

Managing Rehabilitation Services in Youth Detention

Tabled 8 August 2018

VAGO

This presentation provides an overview of the Victorian Auditor-General's report *Managing Rehabilitation Services in Youth Detention*.

Background



200 young people
in detention
with complex
needs



Key aim of
youth detention
is to reduce
offending



Youth detention
is an opportunity
to provide
support

At any time in Victoria, there are around 200 young people incarcerated in youth justice centres. They have complex needs as they are often disadvantaged through neglect, drug abuse and violence.

A key aim of youth detention is to reduce reoffending. Youth detention provides an opportunity to positively intervene in the life of a young person, who given their situation, clearly needs support.

What we looked at



How well do the rehabilitation services provided in youth detention meet developmental needs and reduce reoffending?

We assessed whether:

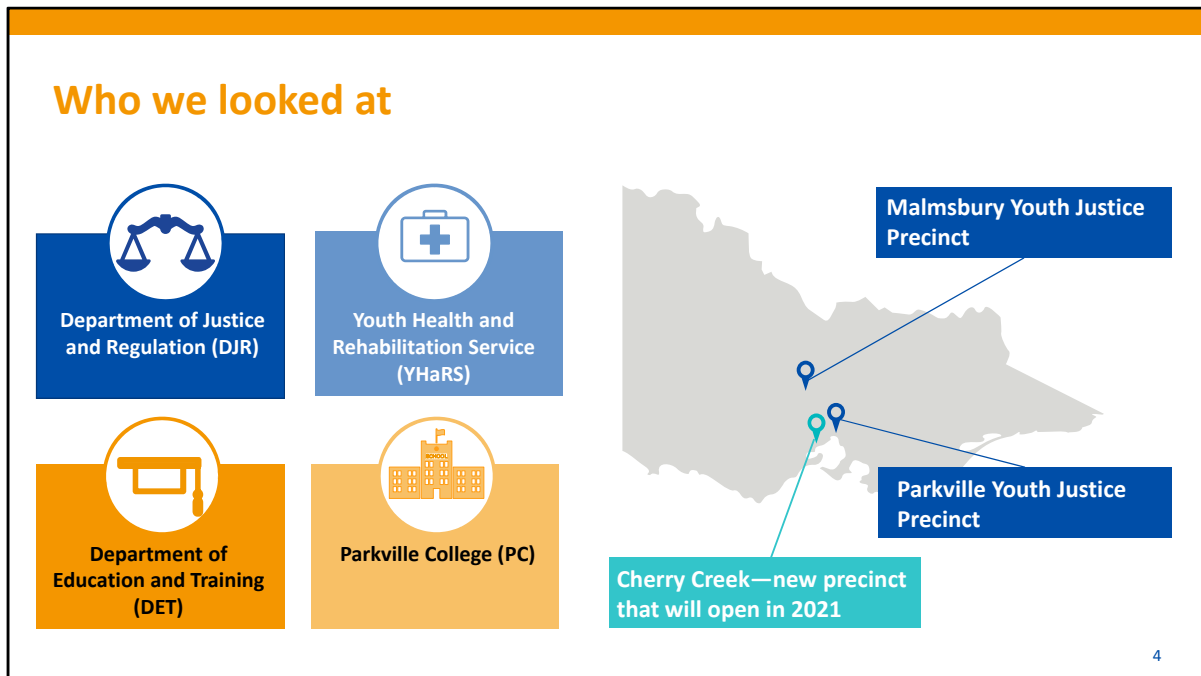
- agencies understand the primary health, mental health and educational needs so they can plan services to prevent future offending
- agencies deliver services to directly address needs
- rehabilitation services reduce reoffending in children and young people.

3

This audit examined how well the rehabilitation services provided to children and young people in youth detention meet developmental needs and reduce reoffending.

