

Executive Summary to Inspection Report Brisbane Youth Detention Centre June quarter 2015

The inspection of the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre occurred from 25-29 May 2015. The primary inspection focus areas were Confidential Information and Legal Rights and Access. The monitored areas were Self-Harm/Suicide Risk and Reporting of Harm, Behavioural Development Plans, Separation and Use of Force.

Staff were co-operative and informative. DYWs appeared busy with tasks and/or engaged with young people. Staff demonstrated a sound knowledge of the individual young people and the operations of the Centre. Staff were observed appropriately and sensitively managing young people presenting with very complex, difficult and challenging behaviours. There also appeared to be a collaborative team approach amongst the DYWs, Supervisors and Caseworkers. The structured day operation appeared to run effectively and efficiently.

In relation to Confidential Information, Inspectors found good processes and practices in operation. There are no significant issues or concerns identified by Inspectors regarding the control of confidential information.

Access to electronic and hardcopy storage of confidential and sensitive information is controlled with robust access control systems in place. Centre staff were able to articulate and demonstrate the need to keep sensitive information about the young people confidential and on a need to know basis.

The removal, due to damage by young people, of confidentiality hoods previously in place over the accommodation unit telephones used by young people, has the ability on occasion to compromise the confidentiality of telephone calls. The Centre is currently in the process of sourcing replacement hoods.

In relation to the area of Legal Rights and Access, Inspectors found good processes and practices in operation. The young people are well informed regarding their legal rights and are provided with assistance and support to access legal representation.

Inspectors found that the demand for legal visit interview rooms sometimes exceeds the visits interview room capacity. In situations when interview room space is not available the visits staff will offer to coordinate a legal telephone call between the young people and legal representatives. Legal stakeholders spoke commendably regarding the assistance of caseworkers and visits staff at the Centre.

Young people raised issues regarding the high demand on accommodation telephones sometimes hampering their ability to contact legal representatives. The Centre has plans to install an additional telephone in each accommodation area.

Inspectors found that the Centre has compliance systems in place to monitor whether staff conduct mandatory safety and wellbeing checks on young people locked in their rooms overnight. However compliance monitoring can be further improved. A digi-tool guard system is in place and will be activated concomitant with the planned security upgrade. The security upgrade will also result in the installation of CCTV in the accommodation units and a number of the cells further enhancing the ability to undertake compliance checking.

Inspectors found that that staff had a sound knowledge of the process of reporting harm to young people. There was no record of any issues specific to the non-reporting of harm by DYWs.

Inspectors found that all DYWs have current accreditation in the use of force. Inspectors were advised that all instances of use of force are reviewed daily by the Manager, Compliance and Monitoring and any identified concerns are investigated. There are no current investigations regarding inappropriate use of force.

Inspectors reviewed the use of mechanical restraints and found that handcuffs were used in justified circumstances. Inspectors found no incidents or situations that included the use of leg cuffs within the Centre in the previous 12 months.

Youth Justice Services has recently released a new policy on the use of Separation. This policy clarifies the approval process, the application of Separation and addresses the variation in interpretation by staff. The policy, whilst addressing the separation of a young person in a locked room may benefit by incorporating the subject of Separation in other places that may not include confinement of young people placed in a locked room by themselves.

Additionally Inspectors found that the Alternative Programs Unit, utilised as accommodation for many young people on Separation would benefit from a documented procedure.

Cell searches appear not to include any inspection of the cell and no consistent or required reporting of the outcome or findings. Cell property in some cells was excessive with large numbers of magazines and toiletries which would hamper contraband searching.

Inspectors found that the Centre garden and grounds required maintenance.

Accommodation units and cells showed evidence of significant wear and tear, that could be addressed by a Centre based maintenance review.

Inspectors found that some areas of the Centre had recent modifications that affected the initial design purpose and which require immediate review.