



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMYOI Wetherby

**For reporting year
1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023**

Published January 2024



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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, of any concerns it has
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

Wetherby YOI, situated in West Yorkshire, is part of the Youth Custody Service (YCS) and can accommodate up to 340¹ children and young people between 15 and 18. The roll fluctuates between 160 and 170. It serves young people remanded into custody from sentencing courts in the catchment area of Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and designated areas of Lancashire and Greater Manchester. An increasing number of young people now come from other parts of the country. Since July 2021 it has also held a small number of young females. All living accommodation is in single-occupancy rooms.

¹ Figures included in this report are local management information. They reflect the prison's position at the time of reporting, but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with Official Statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- During March and April of 2023, a multitude of factors led to the stability of Wetherby being severely compromised. Towards the end of April this resulted in staff withdrawing to a place of safety, which was of concern to all.
- Violent behaviour has remained high throughout the reporting year. Whether assaults perpetrated between young people or against staff, it is unacceptable. The impact of the behaviour of a small cohort of young people has on the safe running of the establishment is considerable. The outcome for all young people being reduced regimes and the lack of purposeful activity.
- The Board is concerned as to the increasing finds of drugs, phones and improvised weapons. It is a positive outcome that the finds occur; what is of concern is that drugs and phones continue to enter the establishment.

Fair and humane treatment

- Although further work still needs to be undertaken, the Board welcomes the ongoing investment in the site and the general improvement in the estate, both internal and external.
- Many of the young people held at Wetherby have complex needs and can present with very demanding behaviour. However, there are a few whose needs go beyond that. The Board has observed excellent relationships between many staff and these young people, which is to be commended. The patience and skill demonstrated in supporting them has been exemplary.
- The lack of a predictable regime causes frustration and uncertainty for the young people, many of whom have already experienced chaotic lifestyles before entering custody. Cancellations of regime, educational classes or activities and time out of room make up the majority of applications (written representations that young people make to the IMB) during this reporting year.
- Conditions on B wing, which includes young people who are classified as Restricted Status (RS), which means the YOI thinks they are at risk of trying to escape, and those young people who have just arrived at Wetherby, First Night in Custody (FNIC), are unsatisfactory. Mouldy showers, cells and wings dirty and in poor repair are unacceptable.
- The daily food allowance (DFA) remains inadequate; however, the catering team appears to manage this budget skilfully and with imagination.

Health and wellbeing

- Healthcare provision offers 24-hour cover and the Board has observed it to be good.
- A change to a new menu mid-year, introducing healthier eating and less red meat, caused an increase in applications to the Board. Adjustments have been made and the young people are happier with the compromise.
- Whilst the Board acknowledges that there has been gradual improvement in time out of room, it remains disappointing.

Education and training

- There has been a welcome investment in the education colleges to provide an excellent learning environment.
- The Board is pleased to report that some students have been successful in the AS and GCSE external examinations.
- This has been a very difficult year for the education department. The culmination of a new contract awarded to Novus for seven years, staff resignations and a restricted prison regime had a negative impact on the department's ability to deliver education.
- Too many lesson cancellations have taken place.

Progression towards transfer or release

- Some excellent ROTL (release on temporary licence) initiatives have been introduced. These include barbering at a drop-in centre for the homeless in Leeds, work with Balfour Beattie and volunteering at a food bank.
- Operation Safeguard was introduced by the Government to help alleviate the overcrowding in the male adult estate. This means that young people who are 18 now stay at Wetherby until they are 19. During the reporting year more than 40 have remained at Wetherby under Operation Safeguard, with the number constantly increasing. These young people are frustrated by the delay in their transfer, which does little to help the stability of the establishment.
- Too many young people are held on remand in custody due to the court delays, with limited support or interventions. In August 2023, out of a population 168, 48 were on remand. Priority should be given to address both the delays and the lack of meaningful interventions.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- The Board remains concerned about the suitability of placing girls at Wetherby, in their present accommodation. When will a decision be reached regarding their future placement?
- Operation Safeguard has meant that an ever-increasing number of 18-year-old+ young men remain at Wetherby until almost 19 years of age. How long is this policy to remain in place?

TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

- The Board remains concerned about those young people who are 'looked after' by the local authority and consider that they are frequently financially disadvantaged due to late payments or lack of financial support. How can this situation be improved?
- Although every young person has been released to an address, not all addresses are deemed to be suitable by the social care team. Local authorities have been challenged on this on more than 29 occasions. What can be done to assure young people and the Board that this unsatisfactory situation will be improved?

TO THE YOUTH CUSTODY SERVICE

- In August 2023, out of a population of 168, 48 were on remand, many of whom will be held in custody for a considerable length of time. There appears to be a dearth of relevant interventions. What initiatives, if any, are being considered to support them?
- For the increasing number of young people serving very lengthy sentences, what can be put in place to make their time in custody relevant and beneficial, whilst also preparing them for eventual reintegration into the community?
- Recent prison officer recruitments campaigns have resulted in the appointment of many female officers: the figure was over 70% in the recent recruitment campaign. Male young people tell the Board that there are too many young female officers, some little older than they are. Is there anything that can be done to attract more male officers?
- About 8% of prison officers leave within the first six months and 12% within the first year. What can be done to reduce this significant loss?
- Too many young people continue to be placed further than 50 miles from their home, thus reducing the potential to support family links. Is there anything that can be done to change this?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- What will be done to ensure that the amount of time spent out of room continues to increase and to provide a more predictable regime?
- A noticeable factor in successful and efficient departments at Wetherby seems to be consistency of staffing. The Board notes that staffing changes at all levels continue to occur frequently. Can the Governor assure the Board that staff changes will be kept to a minimum?

