



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Action Plan Submitted: 1st November 2022

Updated Action Plan Submitted: 13th November 2023

A Response to: [A Thematic Review of Outcomes for Girls in Custody](#)

Report Published: 21st September 2022

INTRODUCTION

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and HM Inspectorate of Probation for England and Wales are independent inspectorates which provide scrutiny of the conditions for, and treatment of prisoners and offenders. They report their findings for prisons, Young Offender Institutions, and effectiveness of the work of probation, and youth offending services across England and Wales to Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). In response to the report HMPPS / MoJ are required to draft a robust and timely action plan to address the priority and key concerns. Action plans provide specific steps and actions to address the priority and key concerns, that are clear, outcome focussed, measurable, achievable, and relevant with the owner and timescale of each step clearly identified. Action plans are sent to HMIP and published on the GOV.UK website. Progress against the implementation and delivery of the action plans will also be monitored and reported on.



HMPPS ACTION PLAN: [Thematic Review of Outcomes for Girls in Custody](#)

1. Concern No	2. Concerns	3. Response Action Taken/Planned	4. Responsible Owner	5. Target Date
1	<p>A lack of alternative provision and intervention meant that custody was not always justified or used as a last resort.</p> <p>We saw examples of girls being remanded to custody because there were no other available options. In other cases, a lack of appropriate early intervention in the community led to girls' behaviour escalating until they received a custodial sentence.</p>	<p>MoJ recognise the importance of suitable placement options in the community to prevent vulnerable children from coming into contact with the criminal justice system. Whilst Local Authorities have statutory duties to ensure sufficient appropriate accommodation for children in their area, we recognize that LAs sometimes find it difficult accessing the most appropriate accommodation, particularly for children with the most complex needs. The Government is taking significant action to support LAs to fulfil their statutory duties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chancellor announced £259m in capital funding over the Spending Review period (to 2025) to support Local Authorities to expand the number of open and secure children's homes. To drive up the quality and consistency of accommodation, the DfE are introducing mandatory national standards. Ofsted registration and inspection requirements will be required for supported accommodation for looked after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17. The DfE intends to lay regulations in early 2023 with providers then able to apply for Ofsted registration from Spring 2023. The <i>Independent Review for Children's Social Care</i>, a manifesto commitment, took a fundamental look at what is needed to make a real difference to the needs, experiences and outcomes of those supported by children's social care. We are rapidly working up an ambitious and comprehensive implementation strategy in response to the review. <p>The MoJ recognises that custodial remand should be a last resort and, through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 further tightened the tests that the courts must meet in order to remand a child to custody. Those changes came into effect in June 2022; MoJ will internally review their impact in January 2023.</p>	<p>Looked After Children's Division, Department for Education</p> <p>MoJ – Youth Justice and Offender Policy</p>	<p>December 2025</p> <p>April 2023</p> <p>Early 2023</p> <p>Review -January 2023</p>



