



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Feltham

**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

Feltham consists of many low-level buildings spread across a 45-acre site in west London. The buildings were constructed in the mid-1980s and are now in a very poor state. As reported last year, many of the roofs leak, allowing water into cells, offices and the visitors' centre. For most of the year, cells are damp and cold.

Feltham A

Feltham A YOI houses boys aged 15-18 years (with some up to 18 years and 10 months). As of the end of the reporting period, 25.4% are 18 or over¹. Young persons (YPs) may be convicted and sentenced (47% at the end of the reporting period) or on remand, with a few convicted but awaiting sentence. A total of 181 boys came in on remand over the reporting period. The population of Feltham dipped during the reporting year, then increased again, reaching a maximum of 123.

There are nine units in Feltham A, all single occupancy, but not all have been open during the period: one remains permanently closed and the enhanced support unit (ESU) has been closed since October 2023, following extensive damage by one boy. Only some units have in-room showers, and it would assist enormously with delivering purposeful activity if all rooms had their own shower facilities.

In September 2023, the Youth Custody Service put Feltham A into its Tier 3 programme of support for establishments that have concerns. This was reduced to Tier 2 in May 2024.

The closure of YOI Cookham Wood in May 2024 means that Feltham A now serves the whole of the south of England. There are some children at Feltham with very complex needs, so it is disappointing that there has been no ESU facility for most of the reporting period.

Feltham B

Feltham B is a designated category C establishment and holds sentenced prisoners from 18 to 30 years. By August 2024, 55% of B side were aged between 22 and 30, up from 30% in August 2023. YCS put Feltham B into Tier 3 in January 24, and at the end of the reporting period in September 2024 this was reduced to Tier 2.

There are 12 units in Feltham B: cells are a mixture of single and double occupancy; all have toilets and basins and in cell telephony, but none have in-cell showers. A rolling programme of refurbishment meant that not all units were open during the reporting period. Nightingale unit remains closed. Ibis, the care, separation and reintegration unit (CSRU), is for men attending adjudications (disciplinary hearings when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules) or who have been placed in segregation following either adjudication or the good order or discipline (GOoD) process. Wren unit continued to be used in the reporting year as an anomaly, housing those whose needs could not be met on their residential unit. On average, it housed approximately only six or seven men at any one time. Experienced staff supported vulnerable prisoners highly effectively, in the Board's view, but the unit

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.

lacked clear criteria for admissions and purpose. Since the end of the reporting period, Wren unit has closed as a residential unit.

The Board's monitoring reflects the fact that Feltham A and Feltham B operate as two discrete establishments and, from June 2024, for a trial period, each side has its own Governor, with many resources shared jointly. The regime and many of the rules and operating procedures differ across A and B.

The Board can only monitor effectively with the co-operation and support of the Governors and staff. The IMB appreciates the extraordinary job that the prison's senior management and staff do on behalf of the public to contain and keep safe those held in custody, and it wishes to commend them for their dedicated service.

	1 September 2023		31 Aug 2024
Roll A YOI side	113		120
Roll B side	456		462

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Feltham A

- High levels of staff absence have had a significant impact on the children's regime. Despite very impressive efforts by officers on duty, low staffing levels have led to time out of room for the majority of children being consistently below YOI recommendations.
- The number of non-associations ('keep-aparts') has a significant impact on the running of the prison and affects every child. The IMB continues to be concerned that the policy of keep-aparts creates problems in addition to the logistical issue of managing separately multiple different groups.
- Many of the young people exhibit very challenging behaviour, at times involving use of improvised weapons against other boys and staff. The violent behaviour of the boys severely limits the time that staff can get boys out of the rooms for activities, or the amount of free association the young people can have.
- This monitoring period has seen the closure of HMP/YOI Cookham Wood and consequent pressures on the Feltham population due to the increase in the court catchment area.
- The closure of the enhanced support unit (from October 2023) has deprived the prison of a very important resource, which would have assisted the management and rehabilitation of some of the children. The ESU at Wetherby was open, but this is over 200 miles away.
- There is a programme of refurbishment, but some units remain without in-room showers.
- Young people do not have sufficient time outside their rooms for meaningful engagement with support services, significantly limiting rehabilitation opportunities.
- Greater use of the Framework for Integrated Care ('Secure Stairs'), designed for care and engagement with young offenders, has been noted. However, the custody support plan officer role (CUSP) still does not appear to be working as effectively as it might. The support team has the responsibility of coordinating different interventions for an individual boy; there are very many agencies offering support within Feltham A, but no comprehensive register of these is available.
- Leaders and teachers appear to be committed to providing a quality education. Efforts have been made this year to increase the planned delivery to 15 hours per week. However, actual hours fell well below this figure, with too many classes cancelled at various times through the year, due to prison staff shortages. While the education staff never shut the education department, the Youth Custody Service calculated that 1991.25 hours in education were cancelled for boys during the reporting period. There is some excellent provision in vocational subjects, but too few places available. Attendance at education is good, although violent incidents occasionally cause curtailments.
- The provision of healthcare in Feltham appears to be good. However, lack of available rooms can impact on the ability to deliver interventions.

Feltham B

- High levels of staff absence, particularly over the summer and other holiday periods, has a detrimental effect on delivering the regime.
- Violence against staff has increased.
- The education and vocational training provision is unfit for purpose, now that Feltham B is a category C prison housing adults up to 30 years of age.
- There has been a rise in finds of contraband, chiefly drugs and mobile phones. The smell of cannabis on residential units is obvious at times.
- The built environment is in a poor state, with leaking roofs, damp and mould in many cells. This remained the case throughout the reporting period, despite the IMB highlighting it in the last two annual reports. At the time of writing (October 2024), a roofing project has commenced.
- The overcrowding across the prison estate has necessitated Feltham housing men who are far from home and whose families find it hard or impossible to visit.
- Staff have been extremely stretched this year, dealing with the various early release schemes, introduced first, by one Government, and then the SDS40 scheme (which allows certain cohorts to be released from custody after serving 40% of their sentence in prison, as opposed to 50%), brought in by the new Government. This has taken up a huge resource of resettlement and offender management unit staff time. The lack of key worker sessions means prisoners have limited support and guidance in helping prepare and plan for release.
- The difference between the very limited regime(s) on normal residential units and that operating in the CSRU was, at times, minimal. As a consequence, some prisoners were content to remain in the segregation unit.
- The provision of healthcare in Feltham appears to be good.

Every monthly IMB report pays tribute to the officers at Feltham. They work in difficult circumstances and, from the Board's observations, are unfailingly respectful to the prisoners. Prisoners appear to be treated with dignity and staff work hard to foster good relations with them.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- What is the Government doing to address youth knife crime and gang culture, which leads young people to custody with very long sentences for crimes of extreme violence?

TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

- To the Mayor of London: what is he doing to address knife crime and gang conflict in London?

TO THE YOUTH CUSTODY SERVICE /HMPPS

- When will Feltham have enhanced gate security, considering the rise in substance misuse and the admission of older prisoners on B side?
- Will the YCS consider taking proactive steps to address the issue of prisoners making and carrying weapons in custody?

- Will the YCS look at changing the policy where any boy who removes parts from his laptop, in order to make a weapon, is given a replacement after only 28 days? Will the YCS also look at the design of laptops so they do not include removable strips of rigid metal or other removable parts that can be sharpened into weapons?
- When will the enhanced support unit be reopened on Feltham A?
- Feltham B: What is being done to improve purposeful activity? What steps will be taken to increase the number of workshop places to ensure prisoners have access to further education and training, such that they can secure employment on release?
- What are the plans for improving the structural fabric of the whole prison?
- When will A side education have a new management of information system (MIS)?
- When will B side prisoners have in-cell laptops that support study on remote learning courses such as the Open University?

TO THE GOVERNORS A and B Side

- What further steps will be taken to reduce staff absence, particularly during school holiday periods?
- What steps are being taken to increase time out of room (TOoR)?

To the A Side Governor

- Will you ensure that the shortfall between planned hours of education and delivered hours continues to be monitored and reduced?
- What steps will be taken to deliver more education via outreach to separated boys?

To the B Side Governor:

- What steps will you take to commission appropriate skills workshops and rehabilitation courses for prisoners in Feltham B?
- What steps are being taken to address the inconsistent cleanliness seen in the serveries, including inconsistent wearing of PPE by servery workers?
- What steps are being taken to reduce the amount of food going missing between the kitchen and residential units?
- When will the Traka units for dispensing medication be commissioned for use?
- What steps will be taken to re-introduce a working protocol for resolving lost property issues?

