There have been requests that JJC Rules should underwrite an independent element in the processing of Child Protection referrals and complaints. This has been raised, among others, by the Children’s Law Centre (see Appendix 6). It is expected that the draft Child Protection Procedures and Complaints Charter, which are in process of consultation, will address the plan to include people with the specific remit to oversee referrals from an independent stand point.
- 5.7 The child during the referral and investigation process, as well as the staff member, can be left in an invidious position, sometimes feeling isolated. There is a need for effective mechanisms to ensure that the both the child, who is the victim and the staff member or other young person alleged to have caused harm have someone they can rely on to represent their views. This is particularly necessary when a child withdraws their complaint. There are plans for an initiative on staff training along with the implementation of these procedures. Essentially staff need: (a) awareness information about the nature and forms of child abuse; (b) the imperative of ensuring continuing safety of the young people; (c) the appropriate recording and sharing of information about actual abuse, suspicions and allegations; and (d) the avoidance of contamination of evidence.
- 5.8 The few allegations of abuse that are made, usually about physical assault in the context of physical restraint, are currently duly processed by a senior manager in the Centre. He meticulously tracks the progress of the referrals. However, in making the referral to the police CARE Unit their automatic response is to have the allegation investigated by a uniformed police officer, rather than it being held by a member of the child protection (CARE) team. Because the referrals have been made to the police in the first instance, Social Services have not been effectively involved despite the Joint Protocol. The correct path of holding a Strategy Discussion in person or by telephone brings together police and Social Services within 24 hours to assess the nature and seriousness of the suspicions or allegations. This may, in a number of cases, determine that there is no sufficient cause or evidence to proceed to an investigation. This would avoid the interminable delay which causes frustration and anguish that are experienced by the child and family and the staff member, who has most likely been suspended pending the outcome of inquiries. The consultation on the revised procedures should establish the full commitment to Joint Protocol and ensure objective and independent support and oversight when allegations are made. The signal, therefore, of the strategic aim to reduce the incidence of harm is welcome, as it conveys a commitment to a zero tolerance to violence irrespective of the cause.

- 5.9 There is already the role of the “Independent Representatives” previously outlined, (see Paragraph 2.15) who are volunteers and who visit weekly to see the young people and while mingling with them advise them of their opportunity and right to raise issues, concerns or complaints that they would like their help to resolve with staff or management. Some young people use the opportunity and others prefer to discuss their wishes and problems with the key worker or at the meetings with young people and staff each morning.
- 5.10 The issues raised by young people with the Independent Representatives (IRs) are about aspects of daily living such as food, tuck, access to computer games, outdoor activity and bullying. In the past the IRs were seen by young people as the only avenue of complaint of assault or abuse by staff members. They no longer need to solely depend on this route for child protection as such. However, it is important that the outcomes to the issues reported by the IRs should be apparent in the records and subject to external monitoring. It is not always clear at present whether the issue raised by the young person through the IR has been resolved as this is not always entered in the record held in the House Unit. This leaves the IR in an awkward position. However, there is a regular review meeting between management of the Centre and managers of NIACRO, who have the contract to provide the IR Scheme. This has helped to ensure that issues are resolved as far as possible. The additional service to be offered by NIACRO of mentoring will increase the options for young people to be heard. A step further would be desirable, whereby young people could be provided with an advocate, if they wished.
- 5.11 All the young people spoken to said that they “felt safe and that the situation was always under control”. They quite naturally said that they got on better with some staff and not with others. There were no formal complaints but there were several avenues to channel complaints. Issues such as windows either not closing properly or not giving enough ventilation are raised at the daily meetings. Most young people said that the first person they would speak to about a problem was their Key Worker. They also knew that outside professionals and IRs can also be approached. It was good to know that young people appreciated the morning meetings and they felt that staff “listened”. The records of the meetings, however, did not clearly set out what had been resolved. The Meetings Book should keep better track of the outcomes to the issues raised. The same applies to the records of issues raised with the IRs. One boy spoke about a problem with a noisy heating system, which he felt had not been resolved.
- 5.12 The absence of complaints is not necessarily a positive indicator. If young people raise legitimate issues it is a useful way of gaining confidence and taking responsible control over their lives. One girl recalled a staff member putting a fist up to her face and then putting her in her room. She felt that her behaviour i.e. flicking food was insufficient reason. She said that she did not complain because it was a “small issue” and there was a perceived power imbalance. Her wish “was to be treated with dignity and respect and not to be looked down on.” Some young people will be reticent or fearful and will need the help of someone to advocate on their behalf. Whether this can be properly done by the key worker(s) or if it requires an enhanced role for Independent representatives is a matter for discussion. The Centre is encouraged to continue the practice of daily meetings and to use the experience of the Phase 2 team of how young people’s perspectives and representation can be harnessed into decision making groups

and be constructively helpful for everyone's benefit. The "Issues and Concerns Book" in one of the House Units was studied and it showed how the young people brought up valid ideas and can be quite persistent and consistent, particularly raising issues about play stations and computer games. Not all of the requests had an outcome recorded and some of the proposals were not new and had been noted during a previous unannounced inspection visit i.e. the availability of greetings cards from the Tuck Shop. The answer given was that these "will eventually be supplied". Others, however, were quickly resolved:-

- a request made through an Independent Representative for goggles, which were supplied;
- a request for internet access was, understandably, denied;
- a question about the supply of headphones was to be dependent on there being no assessed risk of self-harm; and
- permission to have toiletries in rooms was also conditional and reserved for those who had achieved "platinum" level.

One 16-year-old boy suggested that he should have control and access to a dedicated locker so that he could be sure of exclusive use of his toiletries.

It was significant that girls who were interviewed all perceived that the Centre was male oriented and drew out as examples the types of play station games and videos provided and the emphasis on fitness and boxing training. Female staff suggested that there should be "make-up and hair nights". Yet girls were largely prepared to share accommodation and most activities, as long as there was the option of the "girls' sitting room" as in House 5. There was, however, criticism of Assessment/ISU by young people and staff for having less gender specific space and amenities. The staff stated that they were sensitive to hygiene issues e.g. by staggering the times for getting up, showering and also when girls were having their period. One girl, however, told the Inspector that there had been no female staff on duty at one point.

Admissions

- 5.13 The pressure on custodial places fluctuates and it would be valuable to monitor the levels of co-operation, not only in prevention initiatives within the community, but how well different agencies are engaged in the process of assessment, planning and reviewing for each young person admitted to the Centre. The results of this monitoring should be shared with Children's Services Planning sub-groups on young people who offend.
- 5.14 In June 2004 out of 27 young people admitted to the JJC 15 were from "looked after" care. This pushed the occupancy level to its limit and more than expected at that time of the year. By early October 2004 the twin concerns about pressure on secure care and custody and the prospect of the implementation of ASBOs led the Northern Ireland Children and Young People's Committee (representing the Young people's Services Planners for the 4 Health and Social Services Boards) to seek a meeting with NIO, Youth Justice Agency, SSI and Community Safety. The outcome was the establishment of a Strategy Group to be convened by the Youth Justice Agency which would undertake to co-operate to examine and problem-solve when there are interface issues. In 2001 the Human Rights Commission report called for "an Inter-departmental Strategy aimed at reducing the use of custodial remand for young people from care backgrounds". It is good, therefore to see the move to harmonise Youth Justice with Children's Services Planning and the work of the Children Matter Task Force. The latter aims to create differentiated young people's homes, so that young people that are compatible can be placed together in a home which is geared to meeting their needs. Otherwise young people will have to withstand a lot of disruption and the consequence, often of calling on police involvement, can lead to the arrest and removal of the disaffected. Some HSS Trusts have developed protocols with PSNI which set out the expectations of what should happen when the police are called to a Children's Home. It is good to learn that a standard procedure is being developed for all Trust areas.
- 5.15 Similarly to guard against a new source of pressure on placements, it will be important to try and avoid as far as possible the experience in England and Wales with breaches of ASBOs which has "fast-tracked" some young people into custody. The best means of succeeding in this is for young people and their families to be enabled to enter into contracts with diversion programmes and projects that will tackle their offensive behaviour. This will require close monitoring to see that every opportunity has been taken to work in partnership and only to consider an ASBO after thorough consultation and as a last resort. A number of concerns have also been raised about the prospect of the names and whereabouts of these young people being published. It would be anomalous and inequitable to have young people who have breached an ASBO residing together in the Centre with others whose details were not published, despite being convicted of serious offences.

Remand

- 5.16 The majority of young people placed in the JJC are there on Remand awaiting appearance in court or bail, whichever happens first. In the period from January 2004 to September 2004 there were 153 admissions on PACE, which are generally an overnight stay. Roughly half were given bail and the other half (72) returned on Remand. There were a total of 150 placed on remand which taken together with number on PACE is a high level of turnover. Therefore out of a total of 334 over the period there were 31

young people committed on a JJCO which represents 9% overall and 24% of those remanded. Expanding the figures to a 12 month period suggests that roughly 440 would enter the Centre and thereby gain an identity as “criminal”.

- 5.17 For the majority, therefore, the stay in custody is a period of uncertainty both in terms of length of imprisonment and as to the likely outcome. This is unsettling for the young person and also problematic for the staff in the Centre in planning to meet their assessed needs. This period can be further complicated if the young person is frequently involved in remand hearings, which if held at the court itself rather than by video link can be demanding in terms of staff resources. It may be inevitable, as the particular court may not have the necessary equipment installed. However, it might be the preference of the young person and their solicitor. Such choice can be perfectly valid, but if it is for a formality it is questionable. It would be better if the merits of video link were communicated on a periodic basis to young people, their families and legal representatives.
- 5.18 Fundamentally, the best remedy is to ensure that young people have a fair and prompt court hearing that avoids delay. An extra advantage of the video link is that it is also available for use by families who for particular reasons are unable to travel for a visit at the JJC and it has been used for linking with a Youth Conference at the Youth Justice Agency headquarters. It is important to expect that a Remand placement is only appropriate when there is a fundamental doubt that the young person would appear at court. It should not be due to the unavailability of suitable accommodation, otherwise it becomes a misuse of a highly expensive remedy and may, unnecessarily, criminalise a child and deny their basic right to liberty.
- 5.19 The reluctance of the past to engage young people, who had not been adjudicated at court, in programmes to focus on offending has been softened from two perspectives. First, there are a number of shorter programmes that can major on health, addiction and self care. Second, when some young people have seen how the ones who are sentenced appreciate taking part in the cognitive programme “Offending is not the only choice” they have volunteered to take part. There are still, however, some whether sentenced or on remand who refuse to participate.

Equality and Fairness in Sanctions and Rewards

- 5.20 The young people in the JJC are mostly damaged young people from difficult backgrounds, often with very limited educational attainment. Though, with skilful management, they mostly use the amenities and instruction to their benefit, there are times when they may be less peaceable. In most instances staff use their skills and training to defuse tense situations. Yet, whether due to the young person's acute feelings of distress or annoyance there is always the danger that they will become violent to themselves or others. When that happens, staff on some occasions, have had to restrain the young person safely. The staff are trained to work consistently and fairly using de-escalation as their primary approach. But they will swiftly and efficiently apply appropriate holds to restrain a young person when the situation deteriorates, in order to prevent them harming others or themselves.

One 16-year-old boy spoke of seeing another boy “going mad” and being restrained by staff and placed in a “time out” room. He felt that this was the right way to avoid further damage.

- 5.21 Previous research (In Our Care - NIHRC) found an over-emphasis on control, particularly in Lisnevin, including use of physical restraint and separation, sometimes to a segregated and more Spartan block. In comparison, the situation is now much improved.

One member of staff likened the experience compared to Lisnevin as coming “out of the Dark Ages” and another said that when he had worked there he had felt like a “bouncer”.

In the same unit, that had 7 instances of physical restraint, there had been 26 single separations in the same period. Once removed, the young person is observed at least every 15 minutes to ensure they are settled and safe. The maximum time for being placed separate from the group is 3 hours, but the records show that it rarely exceeds 45 minutes. A lot of young people are calm within 5 or 10 minutes and in some instances staff have merely accompanied a child up one set of stairs by which time they have calmed sufficiently to come down the second set of stairs.

