



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMYOI Wetherby

**For reporting year
1 September 2023 to 31 August 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, any concern 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 231 young people between the ages of 15 and 18¹. The roll fluctuates but is generally around 150. It serves those people remanded into custody from sentencing courts within the catchment area of Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and designated areas of Lancashire and Greater Manchester. However, an increasing number of young people come from other parts of the country. All living accommodation is in single-occupancy rooms. At the time of writing, in September 2024, there are a few young women at Wetherby YOI and at the end of the reporting year there are 47 adult men aged 18 and over (due to Operation Safeguard – see below).

The sudden and unexpected closure, in April 2024, of HMYOI Cookham Wood in Kent meant that a group of young people transferred to Wetherby. They appear to have made the transition more smoothly than anticipated.

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

The Wetherby IMB reporting year has been one of many parts.

Reorganisation was already happening within the senior leadership team (SLT), prior to the Governor leaving in May 2024. As the new Governor took over, it was apparent to the IMB from the start that this was to be a very different style of leadership.

At the end of the reporting year, change is taking place at an accelerated pace. Undoubtedly, improvement is much needed, but the Board is concerned about the speed of change.

It is the view of the Board that if this shift is to be effective and long lasting, it has to come from a shared vision owned by all staff groups and cannot simply be imposed. Much work needs to be done to support staff to enable this transition to be a success.

Our reporting year is between 1 September 2023 and 31 August 2024. However, there have been some significant subsequent political decisions that we note here, as the Board feels they should have a positive impact on Wetherby.

- As a result of Operation Safeguard (which was activated by HM Prison and Probation Service when total prison estate capacity reached a point that required prisoners to be held in police cells on a temporary basis, as overflow), young people who were 18-plus remained at Wetherby, with their transfer to the adult estate delayed. In August 2024, there were 43 young people in this category. This measure has recently been lifted, so they are now able to move on, as and when they are ready.
- Unlike the adult estate, capacity at Wetherby has not been a problem. However, as a consequence of the Government's early release scheme (also known as SDS40), a few young people automatically became eligible for release.
- Most significantly - and answering one of our questions to the Minister - a three-month review has been commissioned by the Minister for Youth Justice to consider the placement options for young girls in the children's secure estate. The Board welcomes this and looks forward to hearing the outcome in February 2025.

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- From the Board's observations, violence continues to present a challenge, with young people carrying improvised weapons. Improved searches and vigilant staff are having some success in detecting weapons before they can be used.
- Separation of young people from each other (non-associates) considerably reduced the amount of time that young people were able to be out of their room.
- The Board is concerned about the number of injuries sustained by both young people and staff during restraints.

- Following the [HM Inspectorate of Prisons \(HMIP\) report](#) (the inspection was carried out between 20 November and 7 December 2023 and the report was published in March 2024), and, in particular, the reference to the searching and restraint process of women at Wetherby, there was intense media coverage. Some staff were subjected to unacceptable levels of abuse on social media. Subsequently, It became apparent to the IMB that many officers seemed to have lost confidence in their ability to use restraint effectively. This, along with the combination of new and inexperienced officers, has perhaps been a contributing factor in the increased number of injuries.
- During March and April of 2024, six serious incidents took place. However, the Board is pleased to report that the morale of staff was better than in 2023 and the establishment remained stable.

Fair and humane treatment

- The absence of a predictable regime causes frustration and uncertainty for the young people. Lack of consistency and the persistent poor communication of information to them unfortunately exacerbated the situation.
- The Board continues to observe excellent relationships between many staff and young people, which is to be commended. Many, if not most, of the young people at Wetherby present with highly complex needs and their behaviour at times is extremely challenging.
- The Board acknowledges the decisions made and the work done by the establishment, usually at very short notice, to enable and support those few young people to visit immediate family members who are critically ill or dying. This has been exemplary.
- The daily food allowance (DFA), although recently increased to £3.45 per person, is still, in the view of the Board, inadequate. The catering team does well to provide quality food. Young people inevitably have varying views on the food. The Board has received far fewer applications (young people's written representations) regarding the food, although some young people have told us they find the portions too small.
- Ongoing investment in the site is to be welcomed. Nevertheless, many areas, such as the Keppel unit, remain in need of refurbishment.

Health and wellbeing

- In the Board's view, healthcare provision, offering 24-hour cover, is reliable and consistently good, which has resulted in the Board receiving relatively few applications.
- Lack of suitable rooms in which to see the young people on the wings, however, remains a problem. This impacts, in particular, on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services' (CAMHS) ability to deliver interventions.
- Time out of room (TOOR) generally and, in particular, at weekends continues to be unacceptable. Separated young people remain in their rooms for up to 22 hours or more. What is produced in the TOOR data does not, in the opinion of the Board, always accurately correlate with what the young people tell us and we observe. The Board welcomes the recent move to a more detailed analysis of an individual's TOOR.

Education and training

- This has been a very disappointing year for the education department, with recruitment and retention of suitable staff the overriding factor.
- As a result of the HMIP/Ofsted inspection report, Novus (the education provider) was given three months to implement change. The follow-up assurance visit by the Youth Custody Service (YCS) central team deemed that insufficient progress had been made and issued a Notice to Improve. Focus is now on how to improve the quality of the provision and offer a more imaginative, relevant curriculum.
- Over 12,500 hours of education were lost due to cancellations, often poorly communicated to the young people, sometimes minutes before they were due to attend lessons. Generally, no alternative was offered other than, perhaps, a little longer in the exercise yard.
- Teaching staff, especially on outreach, also informed the Board that they were regularly available to work with young people but, due to lack of officers, could not gain access to them.
- Unfortunately, as a consequence of the damage caused by young people during a serious incident, Jellicoe, part of the recently refurbished education college, remained out of action, which also restricted the use of the library for some months.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- The ever-increasing number of young people who are serving very long sentences presents an irrefutable challenge. They enter custody as teenagers and may be in their forties when released. How does the Minister plan to support this specific category of offender through their custodial journey?
- What changes will the Minister make to the care system to reduce the disproportionate number of looked-after children in custody? There seems to be little success in progressing this serious failure. At any one time at Wetherby, there can be between 20 and 30 young people on a full care order.
- What decision, if any, has the Minister made regarding the provision for young women who require a secure setting?
- At the end of our reporting year, there were 43 remanded young people at the establishment. Unfortunately, for legal reasons, they are apparently not able to access any interventions. With a backlog and a delay in trials, young people often wait months and years. What will the Minister do to improve the situation?

TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

- Social workers report that they spend much of their time chasing up financial and other support for looked after young people. Once placed in custody, many local authorities appear to relinquish their responsibility, whether educational or financial. How can those underperforming local authorities be more accountable?
- For care leavers at Wetherby, uncertainty around future accommodation continues to cause significant stress and anxiety as they are due for release.

Local authorities frequently leave the provision of suitable accommodation until the very last minute. What can be done to improve the position?

TO THE YOUTH CUSTODY SERVICE

- The Board welcomes the improvements taking place at Wetherby. However, we wonder why, after a series of disappointing HMIP reports, the YCS has not been more proactive in seeking change.
- Many of the procedures in the youth custodial setting appear to be based on the adult model. Has the time come to review the systems such as adjudications, assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans and good order or discipline (GOoD) reviews, to make them more relevant to young people?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- The Board welcomes the proposed vision for Wetherby, but is concerned about how staff and young people will be supported to adapt to the changes, especially when they are happening at such an accelerated pace.
- The Board is concerned about the lack of communication, whether between or within departments. What can be improved so that, for example, young people are informed in a timely manner when last-minute changes and cancellations occur?
- How can you ensure that the staff required for interventions, such as conflict resolution, minimising and managing physical restraint (MMPR) or custody support plan (CuSP), will be available and not, as happens at present, frequently redeployed?
- Numerous young people rely on social video calls to keep in contact with family and friends. They tell us that, due to lack of staff, the video call often does not last as long as scheduled. How can this be improved?
- Many agencies report that they struggle to see young people for wing-based interventions, due to the lack of suitable rooms. How will you improve this situation?
- The Board has seen the positive outcomes and spoken with young people who value the support received from In2Out. Is funding available to enable them to continue with their work?
- The IMB looks forward to seeing the new Governor more frequently at its monthly board meeting.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

Reception oversees all young people as they move in and out of the establishment, whether for court appearances, hospital appointments or release on temporary licence (ROTL).

The reception environment, although basic, is always staffed and generally clean. Young people have never raised any concerns to the IMB about their treatment whilst in reception.

Late arrivals are now the exception; however, the Board appreciates being informed when and why this has occurred.

The Board notes that most of the officers are consistently sensitive to the vulnerabilities of the young people, most of whom are at critical periods in their custodial journey.

On arrival in reception, a young person is assessed by a reception officer, then 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 ACCT (assessment, care in custody and teamwork) plan, which facilitates a higher level of monitoring by the wing staff.

Towards the end of the reporting year, the number of officers staffing reception was reduced from four to three. The Board will continue to monitor the impact of this closely. It is a busy department, supervising unpredictable numbers of young people as they arrive and leave, but also supporting court video links and distributing property, etc.

From the Board's observations, the induction wing offers good support to young people and staff are effective in the care of those who are in the vulnerable early days of custody. During their time on the wing, young people are introduced to the representatives from the various departments and learn about the agencies that will be supporting them whilst at Wetherby. Fortunately, much of this information is also available on the laptop that each young person is given.

Young people on induction regularly tell the Board that they find the allocation to an educational pathway slow.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

The Board reports that there were no suicides or deaths in custody during the year. Self-harm incidents remained high, mainly, but not exclusively, attributable to the young women. The table below indicates the recorded number of incidents of self-harm, although the lower figures (in bold) are the numbers when adjusted to take into account three young people with a high incidence of self-harm.

Self-harm incidents, September 2023-August 2024

Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	March 24	April 24	May 24	June 24	July 24	Aug 24
129	93	106	59	33	39	137	107	148	159	42	111
8	12	13	5	20	20	17	17	40	39	12	16

When a young person appears or states that they are in a low mood, which could possibly lead to self-harm, staff seem quick to open an ACCT document. This means that staff will check on the young person at frequent intervals. Most young people tell the Board that they feel well supported by the staff checks; however, some young people tell us that they find the night-time checks, in particular, disturb them, although, as a rule, they understand why this happens.

The ACCT document is reviewed regularly with the young person to see what changes need to be made, or if it can be closed. The Board is of the opinion that this process, where the young person and various agencies meet to monitor progress, is not conducive to a meaningful discussion. It cannot be easy for a teenager to openly discuss their mental health in front of a group of adults, not all familiar to them. It is for this reason that we do not monitor many ACCT reviews in person. However, we routinely check the documents. The IMB recommends that the YCS reconsiders the appropriateness of the ACCT format.

The number of ACCT documents opened

Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	March 24	April 24	May 24	June 24	July 24	Aug 24
12	18	14	10	15	23	14	23	25	24	19	23

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

A high percentage of the young people are in custody due to a violent offence and, for many, violence is a way of life. At the end of the reporting year, 38 had been charged or remanded for murder/manslaughter. The cost to the country in both human and financial terms is unacceptable. In the Board's view, any external progress that has been made to reduce this number seems to have had minimal effect.

Staff appear to continue to work to resolve the issues around the increased levels of violence within the establishment. One of the significant factors in the apparent increase in violence is that used by the young females when staff are trying to prevent them from self-harming.

Separation of young people from each other, non-associates, considerably reduced the amount of time that young people were able to be out of their room. This was particularly noticeable on the main site. Whilst the Board understands the reasoning behind it, separation frequently appears to increase their frustration.

A small cohort of young people arrive with entrenched, community-based disputes which, unfortunately, continue whilst in custody. Close liaison between Wetherby and a variety of agencies, including various police forces, helps to support and better understand these complexities.

Young people tell the IMB that they carry weapons for self-protection rather than to be a perpetrator. For some, this maybe the case but, undoubtedly, others have every intention of using them against not only their peers but staff, too. It was previously rare that a young person openly admitted to feeling unsafe. We do find that this is now mentioned more frequently to Board members, especially when we follow up on applications.

Weapon finds, September 2023-August 2024 ((in the previous reporting year, there were 889)

Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Apr 24	May 24	Jun 24	Jul 24	Aug 24	Total
45	49	47	66	62	97	97	84	82	63	111	90	893

Some young people on the main site are classified as separated for a variety of reasons. A young person may choose to remain behind their door due to concerns for their own safety, or that of others, or it could be for medical reasons or due to a mental health issue. They are monitored by the establishment, with daily welfare checks made and recorded: their regime is equally limited. However, the Board is pleased to report that more is now being done to support complex young people and improve their regime.

