

Executive Summary

This report describes the quarterly statutory inspections of all three Brisbane, Cleveland, and West Moreton YDCs (BYDC, CYDC, and WMYDC). Delegated Inspectors from the Youth Detention Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) within the Quality and Improvement Unit, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training conduct statutory detention centre inspections each quarter. The on-site inspections occurred from 14-15 March 2023 at BYDC, 16-17 March 2023 at WMYDC, and 20-21 March 2023 at CYDC.

The inspection focus area for this quarter was *staffing* and key observations and findings are summarised below. No recommendations were made in relation to this focus area.

Observations and findings were discussed with relevant Executive Directors (ED) at the conclusion of the inspection and with the Senior Executive Director (SED), Youth Detention Operations and Reform (YDOR) during a post-inspection briefing. Other issues raised during and immediately following the site visits are monitored in an Issues Register and will continue to be examined during future inspections.

The status of active recommendations from previous Inspectorate reports are detailed in a Recommendations Register which is reviewed during the December inspection each year and published online. A copy of the Recommendations Register can be obtained by making a request through the Office of the Executive Directors ACOO_YJSWS@cyjma.qld.gov.au.

Focus Area – Staff

The inspection process focused on three specific areas concerning staffing. These were:

- Induction and training for Professional Officers (POs).
- Supervision processes.
- Staff wellness and support.

Induction and training for PO

The Inspectorate identified there was no formal onboarding and induction process for PO's. Across the three YDCs, the onboarding process primarily consists of shadowing a more experienced staff member and accessing resources that provide guidance on completing specific casework tasks. Moreover, the induction process for working in a secure environment varied across the centres with local-based approaches implemented.

There was limited awareness among staff of the iLearn platform and learning modules currently available to support learning and development. The YDCs require all POs to self-enrol in the learning modules and there are no mandatory competencies or modules. The Inspectorate identified an opportunity for the Learning and Development team to raise awareness and understanding of training modules available on the iLearn platform in YDCs. This could be achieved in part through the training need analysis, which is due in late 2023. This will identify opportunities to enhance learning and development for POs, including a formal induction and onboarding process that considers working in a secure environment.

Supervision processes

During the inspections, supervisors consistently identified challenges in sustaining traditional one-on-one formal supervision models within the YDC settings, particularly for staff in operational roles. One of the significant challenges supervisors identified was providing formal supervision to a large cohort of operational staff who work on a rotational roster. Operational staff include Shift Supervisors, Section Supervisors and Youth Workers. Each centre has



established more creative and informal local level approaches to providing supervision, recognising the importance of supervision practice. The methods adopted include, but are not limited to, team meetings with accommodation units and Section Supervisors, team planning days and a focus on training and upskilling.

Supervision practices for POs occur on a more formal basis between Team Leaders, Caseworkers and Speech and Language Pathologists. Staff also reported challenges in maintaining regular fortnightly supervision schedules due to workload pressures and staff retention challenges, with supervision practices varying across the three YDCs. At CYDC, fortnightly individual supervision was an essential component of a new staff members' onboarding process and ensuring that it equipped and supported existing staff to undertake their role and responsibility. Whereas at WMYDC and BYDC, staff identified that formal and informal supervision methods are occurring ad hoc due to workload pressures, staff recruitment and retention challenges. Formalising supervision for Caseworkers was identified as a need in all three YDCs including developing Professional Development Agreements (PDAs).

To support, develop and retain staff in a complex and challenging environment, YDCs should continue to explore formal supervision opportunities by establishing a fit-for-purpose model for the operational and professional staffing cohort. The format developed by each centre should encompass the five elements of Relationships, Ethics, Acumen, Core Practice and Health (REACH) the department's supervision framework¹ and include a cultural component.

Staff and wellness support

In early 2023, each YDC committed to establishing and embedding a Staff Wellness Officer alongside a Principal Safety Officer. The primary objective of these roles is to work together to promote and support proactive workforce health and safety frameworks, expedite investigation frameworks for work-related matters and support the management team in organisational health, wellbeing, and resilience. At this stage BYDC and CYDC have recruited a Principal Safety Officer, the role was not introduced at WMYDC due to its smaller workforce.

Across all three YDCs, staff reported awareness of the Staff Wellness Officer and their ability to access this support, if required. Some staff at each centre raised concerns about confidentiality and privacy, which the Staff Wellness Officers are responding to by developing a confidentiality framework. The Inspectorate identified that the collaboration between the Staff Wellness Officer, Principal Safety Officer and other key roles at BYDC and CYDC has fostered the development of a team-based approach that focuses on individual employees and systems and processes. This new approach has anecdotally seen a reduction in Workcover claims and the length of time staff may need support before returning to full work duties.

The Inspectorate will continue to monitor the ongoing establishment and embedding of the Staff Wellness Officer and Principal Safety Officers' roles to identify whether the strategy is meeting the intended outcome of improving the health, wellbeing, and resilience of the workforce in YDCs.

¹ Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs. 2022. [The REACH supervision guidelines](#).