- 5.22 The JJC Rules could assist with a specific expectation of timescales for separations. It is especially good to see the use of “time out” rooms has reduced along with untoward incidents and separations. In the case of the school the “time out” room has been transformed into a healthy eating display. Staff put the reduction in incidents down in the main to a changed culture with emphasis on child care rather than control and the benefit of the use of TCI. The layout of House Units may also have contributed to the reduction, as there are fewer occasions when there are big groups of young people together. On the down side, while the house system is generally positive and creates a more homely atmosphere, it can be claustrophobic and cause tensions leading to clashes or bullying between particular young people. There were records in one house which showed young people making accusations and counter-accusations of bullying. This subject receives a lot of attention in the Child Protection Procedures and may assist with staff maintaining a vigilant and proactive line to deal with it using restorative practices in partnership with young people, some of whom can act as Peer Mediators.
- 5.23 Untoward incidents and separations of young people to their own rooms for “time out” have reduced considerably compared to the past. The use of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)⁶ instead or sometimes in conjunction with Physical Control in Care⁷ (PCC) has done a lot to change the manner of effectively reducing or averting danger or injury to the young person who is aggressive or distraught and also to potential victims. It is good to see that the regular recording of these events has been established. There is one form for recording in detail single separation and restraint

⁶ TCI is a method of de-escalating a tense situation from developing further.

⁷ PCC is a way of holding a young person in a non-pain compliant way to prevent harm to themselves or to others

which is forwarded to management, which is facilitating monitoring. This is in addition to the hard copy books for restraint and single separation kept in each House Unit which provide a summary of the event. Both of these facilitate managers and staff monitoring safety and effectiveness. One set of records in a House unit were observed to have been inspected by the Operations manager. The 7 incidents, previously mentioned, were recorded between February 2004 and October 2004 and occurred for the following reasons:-

- barricading a room;
- refusing to follow instructions (the young person then chose to walk to his own room);
- destroying the house unit;
- fire setting in a bedroom;
- trashing a bedroom;
- refusing to attend class or return to the house unit; and
- being physically threatening to staff.

There was use of the “time out” room on 3 occasions.

Staff particularly praised the “Life space interview” which helps the young person reflect on the incident. However, it would be important as well to get a written record of the young person’s reaction to and reflection on the event. Some concern was expressed by staff that PCC may not be sufficient for physically mature 17 year olds. It would be useful to learn from staff if they feel that the PCC holds should be retained for all occasions. It is worrying and distressing to learn of an incident where “it took 8 staff to hold and calm a very agitated boy”. One younger boy admitted that he had felt unsafe when he had witnessed “bigger people” losing their temper and being restrained. A 16-year-old boy described a confrontation between two other boys who ignored de-escalation attempts by staff. One boy “lost his head” and was restrained, which he found frightening.

- 5.24 The use of PCC, therefore, needs to be monitored on at least two levels - first staff safety e.g. the concern about the effectiveness of PCC when used with bigger 17 year olds. Second, in terms of the young person’s safety and dignity in a scenario such as the one mentioned above. This must also incorporate the young person’s perspective. There is a space for this on the form but it is rarely filled out.
- 5.25 The National Children’s Bureau (NBC) has been carrying out a review of restraint techniques in the UK and two fatalities in Secure Training Centres (STCs) in the past year have been the subject of investigation. During the inspection there was an opportunity to observe the training in PCC for a group of staff and this was seen to be

done very competently with instructors being able to weave together the compatible elements of PCC and TCI. As the training is still in process of reaching every member of staff, as well as refresher courses for those already trained, it is recommended that the managers continue in the meantime to rely on this combination of techniques. This should only alter if and when there are any amendments or alternative methods which are preferred. It is good that any application of restraint involves a member of nursing staff joining the staff team who are carrying out PCC. This enables the observation of consistent method and the potential to offer First Aid to anyone hurt during the incident. The nurse can also verify whether or not any injury has been associated and keep a record of what took place.

- 5.26 The intention to get rid of “time out” rooms in the new Centre is a welcome development. The goal, however, will have to be achieved with sufficient staff confidence that the alternatives are working effectively. As a start it would be desirable to discontinue the use of the “time out” room in the ISU which is a drab brown room, devoid of furnishing of any kind. The plans to install a larger viewing aperture in the door using dark tinted glass may increase privacy but will make it more claustrophobic. It is recommended that “time out” should be reliant on the use of the young person’s own room in the first instance, but other vacant bedrooms could be used as a reserve. After 6 months monitoring the decision could be made as to whether the “time out” room could be put to alternative use.

The Operational Security

- 5.27 The environment is still a very controlled one. This is in part down to the use of a renovated building that has many redeeming features but also some frustrating ones. Staff complained about too many locked doors, making it difficult to get from one part of the house to another. This is problematic if there is an incident. They find the doors difficult to negotiate especially if their hand is shaking through adrenalin.
- 5.28 Some staff missed the flexibility to get groups of young people outside for physical activity such as horticulture. They also said that it is impossible to be spontaneous in the current Centre as everything has to be checked with the Operations Team. One girl felt that the House Units were small but surrounded by lots of space which could be put to greater use. The caution by Management is understandable, to an extent, because there have been two escape episodes which were a learning experience. Fortunately, these did not result in any untoward harm to the absconders or others. This demonstrated early in the experience of operating the renovated Centre, that there were structural, environmental and supervisory issues that required remedy. As a result of the escapes, the Director of the Centre took swift and effective action. The Director had also required a significant tightening of security and while this was beginning to relax a little by the time of the inspection, the restrictions on movement for young people and the under use of the outdoor spaces is disappointing.
- 5.29 The Operations Team do an important job in ensuring that the fence is intact, ensuring that young people get safely from one part of the campus to another and facilitating the recreation. Staff in the House Units, however, are very conscious that every movement of young people must first be announced to Operations and then co-ordinated by

them. It is the view of the Inspectors that the yards at the back of the House Units, apart from the Assessment/ISU, where there is a hard surface ball play area, are too cramped and investment is needed to provide more dedicated play areas and the option of an official horticulture allotment. This is not to detract from the benefit of there being an expansive football pitch and a good size games hall, a swimming pool and a fitness suite. These and the Youth Club are tremendous amenities. The main point, however, is the threshold of access the young people have to these and also the amount of time that can be spent in the open air.

One young person summed up his experience in the sentence “We should have more freedom - it’s like Fort Knox.... prefer Lisnevin because of outdoors..”

Progressive Regime

One 16-year-old boy said of the system “Yes it is fair and has been judged well”. Another 17 year old, who had known the previous system, resented the lack of access to activities when subject to sanctions. A girl suggested that to reach “gold” or above before being allowed a poster “was a bit stiff.”

5.30 The “bronze” to “platinum” system is reassessed on a weekly basis. Young people automatically start at “silver” and can go up or down the scale, depending on their behaviour. At “silver” the first thing they receive is a CD/radio and have access to the sports hall, swimming pool and fitness suite. At “gold” the young person can have a TV and access to the Youth Club. At “platinum” they get a play-station in their room. With each increment there are also differentials in the lateness of going to bed and of music being turned off. The rewards of the progressive regime should adequately govern some of the access to sought after pastimes, such as music mixing, but the health and emotional gains of physical activity and fresh air should be accessible irrespective of the level of rewards. Indeed the more “out of unit” activity that is available, the less likelihood of tensions developing within a unit which has a potential to prompt negative sanctions. In addition the concept of risk assessing young people at “gold” and “platinum” level for “a position of trust” should be considered so as to enable them to go to their own room, move to and from Youth Club without having to have an escort. However, they would still be observed and staff at their destination notified. They should also qualify for mobility, not just for home leave near the end of their sentence but to re-introduce outings which were provided in the past, such as visits to cinema, outward bound schemes, church and circus skills training. Admittedly, the number on JJCO is relatively small and the status of “remand” has made it inadvisable to take young people out of the Centre unless for reasons of court or health care appointments. As

some young people, however, can be on remand for a considerable time it would be inequitable if they were to be denied the opportunity of planned mobility. It would be desirable if this could be considered as an addition to the JJC Rules and if necessary amend legislation.

- 5.31 Overall the Progressive Regime has been a positive experience. The “bronze” through to “platinum” stages have been adapted as the staff of the Centre have judged the impact and what the young people can realistically sustain. It is now the prerogative of a Unit or Day Manager, for instance, to sanction a young person for misbehaviour by dropping them down the stages for a period of 24 hours. This means that they heed the lesson but are not faced with an insurmountable task to regain their privileges. Some young people, however, feel it takes too long to get from one level to the next and that a further stage of “platinum plus” would make continued striving worthwhile. This is a view shared by staff who were interviewed by the Inspectors. Also some young people feel that the use of the Youth Club and the swimming pool should not be reserved for a high level award. Other views expressed were that young people who reach “platinum” level should be given more trust. Bed times should be staggered to allow 9.30 pm, 10.30 pm and 11.30 pm respectively.
- 5.32 It is important to balance care and safety with the young person’s right to freedom of expression and to leisure and play. The international rules i.e. Article 47 of the UN Rules and Standard 5 of the JJC Statement of Standards encourage outdoor exercise which should be for at least an hour every day, irrespective of how well behaved they have been. In relation to rewards, a more graduated response would be desirable whereby young people who are not thought to be as much at risk of absconding or self-harm or harm to others could get more freedom of movement within a House Unit and more access to the outdoors and trust in general. It is good that some young people can opt to do table setting or laundry tasks for extra pocket money. Although, there are relatively few who are sentenced to a JJCO, this concept could be taken literally a step further with the development of a house outside the perimeter fence to facilitate more self-care skills in preparation for the move back to the community i.e. a “Step Down” Unit with more open conditions. There are unused premises close to the entrance of the JJC and the Agency should investigate the setting up of such a unit.

Programmes and Prevention of Offending

- 5.33 While recidivism will always remain a problem for this age group the Centre is congratulated for establishing regular programmes to counteract offending behaviour. A member of staff has been designated to be programmes Co-ordinator. In the past in either of Rathgael or Lisnevin the tasks of group work, assessment and care planning would have been undertaken by qualified social work staff. It has taken concerted effort over a period of 5 years to convince a lot of staff that these programmes are essential to improve the chances of making an impact on offending behaviour. Drugs Awareness, car crime, anger management, health and hygiene and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) have all been used. There is some conjecture about the effectiveness of programmes and an early evaluation of CBT showed little difference between the re-offending rates of those who had participated and a control group. It would be useful to revisit this exercise as young people who have re-offended and who been re-admitted have acknowledged that they had reflected more on what they had done and wanted to re-engage with the programme. It is accepted that it raises the awareness of

the young person about the harm they have committed and promotes victim awareness.

- 5.34 The young people said they were keen to “get out and remain out” and the value of programmes was secondary. However, their desire for education, such as gaining AQA Certificates, was particularly encouraging. The programme most remembered was on health, hygiene and sexual health. This is appropriate as there is the increasing phenomenon of the young people already being parents and the need, therefore, to consider meaningful contact with the child and/or partner and preparing them for the responsibility awaiting them on release. It will be important for the Youth Justice Agency to make full use of the place now established on the Prisons and Probation Programmes Approval Panel so that accreditation of programmes will enhance their quality and standing. The Programmes Co-ordinator and the Training Manager work closely together and in addition training across the Youth Justice Agency is giving staff more access to techniques in diversion and citizenship. The Centre is encouraged, therefore, to continue through partnerships to enhance the holistic mix of approaches that are aimed at boosting self-esteem and to promote better integration back into the community.

Protocols with Partner Agencies

- 5.35 The regular incorporation of the representatives of Bail Support, Community Services, PBNi and HSS Trusts from the early planning stage is welcomed. The individual plans, including the transition aided by the education liaison posts, is undoubtedly the right direction. It is good to see that the basis for this inter-agency co-operation will be protocols and Service Level Agreements (SLAs), a process that has already commenced and should increasingly enhance communication. Along with a focus on the quality and effectiveness of programmed work these agreements will need to be monitored. They must also be underpinned by revised JJC Rules and Standards and underwritten through Children’s Services Planning and longitudinal evaluation. The generation of this development into programmed work has been championed by a small group of staff who are resolute and consistent about making a lasting impact on the lives of the young people. They have gradually inspired others to the stage where programmed work is less liable to be knocked aside due to other pressures. One of the Inspectors, who was due to meet with a child after morning school, was politely and rightly told by staff that the young person was involved in a cognitive session “Offending is not the only choice”. It was mutually agreed that it was better for the boy to remain in the group.