3.3 Response to the last report:

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
To the Minister		
What measures will you take to improve levels of staffing and retain experienced staff?	Dedicated national campaign to recruit youth justice workers. Examination by retention research team. Attendance management processes have been reviewed and strengthened.	Prison now fully staffed, but majority have less than two years' experience.
What steps are being taken to recruit probation staff?	Additional funding; staffing levels in London increased 13% in year ending December 2023; additional support in London through Civil Service detached duty scheme; alumni scheme to recruit returners to the Probation Service.	No appreciable improvement observed by IMB, but workload for the Probation Service has increased hugely in the last 12 months due to the early release scheme.
When will resources be targeted to address prisoner lost property?	The Prisoners' Property Policy Framework was introduced in 2022. Onus on Governors and Directors to ensure management checks are undertaken to have confidence that prisoners' property is being handled correctly and with care. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to monitor framework and see if improvements can be made.	Lost property management has got worse at Feltham in last 12 months, as system in place has broken down, with re-deployment of the officer in charge and the increased number of inter-prison transfers.
What will the Government do to improve information sharing between social services and the YCS so looked-after children (LACs) receive entitlements.	The Youth Custody Service (YCS) will build relationships with local authorities (LAs) and site safeguarding teams. Working-together guidance being prepared by the YCS and the youth justice board (YJB).	Social work team has been strengthened at Feltham

<p>To the YCS/HMPPS</p> <p>What steps will be taken to reduce staff absence and improve retention?</p> <p>Can steps be taken to ensure LA funding for SEN/EHCP children follows them into custody?</p> <p>What is being done to ensure the older prisoners on B side have access to appropriate education and training?</p> <p>Underinvestment in the fabric of the estate requires attention.</p>	<p>Answer, as above, given by the Minister.</p> <p>The YCS does not qualify for additional LA funding to support SEN/EHCP children: 'We are working with the Department for Education to see how we can support learners with SEN.' There was an acknowledgement that Feltham A education provision requires improvement. The YCS has developed a new contractual assurance cycle. In October 2023, this recorded shortcomings in outreach. Action to improve outreach forms part of the school development plan and is monitored monthly. The YCS education leads monitored this in January 2024 and confirmed some improvement but that more is required.</p> <p>This lies with the Governor, who commissions courses, informed by a need-analysis in consultation with employers and HMPPS New Futures Network. Review of activities underway. Additional resource targeted to cater for older cohort. 'The quality and type of workshop provision will be addressed to mitigate the current poor levels of engagement and attendance.'</p> <p>In the past year, over £100,000 has been spent on short-term roofing repairs. There is a £20 million Ministry</p>	<p>The proposed new special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has still not started.</p> <p>Not enough has been done to progress this. The IMB receives the same complaints and sees few men in workshops.</p> <p>October 2024 roofing project commenced, starting on the Ibis unit and the CSRU.</p>
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	of Justice major capital project for roof replacements on five-and-a-half units on B side (Ibis, Lapwing, Nightingale, Osprey, Raven and Swallow), as well as the legal and social visits areas. Project in design phase; works expected 2024-2025.	
<p>To The Governor</p> <p>What proactive steps can be taken to reduce staff absence and provide support for those on sick leave?</p> <p>What can be done to improve delivery of key worker and CUSP sessions?</p>		<p>On A side, staff retention has improved, although staff absence is still high. In cases of unauthorised absence, action has been taken, post-absence, to reduce further occurrences and to tighten up on TOIL (time off in lieu of leave). The prison has yet to investigate or utilise the evidence-based practice to proactively prevent staff absence. This has been raised regularly and again this year by the IMB. The increase in violence and assaults against staff also adds to staff absence.</p> <p>A side CUSP sessions improved in regularity and quality at the beginning of the reporting period, but this has tailed off as the year has gone on. B side key worker sessions are still lacking in both quantity and quality.</p>
Could someone identify which spaces are available for outreach meetings, e.g. out-of-use corner rooms, etc?		No progress.
Is the prison investigating why the population of Wren unit is generally white, when		Minutes from the equality team meetings show this was extensively investigated in

a significant proportion of the prison population is black?		January 2024. However, Wren is currently closed.
Please could more information be made available regarding TOoR, e.g. inclusion of data in daily briefing and flagging all children with less than two hours?		TOoR is being recorded on the wings. The quality of recording is variable. TOoR data is not in the daily briefing notices. As in 2022-2023, the IMB has not seen any flags or data around particular children who have two hours or less TOoR.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

Feltham A

The staff know the boys in their care and take the time and trouble to familiarise themselves with each one's particular needs and their personalities. This is key to maintaining a safe custodial environment, as staff can try to anticipate challenging behaviour and know how to de-escalate it. The IMB has observed this in action. In September 2023, steps were taken, all of which helped reduce the amount of violence and enabled more time out of room. These steps included improving staffing levels, reducing the number of separate groups of boys housed on each unit and a lower roll. For example, in February 2024, the IMB noted that the A side roll was around 75-79, staff attendance was high and usually a full regime was in place, with units all clean and tidy. There was one prolonged serious incident on Bittern on 30 January, but this was atypical of safety levels at this time. However, incidents of violence began to rise in May 2024 and through the summer months. At the beginning of May, Feltham had started to take Cookham Wood's courts, and the roll reached 120 on 27 May 2024, the highest it had been for months. Immediately, there was an increase in separate groups on the units and, consequently, the number of regimes, as well as an increase in the opening of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans, which are used to support boys at risk of self-harm and suicide.

In June, the IMB expressed concerns to both the Governor and to the YCS about the potential for violence during the summer: unfortunately, those concerns were realised. Summer violence the previous year was attributed to staff shortages for leave, sickness and restricted duties. This year, the rise in violence was attributed to the uptick in the population figures and the closure of Cookham Wood, introducing more YPs, who brought with them 'keep-apart' and additional gang issues. The large and increasing number of non-associations at Feltham clearly impacts every aspect of prison life and reduces the opportunities for all the YPs. The IMB understands that there had been some forward planning to help counteract potential staff absenteeism in the summer. But staff absence was observed to be very high, resulting in many days where all YPs were on limited regime and spent very little time out of their rooms. The fact remains that when staff do not come into work, for whatever reason, boys are locked in their rooms for longer and violence occurs when they are out.

Many boys on A side come in from communities where they carry knives. This year, boys have been removing metal strips from laptops (which does not impair functionality) and sharpening the metal to a point. A handle is made with bed clothes. If hidden in the tops of trousers, these can be hard to detect with the metal-detecting wand.

Throughout the year, there has been a significant number of 18-year-olds in Feltham A, but this number is decreasing. In October 2023, over 18-year-olds comprised 39.17% of the total population but, by September 2024, this had fallen to 25% of boys.

Eagle unit reopened in June with the aim of housing approximately 18 young people who would always be one single group. Any committing 'bad' behaviour would be

separated. An incentives compact (a type of contract) was given to the boys, offering them up to five 'green cards' a week for 'good' behaviour and engagement with education. This has been a successful initiative and YPs regularly report positively to IMB, usually citing the additional time out of their room and enhanced gym visits.

On other units, the number of separate groups decreased in May, June and July. Unfortunately, the violence in late August and early September, just as the reporting year closed, has set that back.

Feltham B

The pressures on the prison estate means that there are prisoners in Feltham with many keep-aparts. This means that men often tell the IMB that they do not feel safe to go to education or workshops. 'Free flow', where large groups of prisoners can all be out of their rooms simultaneously, does not happen at Feltham for reasons of safety, with a clear logistical impact on movements of prisoners within the prison. This, coupled with frequent staff shortages, means that the daily regime is often unpredictable, time out of room is minimal and movements off unit are often restricted. This has led to frustration, disobedience to lawful orders (DLO), assaults against staff and on-unit fighting between men.

The increase in prisoner-on-staff assaults is alarming and has a significant impact on staff absentee rates and morale. As reported last year, there continues to be a significant number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, or unexplained injuries, in the communal showers. Staff increased the supervision of shower sessions, which resulted in some incidents being stopped whilst in progress. However, assaults and injuries continue, with one member of staff reporting to the IMB that 'showers are not just for showering'.

There has been a worrying increase in the amount of contraband found in the prison. The IMB notes that there is no enhanced security at the main gate staff entrance.

Fear of violence also increases the making and use of improvised weapons, as habitual knife carriers contend that they need a weapon to defend themselves.

Adequate staffing is key to preserving safety. The IMB is concerned that so few of the band 3 officers in post are available for operational duties. These staff are often not available to be detailed due to training obligations, sickness and unauthorised absence. Of band 3 staff, 144 have less than five years' experience, with only 42 having experience of five years or more. It is also noted that 47 officers have left their posts so far in the calendar year 2024. By the end of the reporting year, B side was close to being fully staffed.

