

Report on an independent review of progress at

HMYOI Feltham A

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

30 September – 9 October 2024



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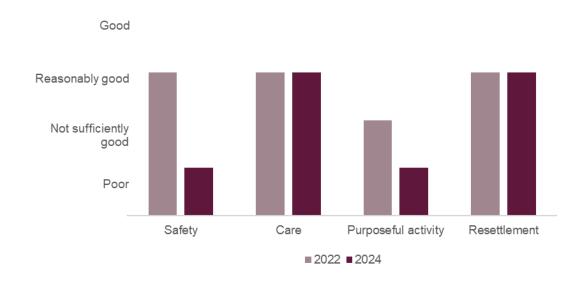
Section 1 Chief Inspector's summary

- 1.1 Feltham A is a young offender institution in West London. It can hold up to 126 boys aged 15 to 18 and, at the time of this independent review of progress (IRP), the population was 112. At our inspection in March 2024, we found that outcomes had deteriorated substantially in safety and purposeful activity. Violence and disorder were at the heart of these issues, the prevalence of which prevented access to key services including education, medical appointments and visits.
- 1.2 Since this time, the site has experienced substantial challenges. The closure of HMYOI Cookham Wood in May 2024 meant that Feltham now received children from a much wider area. This had dramatically increased the number of new arrivals and the proportion of children on remand, as well as increasing the population by nearly 50%. In addition, underlying high levels of staff sickness were made much worse over the summer when two serious incidents of violence led to 34 members of staff being injured. In the month before our visit, 75 of 183 frontline staff were unable to be deployed because of sickness, temporary promotion or training commitments. This dramatically reduced the ability of leaders to deliver a constructive and consistent daily routine. The frustration this caused then led to more staff assaults, further affecting staffing in a vicious cycle. This was the key reason behind the limited progress we have identified at this visit.

What we found at our last inspection

1.3 At our previous inspection of HMYOI Feltham A in 2024 we made the following judgements about outcomes for children.

Figure 1: HMYOI Feltham A healthy establishment outcomes 2022 and 2024



What we found during this review visit

- 1.4 At this IRP we reviewed nine concerns identified at the inspection in March 2024 and found progress to be insufficient or worse in six areas and reasonable or better in the remaining three.
- 1.5 While there had been good progress in addressing weaknesses in public protection and improving support for children to maintain contact with their family and friends, fundamental weaknesses remained. Despite the efforts of leaders, who had improved oversight and their understanding of the issues, Feltham remains an establishment dominated by conflict and violence.
- 1.6 Leaders were trying to incentivise children to mix together by providing those that did with more time out of cell on two units which operated as 'single communities'. While a positive step in the right direction, the scale of the staffing difficulties faced over the summer months meant that the average child experienced less than three hours out of cell each day and in some weeks nearly half the population had less than two hours.
- 1.7 In this context children simply did not attend enough education to make substantial progress or benefit from the better offer available in mathematics. Managers were now fully aware of the weaknesses in the education offer, notably in English, and had issued an improvement notice to the provider as required by their contractual arrangements. This had not yet had an impact.
- 1.8 While we have identified some progress, the experience of children at Feltham will not get better without substantial improvements in safety. Even with predicted reductions in the population caused by the transfer of 18-year-olds to adult prisons, the governor and her team will need support from the Youth Custody Service to make sustainable improvement at Feltham.

Charlie Taylor

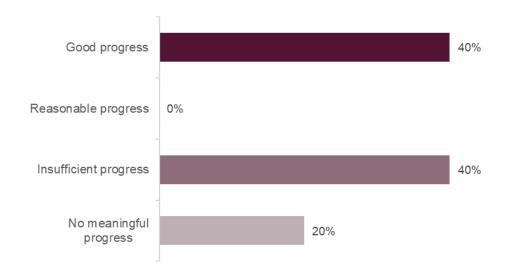
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons October 2024

Section 2 Key findings

- 2.1 At this IRP visit, we followed up five concerns from our most recent inspection in March 2024 and Ofsted followed up three themes based on their latest inspection.
- 2.2 HMI Prisons judged that there was good progress in two concerns, insufficient progress in two concerns and no meaningful progress in one concern.

