



House of Commons  
Justice Committee

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**Children and Young  
People in Custody  
(Part 2): The Youth  
Secure Estate and  
Resettlement:  
Government Response  
to the Committee's  
Sixteenth Report of  
Session 2019–21**

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**Eleventh Special Report of  
Session 2019–21**

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## Justice Committee

The Justice Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Ministry of Justice and its associated public bodies (including the work of staff provided for the administrative work of courts and tribunals, but excluding consideration of individual cases and appointments, and excluding the work of the Scotland and Wales Offices and of the Advocate General for Scotland); and administration and expenditure of the Attorney General's Office, the Treasury Solicitor's Department, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Serious Fraud Office (but excluding individual cases and appointments and advice given within government by Law Officers).

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### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are, Chloë Cockett (Senior Specialist), Mark Doyle (Committee Media Officer), Su Panchanathan (Committee Operations Officer), Tracey Payne (Committee Specialist), Christine Randall (Committee Operations Manager), Jack Simson Caird (Assistant Counsel), Holly Tremain (Committee Specialist), and David Weir (Clerk).

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# Eleventh Special Report

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On 10 February 2021 the Justice Committee published its Sixteenth Report of Session 2019–21, [\*Children and Young People in Custody \(Part 2\): The Youth Secure Estate and Resettlement\*](#) (HC 922).

The Government's Response was received on 1 April 2021. The response is appended to this Report.

## Appendix: Government Response

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### Safety in Custody

#### *Separation*

The Select Committee recommended:

**We find it unacceptable that data on separation in Young Offender Institutions is not gathered and published and recommend that the Ministry of Justice rectify this immediately.**

1. The issue underlying the Committee's recommendation is the gap in the central collection of separation data for Young Offender Institutions (YOIs), and the publication of these figures is one the Government has recognised.
2. This is why the Information Development Project was created by the Youth Custody Service (YCS) to improve the central collection of data across the youth secure estate. Since December 2019 the YCS has been capturing and recording incidents of separation in YOIs which has begun to inform practice.
3. More broadly, we are reviewing the impact of the separation policy framework on the current data collection methods. This will add to our understanding of the impact of trends, helping us support the youth secure estate in implementing local changes, improving outcomes for children and young people.
4. Given that the purpose of collecting separation data is to inform practice and improve outcomes, we agree more needs to be done to improve transparency through the sharing of this information. However, we are clear this needs to be carefully balanced against capturing sufficient, suitable and accurate data that can be effectively analysed and inform practice. The issue on when to publish separation data remains under review as we await publication of the separation policy which we anticipate will further inform our data capturing process in terms of suitability. However, we expect to begin publishing separation data on a quarterly basis in the 2022/23 financial year and onwards.

The Select Committee recommended:

**The Ministry of Justice and Youth Custody Service should set out what is being done to ensure coherent and consistent practice across the estate.**

5. The thematic review conducted by HM Inspectorate of Prisons on the separation of boys in YOIs found a system of poor practice in the use of separation across the estate.<sup>1</sup> Following the publication of the thematic review, the YCS took a range of immediate actions, including introducing a national single point of contact responsible for reviewing oversight arrangements for separation. These priority actions were followed by the publication of an action plan in January 2020 addressing the concerns identified by the inspectorate and setting out steps for implementation.<sup>2</sup> Since this time, steady progress has been made against these actions, to help ensure more consistent processes and better outcomes for those separated.

6. In addition to the action plan, the YCS established a taskforce as a result of the separation thematic to review the model of separation.<sup>3</sup> Whilst the Government has been clear that separation should only be used as a last resort it is accepted that in practice this has not always been the case.

7. The findings and recommendations, published in June 2020, were accepted and included the recommendation to create a new system of separation—work is now progressing in the creation of this new framework.