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. It is a time-consuming process involving two officers and the Duty Governor, plus administrative support to prepare the paperwork.

When monitoring adjudications, the Board finds they usually take place promptly, with the young person being encouraged to attend in person. On the whole, the Board is satisfied that adjudications are conducted fairly. Whilst there may be variations in the approach of Governors, all tend to make sure that the young person understands the process. The Deputy Governor quality checks the paperwork monthly.

Adjudications, September 2023-August 2024

	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	March 24	April 24	May 24	June 24	July 24	Aug 24
Keppel	38	31	47	20	60	56	57	53	65	44	70	54
Main site	158	154	156	111	126	179	151	145	153	208	196	175
Total	196	185	203	131	186	235	208	197	218	252	266	229
Police	17	33	35	18	4	10	49	42	56	49	44	30
*IAs	0	9	15	2	32	1	6	4	0	1	1	1

**Independent adjudications, IAs, are formal hearings, for a more serious breach of prison rules. They are conducted by an external person, often a district judge, who comes in to Wetherby. An IA can add additional days to the young person's original sentence.*

4.3.2 Serious incidents

Some of the serious incidents, such as young people climbing up at height (including on the netting or climbing over bars or on the roof), can be successfully managed and de-escalated on the wing. Others, however, if protracted or potentially dangerous, can result in the opening of the Command Suite.

There were ten serious incidents during the reporting year. Some required additional external support from the National Tactical Response Group (a team trained to intervene in dangerous, high-risk situations) and were overseen at a national level.

The IMB is generally informed promptly, in which case a member may initially monitor the situation by phone or, if serious or protracted, they will observe in person. For a second year, April was the peak month for serious incidents.

Six incidents were monitored by IMB members, who observed from the Command Suite. Good use is made of CCTV cameras, although at times it can be difficult to hear what is being said at the site of the incident. The Board considered them to be well managed. The cost of providing emergency service vehicles and personnel is significant, taking numerous vehicles and workers away from their community duties, often for extended periods of time. Incidents cause disruption to the establishment's regime on the day, but the impact may also last longer, as occurred this year, due to the extensive damage to the interior of the establishment.

Command Suite occurrences (recorded), September 2023-August 2024

Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Apr 24	May 24	Jun 24	Jul 24	Aug 24	Total
1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	1	1	1	10

Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution (CR) works effectively to resolve disputes between young people or between young people and staff, thus creating a safer environment. As a consequence, it can reduce the number of non-associates and enable more young people to mix together, resulting in more TOOR. As mentioned previously, many of the disputes originate from well-entrenched community-based issues.

The majority of the young people who engage with conflict resolution, a voluntary process, speak positively about their experience. The Board is disappointed to hear that, although supposedly ring fenced, the small team of officers is frequently redeployed elsewhere on site, with no notice. Building trust with the young people is an important part of the procedure, so cancellations are most unhelpful. In June 2024, there was a 33% drop in their CR work due to redeployment, whilst the figure was 56% for July.

Number of young people referred to CR

Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	March 24	April 24	May 24	June 24	July 24	Aug 24
N/a	23	14	12	17	16	9	20	15	6	7	14

4.4 Young people with specific vulnerabilities

Historically, Keppel, followed by Napier, has been the enhanced provision for young people with specific vulnerabilities. However, there are few, anywhere on site, whose needs can be defined as straightforward.

The Board notes that 75% of young people on Napier are on a full care orders (when the local authority has legal responsibility for them), with 37.5% on Keppel and 18% on main site.

Keppel offers accommodation and support for those who are more at risk, either due to their vulnerabilities or index (serious) offence. At times, Keppel has been the base for some of the young women held at Wetherby.

The roll on Keppel has been kept intentionally lower than usual capacity of 48. This is fortunate, as many rooms remain out of order due to maintenance delays. The building is in urgent need of refurbishment.

It has been another difficult year for Keppel, with young people on the unit submitting a higher number of applications to the IMB. They expressed their annoyance at the limited regime, lack of consistency and poor communication with staff. On occasion, education seemed non-existent. At one time, Keppel offered a relatively stable environment, but the unit has become increasingly unsettled.

Undoubtedly a significant factor, for Keppel in particular and the establishment in general, was the demoralising impact on staff of the HMIP inspection report. The unprecedented media response to the report and the subsequent reaction on social media was, in the view of the Board, highly damaging.

As in previous annual reports, the Board remains concerned at the continuing placement of young women at Wetherby in the present provision. Whilst one or two young women remain at Wetherby, the Board is disheartened by the lack of political progress regarding the future provision.

From the initial placement of women at Wetherby, the Board noted that their presence has had a significant and long-lasting impact on the regime delivery within the establishment. On Keppel, especially, the regime was led by the behaviour and needs of the few women, much to the detriment of the young men.

The Board was very concerned at the lack of TOOR and the limited regime on Keppel, the only certainty being cancellations. With the lack of both teaching staff and officers available to facilitate the educational offer, day-to-day life was, in the Board's view, bleak.

At the end of the reporting year, the Board welcomes an improving regime and received fewer applications. As a result of a more imaginative regime and educational provision, young people seem to be increasingly engaged in activities both within the unit and the estate. The Board hopes this can be sustained.

Napier is a s-x-bed unit for young people who also require a high level of support due to the complexity of their needs. The original function was to support young people in crisis, who might then move back to a wing. This rarely happens: most remain on Napier until released or transferred, sometimes to a secure mental health hospital, for which there is the inevitable delay.

There have been protracted periods of time on Napier when it has been necessary to simultaneously manage three young people, all of whom required a constant watch.

For those young people on Napier, or elsewhere on site, who require a bespoke multi-disciplinary approach, there is a weekly enhanced support meeting (EST). The Board was previously informed weekly about the dates and times of the meetings. However, unexpectedly and unannounced, the notifications stopped.

Education on Napier appears to provide greater consistency due the smaller number of young people and a more suitable environment that can respond flexibly to the needs of the individual.

The Board commends the professionalism, tolerance and compassion shown by most officers to these young people, whose behaviour is frequently both emotionally and physically challenging.