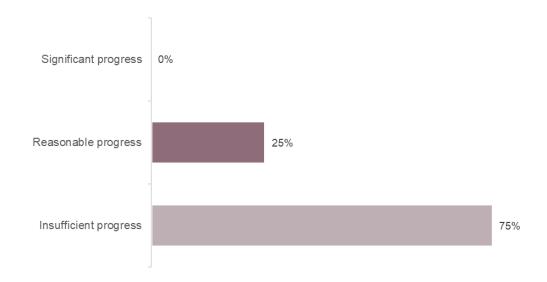
Figure 2: Progress on HMI Prisons concerns from 2024 inspection (n=5)

This bar chart excludes any concerns that were followed up as part of a theme within Ofsted's concurrent monitoring visit.



2.3 Ofsted judged that there was reasonable progress in one theme and insufficient progress in three themes.

Figure 3: Progress on Ofsted themes from 2024 inspection (n=4).



Notable positive practice

2.4 We define notable positive practice as:

Evidence of our expectations being met to deliver particularly good outcomes for children, and/or particularly original or creative approaches to problem-solving.

2.5 Inspectors found no examples of notable positive practice during this inspection, which other YOIs may be able to learn from or replicate.

Section 3 Progress against our concerns and Ofsted themes

The following provides a brief description of our findings in relation to each concern followed up from the full inspection in 2024.

Safety

Concern: Levels of violence and disorder were very high. Conflict and keep aparts negatively affected many aspects of life at Feltham, including access to a meaningful regime, medical appointments and visits.

- 3.1 Levels of violence had remained broadly the same at this visit as at the inspection in 2023. This time the overall assault rate was 35.6 per 100 children a month compared to 38.6 previously. More serious violence, however, appeared to be increasing quite significantly. In the 12 months before the inspection there had been 22 serious assaults, while in the six months before this visit there had already been 27.
- 3.2 Incidents of disorder seemed to be reducing. During the 12 months before the inspection there had been 320 recorded incidents, while over the previous six months 127 incidents had occurred.
- 3.3 Serious assaults on staff had led to an increase in staff sickness, which in turn had affected children's time out of cell (see paragraph 3.10).
- 3.4 Both the monthly safety meeting and the weekly restraint and behaviour risk management meeting were well attended. A wide range of data were viewed that enabled leaders to take appropriate actions to support children and try to reduce violence. These actions were followed up and, in the records we viewed, completed in a timely manner.
- 3.5 This good oversight and interventions such as conflict resolution had led to a reduction in the number of 'keep-apart' restrictions (restrictions on which children a specific child could meet) from 266 for 84 children to 171 for 111.
- 3.6 There had also been good consultation with both staff and children, a safety summit had recently taken place and learning from the summit had been used to inform several policies. For example, the weapons strategy had been updated as the types of weapons children were making and the reasons for this had changed. A new behaviour management policy had been produced and was being implemented at the time of this visit. It was good to see that it placed emphasis on immediate rewards for children.
- 3.7 The closure of Cookham Wood had led to a rise in the population at Feltham and a wider catchment from which children were received,

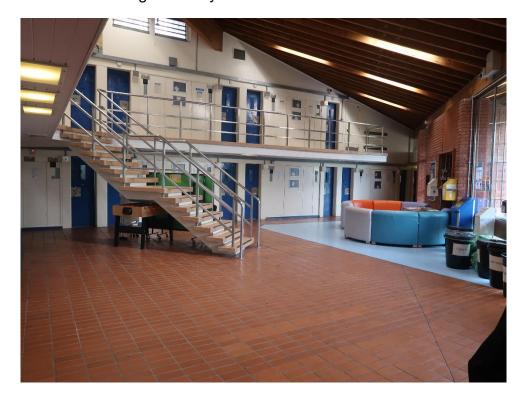
increasing the potential for violence. The threat of spontaneous violence between children remained and, for example, inspectors saw children trying to get to each other through locked gates as they were returning from education. All these factors continued to hamper children's access to a meaningful regime, health care appointments and visits.

3.8 We considered that the YOI had made insufficient progress in this area.

Separation from normal location

Concern: There was a lack of support for the most vulnerable children. The closure of Alpine unit had led to increasingly long periods of separation.

3.9 Since our last inspection, separated children had been moved from Falcon unit to Jay, where the cells were in a better condition and there were more cells available. However, there was less space for other activities or meetings which reduced opportunities for leaders to increase meaningful activity for the children held on the unit.