3.3 Response to last report

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
The long-term position regarding the placement of girls at Wetherby?	An additional placement option for girls is now available, as of November 2022, at Oakhill Secure Training Centre. The YCS and other agencies are reviewing the long-term viability of HMP/YOI Wetherby as a continued placement for girls as part of the review for the YCS Future Estate Strategy, to be completed by March 2023.	The IMB at Wetherby has heard nothing further.
With regards to Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCPs) for young people as they enter custody, what happens to their funding?	The YCS is liaising with the Department for Education to address how EHCPs can be managed when a child enters custody.	The IMB has heard nothing further.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

The Board has observed that Reception, usually staffed by experienced officers, continues to be well run.

In recent years there has been much discussion around the purchase of X-ray equipment for Reception to speed up the process of property checks. This has never materialised. Apparently, the expense is the running costs rather than the initial purchase price. Property continues to go to nearby Wealstun prison and is then returned to Wetherby, which can take several weeks.

Young people generally travel now from the courts to Wetherby in smaller vans, which they say they prefer.

The Board is pleased to report that late arrivals, although they do sometimes occur, are now the exception.

Reception oversees all prisoner movement in and out of the establishment, whether for court appearances, hospital appointments or ROTL.

An initial screening is undertaken in Reception by an officer. A member of the healthcare team will complete a comprehensive health assessment tool (CHAT). If there are any concerns for the welfare of the young person, they will be placed on an assessment care and teamwork in custody (ACCT) plan, used to support young people who are at risk of self-harm and suicide. This facilitates a higher level of monitoring by staff. The young person is usually escorted to B wing, First Night in Custody (FNIC). As stated earlier, B wing is in an unsatisfactory state of repair.

The Board raised concerns with the Governor about the placement of FNIC children on the same wing as young people who had been 'separated' (from their peers for safety and protection reasons), frequently amongst the most challenging young people. Albeit a temporary measure, the Board considered this to be unacceptable.

The Board has observed that the induction wing generally offers good support to young people, and staff are mindful of the individual vulnerabilities of those who are in the early days of custody. During their time on the induction wing, young people meet with representatives of the various departments and learn about the agencies that will be supporting them whilst at Wetherby. There is a great deal of information to absorb, so it is helpful that this can also be found on their individual laptops. Educational assessments are also undertaken. However, the induction regime remains fairly limited.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

There were no suicides or deaths in custody during the reporting year.

The self-harm data, below, for the period May to August shows the number of self-harm incidents in each month. Where the figure is high, it can be attributed to three young people who prolifically self-harm. When their data is removed, the figure is significantly lower.

Self-harm incidents between May and August 2023

	May	June	July	August
Total	163	64	88	50
Total, adjusted against the three young people who prolifically self-harm	30	19	30	24

When a young person appears to be, or states that they are in a low mood, possibly leading to self-harm, the Board has observed that staff are quick to open an ACCT document, which is reviewed regularly. The quality of entries has improved although still remains a concern. Members have been told by most young people they feel well supported by staff checks.

ACCTs opened between January and August 2023 (recording period)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
14	18	19	17	25	14	25	16

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Staff continue to work to resolve the issues around the increased levels of violence within the establishment.

One of the key, significant changes is the violent behaviour of girls when staff are trying to stop them from self-harming.

There has been a rise in the number of incidents directed towards staff. However, a number of these assaults have occurred during the Use of force. This is something that is reported in the monthly safety committee meetings.

The Board is told that internal and external gang-related issues can be a contributing factor in the use of weapons. Few, if any, young people will admit to carrying a weapon because they are afraid. The number of weapons' finds has increased by over 50% since our last reporting year.

Weapons' finds between September 2022 and August 2023

Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Total
78	51	46	41	51	70	64	33	60	64	54	38	650

4.3.1 Adjudications

Adjudications (disciplinary hearings when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules) are held daily, except on a Sunday, as part of the prison disciplinary system. Young people tell the IMB that they do not think these are dealt with equitability. Although the establishment monitors this through standardisation meetings, we are

told by the young people that an outcome can vary depending on the adjudicating governor. For example, some governors will allow a young person with mental health needs to retain their television, whilst others will not. The Board monitors adjudications on a monthly basis.

Adjudications between September 2022 and August 2023

	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23
Keppel	46	18	35	11	44	50	70	43	67	50	41	43
Main site	235	158	179	180	118	161	92	129	244	179	142	176
Police referral	21	25	47	21	19	35	35	76	19	11	8	21

4.3.2 Serious incidents

There were 34 events listed as reportable incidents, of which 16 resulted in the Command Suite being opened (when a response to a major incident is co-ordinated nationally). Six came under the external management of Gold Command, who formulate the strategy for dealing with the incident. Some of the incidents required additional external support from the National Tactical Response Group (which provides specialist services to resolve serious incidents).

The Board attended the most serious incidents, which appeared to be well managed, both at a local and national level. As a result of the debriefs, improvements have been made.

4.3.3 Conflict resolution (CR)

This appears to be a well-run and effective team. IMB members find that most of the young people speak positively about their experience of CR intervention. Participation in CR is voluntary and to the team's credit on average 87% of children engage with the CR process.

At the end of every case a feedback form is completed by the young person. The quarterly forums are also conducted to gain feedback. However, the ability of CR staff to carry out their role in a timely manner can unfortunately be impacted when they are redeployed elsewhere.