		<p>Those changes were a key part of the MoJ review of youth custodial remand. Following its publication in January 2022, the department has established a working group, which includes Department of Education (DfE), Youth Justice Board (YJB), Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), Local Government Association (LGA), Youth Custody Service (YCS), and others, to take forward its recommendations. The group will look at ways to improve the availability of bail and Remand to Local Authority Accommodation. MoJ recognise that it can be a challenge to ensure that community accommodation is suitable and will ensure that the needs of girls are considered by the working group. The group will also review the current remand grant and consider how this funding can support the availability of community accommodation.</p> <p>The MoJ is making a change to the Bail Act (through the draft Mental Health Bill) to end children being remanded to prison for their “own welfare” (when the court is concerned for their mental health).</p> <p>It is important that local areas consider the needs of all children. In 2022-23 YJB required Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to submit content on their services’ understanding of use of remand and custody more broadly. This information is being analysed and assurance will be sought from local services through routine oversight of action to tackle any issues including with reference to girls.</p> <p>In Wales, the Welsh Government (WG) has funded a pilot to provide a safe bed at the Rosedale Residential Home in Newport for children on remand, to better understand the complex needs of the children and young people involved and the potential level of support required.</p> <p>A number of recommendations have been identified from the pilot, and these will be taken forward through a Secure Accommodation Project Board in Wales which will be established in December 2022, with the recommendations delivered by end of 2025.</p>	<p>MoJ – Youth Justice and Offender Policy</p> <p>MoJ – Youth Justice and Offender Policy</p> <p>Youth Justice Board</p> <p>Social Services Division, WG</p> <p>Social Services Division, WG</p>	<p>February 2023</p>
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		A workstream on 'Prevention' has been established, as part of the Youth Justice Blueprint, to collaboratively develop a practical framework for preventative services in Wales. This will maximise the value of early intervention and ensure the best use of resources to prevent girls coming into custody.	Youth Justice Blueprints project board, WG	
<u>Progress against commitments - concern 1 (November 2023)</u>				
		<p>Supporting LAs to meet their statutory duties through £259m capital funding over the next Parliament. This will help to maintain capacity and expand provision in secure and open residential children's homes, providing high quality, safe homes for some of our most vulnerable children and young people across England.</p> <p>April 2023 saw regulations to introduce mandatory national standards and Ofsted registration and inspection requirements for currently 'unregulated' supported accommodation for 16 and 17-year-old looked after children and care leavers (supported accommodation). Ofsted started registering providers on 28 April 2023 and will begin routine inspections from April 2024.</p> <p>To support local authorities with support accommodation reforms, DfE are distributing £123million of new burdens funding between 2023-25 and commissioned the National Children's Bureau to lead a national sector awareness and provider preparedness programme, to support local authorities and providers through the implementation and promote readiness.</p> <p>In February 2023, Stable Homes, Built on Love, an implementation strategy and consultation were published. This set out ambitious plans to reform children's social care in response to The Independent Review for Children's Social Care and the Competition and Markets Authority study into children's social care provision.</p> <p>Initial engagement with the judiciary and YOTs suggests that while remand decisions remain very complex, the PCSC (Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts) tests are ensuring greater consideration of community options. This resulting in increased scrutiny about the suitability of RLAA (Remand to Local Authority Accommodation) before considering custodial remand for a child. The long-term effects of amending the changes in PCSC Act are still being realised and will be monitored on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>Looked After Children's Division, Department for Education</p> <p>MoJ – Youth Justice and Offender Policy</p>	<p>December 2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p>



	<p>The Remand Working Group continues to meet regularly to drive forward progress on the findings of the Remand Review. In August 2023, MoJ launched a public consultation on remand funding arrangements, which set out high-level options for reforming the remand funding arrangements, which might support the aims of enabling community alternatives to custody and reducing offending. One of the options is currently being piloted in Greater Manchester – a regional approach. The consultation closes on 8th November 2023, and the government response will follow in early 2024.</p> <p>Last year’s analysis for 2022-2023 identified that most Youth Justice Services (YJS’) reported low custody rates. There were examples of custody panels, active work with the local Young Offenders Institute and links with accommodation providers. Many services addressed police remand and work with the police to reduce overnight remands.</p> <p>Welsh Government are currently reviewing the future of secure accommodation in Wales in line with the transformation of children’s services programme. Communications with key partners on next steps is planned for the end of the year.</p> <p>On early intervention in Wales, Youth Justice Blueprint partners have progressed work against a Prevention Framework for youth justice. The Framework reflects the strategic and operational landscape in Wales, bringing together the role of reserved and devolved services in Wales into a single coherent vision of prevention activity which will support further improvement work. The Framework also complements a variety of broader prevention work being taken forward by the Wales Violence Prevention Unit and Criminal Justice Board for Wales. WG are now working with partners to finalise the Framework ahead of publication by Spring 2024.</p>	<p>MoJ – Youth Justice and Offender Policy</p> <p>Youth Justice Board</p> <p>Social Services Division, WG</p> <p>Youth Justice Blueprints project board, WG</p>	<p>Early 2024</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>December 2023</p> <p>Spring 2024</p>
2	<p>The national system for caring for girls in custody did not function well;</p>	<p>Although the number of girls in the secure estate remains small, the proportion of girls with complex needs has over the years increased. Many of the girls under Youth Custody Service (YCS) care present as high-risk, high-harm and highly vulnerable.</p>	