Experience of Induction

- 5.36 The JJC Rules require that the young people are provided with sufficient information on admission to enable them to understand the expectations and requirements of the Centre. Particular effort is to be made to ensure that the child understands the Complaints procedure. The Inspectors are aware that young people are given verbal information at the time of admission and there are posters in at least one House Unit displaying the expectations. However, the brochure for young people and parents has been at the drafting stage for some time and is overdue.

- 5.37 It is recognised that young people are most vulnerable when they are first admitted and problems such as bullying are likely to occur. The evidence from discussions during the inspection confirms that staff do help the young person to settle in and observe them closely over the first 24 hours. One girl reported, however, that after being shown round she was taken to her room and was left there. She said that it was a long evening and night to be apart from the other young people. She did, however, admit that she would not have been easy to manage and records have confirmed that a medical had identified her to be under the influence of substances. This girl, therefore, had needed this close observation.
- 5.38 This girl did not recollect receiving anything in writing about the Centre and she also reported that no key worker was allocated for a fortnight, which should normally happen over the first 48 hours. Again records are held which show that she had a thorough assessment by a Case Manager (Team Leader) which was relayed to a “Looked After” Child Review and Case Review combined and took place one week after admission. The girl was released on bail just before a fortnight elapsed.
- 5.39 Vulnerability needs to be a specific aspect of the assessment and staff admitted that the Centre would not be a comfortable atmosphere for someone who is gay, whether young person or a staff member. It is continually mentioned by young people in “anger management”. Some staff do challenge these attitudes but it appears to be prevalent. The commencement of Anti-oppressive training will be valuable.
- 5.40 It is important that there is a good hand-over between day and night staff and during the inspection the Inspector attended a briefing meeting which takes place in the Operations Meeting Room. This provided confirmation that the likely needs of particular young people were identified. This hand-over process is then replicated and endorsed in a discussion in each unit before the other staff leave. It was also established that the gender balance and concentration of qualified staff during the night is always carefully deployed in House 5 and ISU/Assessment where girls are usually placed.

A 17-year-old young person said that he felt “shattered” on the night of his admission and told staff “I can’t stick this!” He confirmed that staff had “made him feel at home” and after listening to music he had eventually fallen asleep. A girl admitted that she had felt “sad” on the first evening but was treated well by both the boys and one other girl. She had phoned her carers the same night and visits were established within the first couple of weeks.

The main things the young people liked were - school, food and “some” staff, whereas they did not like - the opening and closing of doors, the smoking ban and the lack of fresh air.

The Value of a Centre Pet

- 5.41 A young person who recalled the visit of a Labrador dog belonging to a member of staff spoke of the positive effect on the atmosphere. It is apparent that the presence of an animal, which the young people perceive as benign, is beneficial. Within residential child care there have been reservations about the health and safety aspects. However, whether through the generous sharing by a willing dog owning member of staff or through the Centre arranging to get a pet, it is an addition worth considering.

6. Education and Vocational Training

Standard

- a. **The Juvenile Justice Centre conveys an ethos where learning is valued and young people are encouraged to improve their standards of education or achievement.**
- b. **Young people of school age will experience a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to their age, ability and level of attainment with a view to return to school in the community on release.**
- c. **Young people who will be above school age on release will receive a programme of educational and vocational training designed, in so far as is practicable, to prepare them for entrance to further education, training or work experience.**

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

- 6.1 Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognised that young people in custody should be provided with education suited to their needs. The JJC Standards establish education as being valued and that young people are encouraged to improve their standards of education and achievement while in the Centre. A study carried out by Queen's University in 1996 showed that 50% of young people leaving the care system had no educational qualifications, 25% had one GCSE, 13% had a vocational qualification and only 2% had an "A" level. The experience of young people in custody is generally comparable. In the general community there are only 3% with no qualification and 57% have at least one GCSE and 37% had one or more "A" Levels. This shows how hard it is to counteract early life experiences and to overcome the disruption that so many young people in the care and justice systems have faced. Many of the young people will have had different moves of accommodation and many will have been suspended from school. It is, therefore, important to guard against low expectations and to keep reminding oneself of the long term impact of educational attainment on self-esteem and employment prospects. Targets are needed at each key stage to bring the young people in line with their peers in the community. Each child's progress is to be subject of an individual plan and monitored through reviews. The challenge for teaching staff in the Juvenile Justice Centre particularly is the constantly changing population and the wide variety of ability ranging from Moderate Learning Difficulties to GCSE candidates. For many young people their sense of achievement can be promoted in parallel learning activities such as Duke of Edinburgh Award and horticulture.
- 6.2 The education provision in the two former units at Lisnevin and Rathgael was diverse with more individualised work possible in the latter because of smaller numbers and with a clear spatial distinction between school and the living areas. While the curriculum had become wider with the inclusion of vocational subjects the class size and fluctuation of numbers and coping with new admissions disrupting continuity in Lisnevin was problematic. This affected stress levels and staff sickness. The education staff took the opportunity prior to the actual amalgamation of the two Centres to take a month to base themselves on the Bangor site and prepare for an effective

commencement of classes once the young people arrived. While this unfortunately left the young people in Lisnevin without education during this period the level of organisation and staff cohesion has paid dividends. From previously being criticised in the SSI Inspection of 1999 and NIHRC “In Our Care” report 2002 there has been significant improvement.

For example the performance target for this year is to provide 95% of young people in the Juvenile Justice Centre with 20 hours of education and training each week.

6.3 At the time of the Inspection, some 22 young people, aged 13-17 years, in the Juvenile Justice Centre, were receiving their education in the education department, known as Rowan College. The college provides well for the young people and has much to commend it. A number of strengths are evident: these include:-

- the notable improvements achieved in a relatively short time since the college’s inception in 2003;
- the very good quality of the ethos and the impact this has on the young people’s behaviour, personal development and engagement with learning; a key factor of which is the high quality of the relationships established between the staff and the young people; in this endeavour, the teacher-leader plays a significant part;
- the high quality and commitment of the staff to the care and welfare of the young people; a sense of teamwork is evident;
- the good quality of the leadership and management of the college which has enabled the college to address past difficulties and achieve success through hard work and dedication to the aims and values of the college;
- the good quality of the planning and teaching observed and underpinned by the high staff/young people ratio;
- the development of a broadly-based curriculum, with increasing emphasis on vocational work for the older young people;
- the emphasis on assessment when the young people are admitted and the preparation of individualised learning pathways each young person;
- the opportunities provided for the young people to achieve accreditation;
- the clear guidelines for, and implementation of, pastoral care and child protection arrangements, including risk analysis;
- the forward thinking approach of the senior staff to develop links with mainstream services through the appointment of a liaison and placement officer.

- 6.4 The college is strongly positioned to build on these strengths and to develop further some aspects of its work. Current shortcomings are:-
- the organisation of the college into assessment, intensive support and main school divisions, while being well founded, has a number of practical deficiencies which inhibit the flexible deployment of staff and the cohesion of the practice;
 - the impact of long-term absence on sick leave which puts undue pressure on the teacher-leader;
 - the inability of the college to access educational in-service training and support to keep the staff up-to-date with mainstream educational developments;
 - the lack of access to educational psychology from the education and library services;
 - the impact on the teaching programmes and classes when the young people are moved from house to house, including the impact of the fluctuating remand population;
 - the need to consider how best to involve further the care staff in support of the education of the young people by building on the examples of good practice observed during the inspection.
- 6.5 A number of actions are recommended in order to effect improvement or for consideration of potential changes. These are listed in the recommendations section.
- 6.6 The links with Education and Library Boards have been beneficial and the two Liaison staff appointed to the Juvenile Justice Centre have been instrumental in re-establishing young people back into education in the community. It would be valuable to follow this up on a longer term basis to see if the young person remains constructively engaged. It is recommended that research is commissioned into the level of inter-agency planning, support and reviewing and the effectiveness in preventing re-offending in a period of 3 years post custodial placement.
- 6.7 The quality of education being provided and the closer ties with the South Eastern Education and Library Board suggests that it may be an opportune time to consider full integration and transfer school management responsibility. The benefits in terms of staff training and access to amenities would be desirable. It would also underscore the concept that young people are only in custody as an interlude and not cut off from the community where education and health care are part of the normal infrastructure of routine living. Therefore, the services should follow the child.

Comments by Young People and Staff

A 17 year old, who had already left school, told the Inspector that since coming into the Centre and attending classes he was able to manage addition. He also was quick to say that he preferred drawing cartoons, car mechanics and Physical Education. In his view - "Teachers are brilliant!"

A 14 year old, -"Teachers here are nicer - More variety in learning and more choice. School is perfect".

A couple of young people questioned the need to return to the House Units for morning break.

A 16-year-old boy was being helped to work on papers sent by his school.

A girl commented that she was able to "do cooking but got no theory".

A member of staff stated that the requirement for care staff to accompany young people in class was an unnecessary interruption to completing tasks in the House Units.

7. Tackling Offending Behaviour

Standard

- a. **Each young person is subject to an individual offending behaviour programme which is consistent with his/her assessment and other elements of the action plan**
- b. **There are mechanisms in place to promote, develop, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programmes to prevent offending and re-offending within the Juvenile Justice Centre.**

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

Confronting Offending Behaviour

“Preventing offending by young people and assisting their re-integration into the community is a strategic objective of the Youth Justice Agency which involves relevant and planned regimes that prepare young people for a law-abiding life, providing constructive activities including education and training, work experience and programmes specifically aimed at addressing offending behaviour.” Youth Justice Agency - Strategic Objective

- 7.1 Young people appreciate fairness and are more likely to respond positively if given respect and encouragement which is backed up by clear rules, incentives and rewards. The UN Standard Minimum Rules 26.1 (the Beijing Rules) and the JJC Standards encourage assisting the young person to achieve a constructive and productive role in society and undertake an individual offending behaviour programme in accordance with their action plan.
- 7.2 There is a broad public perception that the needs of victims have been neglected for too long and that the balance needs to shift more in their direction. In this respect, the development of restorative justice both here and in other countries reflects the need to give victims a greater say in the criminal justice process. It also encourages offenders to develop more empathy towards their victims. In this regard the programmes in the Centre addressing the causes of offending behaviour have been promoted more consistently over the past year. For a period there were demands which were part of the settling in process in the combined Centre which meant that regular programme sessions were liable to be set aside. Some of the young people had varied experience, therefore, of the programmes available.

A 16-year-old boy said he was doing different programmes, including Crime Pics. Whereas a girl told Inspectors that there was nothing except “health and hygiene”. She would have liked more self-care to avoid her clothes being shrunk. Another 16-year-old boy reported that he was attending “anger management and learning things to keep him out of trouble”. Having already been introduced to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme in the community he would like to have kept it going while in custody.

- 7.3 The Inspectors are assured that there is a firm commitment to integrate programmes as routine. The programmes provided include issues such as victim awareness, anger management, independent living, substance abuse, health issues and cognitive behaviour therapy. The Duke of Edinburgh Award is also now a feature. It is good that most of these can also now be undertaken with young people on Remand.
- 7.4 Staff talked mostly positively about the programmes they were working on with young people. It was agreed that programmes that would promote skills for addiction-free daily living were vitally important and useful for the young person. There was a query, however, about their effectiveness and whether the cognitive programme on stopping offending would actually have any lasting impact once the young person left. One staff member made the point that it is easy to talk about stopping offending in the Centre but if the young person's situation on release becomes fraught and they are homeless the risk of turning to crime is high. Where there are parents/carers involved, it will be important to engage and involve them in joint work as a means of enabling a more lasting impact.
- 7.5 Because of the ongoing questions about "what works" in counteracting offending behaviour, it is important that the Centre stays abreast of the debates and recent research. It is also important that programmes run at the Centre are presented for accreditation and independently evaluated. It is essential that recidivism rates are monitored over a number of years.