4.3.4 Crime clinic

A weekly 'crime clinic' is held, led by Wetherby staff and comprising agencies such as West Yorkshire Police and the Crime in Prisons lead. During the clinic, serious assaults are reviewed. Referrals that are subsequently made to the Police and on to the Crown Prosecution Service can take a long time and officers, if they have been a victim, often tell us that due to the length of time taken decide not to pursue the matter, preferring to drop it.

4.4 Young people with specific vulnerabilities

At present an unacceptable number of young people are held on remand awaiting court appearances. In August 2023, out of the population of 168, 48 were held on remand. Although they have not been charged, few, if any, interventions or support services are available to them. Whilst this is not exclusive to Wetherby, the needs of this group of young people have largely been ignored. This must be addressed as a priority at a national level.

There is enhanced provision for young people with specific vulnerabilities. Keppel is a 48-bed unit for young people who are deemed vulnerable due to their complex needs, index offence (the offence leading to the young person's conviction); more recently, one spur has been the designated provision for young females.

It has been an extremely difficult period for Keppel, with unprecedented levels of violence and challenging behaviour. Staff assaults were high and in the earlier part of the year staff morale was low. Many of the young people submitted applications to the IMB, as they felt they had a very limited regime, with too much time spent in their room, especially at the weekend. The unit itself looked untidy and in poor repair.

In July 2023 admissions to Keppel were halted and time taken to rethink the direction for Keppel. The numerous rooms that were out of order were repaired and repainted. With fewer young people, Keppel now appears calmer, with many staff also appearing to regain their confidence.

As in our last annual report the Board remains concerned at the continuing placement of girls at Wetherby in the present provision. The few girls who come to Wetherby have a very high level of complex mental health needs and high levels of self-harm, which is demanding of both staff time and energy. Some of the girls who were due to be released have been reluctant to leave the provision and return to the community. Many state that Wetherby is where they feel that they have been looked after the best and felt the safest.

In2Out helps to prepare some of those young people on Keppel to transition to independent living by teaching skills such as cooking, cleaning and budgeting, prior to release. The Board commends their work, so is disappointed to hear that funding for this is to be dropped.

Napier is a six-bed unit for a few young people who require a higher level of support due to their complex needs. It was hoped that following a variety of bespoke interventions, a young person might move to a main wing. In practice, their needs are such that they often remain on Napier for an indefinite period. Napier also offers in-house education.

Weekly enhanced support meetings (EST), usually around 12, are held to enable multi-disciplinary agency discussion to take place. Some are held face-to-face, while some, with external agency involvement, are held virtually. They appear to be well organised but, unfortunately, frequently not all well attended. This has been predominately due to staffing shortages at Wetherby. Importantly, where possible, the young person is invited to attend some part of the meeting.

In June 2023 a Neurodiversity Support Manager (NSM) was appointed as part of the prison service's initiative to create awareness of neurodiversity and to increase the support.

This full-time, permanent role will enable the NSM to work both directly and indirectly with young people and staff alike. They will be offering staff training and development at all levels, as well as practical guidance around such areas as the suitability of posters and literature for the young people and engaging in education and interventions. The Board welcomes this as a positive initiative.

4.5 Use of force

Wetherby YOI received two visits from the Independent Restraint Review Panel, (IRRP), in December 2022 and June 2023. It was good to hear that many positives were noted along with some learning points.

The IMB monitor some of the weekly in-house restraint review meetings held by the Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint (MMPR) team. This is a multi-disciplinary review of the most recent restraints. The purpose is to see what lessons can be learnt, identify good and bad practice and to see if any officers require additional training. A total of 78% of all staff have been trained in the new package and are regularly upskilled. The preselected cases to be reviewed are well presented and clear to understand.

There have been 1,194 instances when restraint has been used, varying from low level, such as handcuffs to full restraint. The Board is pleased to report that the use of pain-inducing techniques is lower than in the previous year: 14 last year, 8 this year.

Healthcare attends any planned removals. All restraints are followed up afterwards on the wing by healthcare staff who will speak with the young person involved. Sometimes this conversation takes place through the door.

All young people who are fully searched under restraint are seen by an MMPR coordinator and a member of the child protection team. Should the correct processes not have been followed, the case will then be referred to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO).

The Board is pleased to report that there has been an increase in officers picking up Body-worn video cameras (BWVCs) and they are being used more frequently; their use is said to be invaluable.

4.6 Substance misuse

The Board is concerned about the ever-increasing problem of drugs found in Wetherby. The Security department work hard to try to reduce this. Working in collaboration with external agencies, such as West Yorkshire Police, Crime Corruption Units and Security group colleagues, proactive searches take place. Unfortunately, some of those young people who take drugs are at times putting themselves at significant risk of harm.

In the reporting year period, 127 tests were undertaken of which:

- 39 tests came back positive (in most cases this was cannabis, Gabapentin, Ketamine, amphetamines, buprenorphine)
- 19 tests were recorded as refusal or terminated
- 69 tests came back as negative

All young people are offered access to the Young People's Drug and Alcohol Support Service (YPDASS). Generally, around 60% take up the offer. YPDASS can be contacted by way of an application form found on the laptop. However, any young person who tests positive for drugs whilst in custody is allocated a worker. The team work to support a targeted group of young people on their caseload. Due to attendance in education class and the regime, it can be difficult for YPDASS to gain access to the young people. As with other agencies, YPDASS reports that the lack of available rooms for consultations on the wings presents another difficulty. Group work has also been undertaken alongside education.

For those young people about to be released back into the community, contact is made with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and a discharge plan prepared. If required, a referral will be made to their community drugs worker.