Jay unit

- 3.10 The number of instances where separation was being used appeared to be increasing since the inspection. At that time, there had been 232 instances of separation over the preceding 12 months, while in the six months before this visit there had been 195 separations.
- 3.11 All children who were separated, and those who chose to isolate themselves from other children, were now located Jay unit. This gave leaders assurance that key safeguards such as visits from health care

took place each day. Children were also seen each week by a core support team (small multidisciplinary team appropriate to the child's immediate need) and basics such as exercise and showers now happened each day.

- 3.12 Oversight was good and a wide range of data were considered at the quarterly meetings enabling leaders to better understand the reasons for separation. There was an appropriate authorisation for each child in the records we viewed. Special accommodation had not been used in the previous six months, which was good.
- 3.13 The enhanced support unit (Alpine unit) which previously provided bespoke support for children with the highest level of needs, remained closed after being damaged by a previous resident. At our last inspection, all the children who would have benefited from this unit were separated and received very little of the support they would have received on Alpine unit. This situation had improved and at the time of this visit only one of these children lived on Jay unit, while the other four lived on normal location mixing with other children.
- 3.14 However, records indicated that the average time a child on Jay unit had out of cell each day was about one and a half hours. There was evidence of this starting to increase but this depended on the number of children held on the unit: the higher the number of children the less time each child could have out of cell.
- 3.15 We considered that the YOI had made insufficient progress in this area.

Time out of cell

Concern: Children spent too much time locked in their cells.

- 3.16 Time out of cell for children remained poor. During our checks, we found that just over a third of children were locked up during the day, a substantial increase from the 13.5% during our inspection.
- 3.17 Time out of cell had decreased a few months after our inspection to under four hours, and during summer 2024 had reduced even further to less than three hours. During the three months before our visit, time out of cell remained at less than three hours.
- 3.18 Staff shortages caused by high levels of sick absence, staff restricted to limited duties and high training demands, prevented leaders from consistently delivering a meaningful daily routine for children. Staff and children expressed frustration over the inconsistency of not knowing what was happening each day.
- 3.19 During summer 2024, there had been a small number of serious incidents of disorder that had had a catastrophic impact on staffing resources. During this period, time out of cell fell to its lowest point, where half the population received less than two hours out of cell each

- day and some children were receiving less than 30 minutes, which was unacceptable.
- 3.20 Leaders were committed to their 'single community' strategy, where they aimed to get all children on each residential unit to mix to enable a whole unit to be unlocked at the same time. The levels of conflict made this challenging and while two units were now operating as single communities the majority continued to house several groups of children who could not mix. As a consequence, the average experience of children at Feltham had not been meaningfully affected.
- 3.21 We considered that the YOI had made no meaningful progress in this area.

Education, skills and work



This part of the report is written by Ofsted inspectors. Ofsted's thematic approach reflects the monitoring visit methodology used for further education and skills providers. The themes set out the main areas for improvement in the YOI's previous inspection report or progress monitoring visit letter.

Theme 1: Leaders did not make sure that staff used children's starting points effectively to teach a well-structured curriculum in English and mathematics. Too few children achieved their qualifications.

- 3.22 Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers had taken action to improve the teaching of their English and mathematics curriculum. These processes were more developed in mathematics than in English.
- 3.23 In mathematics, leaders had recruited and retained suitable staff, including putting in place a dedicated curriculum lead, and enhanced their curriculum planning. Children completed a diagnostic assessment and individual unit assessments during their induction to establish strengths and areas for development within each of the units of study. This helped to establish children's starting points, from which teachers routinely monitored the progress children made. Teachers adapted what they were teaching based on the knowledge that children were gaining. Teachers and managers also offered a portfolio-based curriculum that matched areas for learning that were prescribed as part of the children's sentence plans. These improvements were beginning to have an impact in terms of positive learner outcomes. As a result, in mathematics children were supported well and motivated to learn.
- 3.24 In English, leaders and teachers had not managed to make sufficient improvements. Teachers did not consistently set learning targets for

children based on their starting points. For example, in the children's workbooks reviewed there were no, or limited, targets stated. This meant that children did not know what their improvement actions were or the steps they needed to take to achieve them. Children who were taking English lessons reported that they received too little support to improve their skills. The work they were set was not explained clearly or linked to their level of learning. As a result, they did not feel motivated.