One young person spoke very positively about work which he had done with staff on health and hygiene. He said that he was now brushing his teeth for the first time in his life and was very excited about this.

There was a less positive report from the same young person who said that he had been in the Centre for a couple of months but had only a fortnight prior to the interview met his key worker. He was unsure what their role was, but felt that he already had good relationships with other staff.

A girl, who had been returned to a Children's Home on bail, said that she regarded the Juvenile Justice Centre "purely as punishment and would not want to go back". She felt that the Centre did not teach her new skills. She acknowledged that there were various people trying to keep her out of trouble in Probation, Community Services Project and Social Services. But in the view of the interviewing Inspector these were not providing sufficient structure in the young person's daily life to sustain stability.

Sexually Abusive Behaviour

- 7.6 Staff were conscious of the growth in the numbers of those entering the Centre with actual or alleged sexual offences. At present these young people are mixed with other young people across a couple of House Units. The approach taken so far is to hope that other young people do not get to find out. Given how small Northern Ireland is,

there are risks around this strategy which need to be monitored vigilantly. It would be best to have a policy, aligned with the Child Protection Procedures, for dealing with young people who are alleged to or have carried out these offences. This would be aimed at protecting vulnerable young people from untoward attention as well as protecting the alleged abusive young person from summary and prejudicial attack. While some specialist workers from teams who work with sexually abusive young people have maintained contact with individual young people when admitted, it would be useful to explore a partnership arrangement with at least one of them to sustain continuity of preventative work. It is important that the arrangement for sharing information, undertaking assessments and making decisions about risk and need rests within the Child Protection process rather than MASRAM, which is for adults.

Prevention: Limiting the Use and Duration of Placement in Custody

- 7.7 There are several ways of reducing the reliance on the use of custody and then when it occurs to limit the duration as much as possible. These include the new community orders (i.e. Reparation Orders and Community Responsibility Orders) which are in addition to the existing Probation Orders and Attendance Centre Orders and the restorative justice approach using cautions and Youth Conferencing.
- 7.8 Bail Support and Supervision, as mentioned in Chapter 2, have been in operation for over a year and Remand Fostering has also been piloted. These have shown sufficient promise that a scheme for Bail Support has just gone out to tender and Extern has been appointed to take it forward. The practice is to assess all young people placed on remand. The aim then is to assure the Youth Court that granting bail is the preferred option. Extern was also involved with other partners i.e. Down and Lisburn Trust and Community Services of the Youth Justice Agency in the pilot of Remand Fostering. After a positive evaluation it is intended that a project supporting up to 6 intensive foster placements will be generated. The potential of these will be to prevent some young people going into custody by providing a short period of respite care. For others it may make the release from custody possible in the absence of any other suitable bail location or a bridging placement for someone being released until longer term accommodation can be secured. Efforts in these areas have been worthwhile and the agencies involved are to be congratulated. The Beijing Rules and UNCRC are being fulfilled the more these initiatives are expanded.
- 7.9 There is a policy context behind these developments and the drivers for all these developments and changes are the Youth Justice Policy Unit (NIO), the Management Board of the Youth Justice Agency and Children's Services Planning sub-groups regarding young people in conflict with the law. Children's Services Planning brings together the voluntary, education, youth justice and child care interests to assess need and produce a co-ordinated and strategic response to meeting that need.
- 7.10 The organisations that promote young people's rights and undertake inspection are a further catalyst to change. It is vital that the corporate opportunities such as "Children in Conflict with the Law" sub-groups and inter-agency groups set up to replace Juvenile Liaison Bureaux provide the energy and investment to prevent offending. Whether it is the police or another agency there should always be one designated body to lead the process of problem identification and problem solving in the various locations. The aim should be to achieve what best meets the needs of the child, the family and the victim.

This inter-agency linkage at Area Board level is replicated at a local level through such initiatives Children's Panels. Two more are currently on the brink of commencing in Down & Lisburn and Ulster Community & Hospital Trust areas. PSNI used to run Juvenile Liaison Bureaux in most police Divisions and within the current Youth Diversion Schemes there could be a renewed opportunity to corporately discuss how some young people may be prevented from getting into further trouble. These initiatives should be made as complementary and as uniform as possible.

8. Health Care

Standard

- a. All young people will be provided with health care to National Health Service Standards, and with health education.
- b. To work with other agencies to ensure that its health, education and care service is seamless.

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

Assessment

- 8.1 Many young people who come into custody have not accessed Health Care sufficiently. Remedial help along with health promotion need to go hand in hand. Contact is made with the young person's GP for information and a Health Care examination occurs within 24 hours of admission which is focused on deliberate self-harm and reducing risk. Then at the point of discharge from the Centre another Health care examination is completed and the GP is again contacted.

Primary Care

- 8.2 GPs are available for advice 8.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and hold a weekly surgery. They also see patients brought to Ards Health Centre in emergencies and would issue prescriptions for collection in the absence of a young people having to attend. The Out-of-Hours cover via the Out-of-Hours Centre beside the Juvenile Justice Centre appears to work well, as does the pharmacy link which will be further enhanced with a fax facility.
- 8.3 Dental cover is mostly emergency and pain relief, the service being limited to approximately 5 hours fortnightly. The young people would benefit from an increase in the dentistry service to enable more long-term rather than short-term reconstructive work. Additional time would also be valuable for further promotion of uptake of dentistry service on release. It may be worth asking the Dentist to do a needs' assessment on the young people over the next few months to justify such an increase.
- 8.4 Nursing staff are on duty from 8.00am to 10.00pm Monday to Friday and 8.00am to 3.15pm (+ 3-4hrs in the evening) on Saturday and Sunday. There is also one nurse on-call at the weekends. Usually there is only one member of nursing staff present and therefore this limits therapeutic work/participation in clinical and social care governance as they may be called upon to other duties e.g. if any incident has occurred within the Centre or medication is required. There is, therefore, a need to increase the amount of nursing staff time available for therapeutic work. The existing team members have already developed expertise in counselling through post-qualifying training and this has been invaluable. Therefore, any additional nurses appointed to complement this should preferably have had mental health training.

Secondary Care

- 8.5 With regard to secondary care and the physical specialities there appear to be good links with the local A&E, Minor Injury Units, and Out-Patient Departments. There does, however, appear to be a need to set up and audit a process for contacting the young person's GP at the point of being released and currently receiving healthcare. Sustaining this within the community could be a task shared by a mentor and any professionals in contact from Probation and Community Services.

Complementary Therapy

- 8.6 The Centre offers a range of complementary therapies including reflexology, Indian head massage and auricular therapy which recognizes the holistic needs of the young people and the fact that many have experienced traumatic experiences. This may explain a reduction in reliance on medication.

The therapist's help is much sought after and has a very calming effect on some of the most "macho" of the young people. It is commendable that the therapist, who has no shortage of demand from regular adult clients, regards the sessions in the JJC as more worthwhile and would be prepared to expand her contract.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health

- 8.7 Research has consistently found that young people placed in custody are likely to have complex needs and are particularly vulnerable and may have mental health problems. The UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles deprived of their liberty (1990) Articles 81-87 specify that people with specific skills are required. Given the high vulnerability of the young people in custody it is vital that high calibre staff are recruited and they are given the best quality support and training. One former resident, a girl, described herself during her stay in custody as "depressed and distressed". She had felt in need of medication and wanted to see a psychiatrist, but none was available at the time.
- 8.8 The risk factors leading to offending also predict the development of mental health problems. A number of the young people have a learning disability, developmental deficits and behaviour disorders which can lead to threats of harm to self and others. Freeman (2003) has described the link between trauma and possible psychological consequences such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and substance misuse. Bailee (2003) in a small scale study of young people in secure care demonstrated a high rate of trauma in young people's life histories as well as a high rate of presenting behaviours such as aggression, substance misuse, self-injurious behaviour, which are associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- 8.9 In 2002, a report on the Juvenile Justice Centre Order and the Human Rights Commission report on the Juvenile Justice Centre "In Our Care" respectively specified the need for continuity of follow-up by CAMHS services when young people were placed in custody and to accept a wider interpretation of mental health rather than psychiatric illness. There still remains a bleak prospect if a young person is identified as a personality disorder particularly when they reach the age of 17. Mental health services are currently provided by a sessional psychiatrist and a full time psychologist,

the latter is based in the Juvenile Justice Centre. It is good to have these specialists available when there is such a shortage generally. Both, however, noted also that there was the need to develop better links with CAMHS in the community, in order to maintain continuity for those already in contact and also to increase the likelihood of the young person attending and receiving help on release. It was also felt that there was a need to deploy the skills of other staff currently employed in the Juvenile Justice Centre to make best use of their qualifications and competencies as therapists. This could take the form of screening for mental health problems, identifying unmet need, assisting in therapeutic work etc.

- 8.10 Due to the high level of unmet need, particularly complex PTSD among the young people in custody, there is a need to maximise and increase both psychiatry and psychology resources. The joint work of the psychologist and the nurse, who has qualifications in counselling, will be all the more cohesive with a supervisory element provided by the psychologist.
- 8.11 It would be helpful to review the line management and supervision arrangement for health staff to ensure clarity of demarcation. The addition of a further psychologist with educational psychology experience would enhance the complementarity and be of assistance across the living and educational settings. This would be of benefit not only to the young people particularly with learning disabilities/specific learning needs in the school context, but to young people who are troubled within their House Unit. If there is capacity, it perhaps could extend to some young people outside the Centre and known to Community Services.

Self-Harm and Risk of Suicide

- 8.12 Research into the prevalence of mental health problems among young people cared for out of home found across the countries in Great Britain a rate of 45% of conduct and emotional disorders. There is a draft policy for the JJC on young people at risk of suicide or self-harm to be finalised. However, current procedures and the use of the "Self-Injury" Form and "Risk Assessment" Form would appear to be quite comprehensive. Staff have a close observation process for anyone who is acutely agitated or distressed. Managers are now encouraging staff not to leave the child isolated but whenever possible to sit with the young people in the privacy of their rooms, as long as there is regular observation and support from colleagues. The monitoring of these acute cases should be the subject of specific reporting to the Management Board and in the Annual Report.

Health Promotion

- 8.13 In a report by HM Inspectorate in England and Wales in 2004 only 2 out of 16 establishments were non-smoking. Approximately 90% of the young people had smoked prior to admission. Of these 75% said they found the rule problematic. In the JJC the smoking ban has apparently worked well and there has been anecdotally a decrease in the amount of smuggled tobacco. The majority of young people struggle with the situation and declare their opposition, particularly those aged over 16 and they vow to take it up again as soon as they are discharged. However, both in principle and in the maintenance of the practice the Inspectors commend the management and staff for

implementing the ban so smoothly and effectively. Help with smoking cessation techniques should be continually available to both young people and to staff.

- 8.14 The pilot of Sex and Relationships Programme which was due to start in November 2004 is particularly welcome in light of the increasing level of sexually transmitted diseases in young people in Northern Ireland. A proposal also to develop mental health promotion is welcome.

Storage of Medication and Household Remedies

- 8.15 There was a policy for the controlled administration, handling and safe storage of medicinal products within the Juvenile Justice Centre. The Inspectors were informed that household remedies will in the future be available within the houses and on discussion this appears an appropriate way of enabling night staff to provide such remedies to young people without recourse to nursing professionals.

Recourse to Outside Health Facilities and Accommodation

- 8.16 Young people are not admitted as inpatients to the medical unit but instead they receive outpatients support and treatment in their room or if necessary in an outside hospital. While in the room they would be visited by nursing staff and could receive an education pack. There is concern about those young people who are disturbed and who have nowhere suitable to go in the absence of their own home. There needs to be acceptance of the need for accommodation, part open and part secure, which is suitable for those who are not mentally ill in the classic sense but who are emotionally damaged. The prospect of some of these young people moving to the YOC is undesirable. Recently there has been an examination of a suicide death in HMP Maghaberry and a call by the Coroner, the Human Rights Commission and HM Inspectorate of Prisons to reconsider the presence of young people, particularly girls, under the age of 18 being in prison custody. Any move of a 16-17 year old from the JJC to the YOC should be a last resort. Similarly, any retention of a vulnerable 17 year old in the YOC should be avoided. The criteria that they must be under 17 1/2 years old and not have been in custody previously are too narrow. It would be better to consider the appropriateness of location on the basis of assessed need which should include not only custodial options but a specialist mental health which also offers security. A more flexible use of custody would require consideration of a revision of the legislation and could entail a fresh look at the planned use of some of the accommodation in the Phase 2 new build Centre. There is a clear view from staff that transfers to the YOC are handled appropriately. Yet their argument, in terms of sparing other young people from disruption and danger, is similar to that staff in Children's Homes use when their young people are moved on to custody.
- 8.17 Overall the Medical Officer felt that there could be further work done with prospective healthcare needs assessment, introduction of formal clinical and social care governance arrangements, and also increased resourcing for mental health and nursing staff.