YPDASS works with those who are about to transition to the adult estate and educates them to the dangers from a wider range of drugs that might be found within the adult estate.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Maintenance and refurbishment work at Wetherby is ongoing, due in part to the age of the buildings. Asbestos is often discovered during building work, which results in the work taking considerably longer than planned.

The Board is encouraged by the ongoing investment in the site and general improvement in the estate, both internal and external. Many of the young people held in custody already have low self-esteem, which is only reinforced when living in a poor-quality environment. The gym and sports area are much improved.

The Board is pleased that the prison continues to employ one dedicated member of staff to coordinate and manage external contractors.

Key developments this reporting year are the refurbishment of the separation wing, Anson. In-cell showers have been installed, which is of benefit to the young people and hopefully will release staff to provide a meaningful regime.

Collingwood, which houses most young people on the Gold behaviour level, is being updated to provide amongst other things, in-cell showers.

During the refurbishment of Anson, starting in January 2023, the young people were housed on B wing. B wing is also the provision for young people who are newly placed in custody (FNIC). B wing itself was in a dilapidated state, with mouldy showering facilities, peeling and damaged paintwork.

The Board expressed concern as to the conditions and the suitability of placing challenging, separated young people literally alongside those young people who were new into custody. The Board strongly believes this was unsafe practice. On a practical basis, it became increasingly difficult to identify which young person was separated and which young person was new into custody.

The washing machines on E and F wings are no longer fit for purpose. Consequently, in-house washing now has to be taken by officers to the laundry, who then need to return to collect it. This is not an efficient use of time. The purchase of new machines for E and F wings would also enable young people to learn useful living skills.

Although those on D wing can wear their own clothes, clothing remains of concern to all the young people. The boys think it is unfair that the girls are allowed to wear their own clothes. Some of the girls think there should be a wider range of items available to them on the facilities list. They would prefer their own canteen list.

In June of this year there was shortage of socks. Young people said they had to wear the same socks for several weeks. Apparently, staff had not filled in the requisition form for the Stores. This was aggravated by the fact that socks can be, and are, used by some young people in the making of weapons. Fortunately, this matter has now been resolved.

Young people inform Board members that they would like to have more towels. With no heating in the rooms in summer, it can be difficult to dry the towels used for showers and the gym. The Board has been told by staff that the young people use towels for other purposes, such as mats.

Young people submitted numerous applications to the Board in September 2022 to say that it was becoming increasingly difficult to get a haircut. This was of particular concern to the young people who were due to appear in court. A combination of events had led to a lack of dedicated staff. However, after a considerable period of negotiation, the situation was rectified.

The Board commends the kitchen for the way it has managed to produce meals with the ever-increasing cost of ingredients and a very limited Daily Food Allowance (DFA).

The catering team conducts a biennial survey to gain the opinion of the young people regarding the menus at Wetherby. The outcomes are always shared with the IMB. A member of the catering team regularly attends the monthly Youth Council, where they can hear first-hand the young people's views on the food and menus.

In March and April, the Board received many applications from young people who were unhappy about the newly introduced menus. The decision to promote healthier eating, by increasing the amount of fruit, vegetables, pulses, nuts, fish, white meat and poultry and reduce the red meat and fried food, had been taken centrally. The well-researched idea behind it was to reflect the focus in schools and elsewhere in the community on healthier eating.

However, the new menus were not well received by the young people. In particular, the removal of the popular Saturday breakfast, served at lunch. In June a new compromise menu was introduced, offering a better balance. This has seen a reduction in complaints and applications. The catering team informed the Board that no complaints have been received by the kitchen since June 2023.

Young people tell us they would like larger portions. Whilst they can top up with food items purchased from the canteen list, not all have the money available to them. Those young people who are in the care of some of the local authorities are often the most disadvantaged, as not all authorities are forthcoming with their payments.

5.2 Separation

Anson, comparable to an enhanced support unit (ESU), comprises three different floors. There has been a relaunch of the provision to provide a dedicated unit managed through the integrated care principles for young people who need greater support, but away from the main site.

Whilst the Board understands the reasoning behind this plan, in practice it can appear that young people remain there for a considerable period of time, due to non-associates elsewhere or awaiting transfer to the adult estate. Some young people choose to stay there prior to their release in order to keep out of trouble.

The unit has a multi-disciplinary team to manage and support the immediate needs of the young people. On arrival they will be assessed by the psychologist who completes a Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Need (STARN), which will help to update the case formulation.

When a young person is transferred to Anson (the separation unit), the Board is notified in a timely manner. Healthcare, the GP and the duty Governor visit as appropriate, as does Barnardo's advocacy.

Outreach education is available to the young people, but the length of the session is variable and depends on the number of young people held in separation on any one day. An IMB member visits Anson weekly and observes separation reviews, if available.

Good Order or Discipline (GOoD) reviews, the multi-disciplinary reviews held to monitor the progress of a separated young person and plan for a return to main site, are held at the appropriate intervals. Healthcare, generally CAMHS (the NHS service that supports young people with emotional and mental health difficulties), is always present.

IMB members and other agencies are informed of the date and time of the review. However, it is frustrating for those agencies who attend for a GOoD review to frequently discover that it has already taken place earlier in the day, with no notification.

In addition, it has become standard practice for the recommendations around the plan for a young person to have been made at an earlier meeting held by Governors and senior staff. Consequently, many agencies now believe that the GOoD reviews are no longer multi-disciplinary and choose not to attend them.

