

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Corporate Parenting Board
Date:	15 June 2022
Title:	Swanwick Lodge Secure Children's Home Update
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Swanwick Lodge Secure Children's Home.

Recommendation(s)

2. That the Corporate Parenting Board note the update on Swanwick Lodge Secure Children's Home.

Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to:
 - provide a brief contextual background to the secure estate including specific reference to Swanwick Lodge Secure Children's Home.
 - Introduce Swanwick Lodge's new operating model and associated staffing structure
 - Highlight Swanwick Lodge's recent inspection achievements and consider next steps in the services development.

Contextual Information

4. There are 14 individually managed Secure Children's Homes throughout England and Wales, encompassing a range of services within a secure environment that support the individual needs of the children in their care. They provide placements for boys and girls aged between 10 and 17 and include full residential care, educational facilities and healthcare provision.
5. Secure Children's Homes (SCH) care for vulnerable young people in a high quality, safe and therapeutic environment. Each of the 14 homes operates with a high staffing ratio; the overarching aim is to encourage residents to develop a range of personal skills, supported by changes in behaviour and

attitude that will enable individuals to manage safely and responsibly on exit. SCH are subject to twice yearly inspection by Ofsted according to criteria within the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF).

6. Referrals into the secure estate are coordinated nationally by the Secure Welfare Coordination Unit which acts as a single point of contact for all Local Authorities. This unit is based within Hampshire County Council and is funded via a Department for Education Grant. Data collected by this unit supports the view that the complexities of needs of the children being referred into the secure estate continues to become more complex. Referrals out strip available placements and routinely placements can not be found for all children that require them.
7. Swanwick Lodge is one of Hampshire County Council's Children's Homes and as such, benefits from the support of the wider council. Swanwick Lodge currently provides support and care for up to ten male and female young people aged between 10 and 17 years old whose behaviours present a significant risk of harm to themselves or to others (See paragraph 4.4). Placements can be provided to young people from across the country not just those accommodated by Hampshire. Young people who benefit from this provision are likely to have complex needs requiring on-going assessment, high levels of supervision, multi-agency services, and a period of stability in an environment which is conducive to therapeutic interventions.
8. Young people at Swanwick can access both an on-site school and a Health and Wellbeing Team. The integration of care, education and health, alongside excellent recreational facilities and a pleasant living environment maximises the outcomes for the young people. The integrated, needs led approach, is further enhanced by a commitment to understanding young people and working within a formulation driven, trauma informed framework (informed by The Trauma Recovery Model). This is a whole systems approach to understanding our young people, identifying underlying needs and focusing support and interventions utilising this framework. Swanwick has a strong focus on the need for stabilisation of our young people, as the essential foundation to the support we provide, achieved through consistency, relationship building and the development of trust.

Operating Model

9. In April 2022, a new operating model was agreed by the Children's Services Department Management Team. This model is focused on the development of a more commercial focus and a clearer process for managing occupancy safely and appropriately. The model is based upon the actual costs of caring for and supporting each child or young person in placement. Interim arrangements put in place in June 2021, have supported Swanwick to trial and develop its approach and ultimately move from a position of financial challenge to one where at the end of 2020/21 there was a significant surplus.

10. The new model operates by defining placements in blocks where one block equals a core offer of 1:1 supervision and additional blocks are added where higher staffing ratios are required. A 'core offer' of 2:1 support is now the baseline offer for all admissions pending further assessment. Additional elements to that offer, including specific support needs that would increase the required staffing level beyond the baseline are charged accordingly, based on increasing the care ratio.
11. The success of this model is dependent upon having a staffing establishment which meets the current and future business and care needs. The staffing establishment has therefore been increased, for Secure Children's Home Practitioners we have increased from 35 full time equivalents to 43. The services management team has also been slightly increased to ensure there is robust oversight and development of practice. Recruitment remains an ongoing challenge nationally and significant work is being completed to ensure that all opportunities to attract and retain new staff are being deployed.
12. Swanwick Lodge is currently registered as a 16-bed home, however the service plans to change its registration and Statement of Purpose of the home to reflect a reduction to 10 beds which reflects the true capacity of the home. This is due to the increasing complexity of the children being cared for and staffing establishment required to undertake that care. Remaining registered as a 16 bedded home does seem disingenuous when we know Swanwick will never be able to utilise all of those beds at the same time again.