Foreign national prisoners

At the end of the reporting year, there were 13 foreign national prisoners, some of whom had very limited English. Most staff do their best to help facilitate effective methods of communication, whether using phone interpreters or arranging an interpreter to attend medical and legal appointments. Eight of these young people were awaiting deportation.

Neurodiversity

As reported last year, a neurodiversity support manager (NSM) was appointed in June 2023 as part of the Prison Service initiative to create a greater awareness of neurodiversity in prison and increase the support. Prior to the scheme being rolled out, it had only been trialled in the adult estate and it is taking some time to integrate effectively, within the very different juvenile setting. The NSM is proactive in supporting both officers and young people and is tireless in promoting the role.

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.

Since the last IRRP visit, a combination of factors appear to have culminated in an increase in the number of young people and staff receiving injuries during a restraints or planned removal. Many officers now appear to have lost confidence which, in the view of the Board, is partly due to staff receiving mixed messages from scrutinising agencies. It has become apparent that the officers, many relatively inexperienced, are unclear about exactly what should be done. There were 222 assaults and injuries sustained by staff during use of force incidents.

A young person, about to be released, was asked by the IMB if there was anything he would like to change about Wetherby. He replied: *'Stop them [officers] hesitating; they open your door and they hesitate. When you get restrained, MMPR come and they hesitate... they hesitate and you think there's something wrong.'*

There have been 1,143 instances when restraint was used, varying from low level, such as Velcro cuffs, to full restraint. A total of 49 of the restraint incidents were planned. The number of approved pain-inducing techniques (PIT) was 17. The

increased use of PIT can generally be attributed to violence displayed by the young women.

The healthcare department observes any planned removals. The young people who have been restrained are followed up later on the wing by healthcare. They speak with the young person involved; this conversation may take place through the door.

The IMB monitors 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. The pre-selected cases to be reviewed are well presented and clear to understand. Attendance of others can be variable but a member of staff from the healthcare department seems to be always present.

MMPR refresher training should be completed, ideally, every six months, but certainly every year. The MMPR officers who deliver the training have difficulty reaching this target, as it can be problematic to release staff for training or the MMPR team is redeployed. In theory, the team is ring-fenced but, in reality, this is seldom the case.

The Board is pleased to report that the regular use of body worn video cameras, (BVWCs) continues to increase. Officers are encouraged to turn on their camera as soon as they see or feel that a situation may be escalating. This is in everyone's interest, as it can be used in evidence and also when reviewing incidents for training purposes.

All young people who are fully searched under restraint are seen by an MMPR coordinator and a member of the child protection team. If the correct processes have not been followed, the case will then be referred externally to the local area designated officer (LADO)

4.6 Substance misuse

All young people are offered access to the young people's drug and alcohol support service (YPDASS) on arrival at Wetherby.

The security department continues to work assiduously to reduce the young people's access to drugs whilst in custody. In collaboration with external agencies, such as West Yorkshire Police, Crime Corruption Units and security group colleagues, proactive searches take place.

Staff remain vigilant and significant finds have been made, from packages arriving as 'throwovers' or detected as passes during social visits.

This year, 146 mandatory drug tests on young people were undertaken, as opposed to 127 last year; in most cases, this was found to be cannabis and gabapentin (a pain killer). Drugs are not just confined to one wing but are in limited use throughout the residential areas. Frequently, it correlates to the presence of one individual or a small group of young people.

YPDASS can be contacted by way of an application form available on a young person's laptop. However, any young person who tests positive for drugs whilst in custody will be sanctioned and is allocated a worker who will endeavour to support a targeted group of young people on their caseload.

Out of a total of 146 tests: 1 September 2023-31 August 2024

Refused to take a test	Passed (negative)	Failed (positive)	Terminated sample
28	68	47	3

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Due to the age and fabric of the building, there is an ongoing programme of refurbishment at Wetherby, with maintenance not only being costly but never-ending. The Board understands that the establishment has to be responsive to the everchanging demands of the day-to-day population, often resulting in the re-purposing of rooms and wings. However, work that has just been completed is frequently undertaken yet again, in order to fulfil another function. The Board is concerned that this is not the best use of public money.

Throughout the entire site, there are numerous rooms out of action, endlessly awaiting repairs. The Board learned that the computer programme used to record the maintenance work is misleading: although it can appear that a room is undergoing work or that the work is even completed, it can simply mean the contractors are aware that repair work is required. We were informed by staff that this was, in fact, an error in inputting data by the user.

The Board is pleased that there continues to be a role for the establishment to manage some of its own maintenance work and overview the external contractors.

With the age of the buildings comes the continuous struggle to provide an effective heating system. The Board receives countless applications from young people unhappy about the room temperature. Rooms, especially on Keppel, are frequently cold. On the main site, the heating system is slow to adapt and young people tell members that it is either too hot or too cold.

The area around the healthcare department and, in particular, the dental suite remains in a poor state of repair, as it has done for years.

Some young people take pride in their rooms, which are kept in immaculate condition. However, for the majority, this is not a priority. Disappointingly, the Board feels insufficient focus and encouragement is given to the young people to take personal responsibility for the state their own room. This is a basic life skill and greater emphasis should be placed on it.

As reported in last year's report, young people and officers have frequently informed the Board about a shortage of kit, including towels, clothing and, in particular, socks. This reporting year, it has been an even greater problem. £16,000 was spent restocking, which seems to have been successful as, since then, the number of applications regarding kit has significantly reduced.

5.2 Separation

During the reporting year, the care and separation provision has been located and relocated between Anson and Benbow to enable refurbishment work to take place. For the young people, this has been especially frustrating. On Anson, they generally have access to in-room showers, unlike Benbow, which has none. Facilitating showers in the main body of Benbow depends on the time and availability of officers. The SLT believes this can offer an additional opportunity for staff to engage with a young person.

The Board appreciates the complexities of delivering a regime when the occupancy rate remains consistently high and several of the young people are on a three- or four-officer unlock.

The wing caters for young people placed there under Rule 49, for the stability of the establishment. But there have also been young people placed there who cannot be safely located elsewhere, due to non-associates. Some young people on the wing are awaiting release or transfer to the adult estate. The high occupancy and length of stay of these young people, in particular, has had a significant impact on the ability of officers to deliver a satisfactory regime to any of them. The lack of clarity about the identity of Benbow has caused confusion for some of the young people placed there.