Number of separated young people and children between October 2022 and August 2023

	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23
Number of young people	28	38	39	33	32	37	34	32	29	32	37
Average length of separation - in days	16.8	13.0	17.5	24.2	28.7	26.9	19.7	22.2	19.7	20.2	14.7

5.3 Staff and young people relationships

The Board is pleased to report that currently all the administrative posts are filled. Recruitment of Officer Support Grade (OSG) remains difficult, with several vacancies during the reporting year. The main cause is that OSG Fast Track promotes OSGs to officers, with four having followed this route.

A total of 8% of officers leave within six months and 12% within the first year. The reason new officers leave is frequently attributed to the job advertisement, which staff feel is not a true reflection of the role.

Many, if not most, of the new officers are young, which is something that the 18-year-old+ males who remain at Wetherby, due to Operation Safeguard, complain about. They feel that the officer's age is often too close to their own and they lack experience.

Staff absences remain high and can vary between 15 and 50, but average at 35 per day. Work-related injuries are often the cause. Staff are supported and signposted to care teams after every incident and occupational health is used to manage individual absences.

Staff availability is critical to delivering a full regime. High staff absence results in cancellations and a limited regime, which the young people all too frequently tell us about.

The Board observes that the relationship between many staff and young people is generally good. As mentioned, the Board commends the practice of many officers who go far beyond what might be expected of them. Many offer to remain at work if there is a need to provide an emergency hospital escort or assist if there is an incident or a late arrival.

The pressure on staff should not be underestimated. IMB members regularly observe many staff demonstrating skill and infinite patience when de-escalating a situation or supporting a young person in crisis.

Many, but not all, young people, report that they feel confident to talk to any member of staff if they have a matter of concern, and not just exclusively to their personal officer. Young people say they would like to see more of their CAMHS worker and resettlement practitioner. They appreciate that staff are busy, but this is a recurring theme.

5.3.1 Custody Support Plan (CuSP)

This is an evidence-based care planning approach for all young people in custody to have a personal officer trained in motivational interview techniques. A young person has the opportunity to meet with a dedicated officer on a regular basis to talk through concerns or worries. Due to staffing shortages, not all young people have a CuSP session and it is now more focused according to need.

5.3.2 Youth council

There is a monthly council meeting with two representatives from each wing. Discussion points include visits, complaints, equality and diversity. The interaction observed between staff and young people is good and matters arising are always followed up. The Board is pleased to report that the council meetings are now held more consistently and attendance from other agencies is good.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The Board acknowledges the focus and work to support Wetherby becoming a fair and equitable establishment. It would, however, appear that racial discrimination continues.

The Equalities team is fully staffed with an Equalities Adviser, Officer and Analyst in post. The Analyst is at present only a temporary role. However, cross deployment is an issue, as the Equalities officer is often utilised when there are shortfalls on the detail elsewhere in the establishment.

The monthly Equalities Action Group (EAG) is attended by all agencies, including the Governor or Deputy Governor.

Young people are aware of the systems in place to challenge racial discrimination. Discrimination Reporting Forms (DIRFS) are readily available on the wings for all young people, but they tell us that often they do not feel confident in the system. Submissions average around 12 per month. There is a monthly mixture of both allegations among children and allegations involving staff. The DIRF breakdown is communicated in the monthly EAG slide presentation.

Whilst staff are becoming more confident in challenging discriminatory language or racial abuse towards young people of black or minority ethnic heritage, white young people, however, feel they receive similar abuse that goes unchallenged.

Data collated by the Equalities team is carefully scrutinised and frequently highlights the inaccuracies in the figures. This is being addressed by the Equalities Action Group.

In August 2023, the largest ethnic group at Wetherby was still white British young people, with 57.98% of the population. Black, Asian and minority ethnic young people made up 37.77%. The remaining percentage was categorised as white other, 2.66%; white traveller, 0.53%; and other, 1.06%.

In March 2023, the data indicated that on Keppel there was a higher proportion of white young people (75%) than on main site (50%). The allocation to Keppel is made centrally.

It would appear that there are more black and minority ethnic young people, as well as those with a recognised disability, on Red behaviour level (which is the lowest level and means fewer privileges).

There is a higher rate (25%) of ACCTs opened on white young people.

There is a greater diversity in the officer complement, which is encouraging. The lack of diversity at Governor level disappointingly remains the same.

With 70% of the recent recruitment now being female, the young males tell us they would prefer more male officers.

The Board remains concerned about young people who are 'looked after' by their local authority and consider that they are often financially disadvantaged. Payments are sometimes made late, or not at all, which means that a looked after child is unable to make purchases from the canteen. Purchases from the canteen are regularly made by young people to top up their meals.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

Chaplaincy staff continue to provide excellent support and care to all the young people, irrespective of their religious belief. A member of the team will visit separation daily and attend reviews and other meetings such as ACCT and GOoD reviews.

Chapel attendance has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. This may be due to young people being reluctant to come out and attend a service for fear of trouble with other young people. An increase in attacks has, in general, made staff more cautious about who can mix.

Chaplaincy offers a range of programmes, including 'Time for Dads', where there can be as many as 5-8 dads at Wetherby at any one time. 'Winston's Wish Bereavement Support' is also run on a one-to-one basis, as needed.

The Annual Carol Service made a welcome return in December 2022, following its absence as a result of the pandemic.

The catering team provided themed menus for festivals such as Diwali and Christmas.

Appropriate menus were supplied in collaboration with a local Muslim charity for Ramadan. The charity provided two chefs to help prepare the meals in the Wetherby kitchen. A total of 29 young people started Ramadan and 29 finished. This was the first time that all young people who started Ramadan finished.