The Select Committee recommended:

We welcome the Government’s commitment to develop a new policy framework on separation **and recommend that the Ministry of Justice and Youth Custody Service set out when this piece of work will be completed and when the new framework will be implemented.**

8. We recognise the importance of having a consistent policy framework for separation across the youth secure estate and the benefit of clear direction and scrutiny. We have engaged stakeholders and our youth secure estate to ensure the framework is both fit for purpose and addresses the concerns raised by the inspectorate and other partners.

9. We are analysing stakeholders’ responses to ensure the policy framework provides robust guidance to sites across the estate. We understand the importance of having this framework published and implemented and expect the policy to be published by August with implementation following immediately after.

### ***Mental Health and Self-Harm***

The Select Committee recommended:

In cases where the mental health of offenders is a substantial factor in their self-harm or their level of risk to staff or fellow offenders, **we recommend that the Ministry work with the Department of Health and Social Care to identify mechanisms to ensure appropriate placement for individuals who require treatment and to make sure that young offenders are in the right place to receive the treatment they need.**

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1 HMIP Separation of children in young offender institutions: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/01/Separation-of-children-thematic-Web-2019.pdf>

2 HMPPS Separation Action Plan: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/869617/YCS\\_Separation\\_of\\_Children\\_HMIP\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869617/YCS_Separation_of_Children_HMIP_Action_Plan.pdf)

3 Findings of the Separation Taskforce: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/893203/separation-taskforce-findings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/893203/separation-taskforce-findings.pdf)

10. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) recognises the need to ensure all children and young people are placed appropriately, either in the Criminal Justice System or within other appropriate placements for children and young people. To ensure appropriate placement, the YCS has strengthened its partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) through improved information sharing, thus helping to identify the small number of children who present a complex mix of characteristics and whose needs are more suitably met outside of youth custody.

11. Children and young people whose health needs will be more appropriately met outside youth custody are transferred to a secure hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983 Part III. Last year, on average, this amounted to 10 children or young people each year, who in most cases, are transferred within appropriate timescales. However, there are some limited instances either where the child or young person's characteristics are more complicated or sensitive and require an extended assessment period, or they do not meet the criteria for admission to a secure hospital and/or custody.

12. We have recently seen a rise in the small number of children who identified as extremely 'high harm high risk'. To better understand their needs, NHSE&I have commissioned a clinical review of the cohort to support future policy and commissioning work and will be reviewing the evidence and recommendations with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to determine next steps.

13. To further improve the appropriate placement of children, a revised procedure for the transfer or re-admission of children under the Mental Health Act 1983 will be published by the NHSE&I in spring 2021.

14. In addition, the YCS continues to work collaboratively with NHSE&I to identify and appropriately support children and young people with mental health concerns in custody. The Critical Case Pathway, jointly led by a lead psychologist and NHSE&I is the current mechanism for oversight and escalation of cases where a child or young person may be awaiting assessment or accommodation in a hospital. We will continue to work closely with the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure these children and young people are accommodated appropriately so they can receive the treatment they need.

The Select Committee recommended:

**The Ministry of Justice and Youth Custody Service should set out what measures they have put in place specifically to address self-harm.**

15. It is important that children and young people have access to support that aid them in dealing with issues of self-harm and mental health. It is well recognised that children and young people in custody have a range of complex needs and associated vulnerabilities. As such, the approach of the YCS is to work within the Framework for Integrated Care within which the vision of multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working is paramount. Once fully functional, children and young people identified as being particularly vulnerable to the risk of self-harm will be given a provision of support developed by individuals and services involved in their care. Associated activity will be based on a comprehensive formulation of the child or young person's needs, with an emphasis on the importance of the child or young person being part of this planning.

16. To enable the above activity, we are building processes to ensure staff have the right skills and support to enable them to continue to respond in a child-centred way to challenging circumstances. Relevant training around individual development and trauma forms part of this approach. We will also continue to develop opportunities for support and reflective practice amongst staff.