Some young people remain separated for far too long, which is also monitored externally. To remain in their room, with such a limited regime, is not only completely unacceptable, but potentially harmful to the developing brain, in the Board's view.

Throughout the reporting year, on completion of their weekly monitoring of the separation provision, the Board continued to raise concerns about the limited regime available to all the young people on Benbow, which they deemed to be not only inhumane but degrading. With a very high occupancy rate, it is difficult to deliver a purposeful regime. The Board notes the recent regime improvement and hopes it can be sustained.

The unit has a multidisciplinary team to manage and support the immediate needs of the young people who are separated for good order or discipline (GOoD). On arrival, they will be evaluated by a psychologist, who completes a short-term assessment of risk and need (STARN), which will help to update the case formulation.

Daily welfare checks are conducted by the healthcare department, the GP, the Duty Governor, the chaplaincy team and Barnardo's advocacy.

The Board has been consistently disappointed with the poor regime, offering only limited access to a yard, at times less than 30 minutes a day. Young people frequently report that they have had no gym during the week.

Whilst being mindful that the IMB's role is that of a monitor, it is hugely frustrating that, whilst we raised the matter of the poor regime repeatedly, no improvement was made until a visit from the quality assurance central team had taken place.

Although outreach education is available at times, it lacks consistency and often none is offered. Unfortunately, this again is said to be due to the high occupancy rate and lack of officers. It is frustrating to see education staff, at times, in attendance on the unit, yet unable to gain access to the young people.

The length of each education session is variable: depending on the number of young people held on separation on any one day, it can last only 20 minutes, at best.

GOoD multidisciplinary reviews, to monitor the progress of a separated young person and plan for their return to the main site, are held at the appropriate intervals. A member of the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) team, rather than someone from the physical health team, is usually present. The IMB and other agencies are informed of the date and time of the review. An IMB member visits Benbow weekly, talking with the young people and monitoring the separation reviews whenever possible.

The Board remains of the opinion that the area used to hold the GOoD reviews is unsuitable. It offers little in the way of privacy and is frequently so busy, with people walking through to access other areas, that the young people who attend their reviews become distracted.

Benbow accommodates those young people classified as restricted status, who remain there for the duration of their stay at Wetherby. The rooms are extremely small, grim and not fit for purpose.

5.3 Staff and young people relationships

Towards the end of the reporting period, the staffing levels at Wetherby have been in a stronger position, with recruitment and retention reportedly being less of a problem than in the other YOIs. The last 12 months has seen many new officers in post. The establishment is proactive in making sure new officers are fully aware that their role is as a prison officer. Previously, there had been confusion, which was the result of misleading advertisements: many applicants perceived that their role, advertised as a youth justice worker, would be more akin to that of a social worker or caseworker.

Officer support grades (OSGs) are now better staffed and all the administrative posts are filled.

In the final few months of the reporting period, sickness and absence had been at a very high level, with as many as 50 staff a day absent. However, this has been robustly challenged, resulting in a dramatic reduction. There were 24 outright assaults on staff and, unfortunately, 66 staff attended A&E from Wetherby as a result of an assault.

The Board has heard from more officers, who tell us they are experiencing mental health problems, some of which are severe. They do not always feel well supported by the establishment.

Anecdotally, the number of female officers appears high, although the number of male officers joining the service is increasing.

The Board is pleased to report that there has been an increase in the diversity of the staff group. However, the SLT remains predominately white.

Young people vary in their opinion of the officers. Many tell us that, in general, they feel the staff group is too young and too near to them in age. At times, the Board notes that some of the conversations among younger staff are not always appropriate and do not encourage respect. That said, most interaction that the Board observed has been positive. At weekends, when there is less pressure to deliver the educational regime, staff appear to engage more with the young people.

Consistency of staffing is beneficial, although not always achievable for operational reasons. Young people tell the Board that consistency is important to them, especially for custody support plan (CuSP) sessions. The quality of contact and interaction between staff and young people is as varied as the staff and young people themselves. However, the Board considers that many of the meetings and processes, such as, for example, ACCT or GOoD reviews, which are required, have become routine and mundane and are often lacking in depth and quality.

It is the opinion of the Board that a system evolved for adults generally does not meet the needs of a young person.

Custody support plans (CuSPs)

This is an evidence-based care planning approach for all young people in custody, who should have access to a personal officer trained in motivational interview techniques.

Evidence shows that when a young person receives regular CuSP sessions, their mood and behaviour generally improve. A young person should have the opportunity to meet with a dedicated officer on a regular basis, to talk through concerns or worries. Disappointingly, some young people tell us that they do not know what a CuSP is or who their CuSP officer is.

Unfortunately, the delivery of a CuSP has been poor throughout the year, with disparity in the number of CuSP sessions undertaken by different units. General meetings dedicated to CuSP have been poorly attended. It would appear that CuSP is championed by a limited number of the staff, but is not universally supported at all levels, including among the SLT, in the Board's view.

In August, a significant change in the delivery of CuSP was introduced. This involved moving from a named CuSP officer and a back-up for each child to a single named officer who will be responsible for CuSP delivery to the young person through their entire stay in Wetherby.

If sustained, the Board views this as a positive step in improving the delivery of CuSP and providing greater accountability. This might be possible for young people who are serving a short sentence, but the Board is concerned that it is, perhaps, unrealistic for those with longer sentences.

The total number of CuSP sessions planned, compared with those delivered

	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Apr 24	May 24	Jun 24	Jul 24	Aug 24	Total 23/24
Planned	603	621	539	564	586	487	517	514	522	511	658	631	6753
Held	251	242	249	308	310	258	231	249	281	258	141	205	2983
% held	42%	56%	46%	55%	53%	54%	45%	48%	54%	51%	22%	33%	44%

Youth council

The youth council is held monthly and offers young people from each wing (wing reps) the opportunity to meet with staff from the various agencies to ask questions and raise any concerns. When the Board is able to monitor these meetings, they appear extremely well supported, although more adults than young people attend.

The discussion between staff and young people is good and, most encouragingly, matters arising tend to be followed up.

The youth council action plan and work in progress on the issues is available on the young person's laptop.

Regular community meetings are held on each wing to consider wider views and concerns.

The Board monitors some of the meetings and always receives the minutes and follow up actions.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Whilst the Board acknowledges the focus and work to support Wetherby becoming a fair and equitable establishment, it would appear, however, that racism continues although the situation is not getting worse.

Discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) are generally available on all units. The majority of DIRFs are submitted by staff. Many young people are aware of the systems in place for reporting discrimination but seem to have little confidence in the process.

An equality action plan was implemented in March 2024 and progress against the plan is measured and formally discussed quarterly.

The ethnicity of the YOI population at the end of the reporting year

White	60%
Mixed heritage	8%
Asian or Asian British	12%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	15%
Other	5%

This information is used proactively to make comparisons with the ethnicity of the young person involved in, amongst other things, restraints, separation and the incentives scheme.

In the past 12 months, 124 DIRFs submitted, the same number as in the previous year. Of these 124, 79% were related to race and 14.5% were classified as relating to sexual orientation, with other protected characteristics (such as religion, sex, gender reassignment, disability and age, which it is unlawful to discriminate against) making up the balance of 6.5%.

DIRFs are quality assured, in the first instance, by the equality advisor and, at a later stage, by the head of safety and equality and the Deputy Governor.

There are ongoing efforts to improve the quality of DIRFs to both streamline the process and create a better outcome for the young person in terms of feedback and resolution.

In order to have outside validation of the quality of DIRFs, a sample was submitted to the Zahid Mubarek Trust, an independent national charity. Unfortunately, this initiative could not progress so, in August 2024, a DIRF scrutiny panel was created, comprising representatives from the social work team, the charity In2Out, the psychology team, CAMHS and a young person representative.

Through a process of education, staff are becoming more confident in challenging discriminatory language or racial abuse towards young people of black or mixed heritage. It is still evident that some young people believe that racial abuse towards white young people from other young people and staff frequently goes unchallenged.

The equality action group (EAG) meets monthly and aims to work towards the successful implementation of the equality action plan. An IMB member sometimes monitors these meetings and has been disappointed by the poor attendance, specifically from representatives of the wings. The IMB receives comprehensive

minutes and progress reports from every EAG meeting. The Board believes that progress is being made towards creating a more equitable environment.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The multifaith team chaplaincy team offers consistency, not only in staffing, but in approach and presence around the establishment. They are there for all the young people in Wetherby who wish to engage with them, irrespective of their beliefs. Chaplaincy offers a wide range of support, whether regular services, running courses, or support at times of need.

There have been some improvement in the number of young people attending for services; nevertheless, it remains limited due to non-associates.

The Christmas service is well attended and seems to be thoroughly enjoyed by the young people, staff and external visitors. As one young person said of the visitors, 'They make things seem a bit more normal'.

This year, around 30 young people observed Ramadan, with meals provided in insulated boxes by the kitchens. As Ramadan occurred earlier in the year and with cooler weather, more young people were able to sustain the fasting.

In particular, the Board commends the work done by chaplaincy, both within and outside the establishment, to support young people who have experienced the serious illness of a family member or a bereavement.

5.6 Rewards and sanctions

The incentives scheme is used to encourage positive behaviour. On arrival, all young people enter on the gold level and it is their responsibility to stay at that status in order to maintain privileges. A complete list of the gold level benefits is available to all young people through the laptops in their rooms.

Young people can be downgraded, based on behaviour, to either of the two other levels: silver and standard. Likewise, young people can be upgraded as a reward for a positive or improving pattern of behaviour.

Young people complain that there is little difference between the gold and silver levels and there has been no addition to the gold level benefits in the reporting year.

At the end of the reporting year, 56% of young people had gold status, 33% silver and the remaining 11% were on standard.

C wing is the gold wing. However, there are insufficient places, which can be frustrating for those who are eligible to be housed there.

Whilst this suits some young people who may wish to stay on another wing with their friends, it frustrates many gold level young people, who feel that there is little to be gained by being on the top level of the incentives scheme.

5.7 Complaints

The establishment's complaint process is relatively straightforward and seems to work well.

Young people fill in a complaint form (supported by Barnardo's if they want help) and the forms are collected daily. They are logged and sent to be investigated within the

time scale. The young person receives a response and, if unhappy, can raise a further complaint form (Comp 1). Again, these are logged and sent for investigation to a more senior staff member than the person who investigated the initial complaint. A response is delivered and, if dissatisfied, the young person can raise their complaint externally for further investigation.

In the Board's view, every complaint is dealt with the same rigour, regardless of the subject.

A total of 10% of complaint forms submitted are randomly selected for quality check by the head of performance.

The number of complaints received in the reporting year

Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Apr 24	May 24	Jun 24	Jul 24	Aug 24	Total 23/24
31	50	53	35	53	42	29	42	46	62	52	59	554
27	31	44	26	36	33	23	30	37	42	30	40	399
87%	62%	83%	74%	68%	79%	79%	71%	80%	68%	58%	68%	72%

In the reporting year, there were 24 Comp 1 forms completed, of which 13 (54%) were rejected.

There were 554 complaints in the reporting year, compared with 445 in the previous period in review. There doesn't seem to be an obvious cause for the 25% increase, particularly when young people tell us they feel it is pointless making a complaint, as so many are rejected.

The Board asked young people how satisfied they were about how their complaints were dealt with: 46% of those who gave feedback reported that they were happy, while 42% said they were unhappy, with the balance giving a neutral response.

The top ten reasons for complaint were:

Category	Number received	% of total received
Property/clothing	92	17%
Staff	49	9%
Education	30	5%
Medical/healthcare	21	4%
Food/drink	21	4%
Visits	18	3%
Use of force	17	3%
Accommodation	12	2%
Incentives scheme	10	2%
Finance/cash	10	2%
Total	280	51%

The establishment is only responsible for stored property and not for property that is lost on the wings. In the Board's view, this seems unfair, as property lost by the establishment in the laundry is not under the control of the young person.

5.8 Property

Reception is responsible for the property that a young person brings into the establishment and that which is sent in to them. All the property is checked and, if required, may be sent to HMP Wealstun to be X-rayed. Wetherby does not have its own X-ray equipment, as it is deemed to be too costly to run. There should be a weekly set day for property to be sent; however, this transfer does not always happen. On its return from Wealstun, the distribution of property to the young person on the wing is sometimes delayed, due to staffing shortages in reception. The Board finds it disappointing, as this can frequently cause frustration for the young person.