There is now a strong safer custody team at Feltham and the IMB observes its meetings and monitors its activities. The IMB noted, with dismay, that the safer custody programmes with prisoners were often cancelled or abandoned because the staff are pulled away to deal with emergencies or to cover for other operational staff.

4.1 Reception and induction

Feltham A

During the reporting year, new arrivals on to A side were accommodated on Jay unit. The IMB has spoken with the excellent staff on Jay, both new recruits and experienced officers. They appear to be working to induct new prisoners in line with

best practice and the IMB has observed some very kind and humane conversations, particularly with some frightened young people who have no previous experience of prison. The closure of HMP/YOI Cookham wood brought challenges for the Jay team, e.g. May's reception figures were double that of April.

For most months of the reporting year, Jay has also housed 'separated' boys. This means that staff had the challenge of running multiple regimes, sometimes eight, sometimes 13. Therefore, for most YPs, only very limited regime can be offered, induction meetings cannot happen and time with new arrivals is restricted. The IMB has raised concerns about this throughout the year. In September 2023, praiseworthy initiatives were taken by staff to move 'lodgers' and those separated off Jay, which saw improved regime delivery for inductees. Unfortunately, using Jay solely for new arrivals was not sustained.

Feltham B

There are regular arrivals into Feltham every week and there appear to be fewer concerns from staff over late vans compared with the previous year. Reception staff comment that there are often last-minute changes to names and numbers, making processing more challenging. Reception staff are often redeployed onto residential units, which adds to pressure in reception.

All prisoners are initially housed on Kingfisher unit for induction. Kingfisher men do not go to the library.

Missing property following transfer remains a consistent complaint from prisoners. There was a designated officer dealing with property complaints, but he was redeployed during the year so the system he set up has fallen into disuse. Concurrently, an increase in inter-prison transfers has exacerbated the problem of lost property.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Feltham A

There have been no incidents of suicide or deaths in custody. ACCT documents are opened or reopened very readily by staff. A total of 107 ACCTs were opened in the reporting period, which is more per 100 of the population when compared with the previous year. As with other safety indicators, numbers spiked in May 2024, when 24 ACCTs were opened.

Self-harm figures were high in September 2023, at 26 per 100 of the population, but fell over the autumn and winter months to 9-11 per 100, as analysis of incidents and remedial action began to pay off, with a low of 3.5 per 100 in February 2024. However, the rate started to rise again as effective staffing levels deteriorated towards the summer months and following HMP/YOI Cookham Wood's closure. May saw a large increase in self-harm (to 23.8 per 100) when Feltham A's population rose again to 114. It is thought this was at least, in part, due to anxiety around the arrival from Cookham Wood of boys with keep-apart issues at Feltham. Some very complex cases from Cookham Wood faced transfer to one of the other remaining YOIs, which are located hundreds of miles away. This all contributed to anxiety and levels of self-harm.

Feltham B

There have been no incidents of suicide or deaths in custody. The number of ACCTs opened on Feltham B throughout the reporting period has steadily decreased, with 20 opened in September 2023 and just five opened in August 2024, despite the population remaining the same.

On Feltham B, there were between 17-30 incidents of deliberate self-harm per month throughout the reporting year. However, these incidents could involve multiple incidents from as few as eight individual prisoners.

Samaritan Listeners: During the reporting year, there was a push to train listeners and at one time there were ten, but these have all since left Feltham so there are none. The safer custody team tells the IMB that the Samaritan Listeners are a useful tool in the team's work. The in-prison scheme is dependent on the Samaritan's charity to select and train Listeners.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Feltham A

Whilst figures have fluctuated over the reporting period, Feltham A still averages well over one violent incident a day. The number of violent incidents, involving fights, assaults on staff and other YPs, varied between 22 and 50 per month and totalled 431 over the reporting period. There was an improvement over December to April, although there was one seven-hour incident in January 2024. A new weapons strategy was introduced in October 2023 and by December there had been a 60% reduction in weapons finds. The following quarter saw a continued reduction in incidents using weapons. In March 2024, the Independent Review of Restraints panel noted a big improvement in violence reduction since the previous September. Disappointingly, numbers of violent incidents increased again from May 2024 and there were 50 incidents of violence in August 2024.

Last year, we reported on staff shortages in the summer of 2023 resulting in a severe reduction in regime and a consequential rise in protesting behaviour. This year, the establishment was able to do some forward planning to prevent a recurrence, but there were new factors, such as the closure of Cookham Wood and the increase in population to around 120 from, for example, 87 in April. August 2024 saw two protracted incidents, one involving six boys, serious damage to a unit, including fire-setting, and the two staff on duty withdrawing for their own safety.

Significant numbers of children were unable to mix with specific others during the year for safety reasons and are kept apart as a means of violence reduction. Much of this is due to conflict and gang issues in the community. The closure of Cookham Wood means there is no other YOI in southern England to offer custody. In September 2023, an average population of 100 had 475 'keep-aparts' listed. Despite falling to half this number over the winter, by August 2024 the number had increased again to 389.

A new strategy for dealing with these keep-aparts has resulted in less impact on regime delivery for the majority of boys who can mix, as those with keep-apart issues are separated from the majority group. This does mean that the separated boys receive fewer opportunities to engage with activities. Staff report to IMB that, for some boys, having to be kept apart can give them a feeling of superiority over their

peers. The IMB has previously reported its view that the groups can replicate the gang culture of the community.

A number of boys will choose to self-isolate, feeling themselves at risk if they mix. In September 2023, Feltham identified 16 self-isolators.

Feltham B

The rate of violence in Feltham B has decreased from the high of 59 incidents (per 1,000 prisoners) in September 2023 to 29 incidents (per 1,000) in August 2024. However, there were spikes during the reporting year, particularly in February 2024. It is possible that the decrease in the rate of violence is attributable to the influx of adults aged up to 30 years old, who are perhaps more mature and less inclined to use violence as a first resort.

Nevertheless, there were serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, many involving multiple assailants, and a number of these assaults were carried out in the showers (where there is minimal supervision and no CCTV).

The IMB is very concerned to note the increase of prisoner-on-staff assaults: 147 during the year compared with 62 in the previous reporting year. We are informed by officers that some of this increase can be attributed to pressures caused by under-staffing and the resulting negative impact on the regime. Officers also blame the very low number of key worker sessions taking place, which impacts negatively on prisoner and staff relations and gives rise to anxiety and frustrations. The increase may also be due to an influx of young, relatively inexperienced and unconfident staff and/or over-reporting (for instance, a prisoner pushing past an officer or throwing food may be reported as an assault).

There remain a large number of keep-aparts within Feltham B. In January, there were only two staff trained in conflict resolution, with one in training, and they struggled to deliver CR where men from gangs refused to engage. It was noted that The London Mayor's office was funding an anti-gang programme involving prisons, but no evidence of this has been observed at Feltham. At the end of the reporting period, the conflict resolution programme was closed. At the time of writing (October 2024), a new initiative with an external partner charity, Catch 22, is being launched.

4.4 Young people with specific vulnerabilities

Feltham A

Alpine, the enhanced support unit, has been closed since October 2023, following extensive damage, primarily by one YP. It is anticipated that the ESU will re-open in late 2024. There are boys in the separation unit, who, in the opinion of the IMB, would benefit from the specialised support available within the ESU.

A special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) lead has not been in place. But a neurodiversity support manager (NSM) has been at the prison since early 2024. There is an enhanced support team, a wellbeing team and a psychology team.

4.5 Use of force

Use of force and incidents at height (IAH)

Feltham A

At Feltham, incidents at height may involve climbing over the safety railing on an upstairs landing or going up on bars in the exercise yard. Incident lengths vary from a few minutes to a number of hours. If boys refuse to come down, in-house negotiators will be brought in and airbags deployed, to minimise the risk of injury. In cases of protracted refractory behaviour, the National Tactical Response Group (NTRG, a team trained to intervene in dangerous, high-risk situations) will be called into the prison. The IMB noted that the NTRG was called in less frequently in July and August 2024 than it had been in 2023. Long incidents of a few hours or more have a highly negative impact on the other boys, who remain locked in their rooms, with no regime or food offered until the incidents are resolved. There were 205 IAH over the year within Feltham A, ranging from four in February 2024 up to 45 in June.

The IMB has monitored the use of force in attending safety meetings and monitoring planned interventions. The IMB notes the high regard for safety protocol and procedures to which staff adhere during these planned interventions. At the same time, staff clearly explain to boys what is happening. There is no safe searching room at Feltham.