17. In addition, HMPPS and NHSE&I have developed a package of interventions within the Behaviour Management Strategy that address risks and needs of children and young people through early intervention and an initial multi-agency approach. The intensity and specialisation of interventions then increase based on the individuals need. Our strategy includes rolling out the Custody Support Plan (CuSP), a care planning approach, based on the 'hierarchy of needs', namely meeting physical needs (for example warmth, shelter and food), building trust and safety, working on relationships, self-esteem and achievement; and self-actualisation (growth, change and development to plan for positive future). The CuSP forms part of the wider support approach for children and currently operates across the 4 public YOIs.

18. As the overall population has decreased, we have an increased proportion of children and young people in the youth secure estate who present varying complex needs including self-harm. These children are also some of the most vulnerable in society and require bespoke interventions to support their needs. That is why we have been progressing work with a focus on some of the most vulnerable and challenging young people in custody through the Critical Case Pathway (CCP). This joint YCS and NHSE&I pathway provides a level of oversight, assurance and support to professionals working with children who self-harm and those with the most exceptionally complex needs. The multi-disciplinary approach allows staff to take action to ensure effective assessment, planning and co-ordination to make sure every effort is made to meet the needs of this group. The CCP builds on the provision of support and expertise at site level with additional opportunities for support, advice and intervention from central services as identified as necessary.

19. Our priority is to always increase understanding, so in addition to local safety diagnostic tools, central management information gives sites within the youth secure estate the ability to further review self-harm data on a monthly basis. This data provides breakdowns on trends, allowing sites within the youth secure estate to determine location, time and frequency, thus building a better understanding of how to address, and where possible, prevent self-harm in children and young people.

The Select Committee recommended:

**The Ministry of Justice and Youth Custody Service must also seek to understand why self-harm appears to have reduced during the covid-19 pandemic, and what can be learned from that.**

20. We welcome the decline in the rates of self-harm during the covid-19 pandemic and agree we must seek to understand the reasons for the decline. As the Committee will be aware, at the start of the covid-19 pandemic the YCS took a number of measures to ensure children and young people were kept safe. This included a combined approach of adapting or enhancing elements of the Behaviour Management Strategy and implementing a reduced regime, with a focus on delivering essential activities.

21. The YCS worked with their partners NHSE&I to deliver an enhanced model of 'SECURE STAIRS', the integrated framework of care that provides the foundations for how the YCS works with children. This took into account the impact of covid-19, the vulnerabilities of children and young people with complex needs and the need to increase the core offering.

22. The YCS also created youth-specific Exceptional Delivery Models (EDMs), alongside those published by HMPPS, on key aspects of regime delivery (specifically Education and P.E, Advocacy, the CuSP, Interventions and Resettlement) to ensure the needs of children were seen as distinct and suitably met.

23. In addition to learning from the decline in self-harm incidents, the YCS is applying other lessons learned from the covid-19 period to recovery planning. To better understand these lessons, the YCS commissioned the covid-19 Research and Evaluation Programme in May 2020. The work is being undertaken by HMPPS, YCS Psychology Services with academic input and the final report is due to be published in late spring 2021.

### ***Use of Force and Pain-Inducing Techniques***

The Select Committee recommended:

**We recommend that the Ministry of Justice and the Youth Custody Service set out the reasons why use of force is rising in youth custodial institutions and what steps are being taken to ensure that any such use is necessary and proportionate.**

**We recommend that the Ministry and Youth Custody Service conduct a light-touch review of monitoring and governance processes in place for use of force involving children and young people in all the institutions that hold them to establish that those processes are sufficiently robust.**

24. Published Youth Justice Statistics highlighted a 19% increase in Restrictive Physical Intervention between 2018/19<sup>4</sup> and 2019/20.<sup>5</sup> Of this increase, almost 50% is attributed to a small number of very complex girls within the cohort. This can be seen in the higher rates of incidents within the STC and Secure Children's Homes (SCHs) sector.

25. To better understand the needs and care pathways of girls in the youth secure estate, the Centre for Mental Health, co-commissioned by the YCS and NHSE&I will be publishing a report on girls. The findings will inform the development of a YCS and NHSE&I Girls Strategy and Delivery Plan which will be published later this year.

26. Significant work has been and continues to be, undertaken to keep children and young people safe in custody. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain: in the year ending March 2020, 55% of the children and young people in custody had committed a 'violence against the person' offence.

27. It remains the case that physical restraint is only used where there is no other suitable alternative. Our approach is to always minimise the use of restraint through

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4 Youth Justice Statistics 2018/19: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/862078/youth-justice-statistics-bulletin-march-2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/862078/youth-justice-statistics-bulletin-march-2019.pdf)

5 Youth Justice Statistics 2019/20: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/956621/youth-justice-statistics-2019-2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/956621/youth-justice-statistics-2019-2020.pdf)

both de-escalation and diversion techniques, alongside a broader approach to behaviour management. Where restraint is used, we are clear it must always be necessary, proportionate and in accordance with the law.

28. We now capture use of force data at different levels of techniques (i.e. High, Medium and Low). Data on low and medium techniques tell us that it is likely staff are preventing further harm to a child or young person or themselves, and a high level is linked to larger or more serious incidents.

29. In addition to the planned removal of the use of pain-inducing techniques from the Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint (MMPR) syllabus, to ensure that these are used as a last resort to prevent serious physical injury to children or staff (see below), an independent review panel—reporting directly to ministers, is now in place, to review the use of Pain-Inducing Techniques and Serious Injury and Warning Signs at one establishment each month providing an additional level of scrutiny.

The Select Committee recommended:

**We recommend that the Ministry of Justice and Youth Custody Service remove pain-inducing techniques from the MMPR syllabus without further delay. The Ministry and Youth Custody Service should also set out a timeframe for conclusion of the review, redesign and delivery of the new syllabus.**

30. In June 2020, following Charlie Taylor’s review of the use of pain-inducing techniques, we committed to removing the use of the techniques from the MMPR syllabus.<sup>6</sup>

31. A review of the MMPR syllabus has concluded and applied focus has increased during weekly governance of Use of Force, with a requirement to look at antecedents to reduce future occurrences. In addition, the mandatory refresher training for staff has been reviewed and now includes a classroom-based session on Behaviour Management to improve de-escalation and the utilisation of MMPR techniques at the earlier opportunity.

32. We aim to remove this technique by the summer, accompanied by a suite of training for staff to ensure full implementation and understanding across all sites.

## Disproportionality in custody

The Select Committee recommended:

We welcome the Ministry of Justice’s commitment to implement in full the remainder of David Lammy’s recommendations within the next 12 months. The Ministry should set out what resource has been allocated to this piece of work. **We recommend that the response to this Report provide a full and detailed timetable setting out how and by when those recommendations will be implemented. We recommend that that timetable be accompanied by an outline of how sufficient resources will be provided in the immediate and longer terms to ensure that disproportionality in the system is reduced now and remains so in future.**

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6 Independent review of pain-inducing techniques – Government Response: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/893194/pain-inducing-techniques-government-response.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/893194/pain-inducing-techniques-government-response.pdf)

33. Race disparity is a complex problem, and the Government is committed to building on the Lammy Review's recommendations by considering the Review, other independent insights and our own data to better understand the issues and how they can be addressed. The central tenet of Lammy, to better use data so we can "explain or change" those policies or practices that may show some disparity, is key to this approach and to ensuring people responsible for different elements in the Justice System are alert to disparities where they occur.

34. After the publication of the Lammy Review, the Government expedited its efforts to appraise and release a detailed response to the Review which came within 4 months of publication, in December 2017. Since then, we have produced two comprehensive updates on the progress of actions arising from the Lammy Review, Tackling Race Disparity, in September 2018 and again in February 2020. As well as providing a recommendation-by-recommendation position, these updates also outlined other related developments and where appropriate set out expected timeframes.