- 3.25 In English, children were not always aware of what level they were studying, or what their individual targets were. Children were making insufficient progress in English.
- 3.26 Ofsted considered that the YOI had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Theme 2: Leaders did not make sure that children took part in sufficient education or that children attended, as expected, to make swift progress and gain substantial new knowledge and skills to help them in their next steps.

- 3.27 Leaders and managers had put in place strategies to ensure children took part in and attended sufficient education. Leaders had established 'single communities', whereby children agreed to live in a group that wanted to dissociate from violent behaviour and live in a safe community, which would enable them both to attend and make progress in developing their knowledge and skills. Managers had also introduced a new timetable that had been developed to focus on children's aspirations and prior educational attainment. This timetable moved away from the previous one that had been based on the children's accommodation units, which restricted both choice and access to workshops and available courses. Leaders and managers had also taken actions to improve the monitoring of children who did not have a minimum of 15 hours' planned learning. In addition they had begun to identify barriers to attendance and any mitigating actions they could implement to improve these.
- When children were able to attend, most worked purposefully and made good progress. For example, in the barbering workshop children were proud of the styling skills they were developing by working on dummy heads and fellow learners as salon clients. In painting and decorating, children developed their professional skills to a high level and applied their mathematics knowledge to work out the materials needed after calculating the area of the rooms to be decorated.
- 3.29 While there had been some very short periods of better attendance, the impact of the strategies leaders had implemented had not resulted in improvement over a sustained period of time. This was in part the result of insufficient staffing linked to significant incidents of assaults, violence and poor behaviour by children since the previous inspection.

- 3.30 As a result of these incidents, attendance in education and vocational training workshops had at times fallen lower than at the previous inspection and had not reached levels that would support children in making good progress. Most of the children spoken to were keen to improve their knowledge and skills and felt frustrated at being held back by these disruptions and the lack of opportunity to attend education and vocational training.
- 3.31 Ofsted considered that the YOI had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Theme 3: Leaders did not provide a sufficient curriculum offer at level three to support children to progress and meet their educational needs and interests.

- 3.32 Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers had taken action to enhance the academic curriculum offer at level 3. The recently introduced Stonebridge distance learning provision was meeting the needs and aspirations of the small cohort of learners who were currently enrolled on these courses. As a result, the learners spoken to enjoyed their courses in accountancy, business and the fundamentals of electricity, and were keen to develop their skills to this higher level.
- 3.33 Leaders had only recently introduced the level 3 vocational curriculum, including the access to higher education stand-alone English and mathematics qualifications, and so the impact was not visible. Plans for level 3 work were at an advanced stage in the barbering and painting and decorating vocational workshops, though not yet available to children.
- While leaders were still finalising the processes for children to undertake their learning fully independently, they had put in place specific staff resourcing that meant learners could continue with their studies. Teachers were closely monitoring children's progress on level 3 courses and had put in place support for those who needed help with their learning. This was helping children to improve their knowledge and skills to the higher-level work. As a result, those engaged in level 3 courses enjoyed working independently on the modules and appreciated the support from staff to access resources. For example, an accounting learner spoken to was learning how to pay in and withdraw money on a balance sheet and felt this was very useful for his future career aspirations.
- 3.35 Ofsted considered that the YOI had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 4: Leaders did not have sufficient oversight of the quality of the education provision and had not improved it significantly.

- 3.36 Leaders and managers had established an oversight of the quality of the education provision since the previous inspection, and had a clear understanding of the areas for improvement.
- 3.37 The regional operations education team and the head of education skills and work at Feltham had established a quality review process. They established lesson observations, learning walks, learner surveys, and scrutiny of children's work and their progress as a part of a quality calendar and cycle, to inform and support improvement.
- 3.38 While the measures taken had led to positive signs of improvement in teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics, they had not led to improvements in the overall provision since the previous inspection. As a result, many of the identified issues from both the inspection and the internal quality review process still needed further improvement to reach the required standards, which had led to a recent notice to improve to the education provider, the Shaw Trust.
- 3.39 Managers had not managed to bring about the required improvements through the action plans they had implemented. As a result, there was not sufficient evidence of impact on education and skills, to support significant improvement that would benefit the progress of the children.
- 3.40 Ofsted considered that the YOI had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Children, families and contact with the outside world

Concern: The provision to help children maintain family contact was poor. There were insufficient opportunities for social visits and video calls were not promoted well enough to children.