Young People's Views

There were a number of individual views provided and the Medical Officer on the Inspection Team met with a group of young people. He found that all comments regarding healthcare were positive.

One young person complained that he had a sore back from his blue plastic covered mattress and the only way to get a "comfortable" mattress was to be on "platinum". Young people should be provided with sprung mattresses, which are anti-suicidal, throughout their stay and this should not be reserved as a privilege.

A young person aged 17 said that his key worker had helped him to eat a more healthy diet. He now eats vegetables. The Centre policy had also helped him to give up smoking and he has learned to clean his teeth, which he now does daily and had never done before.

Most young people had no reserve about being seen by male or female nurses or GPs. One girl who was pregnant was glad she could get attention from female health workers. Some, however, felt that waiting for an hour for attention was unduly long.

9. Parental Involvement

Standard

Management of the Centre recognise the importance of having a customer focus and the customer interface by involving parents/guardians in the planning and implementation of plans for the development of their young people and ensure that they are supported and encouraged to participate at each stage of the process.

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

Partnership and Empowerment

- 9.1 Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights highlights the right to family life. Management and staff are attempting to be more family oriented recognising that any hope of lasting change is improved when parents along with other supports in the community are reinforced and helped to take responsibility. The JJC is in a good position to work with the young person and their family and engage with Social services, Probation, colleagues in Community Services and voluntary agencies by involving them during detention and assisting them assume responsibility once the young person is discharged. The Centre has a social worker who works part time as the “family worker” providing an important link with families and other people who are key to the young person’s reintegration.
- 9.2 The greater the ownership of the process by everyone the better the chance of the young person being prevented from re-offending. The model of a Family Group Conference (FGC) is commended, particularly prior to release as this would reinforce to the immediate and wider family that plans, effort and successful outcomes were largely within their capability. What is required is first the opportunity, second, being facilitated and then supported once a viable plan can be agreed and also that reasonable resources are provided. When one considers the early findings from the evaluation of Youth Conferencing of a high participation rate, the parallel process of FGC is worth pursuing.
- 9.3 Young people are facilitated to keep in contact with family and friends by letter, telephone and visits. Immediately after first arriving, the young person is enabled to make a phone call to their family. Staff also take the opportunity to explain the opportunities for regular phone calls and visits. Most families are visiting on a weekly basis. It is important, at least initially, for families to see where their child is residing i.e. in their House Unit. However, it may be helpful to vary the visit location within the Centre, depending on the needs of the child and their visitors. This is particularly the case for families who have travelled a distance. The family suite in the Assessment/ISU building and the Youth Club could be the better options. The inspectors were pleased to find that already visits for young people other House Units were being facilitated in the ISU Family Suite during the week of the inspection.

- 9.4 The staff and young people have been involved in organising and running some very sophisticated events such as “Stars in Their Eyes” talent competitions. Whether, it is shows, quiz games or certificate presentation ceremonies it would be good to invite parents on a regular basis. This has had precedent in the past before amalgamation, when Cognitive Behaviour Certificates were presented in front of some parents in a Belfast Hotel. This and fund raising events which have taken place on the Bangor site can be seen as part of effort involved in the reparation process. This has good outcomes as it combines development of skills, enjoyment, boosting self-esteem and making amends.

Feedback from Parents

Parents give a mixed response to the question about receiving information. Some said it was prompt and done verbally others said they received the written rules. There is also appreciation of the support provided for those who need help with transport and use the bus to the Centre provided by NIACRO. All the parents interviewed praised the Centre for its welcome. They recognised that their young people did not like being locked up but they spoke of a sense of relief that their young person was secure and safe. Two out of three said that they had attended a review meeting.

Distance, telephone and travel cost were an issue for most young people and their families

Feedback from Young People

One boy, who was placed in the ISU, while happy about having a family room available, was uncomfortable with the level of observation. He understood the issue about preventing the passing of contraband items but not of staff listening into conversations. Another young person felt that while his family got on well with staff there was not enough privacy and both visits and phone calls were too short

A boy aged 16 confirmed that he was able to phone home the first night. The family visited the first weekend and he was happy with 45 minutes spent in the Dining Room. A girl said the there were two visits happening at the same time and she felt staff were listening. There were also other people around when she used the telephone. She would like more privacy and more hospitality for visitors. Another 16-year-old boy told the Inspector that he would like more time than 45 minutes and a “special place” for visitors. One girl, whose family were expected later in the week of the Inspection and who were coming from a distance, made representation about an extended visit.

10. Premises, Security and Safety

Standard

- a. The design of the premises and security measures in operation at the Juvenile Justice Centre prevent unauthorised entry or exit and the passage of unauthorised items and substances, and are sufficient to ensure the safety at all times of young people, staff and visitors.
- b. The Youth Justice Agency exercises proper corporate governance so that, among other accounting, the Centre is properly maintained and furnished providing appropriate facilities.

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

Security

- 10.1 At the time of final preparation of the amalgamation of the two Centres the premises at Bangor were assessed in relation to their readiness by a Social Services Inspector from England who was familiar with the facilities here and who had inspected many secure establishments in England. He was unhappy with a number of potential hazards and drew attention to the importance of flexibility to have the option to separate girls from boys. The Phase One team, who had overseen the renovation design and refurbishment, carried out a further risk assessment with the assistance of their consultant who is the Director of St Mary's (Glasgow) along with SSI and NIO Youth Justice Policy. The team were satisfied that occupation of the premises could proceed after a few items were put right.
- 10.2 Shortly after the operation was combined in the one Centre the Fire Safety policies were rationalised and a new manual was issued in December 2003. This provides clear instructions on evacuation for all areas of the Centre and a record sheet for fire drills. However, the security of the Centre and the avoidance of escapes does act as a discouragement in the frequency of carrying out drills. Particularly as the majority of young people are in custody for short periods, it is important that drills should be held in each unit at least every other month.
- 10.3 Young people with particular physical needs or who have a disability are not well provided for in the current premises. There has been one girl who was expecting a baby but who moved elsewhere before the expected date of confinement. The Centre has recognised that it would have serious problems if a child in a wheelchair or serious walking problems was admitted. The Youth Justice Agency commissioned an audit by "Disability Action" to test compliance of all its properties against the Disability Discrimination Act. The report has now been received and an action plan will be drawn up to implement reasonable modifications in the Centre, bearing in mind the Phase II development. Disability awareness training is planned for all staff as a corporate training priority for 2005-2006.

The Built Environment - its role in Meeting the User's Needs

- 10.4 Inspectors from Health Estates undertook a survey with the limited lifespan of the Centre in mind. The buildings, which are between 30 and 40 years old, have had a varied amount of refurbishment/renovation to create an interim solution. The current premises are intended to serve the purpose of a secure establishment accommodating young people at least up until the end of 2006. The recommendations have been made accordingly and anything with longer term financial payback has been omitted.
- 10.5 A full report on the condition of the Centre with systematic comment on each unit or service amenity and recommendations is appended. (See Appendix 4)

Summary

- 10.6 In general the premises are in good state of repair. Building exteriors and perimeter fencing are largely in good condition. The swimming pool and school blocks are in reasonable condition. The following are the few very minor exceptions:-
- fire escape routes should be kept clear of furniture;
 - fire extinguishers were not in place in some locations;
 - fire doors were propped open throughout the premises, this creates a fire risk to protected escape routes;
 - service penetrations from plant/boiler houses are by and large not fire stopped, intumescent foam/paste at perimeter of penetrations is required;
 - store door fire signage is not what is recommended and should read fire door keep locked;
 - some door closers were not in operation;
 - ducts into plant rooms / boiler houses through floors are largely left unsealed, this poses a risk of vermin ingress;
 - heating - Increased control would improve energy efficiency, although this would not be cost effective in limited lifespan;
 - ventilation problems due to macralon covered windows has been remedied;
 - no cold water storage and there are complaints about interruption to supply. This is under investigation by maintenance staff;
 - overall condition of electrical installation is good, minor adjustments advised to meet 'Electricity at Work Regulations';
 - it is advised that a specialist contractor be appointed to carry out tests on fire alarm / emergency lighting at the time periods advised by British Standards;

- fire alarm and emergency lighting installations both require adjustment to comply with current guidelines, although it is acknowledged that some effort is already underway to resolve fire alarm issues;
- some areas would benefit from an upgrade of the general lighting provision;
- plywood fascia at intensive support unit requires painting; and
- rainwater gutters, while in good condition, require cleaning in places.

Conclusion

It must be remembered that young people who are in custody are a very small minority and are probably to wider society the “forgotten few”. However, they are rightly the subject of close interest not just by the provider but by a number of agencies who have a concern and responsibility for young people’s rights. The Oversight Commissioner, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Children’s Law Centre, Include Youth, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Independent Representation scheme run by NIACRO, Criminal Justice Inspection (NI) and Social Services Inspectorate all have a legitimate interest in how the Juvenile Justice Centre looks after and protects young people placed there by the courts and the police. There needs to be regular communication between these agencies so that the important research and monitoring they carry out is neither duplicatory nor becomes an undue imposition or intrusion in the lives of the young people and serve to distract the staff from their purpose. It is good that these organisations meet regularly and share a willingness to co-operate by combining together in a collegiate or team arrangement when appropriate.

This inspection can assure the management and staff of the Juvenile Justice Centre and the Youth Justice Agency that there is a positive recognition of the strides that have been made. Those agencies, who are keen to promote young people’s rights and protection, do acknowledge that there is a lot to celebrate and want to see the increasing openness and partnership sustained. A specific group of young people, “Young Voices” co-ordinated by Include Youth should be an additional help in this process. There should also be scope for young people while they are resident being invited to contribute views to other regular meetings about the running of the Centre and not just House Meetings and a Food Committee.

The size of the Units and their more domestic and homely accommodation helps with the formation of good working relationships with the young people. The progressive regime generally works well and as one team Leader stated “This is the “best cared for” many of these kids have been in their lives”. They feel secure within clear structures and boundaries. The continuity of care with better communication between young people and staff and between those on day and night shifts has reduced the potential for conflict and thereby the number of incidents which in the past led to child protection issues. Staff generally feel more included and empowered to take on work with specific young people either as “lead” or “co-workers”. The staff group also have a greater opportunity for training and appreciation of equal opportunity and keeping politics and sectarianism out of the day to day atmosphere. There could be more achieved in addition to the positive work with young people from ethnic minorities, as the culture is still hostile to anyone with a homosexual identity. Perceptions will always be

different and there is variation among staff and young people in their views. One staff member says “The only thing that keeps me here is the quality of the Team Leaders”, while another says “I really love it here”. Then there is the contrast between the young person who can think of nothing good about the Centre, compared with the others who do not want to go home.

The Centre can boast of having excellent recreation amenities which are to the benefit of young people and staff but the lack of access to the considerable outdoor space is regrettable. Both mobility opportunities outside the Centre and use of the grounds needs to be reviewed and extended.

Value Added

Many people call for tougher measures to deal with youth offending. Some are so strong that they appear to condone abuses such as “punishment attacks”. There are certainly consistent demands from many sources in society to “get tough” with young offenders. On the other hand there are demands for the raising of the age of criminal responsibility to age 14 and also the closure of all custodial provision for young people.