5.6 Rewards and sanctions

The Incentives scheme is used at Wetherby to encourage positive behaviour. All young people at Wetherby enter on Gold level, and it is their responsibility to stay at that level in order to gain privileges such as a television set in their room. D wing is where young people on the Gold behaviour level are accommodated. There are many young people who are eligible to be on that wing, but there are insufficient places. This frustrates many Gold level young people, who feel there is little to be gained by being on Gold level.

5.7 Complaints

The complaint form is not available on the young person's laptop.

Complaints submitted to Wetherby YOI between September 2022 and August 2023

Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Total
28	40	23	16	32	13	29	55	58	49	59	53	455

There has been an increase in complaints between December 2022 and August 2023. (This reporting period is due to a new recording system in place.)

There was a notable increase in 'requests' submitted as complaints, which are still recorded as complaints. The top three complaints related to property, clothing and education.

There was an increase in complaints about closed visits, related to the result of recovered contraband.

5.8 Property

The Board receives applications for help regarding missing or damaged items. Some of these complaints were upheld by the establishment and the young person compensated accordingly.

Young people make applications to the Board regarding property sent in by family members. This may have been delayed in Reception where it has to be checked before being allowed on the wings. On further investigation we are sometimes told that the item must remain in Reception until the young person is released or transfers. Or it might be that the item is found not to be in accordance with the agreed security or health and safety arrangements. Inevitably this creates frustration for young people.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The new Healthcare lead started on site in September 2022.

Healthcare at Wetherby appears to be good: we receive few applications from young people. There is no provision for in-patient treatment: historically, the unit was underused so consequently closed. Arrangements would be made for a young person who requires such input to be seen at a local hospital. A member of the healthcare team attends the Youth Council.

The department is well scrutinised by external agencies. For example, meetings are held with Commissioners to update them on the healthcare provision at Wetherby.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Healthcare is a busy, well-integrated department, offering good provision for the young people. The local General Practitioner (GP) attends six days a week and holds monthly management meetings with the clinical lead. The GP visits those who are held in separation on Rule 49 or self-isolating for any reason.

The Board has observed that healthcare staff provide excellent care of several young people with very complex requirements.

A young person can fill in a healthcare application or speak to a nurse on the wing. The applications are triaged and dealt with according to their clinical need. The introduction of a prison healthcare officer has supported attendance at appointments and also reduced the number of do not attends (DNAs.)

There is a good uptake of immunisations, including influenza; any DNA appointments are followed up and rescheduled.

Follow-up reviews from the initial induction CHAT are held at regular intervals. They are reviewed according to their clinical need.

A dentist attends once a month and is able to see 12 patients. There has been a considerable reduction in the waiting time, which is now around seven weeks. The dentist can arrange to see a young person if there is an emergency.

The optician generally visits the prison once a month, seeing about 10 patients. There was a waiting list, but this, too is reducing, as the optician tries to increase the number of sessions, if required.

A physiotherapist is also available, as required.

There is no waiting list for speech and language therapy, but with as many as 90% of the current population having some sort of communication difficulty, this is surprising. Most referrals come through education. There are two part-time therapists; disappointingly, they do not appear to be integrated within the establishment.

As with many other departments, healthcare finds that competing with regimes and education can impact their ability to access young people. If asked to attend for a medical appointment or go to the gym, inevitably the young person opts for the latter.

As in the community, it is difficult to recruit and retain nursing staff. There can be four vacancies at any one time. The role is challenging and not suited to everyone. But once interviewed, the security clearance process is now much quicker.

6.3 Mental healthcare

The mental health of young people at Wetherby is well supported by the CAMHS team. It would appear that the young people have greater access to such provision than they might have in the community.

A total of 60% of the young people at Wetherby are on the CAMHS caseload. There is an ever-increasing number of young people with highly complex mental health needs. CAMHS offer a wide range of programmes and support for the young people. The Board receives few, if any, applications regarding CAMHS, although young people say they would like to see their CAMHS practitioner more frequently.

The new clinical lead, in post since April 2023, has a clear vision about how they would like the service to develop. There have been vacancies in psychiatry, psychology and CAMHS nurse practitioners. Subsequent gaps are filled wherever possible, generally through the use of South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust bank staff, who are familiar with working in the custodial environment. Towards the end of the reporting year the Board was pleased to hear that the consultant psychiatrists have been appointed. However, some mental health practitioners are yet to be secured. The team also comprises an occupational therapist.

Again, as with other agencies, CAMHS finds that the regime and lack of available rooms can impact on their ability to deliver the interventions to the young people.

6.4 Social care

There is a consistent Designated Social Work Team at Wetherby, employed by Leeds City Council and managed through the Integrated Safeguarding Team. Its role is to promote the welfare of the child within the establishment and safeguard those who have been remanded to youth detention accommodation or have received a custodial sentence. The Board acknowledges its level of commitment and desire to develop and share its practice with staff at Wetherby.

The social work team considers it is well supported in its work by the Governor and senior leadership team (SLT). It appears to have good working relationships with all departments and challenges practice where appropriate.

There are numerous examples of the social work team's innovative practice. It has focused on how to reduce the number of weapons being found, and used and worked proactively with the identified perpetrators, which has helped reduce some of the violence.

The social work team has also been involved in specific projects supporting the girls at Wetherby.

Foreign national young people are helped and supported through age assessments, as are those who, when they reach the age of 18, face deportation.

6.5 Time out of room, regime

In March and April 2023, there were extremely high levels of violence towards staff and other young people. The lack of time out of room and lack of a predictable regime made the situation extremely challenging for young people and staff alike. A series of incidents required the support of the National Tactical Response Group. The culmination of these events led officers to withdraw to a place of safety, delivering only the most basic of regimes, meals and medications. Some young people, whose exercise yard was out of use, remained in their rooms for several days. Unfortunately, at this time, the IT system also failed, which added to the frustration of the young people, who were unable to use their laptops.