Feltham B

The use of force on Feltham B has remained the same as in the previous reporting period. Pava incapacitant spray tended to be used where there were multiple prisoners involved in an incident.

During the 12 months ending August 2024:

- Pava was drawn, but not discharged, 22 times, which is comparable with the previous 12-month period.
- Pava was drawn and discharged on just ten occasions compared with 36 times in the prior period.
- Batons were drawn but not used in ten incidents and used in just five cases.

New body worn video cameras (BWVCs) were rolled out in September 2022. The existence of BWVCs and extensive CCTV on units, in corridors and on exercise yards meant that there was usually recorded footage of most incidents. However, staff did not always turn on their BWVCs to capture all incidents where this might have been helpful, in particular during cell searches.

The prison's conflict resolution function, focused on resolving issues between prisoners, was disbanded from July 2024.

4.6 Substance misuse and illegal items

Feltham B

The IMB has noted an increase in finds of contraband. Feltham identified its first drone incursion during the reporting period. Staff told us they were concerned by the increasing number of contraband smartphones/phone chargers/SIM cards getting into Feltham B. The IMB understands that smartphones in prison are often used to

assist in drug trafficking/misuse and in threatening people with debts. As such, the presence of illegal phones contributes to the risks of violence within the prison. The IMB noted a considerable rise in the number of reported illegal finds in rooms. Effective cell searches have revealed phones, chargers and SIM cards.

During the reporting period, officers told us that, for the first time, they were discovering 'hooch (illegal prison-brewed alcohol) being used on Feltham B. This was, said the officers, probably due to the influx of older prisoners.

More staff underwent mandatory drug testing training at the end of 2023, which was necessary as the presence of cannabis and 'weed' within the B side residential units was obvious. The IMB often report being able to smell this while on the units. Staff sometimes appear to the IMB to be resigned to this, saying: 'This always happens after visits' or 'He's going home next week'.

Feltham A and B: weapons

Boys and men continue to fashion weapons in their rooms from bits of plastic, laptop components or furniture. In the past, the IMB has reported that this may be a plug in a sock, but this year has seen a big increase in the sharpening of materials to fashion knives. In Feltham B, broom and mop handles issued for cleaning are sharpened to a point. In Feltham A, a successful weapons strategy achieved a reduction in improvised weapons, but this has not been sustained.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Previous reports have drawn attention to the leaking roofs, which have continued to cause issues this year when there have been periods of extremely heavy rainfall. In January, the healthcare unit closed for a short period due to a leak. The visitors centre portacabin at the gate was closed from August 2023 to October and the main visits hall had roof leaks. The hole in the visitors' centre roof was temporarily fixed but, during the winter months, it provided a very cold reception, with buckets in situ to catch rainwater and the canteen/play area fenced off. The roof lights on the CSRU and the Swallow and Jay units continued to leak and buckets collecting rainwater were a trip hazard during wet weather. Roof repairs to the CSRU have finally commenced at the time of writing, in October 2024, after leaking for about six years, with at least 11 patch repairs since 2018.

The IMB continued to receive numerous verbal complaints from the prisoners about the temperature within the prison. As one prisoner observed, issues with the boilers had occurred in each of the three winters he had been at Feltham. Temporary boilers were on site in December 2023. The heating across the site was turned off on 1 April 2024. During a particularly cold spell at the end of April (when the external temperature was 2-4oC), prisoners and officers alike were observed wearing coats or wrapping themselves in the extra blankets provided, simply to keep warm.

Ventilation issues are at the heart of the problems, with mould and damp within the prison. On Feltham B, the IMB saw evidence of mould, and flaking paintwork, in occupied cells and the communal showers. Some of the cell walls, which are just inches from the beds, are visibly wet. In January, the IMB received complaints about mould on Osprey and Lapwing. A full 'mould audit' was carried out in the spring and a number of rooms taken out of use whilst the mould was treated. However, due to the poor ventilation in the prison, this remains an on-going problem. Indeed, mould was regrowing in some of the showers on Feltham B just months after these were jet-sprayed.

On Feltham A, new in-cell shower pods were installed on Heron unit this year. This leaves only Eagle, Falcon and Jay units on Feltham A without in-cell shower pods. Given Jay's role as the induction unit during this period, lack of self-contained showers is less than optimal. Despite only recently being installed on Heron unit, it is disappointing to see the poor-quality fittings discolouring already; toilet lids have been removed (as they were being used to make weapons) and most of the shower curtains are broken (the hooks do not appear to be very robust). A common complaint across the prison is that the shower water is often lukewarm and of low pressure. The IMB is also aware there have been drainage issues on the site this year.

On Feltham B, refurbishment of the gym showers commenced in December 2023. It is not clear why the refurbishment, which was anticipated to take approximately four weeks, took so long to complete: these showers were out of action for approximately five months. During this period, prisoners were unable to easily access showers back on their residential units (where there are still no in-cell showers), which led to numerous complaints.

In a number of cells on Feltham B, there is a clear view from the observation panel to the toilet; prisoners commonly cover the observation panels in their doors in most units, a practice which the IMB understands is against prison rules.

Food at Feltham continues to receive praise from the prisoners, with comments including 'good', 'better than other joints' and 'portions not massive but food OK'. Fresh fruit is always offered with lunch (although not always taken). Menus are on a four-week cycle with five options offered for each evening meal. During Ramadan, a record number of 270 flasks were provided each day. The IMB heard that the flasks kept the food hot (but that the portions were small).

Within the main kitchen, there are 30 prisoners working towards their NVQ levels, with a further seven working in the staff dining area, Loch Mess, where they gain 'customer-facing' experience. Whilst the prisoners in both the kitchen and Loch Mess were always observed wearing PPE (personal protective equipment) and safety boots, the IMB regularly observed servery workers on the B side residential units who were not wearing PPE.

Cleanliness of the servery areas was inconsistent across the Feltham B residential units. Food debris in the sinks, litter and uncovered food in the serveries was observed, as was evidence of rodent infestation across a few wings, including in the servery areas. The mice problem is probably not helped by the amount of food kept within the rooms by prisoners. A 'clean and decent' initiative began in late spring, aimed at improving cleaning processes and ensuring consistency across the residential units. New signage is evident in the residential units, with clear, colour-coded equipment and instructions. However, the culture change required to embed the consistent wearing of PPE is still a work in progress.

The number of meals provided are 'signed out' from the kitchen and 'signed in' when delivered to the residential units. Despite this apparently robust quantity control process, the kitchen is regularly approached for replacement meals and breakfast packs. The amounts involved are not insignificant: in one instance seen by the IMB, the request from the unit was for a further 44 doughnuts and 16 burgers, which had 'gone missing'. And numerous complaints were received from young people on Feltham A when they received 'adult' breakfast packs (the contents of which differ from those provided to children) as replacements, again as a result of delivered packs having 'gone missing'. As the reporting period closed, the missing food problem has worsened on B side and the IMB is monitoring the situation.

A common complaint from older prisoners was about the lack of access to communal cooking facilities, including microwaves, on the residential units (in contrast to their experience in other category C prisons).

A new set of rules for prisoners on Feltham B was introduced at the beginning of 2024, to reflect the older age group and also for simplification. These were communicated via the in-cell tablets, but not displayed on units. One rule prohibits vaping outside cells. However, whilst men tell the IMB that they know about this rule, it is apparent that this is not enforced consistently across Feltham B. Vapes continue to be sold on canteen (a facility where prisoners can buy snacks, toiletries, stationery and other essentials using their allocated funds).

5.2 Separation

Feltham A

The Board is constantly impressed by the tireless patience of staff on CSRU. During the reporting year, this was the Falcon unit. The highly complex needs of those on Falcon remain a significant challenge: for example, seven of the staff assaults in August 2024 occurred on Falcon. Consequently, it has frequently been hard for staff to deliver a full regime on Falcon when the safety of the young people and staff must be prioritised.

This year has seen some very challenging young people housed on Falcon (including a restricted-status young person, whose escape would present a serious risk to the public), who often required three or four officers in PPE to unlock them. The IMB has also observed dirty protests, with faeces pushed under room doors. From the Board's monitoring, boys are treated with humanity and decency and staff have been calm and patient.

Separated YPs continue to receive less education, as there are so many constraints on delivering one-to one teaching.

One young person has been separated on Falcon unit continuously since October 2023, and it is anticipated that he will remain so until transfer to the adult estate. For the majority of this time, separation has been for his own protection or self-separation, although occasionally it has been for good order or discipline. The IMB has observed his reviews and recognises efforts made to offer reintegration opportunities, even moving him to the 'platinum' unit (Curlew). The input of the Falcon team has impressed the IMB, which has seen improvements in the individual's self-care and levels of engagement.