At the time of the launch of the Youth Justice Agency (1 April 2003) the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Paul Murphy MP, stated that the principal aim of the Agency would be to protect the public by preventing offending by young people. He went on to point to the innovative and inclusive approach that restorative youth conferencing would bring to both the victim and to the majority of young people who offend. This is in keeping with the principle that the use of custody should be the last resort. It is a matter of celebration that the numbers of young people in custody has fallen and that one Juvenile Justice Centre will suffice for all of Northern Ireland. It would, therefore, become more possible to limit the use of custody to those who are truly the most serious and/or persistent offenders. Part of this trend will depend on the reduction of delays in cases coming before the court and thereby a reduction in the use of custodial remand. It will also be helped by the increasing emphasis on working in partnership with parents and other agencies. With the fresh confidence and a momentum in the Juvenile Justice Centre, the next two years will be a good proving ground for the Phase 2 new Centre.

The report contains a number of recommendations which can be split into main issues and a second group that while needing attention, are perhaps more at the level of suggestion.

The JJC is being well led and managed and is dealing with a fast pace of change in an open and effective manner. The achievement of the past year is best summed up in a comment by a staff member who said that since a shaky start in October 2003, when the single Centre commenced operation, the “marriage between the justice and care philosophies is coming together”.

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Recommendations:

1. The reasons for such a high proportion of young people being placed on PACE/Remand needs to be assessed and addressed. The outcomes from current research is awaited. (Paragraphs 1.17, 1.18)

2. There should be an assessment of the level of meaningful participation of young people and their carers in the Youth Court and the potential benefit of having child witness support. (Paragraph 1.21)
3. The costs of the JJC should be disaggregated from other Directorates of the YJA and a per capita cost established for a young person in custody. (Paragraph 2.9)
4. Consideration should be given to appointing two non-executive Directors both for reasons of gaining added independent perspectives and attracting skills across both business and social care. (Paragraph 2.10)
5. The following aspects of admissions should be identified and monitored:
(a) numbers, reasons and trends of admissions to the JJC, (b) the backgrounds of young people placed, including any paramilitary threat or attacks, and (c) the effects of bail support. This information should be made generally available by NIO and YJA on a quarterly basis. (Paragraphs 2.7 & 2.11)
6. The relationship with the immediate community needs to be progressed further to promote understanding of the service being provided and using a variety of means to promote understanding and an appreciation of the work taking place. (Paragraph 2.12)
7. It is important, at least initially, for families to visit where their child is residing but it would be good to have other options for visits within the welcome concept of enhanced family visiting. (Paragraph 2.14) Visits by families could often be better facilitated by the use of the family suite in the Assessment/ISU building and the Youth Club. (Paragraph 9.3)
8. There should be the facility, during the lifespan of the interim Centre, to provide and staff a distinct unit for vulnerable young people, particularly girls on an as and when required basis. (Paragraph 2.23 & 5.5)
9. Monitoring should take place over the next two years regarding the needs of vulnerable 17 year-olds to assess the requirements for either a distinct specialist facility or a change in the criteria for admission to the JJC. (Paragraph 2.26 & 8.16)
10. Attitude surveys and training is needed to ensure staff can understand and counteract hostile views about race and sexual orientation. (Paragraph 2.31)
11. Monitoring should take place of the impact of anti-oppressive practice in religious affiliation, ethnic background and sexual orientation. (Paragraph 2.27 & 2.33)
12. There is a need for more staff training in relation to the mental health needs of the young people and dealing with self harm and suicide prevention. (Paragraph 3.7)
13. The representation of both Protestants and Roman Catholics among both the young people and the JJC workforce should be identified, monitored and reported annually. (Paragraph 2.34 & 3.15)
14. A staff questionnaire which gauges their job satisfaction and compatibility with Section

- 75, sought on an anonymous basis, would be timely during the run-up and preparation for the new-build Centre. (Paragraph 3.13)
15. The frequency and consistency of supervision of staff members should be monitored and subject to regular reporting at the Management Board. (Paragraph 3.17)
 16. There should be discussion arranged by Corporate Services with staff who are leaving i.e. Exit Interviews. (Paragraph 3.26)
 17. There should be regular staff meetings in each House Unit verified in the monthly report to the Management Board. (Paragraph 3.28)
 18. It would be helpful if consideration was given to agreeing a common assessment tool across youth justice agencies and which would be compatible with children's services. (Paragraph 4.1)
 19. Management should review the purpose and criteria for admission to the ISU/Assessment Unit and ensure that the Placements Meeting are clear and can state the reasons why a young person cannot reside in an ordinary House Unit. (Paragraph 4.5)
 20. The Youth Court could be asked to identify those young people charged with offences and their families who would accept a set period of remand to facilitate assessment and establishment of plans. (Paragraph 4.6)
 21. File records should include concise chronological information and major on analysis and details of reviews and plans. (Paragraph 4.14)
 22. There is a need to make available independent support for the young person making an allegation of abuse and throughout the process. This could be a person with advocacy skills. (Paragraph 5.6)
 23. All allegations of abuse should be considered in a Strategy Discussion within 24 hours may to determine that there is sufficient cause or evidence to proceed to an investigation. (Paragraph 5.8)
 24. The outcomes to the issues reported by young people to the IRs, or raised in House Meetings, should be apparent in the records that are held in each house unit and subject to external monitoring. (Paragraph 5.10 & 5.11)
 25. The level of participation by representatives of other agencies in the process of assessment and planning should be monitored and the information shared with Children's Services Planning. (Paragraph 5.13)
 26. The effectiveness of inter-agency strategy and protocols aimed to reduce custodial remand should be taken up as an issue by the Youth Justice Forum. (Paragraph 5.14)
 27. The revision of the JJC Rules could provide a specific expectation of timescales for separations. (Paragraph 5.22)

28. The Centre should continue to rely on the current combination of child management techniques. This should only alter if and when external inquiries and internal monitoring suggest there are any amendments or alternative methods which are preferred. An analysis, however, of incident reports and of staff and young people's experiences and views would be informative. In particular, the use of PCC needs to be monitored to address concern for safety of staff and young people when it is applied to older and larger young people. It is also important to ensure the young persons reaction and their views are sought and recorded. (Paragraph 5.23 - 5.25)
29. "Time out" should be reliant on the use of the young person's own room in the first instance in the ISU. Other vacant bedrooms could be used as a reserve. After 6 months monitoring the decision could be made as to whether the original "time out" room could be put to alternative use. (Paragraph 5.26)
30. A more graduated response would be desirable to freedom of movement within the Centre environs whereby young people not thought to be as much at risk of absconding or self-harm or harm to others could get more access to the outdoors and trust in general. Consideration should be given to creating outdoor play areas and a horticulture allotment. (Paragraph 5.28 & 5.29)
31. As part of a review of the Progressive Regime, consideration should be given to the level of trust that can be afforded and the access the young people have to amenities and also the amount of time that can be spent in the open air or on mobility. (Paragraph 5.30)
32. Consideration should be given to expand the Progressive Regime so that there are further goals to strive for in a stage of "Platinum Plus". (Paragraph 5.31)
33. To facilitate the move back to the community consideration could be given to establishing a "Step Down" Unit with more open conditions, established outside the Centre. (Paragraph 5.32)
34. The Planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes to tackle offending should be integrated with partner agencies and accredited through the approval process convened by PBNi and the Prison Service. ((Paragraph 5.34 & 7.5)
35. A brochure of information about the Centre and expectations for young people and parents should be finalised and made available as soon as possible. (Paragraph 5.36)
36. In education, review the current organisational structures and procedures to allow greater flexibility and cohesion, recognising the importance of initial assessment as a solid basis for the development of individual personal plans. (Paragraph 6.5)
37. Explore formally how to access the Curriculum and Advisory Support and psychology services of the Southern Eastern Education and library Board. (Paragraph 6.5)
38. Develop further the remit of the liaison and placement officers to ensure protocols are established between the juvenile justice service and the Education and Library Boards which promote continuity and cohesion of the programmes provided by the college. (Paragraph 6.5)

40. Establish a framework to promote a self-evaluation approach to monitor and track the young people on leaving the college in order to inform how best to make improvements in current practices. (Paragraph 6.5)
41. Identify the possible benefits of a delegated budget allocation to enable the college to set development priorities and targets for in-service provision within an agreed timescale. (Paragraph 6.6)
42. Consider the implications of the current arrangements relating to long-term staff absence among teachers. (Paragraph 6.6)
43. Strengthen the college's partnership arrangements with care staff for the mutual benefit staff and that of the young people. (Paragraph 6.6)
44. Research should be commissioned into the level of inter-agency planning, support and reviewing and the effectiveness in educational input to preventing re-offending in a period of 3 years post custodial placement. (Paragraph 6.7)
45. It will be important to engage parents/carers in work to support programmes that will tackle offending behaviour. (Paragraph 7.4)
46. A partnership arrangement should be explored with specialist teams who work with young people with sexually abusive behaviour. The appropriate means of assessing the risk and needs of these young people and how they will be treated, monitored and protected will rest within the Child Protection process rather than MASRAM. (Paragraph 7.6)
47. It would be helpful if the Dentist would undertake a needs assessment of the young people to gauge the future scale of service to be referred to the community. (Paragraph 8.3)
48. The Nursing team require reinforcement, preferably with staff that has mental health training. (Paragraph 8.4)
49. There should be an audit of the process of contacting the young person's GP prior to release about their health needs and how this is subsequently taken up in the community. (Paragraph 8.5)
50. Any potential for reinforcement of psychology would benefit from someone with an educational psychology background. (Paragraph 8.11)
51. A review of the line management and supervision arrangement for health staff would be helpful to ensure clarity of demarcation and complementarity. (Paragraph 8.11)
52. Self-harm and risk of suicide should be the subject of specific reporting to the Management Board and in the Annual Report. (Paragraph 8.12)
53. Help with smoking cessation should be continually made available to both young people and staff. (Paragraph 8.13)

54. Young people should be on proper mattresses throughout their stay and this should not be classified as a privilege. (Paragraph 8.17)
55. The model of a Family Group Conference is commended, particularly in preparation to release as this can identify effort and capability in immediate and wider. (Paragraph 9.2)
56. It is important that fire drills are held for each Unit, at least every other month. (Paragraph10.2)
57. The premises are in a good state of repair. A list of issues requiring attention is catalogued in Paragraph 10.6 and more fully in Appendix 5.

**INSPECTION OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE
(NORTHERN IRELAND) - OCTOBER 2004**

GENERAL AIM

In each inspection the aim is to:-

- pursue the purpose of improvement;
- focus on outcomes;
- take a user perspective;
- be proportionate to risk;
- encourage self-assessment by managers;
- use impartial evidence, wherever possible;
- disclose the criteria used for judgement;
- be open about the processes involved;
- have regard to value for money, including that of the inspecting body; and
- Continually learn from experience.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose:

To review the provision of accommodation and treatment for young people who are placed on PACE, remand or are committed to the Juvenile Justice Centre(NI) and make recommendations on the steps necessary to facilitate appropriate care for them within the current single Juvenile Justice Centre. In order to carry out this inspection it will be important to gain the views of both boys and girls (current residents and some former residents) their parents, their carers, managers and other professionals and volunteers in contact.

This remit is to be achieved by considering in relation to 'best practice', (through the Statement of Standards and Common Core Matrix), the context of the care and the experience of the young people who have experienced a placement in the Centre and how their needs have been met.

The overall aim is to reinforce the achievements over the past year of operation, encourage the developments and plans towards successful fruition. To support management and staff to achieve 'best care' for young people, both in the current premises and in preparation for the new-build Juvenile Justice Centre which is due to be opened in 2006.

Methods:

A team comprised of inspectors representing CJINI/SSI, Health Estates, Education, Medical Adviser and an Independent Inspector from the Human Rights Commission will examine records, policies, procedures and practice as well as interviewing past and present residents and their families and significant professionals. This will involve:-

- a study of records of individual young people (Sample size 18 ñ 14 boys and 4 girls); and
- interviews with young people (both current and past residents), their parents, staff, managers and other professionals, mainly in the Juvenile Justice Centre.