3.41 The provision for visits remained similar to that seen at our inspection, with the majority of sessions taking place during school and work hours. Children's responses to our survey questions on visits also remained similar, being significantly worse than at comparable prisons. However, leaders had completed a review of staffing and planned to increase the provision in early November 2024, which would triple the availability of visits sessions at the weekend.







Visits hall (top) and family room

- 3.42 The use of video-calling visits remained low, with only 28 sessions in the previous six months. Leaders had acquired an extra four terminals and had made additional staff available to facilitate dedicated sessions.
- 3.43 Leaders had made resources available to manage the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) contract effectively and staffing had improved in this service. All new arrivals were met and the available services offered to each child, which included casework to support children who needed to improve family relationships, including their own children in some cases, supporting visit sessions and delivering courses.
- 3.44 Several bids had been submitted to enhance the visit environment, with some, such as fixing the visits centre roof, already approved.
- 3.45 Leaders had introduced other initiatives to understand and improve services, including surveys and holding a family enrichment week.

3.46 We considered that the YOI had made good progress in this area.

Public protection

Concern: The identification and review of children's risk levels were weak. Resettlement practitioners had not received adequate training in public protection risk management and children that were high risk of harm were not reviewed regularly.

- 3.47 Leaders had sourced and delivered several appropriate training courses to improve resettlement practitioners' understanding of risk management, including on systems used to record risk, report writing and general risk management. Most practitioners were now trained and future sessions were scheduled for the remainder of staff.
- 3.48 New, effective quality assurance systems had been introduced which reviewed a sample of work in depth, including contributions to risk meetings, MAPPA (multi-agency public protection arrangements) and other relevant documents. Leaders gave detailed feedback on strengths and weaknesses in the work to develop resettlement practitioners' reporting on risk management.
- In cases that we reviewed, the work undertaken was not fully reflected in all cases, which was understandable, but we did see evidence of resettlement practitioners commenting on risk management and identifying and reporting on behaviour in custody which reflected the child's offending in the community.
- 3.50 A quality assurance system that reviewed public protection systems and meetings to make sure that public protection measures were effective had been strengthened, and a strategic public protection meeting was to start in the near future.
- 3.51 We considered that the YOI had made good progress in this area.

Section 4 Summary of judgements

A list of the HMI Prisons concerns and Ofsted themes followed up at this visit and the judgements made.

HMI Prisons concerns

Levels of violence and disorder were very high. Conflict and keep aparts negatively affected many aspects of life at Feltham, including access to a meaningful regime, medical appointments and visits.

Insufficient progress

There was a lack of support for the most vulnerable children. The closure of Alpine unit had led to increasingly long periods of separation.

Insufficient progress

Children spent too much time locked in their cells.

No meaningful progress

The provision to help children maintain family contact was poor. There were insufficient opportunities for social visits and video calls were not promoted well enough to children.

Good progress

The identification and review of children's risk levels were weak. Resettlement practitioners had not received adequate training in public protection risk management and children that were high risk of harm were not reviewed regularly.

Good progress

Ofsted themes

Leaders did not make sure that staff used children's starting points effectively to teach a well-structured curriculum in English and mathematics. Too few children achieved their qualifications.

Insufficient progress

Leaders did not make sure that children took part in sufficient education or that children attended, as expected, to make swift progress and gain substantial new knowledge and skills to help them in their next steps.

Insufficient progress

Leaders did not provide a sufficient curriculum offer at level three to support children to progress and meet their educational needs and interests.

Reasonable progress

Leaders did not have sufficient oversight of the quality of the education provision and had not improved it significantly.

Insufficient progress

Appendix I About this report

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons) is an independent, statutory organisation which reports on the treatment and conditions of those detained in prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres, immigration detention facilities, court custody and military detention.

All visits carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons contribute to the UK's response to its international obligations under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). OPCAT requires that all places of detention are visited regularly by independent bodies – known as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) – which monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is one of several bodies making up the NPM in the UK.

