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Surrey County Council Prison Social Care Team awarded CQC ‘good’ rating

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Surrey County Council’s Prison Social Care Team has been rated ‘good’ by the Care Quality Commission for the dignified support it provides to people in custody with care needs.

The specialist team provides adult social care across five prisons and an approved premises in Surrey, supporting people with dementia, mental health needs, learning disabilities, autism, and sensory and physical disabilities. The team supports prisoners who struggle with daily living tasks, helping them engage with prison services and prepare for a smoother transition on release.

Following an inspection in May, the CQC rated the team ‘good’ across all areas and identified ‘outstanding’ practice in delivering evidence-based care and treatment.

Inspectors praised staff for treating prisoners with kindness and compassion, respecting their dignity and taking a non-judgmental approach.

“People told us their care needs were met, and they liked the staff who supported them,” the report said. “They said the staff were kind and caring and treated them with respect and dignity. People and their relatives were satisfied with the service. People felt their needs were met and they received personalised care and were able to make choices in the way they were supported.”

The report highlighted positive feedback from people the team supports and their relatives, including praise for a staff member who had “stuck by me through all my growing pains” and was “what you call a good social care worker.” Another comment said: “They are very kind and understand mental health which is good.”

Inspectors also recognised the team’s visible and supportive leadership, their collaborative approach with partner services and the effective systems in place to monitor quality, mitigate risk, ensure safe recruitment and maintain good infection control.

The team’s evidence-based approach to delivering care and treatment was found to be outstanding, with the report noting: “The provider always planned and delivered people’s care and treatment with them, including what was important and mattered to them. They did this in line with legislation.”

The Prison Social Care Team, part of the council’s wider mental health social care service, brings together social workers, occupational therapists and support workers. The team is unusual among councils in that every part of the prison social care service – from assessment and care planning through to the direct delivery of care – is delivered in-house.

The team supports people across Surrey’s five prisons – High Down, Downview, Bronzefield, Send and Coldingley – as well as St Catherine’s Approved Premises in Guildford, which supports people as they move from prison back into the community.

Sinead Mooney, Surrey County Council’s Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, said: “This is a fantastic achievement and really shows the dedication and professionalism of our Prison Social Care Team. They’re a small team working in challenging settings and it’s great to see their compassionate, person-centred care recognised for the impact it has. Alongside the ‘good’ rating for our wider adult social care service in 2024, this is another example of how the council is making sure services are effective for vulnerable residents.

“As we look ahead, we’re proud to be passing on a strong legacy for adult social care to the new councils. We have a talented and compassionate workforce, and our staff have the expertise to deliver a safe transition and ensure the new councils start well.”

The full report can be found on the CQC website.

To find out about Surrey County Council adult social care jobs, please visit our jobs page.

Surrey University

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