35. With extensive work having been carried out since the last update in 2020 and significant progress being made, a further update is planned to be published in due course. This shall again provide a detailed analysis of our current progress against each recommendation and outline where work specifically relating to the Lammy Review remains.

36. Key to our work in responding to the Lammy Review has been considering how to monitor the actions taken and measure the long-term impact as well as developing our work in tackling racial disparities outside of the recommendations of the Lammy Review. As significant action has been taken against most of the recommendations, the Race and Ethnic Disparities Team has been carrying out scoping work on possible cross-cutting projects which investigate the root causes of race disproportionality.

37. The quarterly Race and Ethnicity Board remains the source of governance for the implementation of the Lammy recommendations. As most of these are now completed, the Board has begun to reframe its work to improve the data to track changes and progress, support and embed new initiatives whilst continuing to ensure actions taken against the Lammy recommendations are monitored. As such we can ensure tackling race issues remains a key priority for the Ministry of Justice.

38. As the work of the Lammy programme naturally comes to an end, some elements – such as sustained improvements in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) representation in the workforce, including Senior Leaders will be built upon and driven further through the Race Action Programme, which launched in December 2020. The work of the Race Action Programme will allow us to test whether these system changes delivered through the Lammy Programme have the impact and drive the change intended. This 20-strong team provides significant investment to continue delivering long-term and sustainable change on racial inequality.

39. Beyond the work of the Lammy recommendations, HMPPS has allocated funding of £100,000 through the Voluntary and Community Sector Stewardship Fund, targeted at a regional probation level to organisations that are led by BAME boards or managers, and that have a clear focus around working with ethnic minorities. Funding has also been allocated via Clinks to provide consultancy support tailored to their organisational and strategic needs to support them to participate fully in new probation arrangements

(in place from June 2021) and other opportunities that may be provided. As a result, this will improve rehabilitation outcomes and divert young people from the criminal justice system.

## Youth Justice Reform

### *The Future of the Secure Estate*

The Select Committee recommended:

**The Ministry of Justice should set out why the opening has been subject to repeated delays. We recommend that it guarantee that the first school will open as now planned in 2022 and set out what is being done to ensure that that opening is achieved on time.**

40. The MoJ and Oasis Charitable Trust (the successful applicant to run the country's first secure school in Medway, Kent) are working closely with our cross-government partners to get the school ready to open as soon as possible. With secure schools, we are realising a concept never seen before in this country—institutions dually-established as SCHs and 16 to 19 academies. The first such establishment will be run by a charitable secure academy trust, another first for the youth secure estate, and it is important we take the time to get it right.

41. This innovative approach has required us to work through some significant and complex legal and regulatory issues. We want to attract the best child-focused providers and many of those organisations are charities. Charitable status for secure schools is a complex issue, which we have had to work through carefully in partnership with the Charity Commission. We have concluded that the surest way for the operation of a secure school to be deemed a charitable activity is through primary legislation. This includes ensuring this legislation has no unintended consequences beyond establishing the charitable status of secure schools. Provisions in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill introduced into Parliament in March will enable Oasis (and future providers) to establish a secure academy trust and to commence the activities needed to open the school, most notably, the ramp up of recruitment.

42. In parallel to legislation, Oasis is developing an operating model for the school, with the work being led by the school's senior leadership team who are expected to take up post from this spring. We are planning an extensive refurbishment programme at the Medway site to upgrade its facilities, create smaller units and provide a homely child-centred environment that meets children's home regulations. Last year, the department revisited the design and capacity of the site in response to feedback from Ofsted. Following a tender process, we are shortly appointing a preferred constructor to develop the detailed design of the building and to confirm the full programme of works, timeframes, and costs. Subject to securing necessary approvals, we intend to commence the renovation of the site at the end of this year.