Performance

13. On the 5 April 2022, Swanwick had its most recent full Ofsted inspection, five inspectors visited for three days. The last full inspection of Swanwick by Ofsted was in July 2021 when Swanwick was judged as 'requires improvement to be good'. The final report (See appendix A) has provided the following outcomes and identified that the overall experiences and progress of children and young people was 'Good' this took into account the following judgments:

• Children's education and learning	GOOD
• Children's health learning	GOOD
• How well children are helped and protected	GOOD
• The effectiveness of leaders and managers	GOOD
14. A significant achievement for a Children's Home but an excellent achievement for a SCH given the complexities of needs and risks presented by young people in secure accommodation. The service had previously been judged as 'Requiring Improvement' a grading that was first made in 2018 and which remained unchanged until this recent inspection. This reflected staffing and performance issues (capacity, capability and culture) and difficulties progressing the necessary improvements due to

outbreaks of Covid within the home. In this recent inspection, Ofsted rightly praised the dedicated staffing team who they recognised worked collaboratively to keep children safe, the report recognised that “children enjoy spending time with staff, who offer high levels of supervision and support”. The integrated leadership team was also recognised with inspectors commenting that “leaders and managers from care, health and education have been effective in driving forward an improvement agenda that places the children and staff at the heart of service delivery”. Everyone at Swanwick is extremely proud of its achievements and continues to push forwards to ensure this is not only maintained but also built upon.

The Future

15. Whilst everyone at Swanwick is proud of its collective achievements, we cannot be complacent. To sustain and build on the quality of care provided and the service’s financial viability we continue to focus on continual development and improvement. Areas of priority include:

- **Recruitment:** Swanwick has a number of vacancies across care and facilities. Swanwick continues to work alongside wider residential services to promote the opportunities available, ensure salaries are market competitive, provide flexibility in contract arrangements and utilise recruitment events and a focused marketing approach.
- **Staff training and development:** Swanwick needs to be supported by skilled and confident staff who can deliver a high quality of consistent care. Continued evaluation and redevelopment of induction and training pathways is ongoing. Most recently safeguarding workshops have been developed aimed at complementing existing more generically focussed safeguarding training.
- **Premises:** The Department for Education (DfE) and Hampshire County Council have provided substantial financial investment to continually improve and maintain Swanwick Lodge’s facilities. Nonetheless the building’s age and design continue to present daily challenges. The complexity of needs of children referred to the Secure Welfare Coordination Unit are often best met with a degree of physical separation from other children. Swanwick can accommodate this to an extent, however, there is a limitation to this related to the age and layout of the building and grounds. Early conversations are being held with the DfE about a potential new build secure home in Hampshire. This is likely to be a four- or five-year plan and a new location will need to be identified to ensure continuity of service.
- **Staff support mechanisms:** Swanwick is a challenging environment to work in. Whilst there are already a wide range of support mechanisms in place such as reflective supervision, management supervision, debriefing and clinical sessions, there needs to be a continued focus on ensuring this is consistently delivered to a high standard so that staff feel supported to develop resilience, reflect and develop their practice.
- **Integrated models of trauma informed care:** Ofsted recognised that integrated trauma informed care is already being implemented in many

areas across Swanwick. Continued focus is required to ensure this is maintained and opportunities to embed this further throughout the service are explored and utilised.

Consultation and Equalities

16. The contents of this report neither require consultation or an Equality Impact Assessment.

Conclusions

17. In conclusion Swanwick continues to take significant strides forwards both in terms of its financial viability and the high standard of care it provides. There needs to be a continued drive to move forwards and ensure that this progress is not only maintained but improved upon.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	No
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	No

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/ID/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments.aspx?web=1>

Insert in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state:

- (a) why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or
- (b) will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions