Evening Seminar
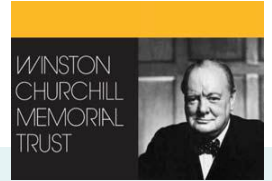
Correction or care?
The use of custody for children in trouble

Dr Di Hart

Wednesday, 9 March, 2016

WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

PRISON REFORM TRUST

@academyjustice

in **Academy for Justice Commissioning**

Background to the Academy

- The Academy's mission is to bring people together to share knowledge and best practice and to promote excellence in social justice commissioning

- The Academy was created in 2007 and now has 3,000 cross sector members

- Services are designed to support the development of social justice commissioning and include nationwide events, eLearning, commissioning themed learning groups and a website offering commissioning information

A personal view based on a travel fellowship

- Funded by Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, in partnership with Prison Reform Trust

- Visits to Spain, US (Washington, New York, Alabama, New Orleans) and Finland

- Definition of custody = 'out of home placements used for children as a result of their criminal behaviour'

- Direct comparisons are difficult but there's a lot we could learn …

The big questions

- Challenging behaviour is the same but responses are different across countries

- Time – and opportunity – to revisit the big questions
  - What is custody <u>for</u>? Balance between punishment and rehabilitation?
  - What is our theory about behavioural change … in adolescence?

- What kind of secure estate can achieve that change?

Theories of change?

Spain	Finland	US	England
Love and boundaries	Care, upbringing and education	Positive youth development	????????????? Education?

- **Spain** – based on best interests of child and judge stays involved
  - 'Centres for Re-education' staffed by educators

- **Finland** – sees criminality as a child protection issue
  - < 5 in prison – rest in 'school-homes' (koulukoti)

- **US** – large numbers but reducing and each state is different
  - continuum from 'correctional' to children's homes

What do they do? Formal interventions

Education
- High quality
- Tailored to this population

Programmes
- Evidence based
- Locally developed

Treatment
- More recognition of need for treatment
- Psychologists integrated into service

Family work
- On-site social workers
- Family therapy/ group work

Learning to live: beyond the formal

- Positive engagement v. containment and harm prevention

- Children live in small groups, as close to home as possible

- Structured activities – no TVs in rooms!

- Front-line staff are main agents of change, using positive relationships

- Job is to be with the children at all times – eat, work, play, learn together

- Expectations reflected in staff skills/ qualifications

Transition to community

- Release less abrupt
  - School/ college outside and opportunities for home leave
  - Semi-secure placements to allow for phased release

- Linked to progress rather than pre-determined at point of sentence

- Establishment staff often have ongoing role in supporting/ monitoring

- Flexibility to remain in children's establishment post-18

The ideal secure estate?

Small and close to home

Continuum of placement types - levels of security based on risk and need

Streamlined case management systems, with the establishment playing a central role

Regime that promotes adolescent development, based on a theory of change

Active engagement by front line staff, who are seen as key agents of change

A clear pathway to success so that children have a reason to make progress

Family engagement to support parents to regain control over the child's behaviour

A phased rather than abrupt return to the community.

Questions for commissioners

- What is custody/ service <u>for</u>?
  - What would success look like?
  - Range of outcomes – not just re-offending data

- What is your theory of change?
  - What is effective in achieving the outcomes you want e.g. behavioural change
  - Based on evidence e.g. adolescent brain development, impact of trauma, attachment disorder

- Ensure the service prioritises the vision – not system/ processes
  - Rules might eliminate worst practice, but do they enable best practice?

Link to report

http://www.wcmt.org.uk/fellows/reports/approaches-secure-care-troubled-children

ACADEMY for JUSTICE COMMISSIONING
Inspiring dialogue and understanding

Any Questions ?

@academyjustice

Academy forJustice Commissioning