43. In such a complex regulatory and operating environment, it is important to take the time to get it right if we are to provide the high-quality provision that children need to enable them to turn their lives around. We continue to work towards an opening date at the end of 2022 and we will keep the Committee updated on progress.

The Select Committee recommended:

**We recommend that the Ministry publish a timetable setting out how, where and when it plans to replace YOIs and STCs with secure schools and what resource has been allocated to ensure this commitment is achievable and is met.**

44. Over the last 10 years, we have seen the number of children in custody decline to the relatively low levels seen today. However, the children who do come into custody are often very vulnerable and have a range of significant needs to be addressed. We remain committed to improving the experience and outcomes for the children in our care and secure schools, with a focus on education and healthcare, are a key element of our programme of reform for youth custody.

45. We want children in custody to live in small units that are close to home and our long-term ambition is to replace all YOIs and STCs with secure schools, so the estate consists of secure schools and SCHs only. We continue to work closely with the SCH sector in anticipation of the next round of commissioning, and we are committed to making the most of our SCH provision. With secure schools, we anticipate establishing future schools will be less complex and, therefore, quicker to open than the first one because we will have laid the policy, legislative and operational foundations and can apply our learning from the first school. However, it is an ambition that will take some time to be realised, so we must also maintain our focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for the children in our existing estate. That's why we are investing significantly in maintaining the current buildings and will continue doing so during 2021/22. We will also continue to make the case in future spending reviews for further investment in the youth secure estate and further secure schools. We will keep the Committee updated when we are able to say more about the timetable for further steps towards our vision.

The Select Committee recommended:

**The Ministry of Justice should set out specifically what reforms to the existing estate have taken place since the Taylor Review and what reforms are in progress or due to commence and complete over the next two years, before the new secure school opens.**

46. The Government remains committed to reforming the youth secure estate following the Taylor Review in 2016 and recognises the importance of having a secure estate that is fit for purpose. We have made good progress in a number of reform areas:

- **Justice Officer Role:** In 2018, as part of our workforce reform and commitment to introduce staff specifically trained to work with children and young people, we announced the introduction of the new Youth Justice Specialist role and provided funding for every prison officer in the youth secure estate the opportunity to obtain a foundation degree in youth justice. In March 2021, the YCS had 201 qualified officers in post, with an additional 227 staff signed up or undertaking learning.

As the workforce reform programme draws to a close, and we move to a level 4 apprenticeship, we will enable all staff joining the YCS to take part in a specialist qualification focused on the 'child first'. In addition, and following a training review, we are now updating the training modules to ensure they are child focussed and linked with the Youth Justice Board's Skills Matrix.

- **Dedicated Officer:** The Behaviour Management Strategy, supported by 'Building Bridges: A Positive Behaviour Framework for the Children and Young People Secure Estate', published in 2019,<sup>7</sup> is a comprehensive range of initiatives, approaches and models of Enhanced Support. Under this strategy sits CuSP, with children and young people in public YOIs allocated a personal custody support officers who they work with on a weekly basis to build trust and consistency.

Currently, the 'COVID-19 Support Plan', a less intensive and physical distanced version of CuSP, is also being delivered to children and young people. This plan takes into consideration the challenges of covid-19 by allowing sites within the youth secure estate to maintain key relationships between staff and children, while supporting those with the most significant needs.