Tasks:

1. To study written records including case files, log books, injury and incident reports in respect of young people and staff.
2. To evaluate the adequacy of the assessment (including risk assessment), the care plan and its implementation for each resident.
3. To interview the staff, young people and other relevant professionals and officials regarding:-
 - (i) the care and control of the young people;
 - (ii) the use of amenities and resources available particularly education, recreation and health care; and
 - (iii) the staff and management response to the young people's needs and behaviour and how this has been influenced by the transition into one Centre.
4. To assess the suitability and adequacy of the premises and amenities, bearing in mind the short life span of the interim arrangements. To identify factors that require immediate attention as they have import to safety to life and limb. To also recommend other aspects of the provision that require maintenance response for the remainder of the planned occupation.

Reporting:

- To report to NIO and the Youth Justice Agency by January 2005 on (1) aspects of current good practice and how these may be sustained and developed, (2) make other recommendations for the improvement of the care of the young people, in particular for the interim but also in preparation for the new build Phase 2 Juvenile Justice Centre.

(The report should be accessible on the CJINI, SSI, YJA and NIO Web sites and available in printed form by request.)

THE LEGISLATIVE BASIS

The inspection has taken into account the legislation and rules governing the care and treatment of young people and young people who are detained in the Centre. The legislation includes the Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, which was implemented in 1999 and the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. The Children (NI) Order 1995 is applicable, in so far as there is a responsibility under Schedule 2, Paragraphs 8 (a) (ii) and 8(b) to prevent offending and “to reduce the need to bring criminal proceedings against young people”. When young people enter custody they remain “children in need” as most are placed on Remand and have not yet been adjudicated. It also has relevance in regard to the protection of children as practices in the Juvenile Justice Centre must be consistent with “Co-operating to Safeguard Children” (DHSSPS) and the procedures issued by the Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs).

Details of the Inspection Team

Ian Young	-	Health Estates, DHSSPS
Philip Ballantine	-	Health Estates, DHSSPS
Johnny Baxter	-	Health Estates, DHSSPS
John Hunter	-	Education and Training Inspectorate
Dr Linda Moore	-	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Tom McGonigle	-	Criminal Justice Inspection (NI)
Dr Ian McMaster	-	Medical Adviser, DHSSPS
Ronnie Orr	-	Team Leader, Social Services Inspectorate, DHSSPS
Inspection Manager	-	Kit Chivers, Chief Inspector, Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland

Aim of the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

CJI's vision is summed up as '*A better justice system for all*'. By that we mean a criminal justice system that works smoothly and efficiently, protecting everyone, working to reduce crime and helping to put offenders back on the right track so that they will not offend again; and a system that does all that with absolute fairness, promotes equality and human rights and is responsive to the real concerns of the community.

CJI's Specific Mission

The vision requires the collaboration of all the agencies of the criminal justice system and of voluntary sector, political and community-based organisations to bring it about. The specific mission of the CJI is to contribute to it by conducting inspections of individual agencies and cross-cutting thematic reviews of aspects of the criminal justice system. Basic information about the law under which CJI was set up - the Justice (NI) Act 2002 - and the statutory remit of CJI can be found in the Prospectus published in January 2004 (see www.cjini.org).

Inspection examines the strengths and weaknesses of organisations with a view to identifying the scope for improvement. It may make recommendations designed to help an organisation to improve in any aspect of its performance. 'Improvement' covers all the dimensions of the 'common core' (see Appendix 1):-

- Openness and accountability
- Partnership with other agencies in the criminal justice system
- Promotion of equality and human rights
- Being a learning organisation, responsive to customers and the community
- Delivering results in relation to the Government's objectives

It is not just efficiency and effectiveness, but learning, responsiveness, direction, values and accountability too. 'Improvement' means getting closer to the vision.

Stages of an Inspection:-

1. The initial process of data collection in advance of the inspection will be followed by a meeting to formulate hypotheses or provisional judgments as to the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation.
2. It is also essential to talk to people at all levels in an organisation. Almost invariably there will be different perspectives on the work, and ideas for how things can be done better are as likely to come from the shop floor as from the management suite.
3. Staff need to be given the reassurance that they can speak in confidence and that nothing that they tell us will be attributed to them by name. The only exceptions may be the Chief Executive or other senior staff whose functions cannot be disguised.
4. CJI proceeds by working in partnership with the agencies, taking it as a working assumption (until proved otherwise) that the agency managements share with CJI the common aim of improvement.
5. There will be occasions, when the work of an agency is of such a poor standard and when it shows neither the will nor the capacity to improve, when the Inspectorate will have no option but to state publicly that the position is unacceptable.
6. The CJI does not believe that the most productive way to promote improvement is by 'naming and shaming' agencies that are under-performing or their staff.
7. At the end of the fieldwork a further meeting takes place to revise and finalise the judgments and turn them, where appropriate, into recommendations.

COMMON CORE MATRIX
Application of Matrix and Statement of Standards and Criteria for
Juvenile Justice Centres in Northern Ireland

	Openness Is it an open and accountable organisation?	Partnership Does it operate in a joined-up way with the CJS?	Equality Does it promote equality and human rights?	Learning Does it seek feedback and manage change well?	Results Does it deliver performance and outcomes?
Strategic planning, management and reporting to the community and other stakeholders	A1 Plans and reports are addressed to the community. Political and media environment handled well	B1 Planning is conducted in consultation with partners in the CJS and the community	C1 Planning gives priority to addressing equality and human and children's rights issues Ref Statement of Purpose, policies and procedures	D1 Constantly updates its plans and manages change effectively in dialogue with the community	E1 Sets challenging targets in collaboration with the community and delivers results against them
Customer focus and the customer interface - through the care of young people, involvement of families and tackling offending behaviour	A2 Holds itself accountable to users of the Criminal Justice System and designs, delivers and monitors services to meet users' needs in keeping with purpose and function	B2 Works with other agencies to ensure that its education, health and care service to customers is seamless. Specifically, social services, PBNI and other youth justice colleagues.	C2 Ensures even-handedness and respect for human and children's rights in the service provided and in particular through child protection	D2 Learns from customer feedback and responds professionally to changing demands	E2 Delivers good service to those experiencing the criminal justice system as a user to promote the prevention of offending and re-offending
Operations and processes	A3 Reports meaningful statistics about its operational performance, demonstrating where value is added for customers and stakeholders	B3 Works with other agencies to optimise CJS combined efficiency and effectiveness	C3 Maintains systems to confirm even-handedness and non-discrimination	D3 Benchmarks performance and responds to technical innovations	E3 Continually improves efficiency of processes and quality of services
Finance and fixed asset utilisation	A4 Proper corporate governance, proper accounts and audit with independent review of processes and controls for value for money	B4 Takes into account resources of CJS partners in financial and business plans	C4 Is prepared to devote resources to equality and diversity issues	D4 Monitors financial trends and is ready to invest in new processes	E4 Manages its budget and its assets to optimise value for money
Management of human resources	A5 Staff reporting and other HR practices are open and transparent	B5 HR plans and practices facilitate joint working with partners	C5 HR practices guarantee no discrimination in recruitment, deployment, supervision or with grievances, disciplinary action or promotion	D5 There are regular surveys of staff attitudes and values and results are acted upon	E5 Manages its human resources economically to support effective operations

REPORT ON GENERAL CONDITION BUILDINGS AND SERVICES

1. SPORTS HALL

- Architectural

In general the physical condition and Health & Safety aspects of the Sports Hall were good with no major faults observed:-

- a loose stair nosing was observed which could pose a trip hazard;
- a bin and storage locker were seen in the stairwell which could pose a fire risk;
- fire separation of the first floor plant room appears to be incomplete;
- some fire extinguishers appeared to be missing from their mounting boards, however this matter was confirmed as currently being resolved.

- Mechanical

Overall all mechanical systems are satisfactory and no immediate remedial work would be recommended. The Sports Hall space heating is from a direct gas fired air handling unit and ducting, which was fitted in 2002, delivering warm air to the Main Hall, Changing Rooms and Gymnasium:-

- the ductwork insulation in the Plant room, however, is in poor condition;
- there is a single WC, urinal and electric shower in the Changing area. These are in a poor condition, but satisfactory for their age.

- Electrical

Generally satisfactory, however the following areas require attention:-

Emergency Lighting

EM exit signs and additional EM lights are required in the gym, gym landing and staircase leading to the gym.

Fire Alarm

Strobes should be installed within the gym.

AHU Plant Room

Trunking lid is missing, distribution boards have no circuit charts or lock of facility.

2. **CHANGING AREA**

- **Architectural**

In general the physical condition and Health & Safety standards of the changing area are reasonable:-

- a window within the male changing WC was seen to be in poor condition;
- the raised step from the changing area to the swimming area would benefit from further highlighting; and
- multiple ligature points exist within the changing / shower areas.

- **Mechanical**

Overall all mechanical systems are satisfactory and no immediate work would be recommended.

- **Electrical**

Generally satisfactory, however:-

- the 13A socket outlets should be protected by a 30 MA RCD; and
- additional exit signs are required.

3. **LAUNDRY**

- **Architectural**

In general the physical condition of the laundry is in good condition with no specific faults observed:-

- the existing chairs within the room appear to restrict access to fire escape doors; and
- the water cylinder within the corner cupboard is gas fired and should have the necessary fire measures such as a fire door.

- **Mechanical**

The mechanical systems for space heating, using new electric convactor heaters, domestic hot water and industrial washing machines and dryers are compliant and require no remedial work.

- **Electrical**

Generally satisfactory, however the following areas require attention:-

Link Corridor

- smoke detector required in roof light;
- EM exit sign required; and
- fire alarm strobe light required.

Switch Room

- the switch room must cease being used as a store;
- distribution boards require locks, a smoke detector is required as is emergency lighting.

- **Laundry**

The breakglass unit at the fire escape has been obscured by clothes storage:-

- exit signs are required above this door;
- a smoke detector is required within the rooflight; and
- isolators controlling the washing machines cannot be locked off.

4. **COURT VIDEO LINK AREA**

- **Architectural**

This is a very specialised area either new or refurbished with video court booths. In general the physical condition and general H&S standards of the video link area are good with no specific faults observed.

- **Mechanical**

These new mechanical systems are compliant and therefore no remedial work is recommended.

- **Electrical**

Video Link Corridor

- EM exit fitting required at the fire escape;
- fire alarm strobe required, and
- the fire alarm panel requires a zone chart.

5. YOUTH CLUB/ASSEMBLY HALL

- Architectural

In general the physical conditions and H & S standards in the Assembly Hall are good with no specific faults observed, however:-

- ligature points exist within the music area, although work was ongoing to remove such hazards from the adjacent WC;
- only one exit door exists from the room. Therefore, it is important to ensure occupant numbers do not exceed that recommended in the fire assessment.

- Mechanical

The space heating system is compliant and no remedial works are recommended.

- Electrical

- EM exit sign required above entrance door; and
- A smoke detector is required on the balcony.

6. SWIMMING POOL

- Architectural

In general the physical condition and H&S standards of the Sports Hall is reasonable:-

- some staining of ceiling panels was observed;
- additional safety signage was confirmed as being on order and due to be installed imminently; and
- the swimming pool plant room steps were poorly lit and in poor condition.

- Mechanical

The pool and pool hall are 35 years old and mechanical systems for space heating, water treatment and ventilation systems have been refurbished over the years and are regarded as safe and compliant with no remedial work recommended.

- Electrical

- additional BGUs required;
- EM exit signs required; and
- fire alarm strobes required.

Swimming Pool Plant Room

- Redundant cabling and control panels should be removed.
- Distribution boards require repair/replacement (flash guards, zone charts, fuse carriers missing). No lock off facility on existing boards.
- No service or emergency lighting within service ducts.
- Emergency and general purpose lighting required on stairs leading to plant room.
- Socket outlets should be protected by a 30 mA RCD.

7. MAIN CENTRAL BOILER-HOUSE

- Architectural

In general the physical condition of the Boiler-house is reasonable, but some H&S standards could be improved by removing or reorganising storage and equipment.

- Mechanical

A large part of the site is now served from local boilers and all the mechanical services are satisfactory and no remedial work would be recommended.

- Electrical

- Main Incomer No label or lock off facility.
- Additional EM lighting required.
- Fire alarm system has a mix of sounders and bells, they should be of the same sort.
- Emergency lighting is required outside boiler-house door.