We assessed:

- whether agencies understand the primary health, mental health and education needs of young people in detention
- whether agencies deliver rehabilitation services that directly address needs, and
- whether agencies monitor the effectiveness of services in reducing reoffending



We looked at four agencies:

- The Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR), which took over responsibility for youth justice from the Department of Health and Human Services in April 2017. This means that DJR now manage Victoria’s two youth justice precincts—Parkville and Malmesbury.
- The Youth Health and Rehabilitation Service (YHaRS), which is a service provider who provides primary and mental health services, health case management and offending behaviour services at Parkville and Malmesbury.
- The Department of Education and Training (DET), which is responsible for providing education to young people.
- And, we also looked at Parkville College (PC), which is a registered specialist government school that is located at both Parkville and Malmesbury.

What we found

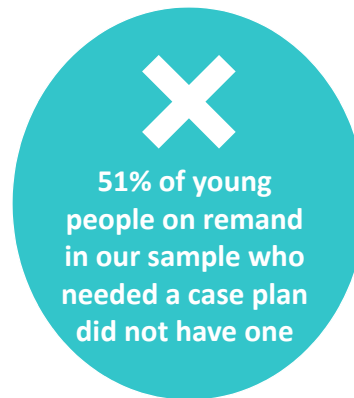


Young people have not received the necessary rehabilitation services

Youth detention has not effectively promoted reduced reoffending

We found that young people in detention have not been receiving the rehabilitation services they are entitled to and that are necessary to meet their needs. As a result, youth detention has not been effectively promoting reduced reoffending.

Assessment of needs



6

In order to provide appropriate services, it is important that young people's needs are promptly identified and plans are put in place to address them.

We found that:

- all young people receive health and mental health screening when entering youth justice
- follow-up assessments vary in quality and timeliness and not all young people receive them
- 51% of young people on remand in our sample did not have a case plan. DJR is attempting to address this

Rehabilitative services



Young people do not always receive required services because of:

- inadequate service levels
- inadequate facilities
- security procedures hampering access to services



A holding and admission cell at Malmsbury that is sometimes used as a temporary bedroom.

7

We found that both YHaRS and Parkville College are hampered by inadequate resources and facilities.

YHaRS doesn't have sufficient resources to meet service demand, resulting in some young people waiting long times to see clinicians.

We also found that security procedures hampered YHaRS and PC's ability to deliver services. This is mainly because security escorts were not always available to take young people to class and counselling sessions. This has caused poor attendance at class and health appointments.

Parkville College funding



- PC received insufficient funding from 2013–16
- In 2016 DET increased funding
- \$27.4 million shortfall



A typical classroom at Parkville College.

From 2013 to 2016, DET's allocated budget to PC was insufficient to meet the school's operating costs.

DET's budget did not consider PC's 52 week, six days per week operation, or provide for the multiple expansions DET approved between 2013 and 2016. DET reviewed PC's College's budget in 2016 and increased its funding. Had DET applied the 2016 budget model to PC from 2013, it would have received an additional \$27.4 million in funding.

Planning and performance



To ensure the needs of young people are met, service planning requires robust analysis of demand and evaluation of performance outcomes.

We found:

- DJR does not understand service demand, needs or whether outcomes are being achieved
- PC does not plan strategically for service delivery

Reforms



DJR is currently implementing reforms:

- developing new service delivery models
- improving case planning

DJR will open a new precinct in 2021 that will include 244 beds

DJR is currently in the process of implementing necessary reforms such as increasing service levels, developing new service delivery models and improving case planning. These reforms should, if implemented appropriately, better meet the needs of young people and contribute to reduced reoffending.

In 2021, DJR plans to open a new precinct at Cherry Creek in Melbourne's west that will include a total of 244 beds.

Recommendations

5 recommendations for DJR

- Improve case planning and evaluate outcomes
- Monitor service levels and demand through new reporting requirements
- Review and facilitate young women's access to education and recreation
- Adopt a performance measure for school attendance

2 recommendations for DET

- Complete its review of PC's budget
- Improve PC's record-keeping

2 recommendations for DJR and DET

- Develop an MOU to coordinate education and health services
- Ensure access to educational resources and facilities (internet, materials, classrooms)

11

We made five recommendations for DJR and two for DET. We also made a further two recommendations for both DJR and DET.

All recommendations have been accepted.

For further information, please view the full report on our website:
www.audit.vic.gov.au

For further information, please see the full report of this audit on our website,
www.audit.vic.gov.au.