- **Specialist Support Units:** The youth secure estate accommodates some of the most vulnerable and complex children and young people in the country, which is why it is important to have systems in place to support these young people. To enable this support, the YCS opened Enhanced Support Units (ESU) at Feltham and Wetherby YOIs. They provide smaller specialist accommodation for those with exceptionally complex needs enabling the delivery of smaller more intensive rehabilitation work in a therapeutic environment. In 2020, the ESU at Feltham YOI was refurbished and re-opened. Feltham now has its own dedicated, multidisciplinary resource of managers and staff who have been up-skilled where needed, to better support children accommodated there. In addition, Enhanced Support Teams can also be deployed where additional multi-disciplinary support is considered beneficial outside of specialist units.
- **Secure schools:** As part of the youth justice review it was recommended that YOIs and STCs were replaced with smaller secure schools situated in the regions they serve. The Government agreed with this recommendation and recognised the importance of having a site that could meet the needs of children and young people in London and the South East, who at the time, accounted for 38% of the youth custody population. Since then, work has been taking place to deliver on this recommendation.

In July 2019, the Government announced Oasis Charitable Trust as the successful applicant to run the country's first secure school in Medway, Kent. Since then, we have been working in partnership with the Department of Education and NHSE&I to progress its development. As referenced above, we are working towards opening the school in 2022 as we work through some challenges during the project.

- **Refurbishment:** In summer 2020 we announced the additional investment we will provide to improve the youth secure estate (and Feltham B for young adults). We have set aside £13 million to progress plans with opening the first secure school and refurbishing the existing estate, which includes the installation of in-room showers at Feltham 'A', Werrington and Wetherby YOIs, improving facilities for education and the planned roll-out of secure in-room technology across public sector YOIs, to help children access services such as education and engage with family and delivery partners.

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7 Building Bridges: A Positive Behaviour Framework for the Children and Young People Secure Estate: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/863607/building-bridges-positive-behaviour-pf.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863607/building-bridges-positive-behaviour-pf.pdf)

Whilst we remain committed to long-term reform, our vision is that this investment will help improve the lives of children within the youth secure estate, providing greater facilities and opportunities to engage in constructive activities to support their future resettlement.

More widely, HMPPS has secured significant investment for prison maintenance in 2021/22 through the recent one-year Spending Review settlement, with up to £7m designated to the youth secure estate which will facilitate further improvements to the condition of the estate.

47. Due to the impact of covid-19, the progression of many reform initiatives either paused, progressed as desktop activities or were altered to maintain the safety of children and staff at a physical distance, whilst sites managed the effects of the pandemic. Notwithstanding, we remain committed to progressing these reforms that are having a positive impact on children and young people in the youth secure estate.

The Select Committee recommended:

**The Ministry of Justice should set out its workforce strategy, specifically relating to staff in the youth custodial estate. We further recommend that the Ministry commission research into the reasons why staff turnover has been high.**

48. Since introducing the youth justice specialist role, we have provided funding for every prison officer in the youth secure estate, both public and private, to take up a degree level qualification in youth justice. As referenced above, as of March, there were 201 youth justice specialist officers already in post. A further 227 staff are currently signed up or undertaking the learning, with the next cohort due to start in June with up to 130 more frontline staff participating. In addition, there are an extra 20 Band 4 Youth Justice Workers from the Unlocked Graduates scheme working in the youth secure estate. We will continuously review the qualification, including how we can continue to skill staff to work with children in custody.

49. We are currently reviewing staff turnover in public sites within the youth secure estate. The review will focus on frontline positions from entry grade Youth Justice Worker to Custodial Managers, with an emphasis on resignations and the role of the youth justice specialist and where this has influenced attrition. This review is ongoing with a provisional reporting date of 30 June 2021, as by that time there should be sufficient recent data to draw some appropriate conclusions.

## Resettlement and Reoffending

The Select Committee recommended:

**The Ministry of Justice, Youth Custody Service and Youth Justice Board should continue to work together to ensure that all children and young people have adequate access to education and purposeful activity while in custody and that meaningful opportunities continue through into the community.**

50. We welcome the committee's recommendation and will continue our multi-agency working with the YCS and the Youth Justice Board (YJB). We remain committed to improving educational outcomes and access to purposeful activity for all children in custody.