Feltham B

The CSRU at Feltham B is known as Ibis. Conditions on the unit exercise yard were improved, as reported last year. However, the main corridor roof has been leaking for years and dripped continuously, causing a slipping hazard. However, it is pleasing that, as of the end of the reporting period, works to replace the flat roof in this area had commenced.

The average stay in the CSRU remained roughly the same throughout the reporting period, ranging from 3-5 days per month. The IMB visits at least once a week and aims to speak to every segregated prisoner. There are usually, on average, 9-13 prisoners on the unit. The IMB also observes adjudications and finds them to be fairly conducted.

Many stays on CSRU have been unnecessarily increased by population pressures, with prisoners being unwilling to move back to the units. New electric points were added into the CSRU so men who were not on basic regime could have a TV or have a laptop. Many residents on Ibis/CSRU told us that the difference between the very limited regime(s) on normal residential units and that operating in the separation unit was minimal. As a consequence, many were content to remain in the CSRU longer than they would otherwise.

Prisoners who self-isolate have difficulty accessing regime, time out of room or any education or purposeful activity, even when on a residential unit. There are no

mechanisms for delivering adequate regime and such men spend long periods alone. They do have access to laptops and to in-cell telephony (if it is working) in their cells.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships

Feltham A

In October 2023, Feltham A staff received the support of the HMPPS custody improvement team. This was part of the Tier 3 process that the YCS uses for establishments with concerns. A strategy action board was set up. The IMB immediately saw an improvement in delivering regime and time out of room. In December 2023, it was noted that the standards coaching team had been effective in building up confidence in staff. Steps taken were sufficiently successful that, in May 2024, Feltham A moved into Tier 2. Staffing levels were then recorded as being suitable for a maximum operational capacity of 180 (at the time, the roll was around 113).

The IMB reported in June 2024: 'Relationships between staff and YPs were observed to be extremely positive in all areas on all units on A side, without exception.' The IMB has also learned that, over the reporting year, the staff attrition rate on Feltham A has fallen.

Feltham B

Feltham B staffing was an issue at the beginning of the reporting period, leading to regime cancellations. For this reason, in January, Feltham B also went into Tier 3 for Youth Custody Service (YCS) support. At the time of the report, the prison is fully staffed but, on any day, the numbers of operational staff are reduced due to sickness, unauthorised absence, training or being on restricted duties due to injury, etc. IMB members noted that many staff on duty are very inexperienced and lacked older, more experienced staff to mentor them, and they also lacked adequate training in 'jail craft'. Some older prisoners on Feltham B have told IMB that they think Feltham is 'not set up for adults' and staff are 'too friendly'.

The lack of key worker sessions has a big impact on prisoner and staff relationships. Frustrations around many other issues, such as the lack of workshop opportunities, being far from families, fear of keep-aparts, all adversely affect prisoner and staff relationships which is, perhaps, is a factor in the worrying increase in assaults on staff.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The equality team is very active. At Christmas time, they took proactive steps to work with a local charity, Friends of Feltham, to buy Christmas decorations for A side units.

In February, LGBTQ+ History Month was marked with a forum attended by 80 prisoners. This was used as an opportunity to address the rise in cases of homophobic abuse. It was understood that some prisoners' cultural or religious background and beliefs were behind this. The forum was deemed a success, as prisoners responded to themes of tolerance and respect for all and showed empathy when discussing the effect of homophobia on peoples' wellbeing. Education and wellbeing intervention teams were all involved and gave positive feedback.

Foreign national prisoners are supported by the offender management unit (OMU), which handles resettlement by coordinating efforts with the Home Office and other relevant departments, depending on the specific needs of each individual. The aim is to ensure that all aspects of the person's resettlement, such as housing, employment and immigration matters, are addressed, but the IMB has not been able to measure the success of this. On Feltham A, there were roughly 20-30 foreign national prisoners in any month, with a high of 39 in April 2024 (approximately one-third of the prison population). In Feltham B, numbers of foreign national prisoners varied between 40 and 70 in any one month.

Alleged incidents of discrimination are reported by prisoners on discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs). A total of 50 of these were submitted in Feltham A during the period; and 38 in Feltham B.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The multi-faith chaplaincy team is highly visible to all prisoners across both prisons. Friday prayers and Sunday services are held weekly, but the support of the team goes far wider and they are a visible presence on the residential units. In the absence of concrete data, it is difficult to evidence the impact of chaplaincy, but it is apparent to the IMB, from prisoners' comments and observations, that the prisoners recognise and appreciate the support provided and reach out directly for support, for example, at times of bereavement or immediately following a GOoD review.

Due to the prevalence of keep-aparts, the number of prisoners able to attend mosque each week is limited. Attendance is rotated amongst small 'bubbles', which means that most Muslim prisoners can attend only occasionally. The Imams work hard to deliver supporting messages to all prisoners, via laptops, every Friday morning.

Problems were identified in previous reports in facilitating access to Christian worship on Sundays, given the need to accommodate four groups safely within a limited time period. Additionally, within Feltham A, there were some clashes with regime, with young people being offered potentially more favourable options (such as, for example, exercise or paid work). These issues were addressed mid-year, with changes to start times of services and regime on offer, with improvements reported subsequently. It was also noted during the reporting year that the lack of escorting staff on B side caused cancelation of chaplaincy activities.

5.6 Rewards and sanctions

The Board has nothing to report.

5.7 Complaints

From 1 September 2023 to 31 to August 2024, the prison received 167 first-stage complaints (up from 127 last year) from young people on Feltham A and 993 (up from 623 last year) from those on Feltham B. Second-stage complaints (appeals) were received from six young people on Feltham A and 26 prisoners on Feltham B.

Most common complaints by category:

Complaint	A side	B side
1	Lost property (39)	Residential issues (151)
2	Staff (29)	Lost property (133)
3	Other: Not feeling safe; Home Detention Curfew (HDC; which allows some prisoners to be released early from custody if they have a suitable address to go to); sentencing; transfers; and issues with other prisoners. (27)	Other: Not feeling safe; HDC; sentencing; transfers; and issues with other prisoners (117)
4	Accommodation (11)	Reception (88)
5	Confidential (9)	Staff (63)
6	Food/drink (9)	Transfers/allocations (69)

5.8 Property

Feltham B

The IMB continues to receive complaints and applications (prisoners' written representations) about lost property. It may have been lost on transfer from another establishment or after having been sent in by family and friends. This causes anxiety and stress for prisoners and involves staff in a lot of time following up complaints and enquiries. In the last reporting year, a member of staff in reception had set up a manual system to follow up lost property with other establishments, liaise with the gate and post room and record progress. This member of staff has been redeployed to other duties, so the system is no longer followed. No other system has been introduced and there are no steps in place other than the prison complaints system. Property cards, which record items the prisoner has in custody, are not digitised. No modern technologies are in use to track and record the sending or transfer of property.

Feltham A

Lost property is seldom an issue on Feltham A, except when items have been lost internally, in the laundry.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The provision of healthcare in Feltham appears to be good. Healthcare is well scrutinised by external agencies, such as, for example, NHS England, Hounslow Local Authority and the Prison Health Partnership Board. Due to the increase in the number of young people and adults during the year and the increase in age category to 30 years, a population health needs' analysis is being completed. The staffing model is being reviewed to meet the needs of the changing population. This has been welcomed by the IMB.

The IMB is aware of the increased number of hospital escorts: from 1 April to 31 August 2024 there were 15 emergency escorts and 43 planned escorts. Of these, on average, 16 per month are for X-rays as there are no such facilities in the prison. Escorts take up valuable and scarce staff time.

In October 2023, a prisoner failed to receive the best treatment for an injury. This was because, on two occasions, his escort to hospital was cancelled by the orderly room, once due to staff shortages and once because it was believed the correct paperwork had not been completed.

Young people and adults are able to make healthcare appointments via their in-room laptops, or the healthcare unit can call a prisoner on the phone in his room.

Complaints and concerns are monitored through the NHS process. The IMB received an increased number of applications concerning healthcare in the reporting year, from four in 2023 to 15 in 2024.

The standard of cleaning has improved in the primary care unit.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Healthcare is an integrated department offering a comprehensive provision for adults and young people, such as, for example, a GP, primary care, CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services), mental health, substance misuse, drug and alcohol treatment, a dentist and hygienist, physiotherapy, sexual health, podiatry and nurse-led clinics.