Whilst time out of room has gradually increased, the Board considers it still to be inadequate. At the end of the reporting year, it was approaching five hours daily during the week but considerably less at weekends.

Time out of room has been significantly decreased due to the number of classes cancelled, with young people spending even more time in their room.

This year, we had many applications from young people who were frustrated that they were unable to access the gym. Initially, this was due a lack of fully trained gym staff. Then, young people, due to their poor behaviour, were excluded from the gym. With no clear pathway to their return, understandably they became aggrieved. It took several months for the situation to be resolved, but gradually the applications ceased.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

YPDASS continues to offer all young people the opportunity to engage with them to help reduce the use of drug and alcohol; 60% all young people take this up. (See 4.6)

6.7 Soft skills

Yoga sessions have been available to some young people.

7. Education and training

7.1 Education

The education department report that they have a good working relationship with the establishment.

The Board is pleased to report that Kinetic Youth work has been reintroduced and is able to offer support on the induction wing, outreach sessions on Anson and weekend and evening activities. The team comprises seven youth workers based at Wetherby.

Education courses include English and Maths (offered at varying levels), as well as Information Technology and Personal Development.

The Board is pleased to report below that some students have been successful in external AS Level and GCSE examinations.

STUDENT	AS Levels	GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE Grades	GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE Grades	GCSE MATHS Grades
1	C	N/A	N/A	5
2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
3	N/A	DNA	N/A	4
4	N/A	3	N/A	2
5	N/A	2	3	3
6	N/A	4	N/A	3
7	N/A	5		4

Considerable investment has been made in the colleges, which now look attractive and welcoming. That said, it has been apparent to all that this reporting year has been an incredibly difficult time for the department and it has been a challenge to deliver learning for the young people.

The introduction of the new education contract, given to Novus, low staffing levels, non-associates and problems within the regime have had a cumulative and negative impact on the education department and their work at Wetherby. Frequent cancellations from both education and the establishment have exacerbated the situation.

Number of young people affected by cancellations between September 2022 and August 2023

Cancelled by	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23
Novus	69	35	8	27	0	6	39	8	169	514	428	422
Establishment	446	744	1185	903	927	1199	501	1419	304	216	422	298

The new contract started in September 2022 and eventually came into operation in December 2022. With the uncertainty and possibility of redundancies, many teachers decided to resign, resulting in 19 vacancies. Some lessons were managed with cover staff, which was far from ideal with this particular group of young people, and some lessons cancelled. Recruitment and retention of staff is difficult. As a result of

exit interviews, Novus has identified that a better induction package could be introduced.

The weekly offer is 15 hours of education and six hours of vocational classes. Many think that this should be reversed and, indeed, most young people prefer the vocational work, finding it to be not only enjoyable but more relevant.

Movements to education are, at times, delayed for operational reasons, resulting in young people arriving late for lessons and returning back early to the wings.

The Board has observed that, at times, behaviour in class is difficult. Teaching staff, having requested the removal of a young person with unacceptable behaviour, find that officers are reluctant to agree to this request, thus undermining the teacher's authority. Or the young person is taken out of one lesson, only to be brought back for the next.

Body-worn video cameras are not generally used by the teaching staff, many of whom consider that young people perceive this as a sign of weakness. Officers patrol the education corridors but, if dealing with another young person, are not always able to attend an incident immediately.

Class groups, generally of eight young people, were determined by safety rather than academic ability. Not only the young people, but the teachers, were frustrated by this practice. However, since May 2023 there has been a greater focus on the class selection being led by ability rather than safety.

Young people on F wing submitted many applications to the IMB to say they felt they had been unfairly disadvantaged, as they did not have access to education on a regular basis. Due to the high number of non-associates on the wing, as many as 11 separate groups were running. This meant that it was difficult for everyone to access a full regime of education, gym and exercise.

The quality of lessons appears to be variable: young people speak positively about some, less so of others. The Board is pleased to report that, in general, there has been a move away from worksheets.

Since December 2022 the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme has been reintroduced and is now embedded in the gym curriculum, with physical education instructors taking responsibility for its delivery. Young people who take part in the scheme can access the e-learning section of the scheme on their in-cell laptops.

7.2 Library

The library has recently been moved and upgraded to form an attractive, well-resourced facility offering both Library and Digital Learning Services. There is a new library timetable in place, which has enabled all young people to have the opportunity to visit regularly. The experienced librarian is available when the sessions are running to advise and help the young people. A small selection of books is available on the wings and units.

Storybook Dads, supported through the library, remains popular. This scheme enables males in prison who are fathers to record bedtime stories on CD or DVD for their children to listen to at home. Some young people also record stories for their younger siblings. Even those young people who struggle with literacy manage to

successfully record the bedtime stories. It is a positive and worthwhile scheme, which the Board commends.

7.3 Vocational training

There is a range of vocational skills courses including: Art, Barbering, Bikes, Music and Multi-Skills, Painting and Decorating, PE Academy. There is also a Hospitality pathway, and D wing young people can work in the Admiral's Coffee Shop.

The Board is disappointed to report that both the Army Cadets and Fire Cadets are no longer offered at Wetherby YOI.

