

Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre branded inadequate by inspectors

A new report from Ofsted, HMI Prisons and the CQC lays bare the extent of failings at the secure training centre (STC) near Rugby, currently run by MTC.

Inspectors found poor practice was placing children and staff at risk of harm, as well as failing to give vulnerable children – some as young as 14 – adequate care and support.

Children and staff told inspectors of their concerns that a child or adult would be harmed or die as a result of poor practice and management in the centre. The report describes a 'volatile culture' where children carry weapons 'just in case'.

While children felt cared for by most staff, many said they lived in an environment where they felt anxious and unsafe. Children told inspectors "Of course we are not safe. That's just how it is" and "Somebody is going to die in here soon." This was echoed by staff, who said they feared for their own safety as well as children's.

Inadequate staffing levels placed staff in 'an impossible position' and unable to care for children safely, with staff resorting to leaving children unsupervised and locking them in their rooms in order to take a break.

Inspectors also found:

- Children aren't always taken to planned healthcare appointments on time, if at all, and sometimes aren't given prescribed medication. One child, whose health staff suspected had a head injury, wasn't taken to hospital to be assessed.
- Education is weak – children aren't given access to a timetable and often don't know what lessons they would be doing on a given day. Instances of aggression in the classroom take too long to de-escalate, leading to an unsafe learning environment.
- Conditions at the centre are poor in some areas. Staff had failed to notice that an unused child's room had faeces in the toilet, resulting in a fetid, unpleasant smell in the living unit, while elsewhere inspectors found gang-related graffiti on walls.
- Staff lack skill and experience, leading to unsafe practice. There is too little oversight from leaders, with staff telling inspectors that they didn't feel supported, and that poor practice is not readily identified or challenged.
- There is a disconnect between the senior leadership team and centre-wide staff. Staff and children told inspectors that the director – the third since the last full inspection – isn't sufficiently visible.

The findings follow a series of negative inspection outcomes for the centre.

After visits in October and December last year highlighted serious concerns – including children being kept in their rooms for up to 23.5 hours a day – the inspectorates issued an Urgent Notification (UN), requiring the Ministry of Justice to set out an action plan for improvement at the centre. While a monitoring visit in January this year showed some improvements, a second UN in June highlighted further serious issues.

There are no children currently living at the centre after the Ministry of Justice ordered their removal in June, but the centre remains open.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, said:

Today's report reveals a litany of failures. Rainsbrook has once more fallen drastically short in caring for especially vulnerable children, despite being warned about poor practice last year. These children need the highest quality training, care and support to get their lives back on track. It's vital that there is long-term, sustainable improvement at the centre.

Charlie Taylor, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, said:

In spite of the previous concerns we raised in our visits to this centre, it remained a place where children, some very damaged, were neither being kept safe, supported nor given the boundaries and education that they need in order to go on to lead successful adult lives.

Dr Rosie Benneworth, Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care at CQC said:

In a setting such as this, the interplay between health care staff and the centre staff is vital to making sure that children get the care they deserve. It can only happen if both are supported, trained and able to perform their complementary roles in enabling and providing care. Sadly, along with concerns about their general treatment and wellbeing, we saw that vulnerable children did not always have their health care needs met and they were exposed to unnecessary risk at Rainsbrook. When the joint inspectorates visited in June, there was much to be addressed before this service could safely provide care in the future.

Inspections of Rainsbrook STC since 2015

Inspection judgements 2015 to 2020

Date	Overall effectiveness (before 2019) or overall experiences and progress of children and young people (after 2020)	Effectiveness of leadership and management (introduced to the inspection framework from September 2015)
February 2015	Inadequate	N/A
September 2015	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good
October 2016	Required improvement to be good	Inadequate
June 2017	Requires improvement to be good	Inadequate
October 2018	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good
February 2020	Requires Improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted, HMIP and CQC suspended inspections of STCs in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we carried out assurance visits to STCs in the period until 31 March 2021.

Visits 2020 to 2021

Date	Type of visit	Visit outcome
October 2020	Assurance visit	Serious and widespread concerns
December 2020	Monitoring visit	Urgent notification invoked
January 2021	Monitoring visit	Some early signs of improvement. However, much of the action plan yet to be implemented.