The IMB is aware that the GP and members of the healthcare team visit those who are held in separation on Rule 49 (for good order or discipline/GOOD) or are self-isolating for any reason. A weekly nurse-led clinic is held on the separation units (Falcon and CSRU) to enable the young people and adults to be seen individually to have their health needs assessed.

The majority of the young people have their comprehensive health assessment within two hours of arrival. They are followed up at regular intervals, according to clinical need.

In-possession medication has been better facilitated for adults on Feltham B, following the installation of the in-room medication boxes, based on individual risk assessments. Other medication is delivered to the residential units by two staff. In the course of the reporting year, there were difficulties with administering medications by healthcare staff due to the increase in numbers and the times prescribed for medications. This was reviewed and resulted in new timings for

administration of medicines on Feltham B, which is being trialled for three months. This should improve timeliness and safety of medication administration. Tracka units were installed in March on B side for safe delivery of medications, but still have not been used, as staff have yet to be trained in their use.

6.3 Mental healthcare: drug and alcohol rehabilitation

A CAMHS consultant provides support for the young people and a consultant psychiatrist provides four sessions per week for adults. Wellbeing is provided by healthcare professionals as an outreach service on the residential units. The adult substance misuse service is being reviewed due to the increase in number and age of the population. Lack of available rooms, due to competing with other agencies for space on the units, can impact the ability to deliver interventions.

6.4 Social care: designated social work team (DSW)

Feltham A

The advanced social work practitioner has now been in post since June 2023, and in January 2024 was joined by two social work practitioners. This was extremely welcome, but it has taken considerable time for the new staff to gain access to the relevant prison information systems and general equipment, so integration of the DSW service is ongoing.

The number of boys coming into Feltham with care orders remains high: for example, in April 2024, there were 15 YPs in Feltham A who had care orders, rising to 22 in August. In addition, in August, there were 47 boys who were 'looked after', by reason of remand (Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act, 2012, or LASPOA). Once a boy is sentenced, that status changes to Child in Need.

All boys have a social worker, who sees them regularly. The boys can access the DSW through their laptops and the social workers are actively involved in supporting the boys. The DSW team is involved in family social visit days and the youth council.

In October 2023 and May 2024, there were two open day sessions for local authority youth justice teams to visit HMP/YOI Feltham.

The social work team reports to IMB that there have been issues with receiving subsistence monies from local authorities and securing appropriate accommodation on release. The DSW team escalates matters around subsistence and accommodation. In order to secure accommodation on release, an escalation process starts four weeks ahead of the release date; however, DSWs are actively raising with the independent reviewing officers/social workers during looked after children (LAC) reviews, the need to secure accommodation throughout the young person's time at Feltham, particularly when the young person is not returning to family. The team also offers care leaver support to help prepare boys for release.

6.5 Time out of room, regime

Feltham A

Time out of room (TOoR) varies considerably, depending on residential Unit. The 'platinum' unit, Curlew, operates most successfully with boys out of rooms and associating freely for up to ten hours a day. Boys placed on this unit exhibit good behaviour and, consequently, they can follow a full programme of education and

exercise, including gym in the day and homework or youth club in the early evening. The atmosphere appears to be good. In the autumn of 2023, Bittern unit boys were participating in football matches against Curlew. Eagle unit was re-opened after a period of closure in June 2024, with the aim of maintaining a single group on a unit who could associate freely, optimising time out of room. For the most part, this has succeeded and is very welcome.

On the other units, time out of room can be extremely limited and is inconsistent. This has been the case on weekends throughout the reporting year and boys may only have had two hours out of their rooms at weekends. Again, this was a particular problem on August weekends, when staffing levels were very low and boys could be locked up for 23 hours a day. The IMB continually asks for time out of room data, but it is not readily available. As reported last year, the IMB still does not see the data circulated, nor have we seen flagged up clearly any particular boys who are getting less than two hours a day T0oR.

Young people at Feltham A do not have sufficient time outside their rooms for meaningful engagement with support services, significantly limiting rehabilitation opportunities. A shortage of time out of their rooms also impacted access to exercise and education activities, particularly in the final three months of the reporting year.

CuSP and 'Secure Stairs'

IMB Feltham has made considerable efforts this year to monitor the delivery of CUSP and the 'Secure Stairs' framework, designed for care and engagement with young offenders, and concludes that it is not fully implemented. Some elements, such as 'guided reflective practice' (for staff to reflect on their engagement strategies with young people) are in place but are not prioritised during staffing shortages, especially in summer months. Core support was also running, aiming for a joined-up approach to care. Formulations are created and updated by the child's core support team, which includes many services, including psychology, for example. It is first created as part of induction and updated regularly or following a significant event by the home unit core support team. All formulations are located in one electronic folder ('secure stairs folder') on the shared drive, so accessible to all. However, when asked about it by the IMB, the working knowledge of staff was patchy. The IMB observed varying degrees of knowledge and engagement from staff.

Every child is allocated a CUSP officer on arrival, but take-up of sessions was poor. For example, in November 2023, 52 boys had accepted sessions, with 67 refusals. Boys said they did not feel it was worthwhile. In January, it was reported that boys on the platinum unit (Curlew) were not engaging with CUSP, complaining that it was 'samey'.

Throughout the year, a number of different approaches have been tried to ensure delivery of 'wellbeing'. At the start of the reporting year, wellbeing was given a dedicated slot, or wellbeing pathway, on the timetable, as part of education. In February, each unit had its own wellbeing day, with life skills included in the programme. In April, it was reported that about 70% of wellbeing slots were delivered but, in July, the IMB learned that a new approach was being tried where individuals would be taken out of education. There has been no consistent delivery of a 'wellbeing pathway', as such, throughout the year. In March, the Governor advised the IMB that the problem was the lack of available rooms on the units for wellbeing

interventions. A long-term plan was to use some space in the reception area, but that has not materialised.

Interventions facilitators, who are crucial to rehabilitation efforts, often face barriers in accessing young people. In April 2024, 30% of sessions were cancelled, rising to 40% in August. Despite this, staff report that when sessions do take place, they positively impact the young person's behaviour and motivation to change. Similarly, wellbeing sessions are also increasingly difficult to schedule and are cancelled more than 20% of the time, due to conflicts with other activities or staff shortages.

Both wellbeing and interventions staff note that such limited rooms as are available for these sessions are often bare, echoey and dirty, which hinders engagement and therapeutic work. Some rooms are inadequately furnished, with one using a filing cabinet laid on its side as a table. The IMB has noted rubbish strewn around.

Feltham B

The IMB have received continuous complaints from men that 'Feltham is not a proper C category prison'; the courses for completing sentence plans are not available; the courses in education and workshops are not what they want; and there is insufficient time out of room.

Staffing restrictions at the end of 2023 meant that time out of room was reduced for men in Feltham B. In December, a new core day was introduced to enable full access to all regime and optimise opportunities for purposeful activity. However, in February, the IMB noted that, on weekdays, B side units were getting five hours daily and only one unit had 8-9 hours, as a workshop was located on that unit.

In August 2024, a new pilot was started for Quail to operate as a category C unit, with up to 40 men out at any one time, all doing purposeful activity, exercise, going to workshops, etc. The very welcome proposal is to roll this out to three more units at a time. This will be in autumn 2024 and the IMB will be monitoring this.

6.6 Soft skills

The youth council is held monthly on A side.

Feltham B has a council for prisoners. This was suspended in January, when all the Kinetics (a charity that supports young people in Feltham) workers suddenly left. It has now resumed.

The Board has seen some good examples of staff members taking very positive initiatives, such as a book group, which started in autumn 2023. At the end of the reporting period, prisoners on B side were invited to attend senior leadership team meetings

7. Education and training

7.1 Education

Feltham A

Education is provided under the seven-year contract with the Shaw Trust. Leaders in the education department are strongly committed to do the best for the YPs in their care. This leads to good relationships between staff and YPs. Monitoring indicates it is unusual for a YP to refuse to attend education. However, the Youth Custody Service calculated that 1991.25 hours in education were cancelled during the reporting period. Movement within education is carefully planned by prison staff, as violence can quickly erupt when YPs are outside their units. Flash incidents of violence have resulted in individual lessons being curtailed and YPs involved being returned to their rooms.

The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to poor, and steps have been taken to address underperformance. From the Board's observations, there are pockets of real excellence, particularly the skills workshops in horticulture, painting and decorating, catering and barbering. Unfortunately, these facilities can only cater for 4-6 YPs at any one time.