Some young people no longer require the clothes they were wearing when they arrived in custody, often because they have outgrown them. When they are released, they may choose to leave such clothing in reception. With the permission of the young person, this property is retained at Wetherby

The Board is aware of instances where a young person due to be released is without suitable clothing. They may be kitted out with the property that has been kept. The Board commends this good practice.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

A 24-hour healthcare service is available to young people at Wetherby.

It is the view of the Board that the provision is at least consistent in range and quality with what is available in the community.

The multidisciplinary healthcare team comprises experienced and skilled staff, covering both mental and physical health. Young people who require support from a healthcare professional can complete an application on their laptop. Sometimes, they ask officers to contact the healthcare department on their behalf. Healthcare staff seem to respond in a timely manner to requests made by young people.

6.2 Physical healthcare

The physical health of the young people at Wetherby is generally well met, in the Board's view. A regular team of multidisciplinary healthcare professionals is in attendance, as appropriate. The physiotherapist is subcontracted, visiting Wetherby monthly. They are involved in health promotion, exercise and weight management.

The local subcontracted GP practice visits six days a week, with the rest of the cover provided by nursing staff. Healthcare assistants and band 3 administrative staff have now been formally trained to act as chaperones for the GPs. The staff complement is good, with agency staff rarely used.

Education and support are given to young people to enable them to make choices that encourage health living. They can be helped to make dietary changes, exercise and improve their sleep pattern whilst in custody. Young people have told the IMB that this can be very difficult when they have had a reduced regime, extended periods in their room, limited exercise and little to do except sleep.

Young people's drug and alcohol support services (YPDASS) will work with young people who require help around the use and abuse of drugs and/or alcohol. However, lack of available rooms impacts their ability to deliver the service.

Young people may also catch up with any outstanding immunisations and dental or orthodontic treatment.

The dental waiting time has been reduced, as the healthcare department now triages dental applications and can fast track any young person experiencing or reporting dental pain. Unusually, the IMB received a higher number of applications concerning healthcare, although this was mainly from one young person who was extremely concerned about a dental problem and needed frequent reassurance that the matter was in hand.

A hospital pathway has been arranged with two of the local hospitals to enable a young person who requires an unplanned admission to be dealt with as speedily as possible.

Support from the Governor and the senior leadership team has resulted in a reduction in the number of young people who do not attend (DNAs) healthcare appointments and waiting lists by improving the movement of young people to their appointments.

6.3 Mental health

CAMHS fulfils their obligations and regularly attends GOoD reviews, ACCT reviews and EST meetings, as well seeing those young people on Rule 49. CAMHS supports not only young people but increasingly works with staff to provide training and guidance.

Encouragingly, during the reporting year, recruitment and retention has improved and the Board is pleased to report that the department is almost fully staffed.

Although CAMHS offers support and interventions to 70% of the young people at Wetherby, more actually access their services indirectly. From the initial assessment and throughout, the CAMHS pathway staff liaise directly with parents, provided they have the consent of the young person.

Wetherby has specialist input from two psychiatrists, one of whom is also a forensic CAMHS psychiatrist, and both highly experienced in their field.

If they are to be seen on the wing, young people are generally available for their appointments. If they are required elsewhere on site, there is an allocated movements officer to escort them to an appointment. However, there continues to be difficulty in finding suitable rooms on the wings, which means that a young person can actually miss their appointment. The Board recommends that this is addressed as a matter of urgency.

6.4 Social care

The team comprises five very experienced social workers, including the manager, who, for the last five months of the reporting period, has been acting up as the manager. They are employed by Leeds City Council and managed through the integrated safeguarding team. Following a successful recruitment process, the acting manager has now been appointed as the lead. Two social worker posts are yet to be filled. Importantly, the manager and the social care team feel they are well supported by the Governor and SLT.

The Board's outstanding concern remains the same as reported in previous years, with social workers at Wetherby spending time chasing up local authorities (LA) that are slow or reluctant to financially support their looked after children. The social work team reports that this situation is getting worse as, nationally, LAs struggle financially. LAs can also be slow to send in clothes for looked after young people.

6.5 Time out of room, regime

As mentioned throughout the report, the IMB has expressed concern regarding the unpredictable regime and lack of TOOR. For a few days this might improve, but it is the inability to sustain the improvement that frustrates everyone.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

See 4.6, above.

6.7 Soft skills

Improved access to the library and a wider range of books on the wings has encouraged reading for pleasure. Chess is also an option for some young people, with sessions held in the library or on Keppel.

The redundant army cadet's building has been successfully transformed in to the phoenix youth club. This can be accessed by some of the young people who demonstrate a consistent pattern of good behaviour.

7. Education and training

7.1 Education

As a result of the HMIP inspection in December 2023, Novus was given three months to implement change in the educational provision. When the YCS central team came later in the year for an assurance visit, it was considered that insufficient progress had been made. A Notice to Improve was then issued to Novus, which had to develop an action plan and agree the outcomes with the YCS central team.

The Board acknowledges that it has been an incredibly challenging year for staffing, putting enormous pressure on the existing team.

The situation that Novus found itself in did not come as surprise to the Board. For some time we had been receiving applications and hearing from young people who were dissatisfied and frustrated with the educational offer. They reported frequent cancellation of lessons, sometimes with no notice, unsuitable class groups and teachers who the young people believed were unqualified to teach the subject. Inevitably, when the young people did attend lessons, they had spent so much time behind their door that socialising and interacting with their peers was their priority.

In total, over 12,500 hours of education were lost due to cancellations during the reporting year. Solely on Keppel, Novus cancellations caused a loss of 580.5 hours and the establishment's cancellations a loss of 679.5 hours.

If a lesson has to be cancelled as much notice as possible should be given. For a young person to be told five minutes before they were due to attend the class is unacceptable. With so many neurodivergent young people in the YOI, this is of even greater importance.

When education can be delivered consistently and respond flexibly to the needs of the individual, progress is made. This is particularly noticeable on Napier, the enhanced support unit (ESU).

The model for the new Secure School in Kent is small group learning, but this comes at a financial cost. The Board hopes that at least the equivalent will be offered to those young people at Wetherby whose needs and behaviours may be even more complex.

As we write the report, in September 2024, we observe changes, such as prompter arrival times at the educational colleges, greater engagement in lessons and a more diverse and better qualified staff team. In the latter part of the summer, the improved regime on Keppel led to a reduction in poor behaviour and, consequently, fewer IMB applications.

