

Ministry
of JusticeChair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Feltham
Bedfont Road
Feltham
Middlesex
TW13 4ND15th April 2024**HMP/YOI FELTHAM: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 – 31 AUGUST 2023**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Feltham. I have read your report with care and I commend the Board for carrying out its statutory role effectively.

We recognise that staffing levels are a concern and therefore increased the recruitment of Prison Officers and Youth Justice Workers through a dedicated national campaign. The Youth Custody Service (YCS) has also reviewed advertising and recruitment material to take into account exit interview data from staff leaving the service to further increase attraction.

Following the introduction of the staff retention oversight process in August 2022, HMP/YOI Feltham (both A and B sides) had been identified as a site with high attrition rates and consequently had a comprehensive examination undertaken by the Retention Research Team during autumn 2023. The research was led by an Occupational Psychologist and explored the drivers of attrition. The aim of the research was to identify potential causes of resignations and support the subsequent design and implementation of interventions to address the issues. With input from the Governor, Deputy Director YCS Operations, and Head of Human Resources, a bespoke retention action plan is now being drafted based on the outcome of the research that will help address the issues that have been identified. Attendance management processes have also been reviewed and strengthened, with support and appropriate focus around sickness absence a regular feature of local management oversight.

To improve probation staffing levels, we provided extra funding of more than £155 million a year to deliver more robust supervision, recruit thousands more staff, and reduce caseloads to keep the public safer, and we are beginning to see the results of our focus on recruitment and retention. Staffing levels in London have increased by 13% in the twelve months ending 31 December 2023 and encompasses all Probation Service grades. Additional support for the London region was provided through staff moves under the Civil Service Detached Duty scheme, for staff willing to move to London (and other most in need areas) to resolve immediate short-term staffing challenges. There has been an accelerated recruitment of trainee Probation Officers (PQiPs) and over 4,000 PQiPs started training between 2020/21 and 2022/23 which will increase Probation Officer staffing numbers. In January 2024, a Probation Alumni Scheme was launched to encourage qualified Probation Officers and Senior Probation Officers who left within the last five years to return, enabling significantly reduced recruitment lead times.

I appreciate that stabilisation of staffing resources supports time out of room and engagement in purposeful activity at both sites at HMP/YOI Feltham. The increased national recruitment of Prison

Officers and Youth Justice Workers will lead to an improvement in delivery and a more stable daily timetable for both the young people and prisoners at HMP/YOI Feltham.

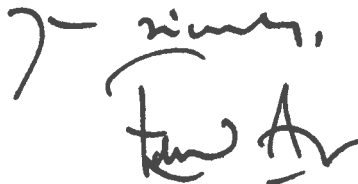
It is regrettable that concerns about prisoners' property remain despite implementation of the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework in September 2022. The Framework places an emphasis on ensuring compliance with volumetric control limits, anything within these limits will be transferred with the prisoner. Volumetric control limits apply to all establishments and the Framework introduced a new requirement that prisons must transfer excess property within four weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances which make this impossible. Emphasis has been placed on the accurate recording of items and the Framework is clear that Governors and Directors should ensure management checks are undertaken to have confidence that prisoners' property is being handled correctly and with care. HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) will monitor the impact of the new Framework going forward and will continue to look at what further improvements can be made. Any digital improvements will be longer-term.

Turning to Looked After Children in our care, the YCS has a Terms of Engagement in place with Local Authorities (LAs) through the Safeguarding Governance Board. This provides oversight of overarching data and requests can be made through this process. To further improve this, the YCS will continue to build relationships with LAs and site safeguarding teams. The Dedicated Social Worker is responsible for ensuring a log of all children who have a care status is kept up to date and work is ongoing to upskill key personnel on statutory requirements. Regarding Looked After Children with care orders, as committed to following last year's report, the YCS has liaised with the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to ensure the issue is highlighted and the Head of Safeguarding will now raise this at Youth Offending Team regional meetings. Records of professional visits are available, and Heads of Youth Offending Teams will follow up where a child has not been visited. A working together guidance and escalation process is being prepared by the YCS and YJB to address any issues that arise regarding professional visits for children. The YCS will endeavour to improve relationships with those who hold statutory responsibility.