Steps have successfully been taken this year to increase the planned delivery time in education. However, the huge gap between planned hours and actual hours delivered remains a major concern for the Board. During the monitoring period, planned delivery hours ranged from 15 to 22.5 hours weekly. The actual delivery time ranged from zero to 12.6 hours weekly. The reasons for failure to deliver on planned hours are many: the greatest contributing factor being prison staff shortages, which means boys are not taken to education. In addition, each month there remain a handful of children (six in August 2024) for whom the planned delivery hours fall very short of the 15-hour minimum target. More work needs to be done to educate these children who are, for example, self-separators and do not attend classes.

Monitoring shows there is an enormous amount of scrutiny of education by multiple external agencies, resulting in an inordinate amount of time spent completing paperwork, performance reviews, data sets, etc. This must be completed separately for the Shaw trust, YOI, YCS, Ofsted and internally. This, coupled with a very poor management information system called Curious, creates a huge amount of administration that takes people away from their core purpose. Support has been provided with the appointment of a head of education, skills and work. This has been a great asset to the prison but, much of his time is spent analysing data to ensure service level requirements are met for the contract with the Shaw trust.

Ofsted inspects the provision of education in prison using the same framework for further education colleges in the community. This makes it extremely challenging to be successful, as some criteria are outside the control of the education team. Standards on entry are low in education, with many YPs having been out of the school system for some years. In the monitoring period, 49% of those inducted were working at entry level 3 (primary school). However, YPs are encouraged to sit public exams and, in 2024, 14 took GCSEs, one YP gaining a level 7 in English language and another who, after release, was offered a place to study at university following his vocational course at Feltham.

Monitoring shows the development of soft skills is a real strength of the education department. One example is a visit for a disabled mother of a child serving a long sentence, where a cake was baked and they were able to spend time together. This had a marked impact on the YP and his behaviour around the prison.

Feltham B

A new national role was introduced to Feltham with the appointment of Feltham B head of education, skills and work in July 2023, with the aim of improving the complete pathways for prisoners. Education is managed by Novus. The contract has been extended for an additional six months from April 2025 to October 2025

In January 2024, HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) conducted an Interim Review of Progress (IRP), focusing on education, skills and training, and identified as a key concern 'that too few prisoners had access to education, skills and work. A lack of activity spaces, staff shortages and safety concerns among prisoners meant attendance at work was woeful, and just one in five prisoners was employed in activity off the wing'. Despite this finding, the IMB saw no evidence of any significant steps taken to improve the position during the remainder of the reporting year.

Classrooms include entry English, English levels 1 and 2 and maths.

An outreach functional skills teacher was appointed during the reporting year, due to several prisoners failing their maths exam. The new teacher also supports the lower English learners and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages).

The Shannon Trust and prisoner mentors assist prisoners who have reading difficulties. There are trained mentors on every residential unit. Lack of staff or regime complications curtailed the attendance of prisoners at education and caused problems with the Shannon Trust mentors and learners having their one-to-one sessions.

As in previous years, the Board heard many comments from prisoners, stating that they are reluctant to attend education due to the fear of violence. For the reporting year, attendance average was 35%, with 46% being the highest and 26% the lowest.

A total of 574 accredited courses were completed and 528 achieved a qualification (92% success rate), plus five Open University courses were completed .

The in-cell laptops do not support MS Word, so distance learners cannot write up assignments in their cells. They may go to education once a week to use the PCs there, but the B side education department has been asking for suitable laptop software for some time for distance learners to use in cells.

7.2 Library

This facility is managed by Hounslow Library Services and is led by experienced and dedicated staff. Both A and B side libraries are well stocked, with a variety of books and topical magazines, plus DVDs. A side library is in a portacabin, but both are inviting spaces. Competitions and incentive schemes are run to encourage better literacy.

Feltham A

In March 2024, the A side library had its most successful month, with 171 YPs attending (compared to 91 in some months and ten at the lowest point). A total of

101 books were borrowed, an increase of 66% on February. Library staff told the IMB that they believed this was because prison staff numbers were good and classes were brought to the library as part of education: 65 classes attended. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the library staff, this engagement has not been maintained. At the end of the reporting year, library visits were not happening, and staff were coming onto the units with books.

Feltham B

Prisoners can attend the library for one hour every two weeks. There were approximately 1,300 visits per month in the reporting year. A maximum of 19 prisoners are allowed in the library at any one time.

The library is well stocked and has a good selection of books and magazines in foreign languages.

Two orderlies (trusted prisoners who take on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison) work in the library room and the Shannon Trust helps prisoners to improve their reading.

Library staff work tirelessly to keep prisoners interested, but complications with regime or staff shortages have hindered many prisoners from attending their library sessions. Earlier in the reporting year, we heard from library staff and prisoners that unit staff were deprioritising library with inconsistent excuses “library or shower”). This has now been resolved.

The IMB has heard several comments from library staff that a lack of searches has enabled prisoners to vape or play cards during their library session.

7.3 Vocational training

Feltham B

Feltham has 379 workshop places, although 500 are required. Workshop and education pathways lack structure to allow development throughout a sentence progressing towards release. There are insufficient levels of accreditation, so levels 1 and 2 may be available but no opportunities to go higher. Whilst there is a need for construction workers, HMP pay does not attract sufficient instructors for this industry. However, positively, there has been a slight increase in the workshops available and prisoners provide very positive feedback from Rugby, the cycles workshop and the active IQ gym workshop (although, in that, only NVQ levels 1 and 2 are available). The kitchen has a thriving and successful skills programme, with graduates progressing to work in the staff café, Loch Mess, where they may acquire ‘customer-facing’ skills. The headsets workshop was moved to a room on Teal unit, which meant it was easier for prisoners to attend.

Regular complaints are received from prisoners regarding the offering compared to other category C establishments: unsuitability for future employment, delays in getting onto a pathway and repeated cancellations due to lack of both prison and teaching staff. From the last week of July 2024, the prison moved to keep workshops and education open at all times, despite any staff shortages, and it assures the IMB that none has been closed since. Accurate attendance figures are difficult to verify by the IMB, but it is often apparent that numbers do not attend, possibly due to legal appointments, sickness or just disengagement. In March 2024, so many men were

refusing to attend workshops that there were 150 outstanding adjudications (disciplinary hearings when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules). Even when a workshop was scheduled to have prisoners from a single unit, men still refused to attend, leading to the conclusion that non-attendance was not down to safety concerns or fear of violence. Many men considered the courses not worth doing, despite their obligation to attend. At that time, the prison told the Board that the instructors did not possess the right qualifications and skill set and a recruitment drive for new teachers was underway.

One prisoner kept a log for July/August 2024, which showed about 40% of his pathway did not take place. When workshops are suddenly cancelled, prisoners become very frustrated.

Difficulties around movements within the prison contributed to prisoners being late to sessions, which added to the frustration of teaching staff in fulfilling curriculum. The Deputy Governor, in his notice to staff about the new core day in December 2023, stated: 'Prompt arrival of the prisoners at activities allows us to ensure that we can open up on time and will help with some of the stress of delivering a busy core day. It is a critical part of our day, so please can we ensure that we are ready to go when activities are called!' However, when monitoring workshops, the IMB received complaints from tutors that learners were not arriving on time, some were often half an hour or more late, so classes did not start on time and learning opportunities were frittered away. The Board believes that, from August 2024 onwards, this was being carefully monitored and tracked in an effort to ensure prompt arrival of learners.

8. Progression towards transfer or release

8.1 Case management, progression and resettlement planning

Feltham A

The resettlement team on A side is fully staffed and appears to the IMB to work hard to deliver a robust resettlement plan to young people. The resettlement practitioners are integral to the 'Secure Stairs' framework, attending core support meetings and providing flexible support to young people. Their engagement includes direct messaging via laptops, phone calls and in-person visits rather than relying solely on scheduled appointments, which can be easily cancelled.

Unlike within Feltham B, there is no hub to assist with form completion, opening bank accounts and sourcing identification (ID) documents, so some young people are released without these essential items. To address this, the resettlement team has developed a process to open bank accounts, although this can only be done through HSBC, and not all young people choose this option. Additionally, all young people can apply for a citizen card as ID, but the cost must be covered by the individual, unless they are under local authority care, in which case the expense is covered.

Young people should ideally have accommodation and education, training or employment (ETE) plans in place six weeks prior to release. Although this is not the direct responsibility of resettlement practitioners, they work diligently to try to ensure that these plans are secured. Due to ongoing challenges in securing accommodation, the resettlement practitioners have created an escalation process, which starts eight weeks before release. This begins with contacting the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and escalates through various levels of social care, ultimately involving the head of resettlement and the Director of Children's Services, if needed. A parallel escalation process exists for ETE, beginning with the YOS and escalating through careers advisors to the Director of Children's Services. Barriers to securing ETE include the inability to process applications without a confirmed address, a young person's reluctance to engage and the limited availability of opportunities in the local community. While the resettlement practitioners attempt to coordinate ETE, the YOS and Probation Service are responsible for its delivery. Notably, the Probation Service does not refer a young person for ETE until after their release.