Independent reviews of progress (IRPs) are designed to improve accountability to ministers about the progress establishments make in addressing HM Inspectorate of Prisons' concerns in between inspections. IRPs take place at the discretion of the Chief Inspector when a full inspection suggests the establishment would benefit from additional scrutiny and focus on a limited number of the concerns raised at the inspection. IRPs do not therefore result in assessments against our healthy establishment tests. HM Inspectorate of Prisons' tests for children's establishments are safety, care, purposeful activity and resettlement. For more information see our website: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/our-expectations/

The aims of IRPs are to:

- assess progress against selected priority and key concerns
- support improvement
- identify any emerging difficulties or lack of progress at an early stage
- assess the sufficiency of the leadership and management response to our concerns at the full inspection.

This report contains a summary from the Chief Inspector and a brief record of our findings in relation to each concern we have followed up. The reader may find it helpful to refer to the report of the full inspection, carried out in [MONTH, YEAR] for further detail on the original findings (available on our website at https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/).

IRP methodology

IRPs are announced at least three months in advance and take place eight to 12 months after a full inspection. When we announce an IRP, we identify which concerns we intend to follow up (usually no more than 15). Depending on the concerns to be followed up, IRP visits may be conducted jointly with Ofsted (England), Estyn (Wales), the Care Quality Commission and the General Pharmaceutical Council. This joint work ensures expert knowledge is deployed and avoids multiple inspection visits.

During our three-day visit, we collect a range of evidence about the progress in implementing each selected concern. Sources of evidence include observation, discussions with children, staff and relevant third parties, documentation and data.

Each concern followed up by HMI Prisons during an IRP is given one of four progress judgements:

No meaningful progress

Managers had not yet formulated, resourced or begun to implement a realistic improvement plan to address this concern.

Insufficient progress

Managers had begun to implement a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern but the actions taken since our inspection had had not yet resulted in sufficient evidence of progress (for example, better and embedded systems and processes).

Reasonable progress

Managers were implementing a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern and there was evidence of progress (for example, better and embedded systems and processes) and/or early evidence of some improving outcomes for children.

Good progress

Managers had implemented a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern and had delivered a clear improvement in outcomes for children.

When Ofsted attends an IRP its methodology replicates the monitoring visits conducted in further education and skills provision. Each theme followed up by Ofsted is given one of three progress judgements.

Insufficient progress

Progress has been either slow or insubstantial or both, and the demonstrable impact on learners has been negligible.

Reasonable progress

Action taken by the provider is already having a beneficial impact on learners and improvements are sustainable and are based on the provider's thorough quality assurance procedures.

Significant progress

Progress has been rapid and is already having considerable beneficial impact on learners.

Ofsted's approach to undertaking monitoring visits and the inspection methodology involved are set out in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook*, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework.

Inspection team

This independent review of progress was carried out by:

Angus Jones Team leader David Foot Inspector Donna Ward Inspector Emma King Researcher Sophie Riley Researcher Tareek Deacon Researcher Malcolm Bruce Ofsted inspector Andrea McMahon Ofsted inspector

Appendix II Glossary

We try to make our reports as clear as possible, and this short glossary should help to explain some of the specialist terms you may find. If you need an explanation of any other terms, please see the longer glossary, available on our website at: http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/about-our-inspections/

Certified normal accommodation (CNA) and operational capacity

Baseline CNA is the sum total of all certified accommodation in an establishment except cells in segregation units, health care cells or rooms that are not routinely used to accommodate long stay patients. In-use CNA is baseline CNA less those places not available for immediate use, such as damaged cells, cells affected by building works, and cells taken out of use due to staff shortages. Operational capacity is the total number of children that an establishment can hold without serious risk to good order, security and the proper running of the planned regime.

Leader

In this report the term 'leader' refers to anyone with leadership or management responsibility in the prison system. We will direct our narrative at the level of leadership which has the most capacity to influence a particular outcome.

Protected characteristics

The grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010).

Secure video calls

A system commissioned by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) that requires users to download an app to their phone or computer. Before a visit can be booked, users must upload valid ID.

Time out of cell

Time out of cell, in addition to formal 'purposeful activity', includes any time children are out of their cells to associate or use communal facilities to take showers or make telephone calls.

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