

Evaluation of the Enhanced Supervision Housing Model¹

With the New York City Department of Correction's ("Department") historic reduction of punitive segregation and the elimination of punitive segregation altogether for 16-21 year olds, it is imperative to have alternative housing options to manage violence in City jails, especially among the young adults. Enhanced Supervision Housing (ESH) is one of the Department's options. Overall, the ESH model has shown notable downward trends in incident rates. The Department conducted a preliminary analysis of the Enhanced Supervision Housing model for the young adult population. Initial results, have been favorable. In particular, there is increased access and participation in programming in an environment that promotes safety through separation. The Department needs to maintain this housing option for young adults to further evaluate its efficacy in the overall young adult plan.

The Department's unprecedented young adult plan necessitates continued consideration of all available options as we determine how best to proceed in the management of this population and their unique needs. In July 2016, the Department sought and was granted a variance to expand the use of ESH to include young adults, ages 19 to 21 years old. We integrated some of our 19-21 year old young adults with adults in ESH. This decision was founded upon noted reductions in violence and infractions when young adults are co-mingled with adults 22 years old and older. We note that the findings of reduced violence are consistent with the Nunez Monitoring Team's experience employing a similar housing strategy in other jurisdictions.

In addition, the Department sought to leverage the gains achieved in ESH housing by expanding its use to 18 year olds. ESH housing for adults (22 years old and older) have shown positive results in terms of both lower levels of violence and infractions overall. These outcomes are most notable in the period of progression for adults advancing from Level II to Level III. ESH housing for co-mingled ESH units (19-21 year olds housed with adults 22 years old and older) also saw positive results. In October 2016, in recognition of the initial benefits evidenced in these co-mingled ESH units, further expansion in the use of ESH for the eighteen (18) year olds was advanced through the variance process. This allowed the Department to house 18 year olds with 19-21 year olds in ESH. Since October and the historic elimination of punitive segregation for all young adults 18 to 21 years old, ESH housing has been fully incorporated into the young adult housing construct. It has served as a key step in the Department's management of problematic youth (18 to 21 years old) in DOC custody.

The ESH housing model that has been instituted for this age group includes two (2) housing categories: Blended ESH, where 19-21 year olds are housed with adults 22

¹ All data contained within this report is based on information as of December 9, 2016.

years old and older, and Young Adult ESH (YA ESH), where only 18-21 year olds are housed together. Both types of ESH units are located at Otis Bantum Correctional Center (OBCC). To date, the ESH model has been utilized to address the violent behavior of twenty-six (26) young adults². Approximately eighty-five percent, twenty (22) of the twenty-six (26) young adults who have been approved by the Chief of the Department for placement in the unit, have committed a slashing and/or stabbing. The remaining young adults engaged in other serious incidents warranting their placement.

Blended Enhanced Supervision Housing (Blended ESH)

In September 2016, the Department began using Blended ESH for the housing of young adults, 19 to 21 years old. Currently, there are a total of seventeen (17) young adults housed with adults within these designated ESH units. Of the seventeen (17), fifteen (15) were placed directly into Blended ESH and two (2) were transferred from YA ESH due to their continued negative and unsafe behavior.

Establishment of these blended ESH units has expanded the core young adult housing construct through the provision of an additional housing option to effectively manage and separate certain young adults. Specifically, those young adults whose persistent violent behavior, violent history and gang affiliations require that they be housed in a unit that provides heightened security and programming in a structured manner.

Outcomes

Initial positive indicators reflect increased, consistent, program participation by young adults who had previously not engaged in programmatic opportunities afforded to them or had limited access to rehabilitative programming while housed in other units. On a daily basis, approximately twenty-nine percent (29%) of the total census of young adults in this housing participate in programming. Another noted benefit to the young adults within blended ESH is their increased interest in receiving educational services. Thus far, eighteen percent (18%), 3 out of 17, of the young adults have chosen to accept educational services offered by the Department of Education. With regard to violence indicators, as it pertains to the young adults, there have been six (6) fights and eight (8) uses of force³.

Young Adult Enhanced Supervision Housing Model (YA ESH)

In October 2016, the Department established an ESH unit exclusively for young adults ages 18 to 21 years old and specifically tailored to their unique rehabilitative needs. This new unit addressed a fundamental gap in the young adult housing plan through the institution of a unit that facilitated the Department's assessment of problematic young

² One (1) young adult has since been discharged from NYCDOC custody.

³ The UOF data is inclusive of one (1) of the aforementioned fights.

adults and the collection of relevant information related to their attitudes, beliefs, behavior, skills, influences, and facility-based and community-based ties. This comprehensive review allows for appropriate consideration of programming needs, management, critical security determinations, and additional options for alternative housing as necessary. Most importantly, during this process, placement in the unit aids proper security and separation. A total of ten (10) young adults have been initially housed in YA ESH, with seven (7) currently in the unit.

Outcomes

Similar to Blended ESH, young adult engagement in programs and educational services has been positive in YA ESH. On a daily basis, approximately ninety percent (90%) of the total young adults housed in YA ESH participate in programming. Fifty-seven percent (57%), 4 out of 7, of the young adults have elected to participate in the educational services provided in this housing unit. With regard to violence indicators, to date, there have been one (1) fight and four (4) uses of force.⁴ The elimination of punitive segregation for this population and the development of alternative housing models such as YA ESH has enabled the leveraging of resources in ways that had not previously been feasible. A principal example of this is evident by the shift from the use of cell study for educational purposes to the current educational services offered in a classroom setting. This illustrates the significant impact that the ESH housing model has already had on the management of some of the most violent youth in our custody.

Conclusion

The need for additional housing options is crucial to the successful implementation of the young adult strategy and ESH is a key component to its success. Maintaining safety and security of staff and inmates is paramount. The use of ESH for young adults who are persistently violent and pose a risk to the safety of staff and others in DOC custody is aligned with that fundamental principle.

While we continue to evaluate the overall effectiveness of ESH in relation to young adults, it is clear that the positive indicators support its continued use. In the coming months, the Department will monitor and track metrics and trends related to violence, length of stay, and utilization of programming/educational services. Additionally, the Department will continue to assess and institute necessary adjustments and enhancements to our revolutionary young adult management plan.

As we move forward into the next phase of the young adult housing strategy, the Department is committed to working with the Board towards the advancement of our reform agenda.

⁴ The UOF data is inclusive of the aforementioned fight.