The IMB has observed numerous instances where accommodation, or ETE arrangements, were not confirmed until 24-48 hours before release, causing unnecessary stress and contributing to poor behaviour. The Board is aware of the shortage of accommodation, especially in London.

Accommodation and ETE statistics (August 2023-July 2024; total releases: 61)

Accommodation:

- Confirmed six weeks before release: 19
- Confirmed within ten days of release: 15
- Confirmed less than ten days before release: 18
- Confirmed one day before release: 8
- Confirmed on the day of release: 1

ETE:

- No confirmed plan: 46
- Part-time education/training: 13
- Full-time education/training: 0
- Part-time employment: 1
- Full-time employment: 1
- Employment service interview: 0

As of August 2024, around 29 individuals over 18 years of age in Feltham A were eligible and awaiting transfer to the adult estate. Limited availability of spaces in the prison system complicates transfers, making it difficult for prisoners to relocate closer to their homes. A policy change at the end of the reporting period means that, as of Autumn 2024, YOIs are not holding over 18s

Release on temporary licence (ROTL)

Historically, few young people in Feltham A were eligible for ROTL, but eligibility is expected to increase due to a policy change. While no national ROTL policy previously existed for the youth estate, a draft version is now under review. The reducing reoffending and resettlement teams have identified 12 eligible young people, with one already having completed three successful outings after a risk assessment board review.

Feltham B

Resettlement within Feltham B is supported by the offender management unit (OMU) in line with the offender management in custody (OMiC) model. Staffing has improved since last year but it takes time for new recruits to gain sufficient experience.

The key worker scheme has not been operating consistently within Feltham over the last year. Not enough key worker sessions are held. Although key work is regularly scheduled (e.g. three sessions completed on 6 December 2023), they are always one of the first things to get cancelled when staff shortages impact the regime. In July, the IMB learned that the detail officer supplies six key work sessions a day. This places additional demands on the OMU staff to respond to prisoners' queries, which can lead to frustrations. The IMB is constantly told by prisoners that either they do not know who their key worker is, or they 'never see' that person. This means there is no single point of contact to support a prisoner and to liaise with other departments to help him fulfil his sentence plan and prepare for release. It also impacts on safety and staff and prisoner relations.

The early release schemes put in place by the Government over the last year put additional pressure on OMU staff to progress resettlements earlier than planned. There was one incident of a prisoner waiting in reception before his release, when it was cancelled due to lack of accommodation.

The IMB has also received complaints about the lack of availability of courses required both for sentence plan completion or for recategorisation. Now Feltham is a Category C prison, in addition to being a YOI, many prisoners, particularly those with longer sentences, wish to recategorise to move to a category D (open prison), but Feltham B only offers the Thinking Skills, Identity Matters and Sycamore Tree

programmes. Frustrations come from the eligibility for category D being set at up to three years prior to the conditional release date (CRD) whereas, in practice, Feltham and most adult sites prioritise attendance at courses for those heading towards 12 months pre-CRD. Furthermore, a large number of prisoners do not meet the other criteria set for these programmes so, in practice, there are only a small number of eligible prisoners.

Employment hub

The employment hub opened in January 2023 to support prisoners in the last three months of their sentence, ahead of their release. The hub works with the employment advisory board (EAB) to bring into the hub prospective employers interested in employing ex-offenders and link them with existing workshops, such as, for example, OX Bikes. A total of 11 employment events took place in the hub during the reporting period, with 110 prisoners attending. Galliford Try brought in a training van to demonstrate construction skills, and Thames Water, Microsoft and Suez Waste also gave presentations. Positive feedback was received afterwards from both employers and attending prisoners. A prisoner who left Feltham in December 2023 came back with the construction company, for whom he still works. The founder of Dusty Knuckle Bakery noted that she had never seen such a 'genuine connection between men and prison staff'. Prisoners attend employment events on a voluntary basis and engagement is variable: for example, 29 prisoners signed up to the Thames Water event but only 12 attended. The IMB has noted that, despite the huge efforts of the hub team, the numbers of prisoners engaging is low.

The hub assists with CV writing, setting up bank accounts, renewing driving licences and obtaining IDs, if necessary. All prisoners are given a comprehensive discharge pack on release.

During September 2023-August 2024:

- 152 birth certificate hard copies were obtained
- 143 bank accounts were opened
- 43 replacement driving licences were obtained from the DVLA

A charity (F.R.E.E) is offering a course to prisoners on employability skills.

Hounslow's Department of Work and Pensions provides a full-time coach within the hub, who advises on Universal Credit claims and employment opportunities and organises appointments with JobCentre Plus.

Challenges have continued in getting prisoners to the employment hub in a timely way, so the decision was made to relocate to the office to education B. This has improved contact with prisoners by the hub team. There is a plan for Wifi to be available in this space, to assist prisoners with job hunting, but no target date has been set. Employer events and courses still take place in the large space within workshops.

The aim of the hub is for 10% of prisoners to be in employment six weeks after release. This target is not being met and data for the end of the reporting year could not be verified. The IMB notes that the data does not reflect the commitment and enthusiasm of the employment hub staff, which is reflected in the atmosphere within by the prisoners.

Release on temporary licence (ROTL)

The number of prisoners eligible for ROTL remains low – in single figures. This is possibly due to the change in population, with both the increased risk and a number waiting to transfer to category D prisons so only able to participate for a short time. The scheme has provided some positive opportunities. In August 2024, two prisoners were going out regularly to assist at a sports club and a foodbank. Since April 2024, eligible prisoners are able to attend Parkrun on a Saturday and there was a climbing trip to Yorkshire for one prisoner.

8.2 Family contact

The visitors' centre is operated by PACT and social visits have increased over the past year. They are contracted to provide 12 family days per year, which provide games and refreshments and are very well received. Sports days and Fathers' Day events are also arranged.

The visitors' centre is a portacabin located by the main gate and is, in the opinion of the IMB, unfit for purpose. It was closed down at the start of reporting year and reopened in October 2023, with only essential repairs completed. During the year, an area had to be shut off again, due to the roof leaking, requiring five buckets, which constituted a risk to both staff and visitors. Roof repairs to the visitors' centre is underway at the time of writing (October 2024).

There is an open play area within the Feltham B visits' room, but fathers are not allowed to accompany their children, so is underused.

Refreshments are available to purchase on Feltham B visits, provided by Loch Mess, which is appreciated by visitors and prisoners.

At the beginning of the reporting year, staff shortages necessitated the cancellation of a family day and, in February, it was reported that the target of three visits per month for Feltham B was not being met. However, this has since improved.

On Feltham A, social visits this year were augmented by initiatives by the education department to bring in families. The IMB attended successful 'half-term week' enrichment activities in the gym, where families, staff and boys played basketball.

On Feltham B, video calls (formerly 'Purple visits') have not functioned well this year and the number of calls made available at Feltham B steadily declined during the reporting period. This was because staff shortages prevented effective delivery of the service. In January, half of the video calls were cancelled, leading to frustration and complaints and particular hardship for some prisoners whose families could not visit.

A booth has now been set up for social video calls and it is hoped that this should improve the delivery of the service, although it is still heavily dependent on staff availability.

The same problems do not exist on Feltham A, where the prison receives fewer requests for social video calls, which are held on five days a week and are rarely cancelled.

The work of the IMB

The IMB members are unpaid volunteers. This year at Feltham, Board member numbers have reduced, as long serving members have retired and the process to vet and then approve the appointments of new members has taken a very long time, leading to some recruits losing interest and dropping out.

A short film regarding the role of the IMB was added to prisoner tablets in 2023.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	17
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	13
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the establishment	394

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year		Current reporting year	
		Feltham A	Feltham B	Feltham A	Feltham B
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	0	9	1	9
B	Discipline including adjudications, incentives schemes, sanctions	1	8	2	11
C	Equality	1	2	1	4
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	1	8	1	10
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	0	8	0	8
E2	Finance including pay, private moneys, spends	0	8	0	7
F	Food and kitchens	0	0	0	2
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	1	3	0	15
H1	Property within this establishment	1	2	2	10
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	0	33	0	18
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue (s)	0	7	0	2
I	Sentence management including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorization	2	11	2	13
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	0	16	1	16
K	Transfers	2	17	0	14
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	1	2	0	6
Total number of applications		10	134	10	145



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