8. CLASSROOM BLOCK

- Architectural

In general the physical condition and the H&S standards of the classroom block is reasonable:-

- some leaks were apparent in the corridor roof at first floor which was affecting adjacent classrooms;
- wheelchair access was available to the ground floor but not the first floor;

- while woodworking and mechanical equipment were being used in the presence of trained staff, its area was spread over two rooms and could be difficult to supervise;
- the sockets in the first floor home economics classroom appeared to be in close proximity to the sink areas;
- fumes and fuel spill risks exist in the mechanical garage ensure procedure are in place to minimise risks;
- furniture and storage lockers located in lobbies/corridors could pose a fire risk in escape routes; and
- some fire extinguishers appeared to be missing from their mounting boards.

However the latter was confirmed to have been currently remedied.

- **Mechanical**

The various heating sources, equipment and appliances in the school which make up the mechanical systems are compliant and no alterations are immediately required.

Because no cold water is stored in the complex, the Home Economics Room does suffer from interruptions to supply. This, the Inspectors were informed, was being addressed by maintenance staff.

- **Electrical**

Distribution System

- distribution Boards require lock-off facility, labels and zone charts.

Emergency Lighting

- additional emergency lighting (inc EM exits) are required throughout the classroom block.

Fire Alarm

- additional detectors are required within roof lights, strobes required throughout the premises.

9. **INTENSIVE SUPPORT UNIT**

- **Architectural**

In general the physical condition of the Intensive Support Unit is good with no specific faults observed, wheelchair ramps were present in two locations allowing access to the ground floor. General H&S standards are good but corridors, stairs and doors are

narrower than would be advised by current standards:-

- the ramp at the school end of the block has no guarding or handrail; and
- storage of mattresses was apparent in stairwell, which could pose a fire risk in escape route.

- **Mechanical**

This building was extensively re-modelled to convert from an Administration Building and Chapel to a Secure Intensive Support and Assessment Units. The specifications for sanitation (i.e. wash-hand-basin in each bedroom) is higher and designed to be vandal proof.

Supply ventilation is also controllable by damper operation on grille at low level below window.

This building has Building Management System control and control panel is located in the first floor control pod.

Overall the mechanical systems are satisfactory and no remedial work is recommended.

- **Electrical**

- electrical exit sign required;
- no emergency lighting provided in clients rooms;
- fire alarm panel requires zone chart; and
- control panels for bedrooms that have been deliberately damaged need to be restored to full working order.

10. **MAIN KITCHEN**

- **Architectural**

In general the physical conditions and H&S standards in the Main Kitchen are good with no specific faults observed:-

- the store door in small fire corridor is not fire rated;
- fire extinguisher positions were obstructed by bins; and
- store doors were left open and crates were stored in escape route to front door.

- **Mechanical**

Overall mechanical systems are satisfactory and no remedial work would be recommended.

- **Electrical**

- distribution board requires lock off and circuit charts;
- emergency lighting required in Fire Escape corridor;
- fire alarm panel requires zone chart;
- fire alarm strobe required; and
- in the event of a fire the fire alarm shuts down plant but not gas.

11. **HOUSEBLOCKS 7 and 8**

- **Architectural**

In general the physical conditions and H&S standards House Blocks 7 and 8 are good with no specific faults observed, (House 7 is not currently used for accommodating young people):-

- corridors, stairs and doors are narrower than would be advised by current standards;
- at the top of stair enclosures 4 No panes of glazing have been replaced by a solid board, no confirmation of the fire rating of this board was given; and
- a store door was missing on the first floor of house 7.

- **Mechanical**

The systems for heating and domestic hot water are in good condition for their age and require no work at present.

Inside the house blocks the space heating is predominantly radiant panels. The Bedrooms are radiant panel heated with stainless steel vandal-resistant wash-hand-basins with push button taps. The hot supply is mixed at point of use to avoid possibility of scalding. Bedrooms are naturally ventilated with perspex replacing glass in windows. Bedroom wings have bathrooms, some with ceramic and some with stainless steel sanitary ware. Some have vandal-resistant cubicle showers and some have over bath telephone handset shower units.

The systems are in good condition for their age and require no specific work at present. Ceramic bathroom fittings and above bath shower fittings could pose a hazard if deliberately misused. The access to these facilities should be based on individual risk

assessment.

- **Electrical**

House 7 and 8 Boiler House

Fire Alarm

- there is a fault on the panel within the boiler house;
- a zone chart is required; and
- a mix of bells and sounders have been installed.

House 7 and 8 General

Distribution Boards have no lock off facility, labels or circuit charts.

12. **HOUSEBLOCKS 5 and 6**

- **Architectural**

In general the physical conditions and H&S standards of House Block 5 and 6 are good, including provision of ramps. Redecorating was in progress in house 5 bedrooms:-

- there is a leak above the rear door at house 5, which appears to be coming from the bathroom above;
- corridors, stairs and doors are narrower than would be advised by current standards;
- at the top of stair enclosures 4 No panes of glazing have been replaced by a solid board, no confirmation of the fire rating of this board was given; and
- bedrooms were being used as stores in house 6.

- **Mechanical**

The systems, including heating and domestic hot water were in good condition for their age and require no work at present. There is the same mix of sanitary ware as in Houses 7 and 8 and the need for careful management and vigilance is repeated.

- **Electrical**

Switchroom

- distribution Boards have no lock-off facility;
- MCB blanks missing; and
- A fire Alarm Panel in House 6 was showing a fault.

13. HOUSE BLOCK 4

- Architectural

In general the physical conditions and H&S standards in House Block 4 (part of which is used for administration) are good with no specific faults observed. There is level access and a disabled WC have been provided:-

- corridors, stairs and doors are narrower than would be advised by current standards;
- a sliding door at the head of one stairwell does not allow an adequate landing when closed;
- many offices are being used as stores and doors should reflect this;
- filing and storage is evident in escape corridors both impinging egress and posing a fire risk; and
- a recent new store constructed off the first floor corridor requires fire rating to standards in fire assessment.

- Mechanical

This is a mixed function Block with not only administration but was originally aimed at short stay eg PACE accommodation. Within the Administrative area there are the Nursing/Medical and Dentistry areas. Additional services include bottled oxygen and compressed air for dentist drill.

Overall all mechanical services are compliant and no remedial work is recommended.

- Electrical

Fire Alarm

- boiler House, FA Panel broken (cover missing);
- no zone chart;
- heat detector covered with a plastic bag;
- Photocopy Room - No smoke detector installed; and
- small kitchen - no heat detector installed.

General

- no lock of facility on Distribution Board;
- no circuit charts;

- Intercom Unit missing;
- no extract fan in photocopy room; and
- no smoke detector in photocopy Room.

14. **PORTACABINS BEHIND HOUSEBLOCK 4**

- **Architectural**

The portacabins are in sound condition with fire extinguishers provided but no DDA provisions.

- **Mechanical**

The portacabins are electrically space heated without mechanical services.

- **Electrical**

- no Fire Detection;
- no emergency lighting both inside or outside portacabin; and
- general lighting not to current CIBSE guidelines.

15. **GATEHOUSE BLOCK**

- **General**

The gatehouse block is a more recent sectional building and is in good structural, mechanical and electrical condition. There is wheelchair access and disabled WC is provided, fire blankets/extinguishers are in place.

The Gatehouse is isolated from the main campus and because it was a likely target for intruders. Subsequent to being operational it was surrounded by additional fencing. While expedient, this has made the visual approach to the Centre more forbidding. A more camouflaged fence may have been less obtrusive. Once the visitor is inside the gatehouse, however, it is spacious and there is an ample waiting area. The aim to have a play corner with play materials for young people has not yet materialised.

The operations staff are screened off from visitors by a window that extends from counter level to the ceiling. While this gives a clear and open view of the staff the audibility suffers and the intercom system is not sufficiently clear without having to raise voices. This must be disconcerting to families and professionals especially when visiting for the first time. The staff try hard to be as personable and informative as possible but it requires a struggle with the amenities. The first impressions of an organisation and the role of gatekeeper can influence subsequent interaction.

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

Children's Law Centre -

- The JJC Rules should underwrite an independent element in the processing of child protection referrals and complaints.
- The use of separation should no longer permit a maximum of 24 hour period.
- The Time Out Room in the ISU should be discontinued and made usable for other purposes.
- The operation of Education was considered as very positive.
- The phenomenon of there being only one girl resident at times is a concern.
- The continued admission of children aged 10-13 is inappropriate.
- Young people need evident choice and easy access to independent advocacy.
- Attention to mental health needs is important

SEELB

- Have had positive experience of liaison in Education.
- Would like a greater commitment from outside professionals and the Centre to engage in prompt risk assessment/management of those being released and have potential for sexual and/or violent offending.
- There is a need for a strategic steer for effective risk assessment for those who sexually abuse others

Youth Conferencing

- One conference held in JJC - staff very helpful and facilitating.
- Protocols on information sharing have been drafted for the two arms of YJA and Bail Support.
- A first breach of a Conferencing Order by a boy refusing bail is valuable learning experience

PBNI

- A clear commitment of management of the JJC to effectively deliver a high quality service.

- A Service Level Agreement was shared with the JJC in September and ratification is needed to underwrite communication which is not operating smoothly.
- A Risk Management Meeting should not be merged with a Pre-release Review. The findings of the SSI report on JJCOs have not been fully implemented.
- There is much that is positive in terms of regime, improved physical surroundings and developments in constructive activities e.g., Duke of Edinburgh Award

Ulster Community & Hospital Trust

- Relationships between the Trust and the Juvenile Justice Centre have improved in recent times and, in particular, the contact between the regional Centre at Lakewood and the JJC. There is exchange of young people between the two settings and the Trust is confident that they will continue to work constructively with each other
- The Trust have agreed to representation from the Juvenile Justice Centre joining the Child Protection Panel. This proposal will be subject to ratification during the consultation stage of the procedures for child protection in the Youth Justice Agency.

NIACRO

- Access to leisure facilities is determined by the Progressive Regime - it took some time to reduce the rigidity e.g., 24-hour limit to reduction to Bronze. The Centre does try to take 'feedback' into account.
- Enhanced family visits will be a good development but would also like to see families being invited to award ceremonies and social events.
- Communication - it would be important to make protocols more generally known and who acts as the link person e.g. from PBNI.

Equality - The Promotion and Safeguarding of Human and Children's Rights in an Even-Handed and Non-Discriminatory Manner - Annex to Chapter 2

The Criminal Justice Review (2000) placed a very strong emphasis on putting its recommendations in the context of human rights. The Human Rights Act 1998 formally incorporates ECHR into domestic law by making it unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with a convention right. However, while not binding, the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency 1990 (the Riyadh Guidelines); the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice 1985 (the Beijing Rules); and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty 1990 underwrite the full range of juvenile justice issues.

Many, however, with interest and expertise in young people's rights have been disappointed in the Juvenile Justice policy not being consistent in terminology, if not intent, by referring, in the Justice (NI) Act 2002 to the welfare of the child rather than "giving primary consideration to the best interest of the child" as stated in Article 3.1 of the UNCRC. The NIO and the Youth Justice Agency are obliged to continually endeavour to balance the protection of the public, the needs of the victim and welfare of offending young people. In practice and in draft policies that are entering a consultation process prior to full introduction by April 2005, they aim to protect young people and uphold their right, amongst others, to have their views heard and to make complaints. This is consistent with the principle of the child's best interests.

All staff with contact with young people are being trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI), Physical Control in Care (PCC), First Aid, Basic Food Hygiene, Child Protection, Equal Opportunities, Freedom of Information, Human Rights, Health and Safety, and Anti-Oppressive Practice. In keeping with Article 12 of the UN Convention the Juvenile Justice Centre has promoted the voices of children and young people should be heard. Each unit holds a daily children's meeting and keeps a record of the issues young people raise. NIACRO provides a weekly Independent Representatives service. It takes up issues directly with unit staff or advocates on their behalf with other agencies. Staff from the Children's Law Centre have made visits to the Centre and other relevant telephone numbers are made available to the young people. The research teams involved in the Pathways into Secure Care and Custody and the review of Young Peoples Rights on behalf of the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People have met with young people and staff and the voice and concerns of young people, who have been through the experience of custody, have been gathered by Include Youth.

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