Kinetic Youth is a registered charity that works with young people individually or in small groups, using positive activities to enable them to acquire new skills. The Board was disappointed when their contract was dropped a few years ago, so is pleased to see them back once more, with increased hours, engaging with young people who are not yet ready for education.

The Board is pleased to report the following GCSE results

Young people	English	English Literature	Maths	Biology	Religious Studies	Fine Art	Business Studies	Combined Science
1	3		2	3				
2	3		3	1	3		3	
3	3		2					
4	3	1	4					3-2
5			2			2		
6	2		2	2				

7.2 Library (Novus)

Due to the damage incurred as the result of a serious incident on Jellicoe, the library was out of use for a period of time. However, now reopened, it continues to flourish, offering a wide range of literature, books and magazines, as well as access to computers. An improved timetable has made it more readily available to the young people. It has an excellent, calm atmosphere that the young people seem to enjoy. The focus on reading and writing has been strengthened with the introduction of competitions. This has been popular with the young people, as the winners receive awards and prizes.

7.3 Vocational training

The current vocational courses include barbering, bikes, the Admiral's Coffee Shop (barista), horticulture, music and the PE Academy. Over the past year, unfortunately, multiskills, painting and decorating, art, hospitality and catering have been lost. Young people who are 18+ feel that the provision for them is poor.

8. Progression towards transfer or release

8.1 Case management and progression

Resettlement practitioners meet with young people, once a fortnight at a minimum, and young people can contact them through their laptops. Generally, resettlement planning and review meetings are happening on time and post-release review meetings are attended by resettlement practitioners, in-person if possible. Young people transferring to the adult estate receive a transitional phone call and visit from staff from the receiving establishment and, in general, they report to the Board that they feel supported by the resettlement team.

The Board is concerned about the large number of remanded young people (43) with a long wait before their trial. For legal reasons, they are not able to access any interventions, which some young people have raised this as a concern.

8.1.1 Use of release on temporary licence (ROTL)

There were 315 ROTLs during the reporting year. Although it is challenging to establish ROTL opportunities within a national catchment area, the establishment has provided ROTL for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, attendance at college classes, volunteering at food banks and several local vocational placements. This has allowed young people who are found eligible to develop key life skills within a community setting. The Board is aware that many more young people could benefit from this kind of opportunity.

8.2 Family contact

Social visits from family members and friends are important to many but not all young people. The Official Prison Visitors (OPV) scheme continues to be organised through the chaplaincy department and is used by those who wish to take it up.

The Board is pleased to report that there is an increasing range of social visits now available. These include the more relaxed family days (which bring together young people and their families outside of their statutory entitlement to social visits, usually in more informal settings), and dads and grandads days and themed visits. Young people who transferred from Cookham Wood have enjoyed 'Cookham Family days'. Agencies that support the young people are invited to drop in to the social visits, which many parents, in particular, say they appreciate. Education is being encouraged to participate in person or provide a written update on a young person's progress.

8.2.1 Social video calls

As few as 16% of young people in Wetherby have families who live less than 50 miles away, so the remainder tend to rely on social visits, which can be problematic. To facilitate family contact, Wetherby operates a family social video call system. Effort has been made to make the social video call rooms clean, tidy and comfortable, with a more home-like feel and neutral décor colours.

On average, about 40 social video calls were completed each month since June 2024, which is when data started to be collected. As the report is being written, in September 2024, only one slot every 30 minutes, between 2.30pm and 4.30pm on weekdays, is available, for a maximum of 20 social visits per week. The limited slots

are due to needing one-to-one staff supervision for transfer to the social video call suite, coupled with a lack of available staff to do so. If more staff were available, more social video calls could be offered. Young people frequently tell the IMB of their disappointment that social video calls do not last as long as scheduled.

There is a 15-minute transition time for staff to move a young person back onto their unit following a call and bring the next young person to the social video call suite. Young people have complained that they are starting the calls late and not getting the full 30 minutes. Data on social video calls include the total call duration for each individual entry, but it is not possible to aggregate in any way at this time, so the IMB was not able to verify how widespread this is.

8.3 Resettlement planning

Young people due for release are offered education on finances, benefits and managing debts. They are supported in signing up for Universal Credit, if eligible, and over-18s can sign up for bank accounts prior to release. Due to local authority delays in assigning accommodation, it is often not possible to find employment or register with a GP prior to release, which can result in gaps in medical and mental health treatment.

In2Out, a charity that supports young people during their transition into the community, provided intensive support to more vulnerable young people on Keppel and Napier during the reporting year. They provided one-to-one cooking skills' sessions and group yoga workshops. While their contribution to the young people's resettlement preparation has been well received, their continued presence at Wetherby depends on sourcing new funding.

There continues to be a significant shortage of adequate accommodation for care-experienced children and care leavers in the community, affecting many young people released from Wetherby. The social work team is tackling this by working closely with local authorities to remind them of their legal responsibilities and challenging unsuitable accommodation when necessary. During the reporting year, no young person left Wetherby without an address to go to. However, uncertainty around accommodation continues to cause significant stress and anxiety for young people about to be released.

9. The work of the IMB

Recruitment and retention of members remains a problem. This year has been no exception, as member appointment was significantly delayed due to the election. Unfortunately, delays can result in prospective members pursuing other interests.

The Board has frequently been functioning with two members. Inevitably, mentoring a new member takes a considerable amount of time, so it is frustrating when members leave after a brief period. Despite continuous efforts, the Board fails to attract a greater diversity in its membership.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	5
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	5 (2 resigned, 2 joined)
Total number of visits to the establishment	204 (including 1 night visit)

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	13	22
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives schemes, sanctions	27	32
C	Equality	9	10
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	97	49
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	27	10
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	0	5
F	Food and kitchens	7	3
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	7	8
H1	Property within the establishment	10	14
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	1	1
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	10	0
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	6	39
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	8	39
K	Transfers	1	5
L	Miscellaneous	40	24
	Total number of applications	263	261

Annex A

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 efficiently managed 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 all the young people
- In2Out provides one-to-one mentoring to help young people with a range of practical support
- Kinetic Youth is a registered charity that uses youth work methodologies to support young people in a custodial setting
- Young People's Drug and Alcohol Support Services (YPDASS) provides substance misuse support



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