51. We are also working towards commissioning a new educational service for under-18 YOIs in England designed to improve learning outcomes for children. The service will focus on supporting the integration of custody, education and health services with our partners providing a better understanding of education outcomes for children in custody.

The Select Committee recommended:

**The Ministry of Justice and Youth Custody Service should set out what work is being done to reduce duplication and ensure that children have a single coordinated resettlement plan.**

52. We acknowledge there has been duplication in resettlement work following an internal casework review conducted by the YCS that leaned on the findings of YJB's *'How to Make Resettlement Constructive'* report. Following the agreement of all recommendations, a Working Group and Task and Finish Group was formed to oversee development.

53. The need for a coordinated and aligned multi-agency approach in resettlement plans quickly became clear as part of the Integrated Care Model, after overlap across sector became apparent. To reduce overlap and duplication we will continue to foster multi-agency working and co-produce resettlement plans with children and young people following their Formulation.

54. The Formulation will identify and sequence all aspects of the child's needs in custody which in turn will form the foundations of multi-agency planning (Resettlement, Health, Education, Interventions). These plans will ensure that from a child or young person's arrival into custody all stakeholders will work collaboratively in enabling a more successful return to the community.

55. The Resettlement Plan will also review longer-term outcomes and use this to inform our partners on what planning and provision is needed, allowing us to achieve success supporting the child's identity. It is also important that the Resettlement Plan is appropriately reviewed. The plan will be reviewed professionally within the Formulations and less formally with the child and their family/carers in the 'My Plan' reviews.

56. Presently, we are in the development stage of this document, and whilst we recognise the importance of finalising this product, it is also as important to get this right in order to produce a plan that successfully meets the needs of the child.

The Select Committee recommended:

**We agree with the recommendation made by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and HM Inspectorate of Probation that the Ministry of Justice must develop a national accommodation strategy for children released from custody. We acknowledge the commitment made by the Minister of State to return to the Committee to report on progress made in these areas.**

57. The MoJ acknowledges the importance of suitable and stable accommodation, and accommodation secured sufficiently in advance prior to release for children and young people leaving custody. Suitable accommodation is one of the foundations of a constructive resettlement experience.

58. Whilst the responsibility for securing suitable accommodation for children leaving custody primarily lies with local authorities, we recognise that there is a need for MoJ, Department for Education, and Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government to work collaboratively in this space. Accommodation issues for children and young people leaving custody are prevalent, with issues such as; accommodation being secured too late for children leaving custody, sometimes being unsuitable or far away from a child or young person's home area.

59. The MoJ, through stakeholder engagement, is currently exploring how it can most effectively address and improve upon these accommodation issues. This engagement is intended to yield specific policy options that the MoJ and wider government can act upon.

### **Transitioning**

The Select Committee recommended:

**We recommend that the Ministry of Justice set out when the 'transition from youth to adult custody' policy framework will be published and how it will be implemented across the youth and the adult estates. The Ministry should also update us on the practical steps being taken in the interim to ensure that those young people who do make that transition receive the support they need and avoid any drop-off in service provision and support.**

60. The YCS are producing a 'Transitions of young people from youth to adult custody' Policy Framework'. The framework will set out the key principles for safe and successful early pre-transitions planning, transitions preparation and engagement with the receiving prison and active support during and post-transition. We aim to publish the Framework later this year along with the details of how the requirements will be rolled out across the children and young people secure estate and the young adult/adult prison estate.

61. Supporting this work, HMPPS are currently working in collaboration with the YCS to improve the transition process from youth to adult custody, this includes the ongoing pilot transitioning young adults from Wetherby YOI to HMYOI Deerbolt to improve the transitions pathway. The vision is to agree a national transitions process that can be operated consistently across the estate, with a central management body responsible for oversight of all transition's arrangements based on individual need.

62. In the interim, the YCS have implemented a central oversight and assurance model to ensure the youth secure estate are carefully planning transitions and that young adults are informed and supported in these plans.