8. Progression towards transfer or release

8.1 Case management and progression

Operation Safeguard was introduced by the Government in the latter part of 2022 to help alleviate the overcrowding in the male adult estate. This means that young people who are 18 now stay at Wetherby until they are 19. During the reporting year, more than 40 have remained at Wetherby, with the number constantly increasing. These young people are frustrated by the delay in their transfer, which does little to help the stability of the establishment. Time and resources need to be made available if Operation Safeguard is to continue.

Quarterly reducing reoffending meetings are held at Wetherby. These are multidisciplinary meetings and are designed to bring together various specialists from all areas, including safeguarding, regime, education, CAMHS, healthcare, chaplaincy, social work, family therapy and other departments. The IMB monitors some of the meetings and receives and reviews the minutes and actions agreed. These meetings are observed to be well attended and managed. Agreed actions are followed up consistently.

8.1.1 Use of release on temporary licence (ROTL)

Very few young people at Wetherby are eligible and suitable for ROTL. During the reporting period, there were 283 ROTLs, with an average of 42 young people eligible each month. There was an average of 26 young people per month who were not suitable for ROTL.

The ROTL team has worked hard to build relationships with business and charities in the community that have provided ROTL opportunities for those young people who are eligible. These include WISE (Wetherby in Support of the Elderly), where young people have been able to offer help with gardening and community work. As part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award, some volunteered to improve a local skateboarding park.

Young people have been offering barbering to homeless people, undertaken in a pop-up shop in Leeds and also volunteering at a food bank. The Board commends this work, in particular, as it has offered not only a learning opportunity to the young people but made them aware of the challenges that can be faced by others. It is good to hear those young people who participate in ROTL talk with pride of their activities and experiences.

The Board commends the use of ROTL to facilitate a young parent-child visit at a local contact centre. This was supported by a member of the Wetherby social work team and the Resettlement Practitioner.

8.2 Family contact

The visits hall is now fully operational following Covid. Vending machines offering sweets and drinks are back in use, as is the soft play area. Visitors have told the IMB

that it can be difficult to set up the email for social visits. They also report that there can be a long wait when attempting to arrange a visit by phone.

During the year, work has been done to increase both the availability of social visits and the time allowed for these visits. For geographical reasons, such as the distance from Wetherby, or convenience, some families continue to use social video calls.

Young people are often frustrated by the length of time that it can take to arrange an inter-prison phone call. This is not always the fault of Wetherby, but can be the other establishments involved.

Young people may be placed on closed visits (where the young person and the visitor are prevented from having any form of physical contact) for security reasons or due to intelligence. The decision to place a young person on closed visits is reviewed monthly by the Closed Visits Board. Agencies such as Barnardo's are present. An IMB member monitors the meetings.

The Board receives many applications regarding closed visits. Young people feel they have been unfairly placed on closed visits or been on closed visits for too long. The IMB Board considers that, in general, the decisions made by the closed visits team are proportionate.

Those young people who do not have family, or who make family contact by way of phone calls or social visits, are carefully monitored by the establishment. In some cases, a visit from an Official Prison Visitor (OPV) might be offered if the young person is in agreement. This is arranged through the chaplaincy.

Family days have been held on Drake and Keppel units. The young people working in the café had the opportunity to invite two family members to a 'Come dine with me' day, where they made and served a meal to their guests.

8.3 Resettlement planning

Weekly resettlement meetings are held and aftercare plans are written for all upcoming releases in the following 28 days to try to ensure appropriate planning.

Due to the nature of their offence, an increasing number of young people from Wetherby transfer to the adult estate. Young people who are about to transfer to the adult estate will receive relevant information about the establishment prior to the move taking place. Face-to-face or virtual contact from receiving establishments is also becoming more frequent.

For those due to be released into the community, arranging appropriate accommodation can be difficult. Local authorities have well-recognised housing shortages and many of the young people have complex needs and are, therefore, not easy to place.

The Wetherby resettlement team works with local authorities, CAMHS and the Probation Service to try to address these issues. Young people are understandably anxious if accommodation has not been officially identified until a day or two before

their release. The local authority tends to prefer to wait until the last moment to avoid making unnecessary payment to secure accommodation.

During our reporting year, no young person left Wetherby without an address to go to. Concern has been raised to the highest level about the suitability of some of the accommodation. Placements have been challenged on 29 separate occasions by the social work team which, alongside the resettlement practitioners, has also had to challenge the local authorities to make sure that the right accommodation is in place. The Board acknowledges their diligence.

The charity In2Out works with some young people prior to their release and continues to keep in contact. This is reported to be much appreciated by the young people with whom they are involved.

The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	6 (one on sabbatical)
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7 (two on sabbatical)
Total number of visits to the establishment	218 (including one night visit)

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	15	13
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	14	27
C	Equality	4	9
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	5	97
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	10	27
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	0	0
F	Food and kitchens	0	7
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	6	7
H1	Property within the establishment	10	10
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	3	1
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	3	10
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	2	6
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	8	8
K	Transfers	1	1
L	Miscellaneous	30	40
	Total number of applications	111	263

Annex A

List of service providers

Healthcare

- Primary care is provided by Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust
- Mental health care is provided by South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- GP services are provided by a Wetherby Medical Practice

Learning and skills

- Novus is responsible for delivering learning and skills

Maintenance

- Amey is responsible for maintenance and repair
- Much of the maintenance work is undertaken by Wetherby's own staff

Escort service

- GEOAmey provides the majority of escort services for young people arriving at HMYOI Wetherby

Other services

- Barnardo's provides an independent advocacy service to the young people
- In2Out provides one-to-one mentoring to help young people with a range of practical support
- Kinetic Youth
- Young People's Drug and Alcohol Support Services (YPDASS) provides substance misuse support



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