I recognise the effect staffing levels can have on a regime and it was therefore encouraging to receive your comments about the staff that work on Feltham A making every effort to maximise the regime together with their attitude and conduct to treat the children with dignity and respect. I also noted the Board's comments about the tireless patience of staff on the Falcon unit who also won an award from the YCS.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HMPPS comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

I appreciate the valuable contribution from members of Independent Monitoring Boards and I am grateful for the work you do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Argar', written in a cursive style.

RT HON EDWARD ARGAR MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Site Maintenance

The fabric of the building is over forty years old and it is recognised that the flat roofs are well past their life expectancy. In the last financial year, over £100,000 has been spent on roofing repairs alone. Work has been carried out to make initial short-term improvements, but this remains an ongoing issue. There is a £20 million Ministry of Justice Major Capital Project for the complete roof replacements on five and a half units of B side (Ibis, Lapwing, Nightingale, Osprey, Raven, and Swallow), legal and social visits area, reception, and the Gate Lodge and Works building. The project is in the design phase, and works are expected to commence in 2024/25 subject to funding approval. In the interim, to continue the use of the living areas and workshops, temporary patch repairs, roof felting, and replacement of faulty skylights have been completed. A complete roof repair has been provided for Feltham B workshops.

Site Investment

Over the last three years there have been major investments carried out on the living accommodations on both A and B sites with the majority of the units being refurbished with new showers, serveries and complete decoration throughout, other than Mallard, Nightingale and Wren units. Shower pods have also been installed within the rooms on four Feltham A site units. There is also a rolling program for the replacement of new cell windows.

Increased rehabilitative facilities were provided at Feltham A which had five new workshops built within the Curtis Trust area and a library building. The education facility at Feltham A was also refurbished last year with new flooring and complete decoration. Feltham B has had investment in workshop facilities with refurbishment of the paints, bricks, and farm and gardens workshops. The old PICTA workshop was also recently converted into a new resettlement hub which includes employment.

Feltham A Education Provision

It is acknowledged that the education provision at Feltham A requires improvement. The YCS has developed a new quality and contractual assurance cycle to address the quality of education and the issue of children's needs not being met. Assurance activity conducted in October 2023 identified shortcomings for those learners' receiving education via outreach delivery. An action to improve the quality of provision and subsequent outcomes of those learners accessing Alternative Provision/Outreach forms part of the School Development Plan and is monitored monthly as part of the contract performance review meetings. YCS education leads carried out a monitoring visit on Outreach in January 2024 and confirmed some improvement but more was required.

Education provision is procured using commercial contracts and the YCS does not qualify for additional local authority funding to support children with Special Educational Needs and Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs). Adjustments and individualised support are included in the current contracts and it is the providers responsibility to ensure all children's needs are met. Guidelines make it clear that despite funding streams, the local authority must ensure plans are reviewed yearly, and adaptations are made where necessary to meet the needs of children in custodial settings. We are working with the Department of Education to investigate how we can support learners with special educational needs.

Feltham B Skills and Education

The commissioning of appropriate courses for the prisoner cohort lies with the Governor. The Governor commissions courses that are informed by a needs-analysis exercise and in consultation with employers and HMPPS' New Futures Network to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of their prisoners. Governors have the ability to change the curriculum throughout the year as needs change within the establishment.

A review of activities is underway with a new needs-analysis to better understand the requirements of the evolving cohort of prisoners resulting from national population capacity pressures. As Feltham B now holds prisoners aged 22-30 years of age, additional resource and expertise has been targeted to better cater for this older cohort and to reflect the provision for those in the wider adult male estate. The quality and type of workshop provision will be addressed to mitigate the current poor levels of engagement and attendance. The allocations process will be revised to prioritise sentence planning and offender flow.