



██████████
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMYOI Wetherby
York
Wetherby
West Yorkshire
LS22 5ED

MoJ Ref: SUB 083615

27 November 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMYOI WETHERBY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JUNE 2019 – 31 MAY 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 May 2020. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you were short of Board members during the reporting year and the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on your ability to gather information. I am also sorry to hear of the problems you are experiencing with recruiting new members, my team have forwarded your concerns to the IMB Secretariat who will respond to you directly.

I understand the Board's ongoing concern about those who require transfer to secure hospital facilities due to mental ill health. Whilst secure mental health beds are commissioned based on identified need, NHS England and Improvement (NHSE&I) recognise that there is currently a temporary deficit due to the closure of a secure unit. NHS England Specialised Commissioners are actively working with providers in London and the East of England to ensure local access to beds in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Medium Secure Units.

For most children and young people the transfer to a secure CAMHS bed takes place as planned and in a timely way, with a national network monitoring all referrals to ensure timely responses, assessments and admissions. However, it is accepted that on occasions some transfers may take longer than intended. This is due to some children and young people in the secure estate having committed some of the most serious offences and having complex and multi layered needs, which must be fully considered and assessed. Identifying an appropriate and safe placement can take additional time to consider the risks of placing them with other vulnerable people. It can also mean that several assessments with input from various clinicians are necessary to determine a clear diagnosis, particularly where they may suffer from multiple disorders. Delays can also occur when the patient is approaching their 18th birthday due to the transition between CAMHS and Adult Mental Health Services to establish the right service to accept the referral. To make improvements within these types of complicated cases, NHSE&I has commissioned a review of the secure pathway which will report by the end of 2020.

Locally, HMYOI Wetherby supports those young people who may require a transfer through an integrated care approach formulated through the Framework for Integrated Care project known as 'SECURE STAIRS'. This uses multi-disciplinary meetings which bring together key stakeholders in Enhanced Support Teams (EST) reflecting the complexity of the individual's needs to appropriately support them. The EST also provides a forum and escalation process to help refer the most complex of individuals.

I would like to reassure the Board that the Government is committed to reducing serious violence and putting an end to the tragedies afflicting our communities. In 2019-20 the biggest funding increase in a decade was announced for the police system and funding being made available this year will increase by more than £1.1 billion. This includes £700 million for forces to recruit an additional 6,000 officers by the end of March 2021 and £150 million to fight organised crime. In 2020-21 the Home Office is also investing £119 million to tackle county lines drug dealing, continuing to fund Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) and providing extra police resources in the areas most affected by serious violence. It is particularly important that we work across government, statutory, private, and voluntary sectors to deliver change and VRUs are a key component to tackle violence at a local level. These bring together local partners in the 18 areas most affected by serious violence to deliver an effective, joined up approach to tackling violent crime and its drivers. In their first year of operation (2019-20), VRUs invested in over 175 programmes helping support 100,000 young people at risk of being drawn into violent crime.

It is acknowledged that longer term action is required and £200 million has been invested in to the 10-year Youth Endowment Fund, to ensure those most at risk are given the opportunity to turn away from violence and lead positive lives. New legislation has also been announced to prevent and reduce serious violence by creating new and extending existing duties on public sector bodies to collaborate with each other. In addition, new Serious Violence Reduction Orders will make it easier for police to stop and search those previously convicted of knife crime offences and a consultation on the design of these new orders ended on 8 November 2020.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ), HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and Youth Custody Service (YCS) also recognise that the rising number of young people who are entering custody for violent offences is a concern. This is why investment is continuing into the youth justice reform programme to support the most vulnerable young people in custody. In addition to the Keppel Unit at HMYOI Wetherby, which is working towards an enabling environment accreditation by providing bespoke care in a positive social environment, Enhanced Support Units (ESU) have also been introduced. These provide smaller specialist accommodation with an adapted regime to meet the needs of a more complex population. As mentioned above an EST is also allocated to each young person in the ESU to appropriately support them which is multi-agency work which I note the Board commends.

Regarding young people being remanded in custody, whilst this decision is a matter for our independent judiciary, the MoJ agrees that custody, including custodial remand, should always be used as a last resort for young people. The remand framework ensures the court considers all other options, including bail and remand into local authority accommodation, before remanding a young person to custody. The Government has also publicly committed to carry out a review into the use of custodial remand for young people, with a view to identifying options to limit its use where appropriate, while ensuring victims and the public are protected. This work is underway and following engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, the MoJ is in the process of testing and refining the emerging findings and recommendations with internal and external partners and across government.

Despite your concerns, it was reassuring to receive your comments that staff treat those in their care fairly and with respect, and that good relationships have developed during Covid-19 making the young people feel safer. It is encouraging to note that the efforts to ensure equality locally has been recognised and young people can express their views through forums and events. It is pleasing that improvements continue to be made to the environment and in-cell phones have been installed. It is also encouraging to read about the Family Talk programme and other efforts staff are making to facilitate young people to improve contact with their family.

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

The Justice Secretary and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMYOI Wetherby.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Frazer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'F'.

LUCY FRAZER QC MP

Annex

HMYOI WETHERBY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2019 – 31 MAY 2020

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Location of the Young Person

HMYOI Wetherby work closely with the national Youth Custody Service (YCS) Placements Team and will always support any young people in custody who would clearly benefit from the services it is able to provide. It is recognised that the children and young people estate is dispersed due to its size, however, the YCS Placements Team do consider the proximity to home as a factor in deciding an appropriate placement. Wherever possible the intention is always to keep the young person located as close as possible to family and those that support them. However, on rare occasions, it may not be in the young person's best interests to locate them at the establishment closest to their home area or other factors, such as capacity may not make it possible at that time. Since the start of 2020, the YCS Placements team has placed 222 young people into HMYOI Wetherby and only eight of those have been out of catchment due to security and capacity reasons.

Transfers to the Adult Estate

The YCS Placements Team have oversight of transition planning for all young people moving to the young adult estate. The team works with all sites to ensure the process begins from the age 17 years and 6 months and takes place within one month of them turning 18. While it is for sites locally to identify suitable future locations where any difficulties are encountered with a transfer to a young adult prison estate, HMYOI Wetherby make use of the YCS Placements Team escalation process via the YCS Prison Group Director.

Restricted Status

The national Restricted Status Policy Lead and the Prison Group Director for Young People are currently reviewing the use of restricted status accommodation at both HMYOIs Wetherby and Feltham. As these are currently the only two YCS sites accredited for the use of the restricted status security category, the review is focusing on potentially expanding their current capacity, as well as considering if any other site can hold restricted status young people.