<p>often girls with the highest level of need were placed into the institution with the least resources.</p> <p>There were two different types of institution in England and Wales for fewer than 20 girls. Legislation (see glossary) required secure children's homes to refuse to provide placements for a girl if they could not meet their needs. The consequence of this was that girls with the highest level of need were held in Wetherby Young Offender Institution, which had fewer resources to meet their needs.</p>	<p>To ensure the distinct needs of the girls' cohort are recognised and addressed, the YCS has convened a Board to draw together strands of work around the improvement of processes surrounding, and outcomes for, girls in custody. The Board will oversee YCS' Girls Delivery Plan which will incorporate activity aligned to the response to this thematic.</p>	YCS Quality Development Team	Completed
	<p>The YCS Critical Case Pathway provides a YCS wide approach to supporting sites on the care and management of the most challenging and complex children in YCS care. The pathway is set for review in 2022 to ensure that sites continue to get the support (and where appropriate, resources) they require. The YCS are working closely with Secure Children's Home (SCH) Registered Managers to improve the operating models in SCHs and provide packages of support for the management of the most challenging girls.</p>	YCS Placements, Casework & Operational Contract Management Team	Completed
	<p>The YCS are considering future provision for all children (including girls) via an internal assessment of the role and purpose of each sector to ensure sufficient capacity and suitable environments. This will inform the longer-term, strategic direction of provision for children in the YCS including girls.</p> <p>The Quality Development Team will review effectiveness of provision for girls at Wetherby YOI in early 2023. The YCS have already agreed an uplift in staff for the Girls Unit at Wetherby, which reflects the staffing levels achieved in Enhanced Support Units. Recruitment for the increased number of staff is currently underway locally.</p>	YCS Strategy & Commissioning Team YCS Operations Team YCS Quality Development Team	Completed June 2023



Progress against commitments – concern 2 (November 2023)

In recognition of the importance of the work in relation to girls in the CYPSE (Children and Young People's Secure Estate), the Girls Oversight Board will continue to oversee the work around the YCS Girls' Delivery Plan to ensure all girls receive a bespoke, gender responsive service, which they are empowered to shape. The Board is committed to the ongoing steer and focus of the various strands of work across YCS to improve outcomes of girls.

YCS Quality Development Team

Ongoing/BAU

The CCP review has concluded. The findings have driven a merger of two key YCS groups: Operations, and Safeguarding Strategy, Casework, and Community Partnerships. This presents an opportunity to develop an end-to end case management model for all children, aligned to the Framework for Integrated Care.

YCS Placements, Casework & Operational Contract Management Team

April 2024

The priorities moving forward are:

- a) Establish key deliverables and develop a case management system for all children
- b) Identify a caseload vs resourcing model that is responsive to different children's needs and at different times

The CCP Governance Board will meet quarterly to oversee the work plan and governance will be through the YCS Operational Management Committee and whilst girls have now been removed for automatic referral (with the aim being that their specific needs are integrated into their placement offer) placements have established a leadership team from the relevant sites (including the secure school from 2024). They regularly meet to discuss their methodology, risks and good practice.

YCS Service Transformation & Project Delivery Team

April 2024

The YCS has commenced preparation for the next Spending Review. The aim is to support the twin track approach to improve the existing estate in line with effective practice research i.e.: smaller units, whilst scoping Secure School 2. The evaluation of the first secure school has been commissioned and will inform practice for girls in the longer term, whilst the use of Wetherby will also be revisited in April 2024.



		<p>YCS commissioned HMPPS Effective Practice Team to undertake an independent review of the long-term viability of Wetherby YOI as a continued placement pathway for girls. The completed report will inform the immediate and longer-term estate strategy for girls placed by the YCS. Recommendations were considered and a revised Girls delivery plan has been formulated covering three main workstreams – Strategy, Staff Support and Staff Training. Governance will continue through the Girls Oversight Board.</p> <p>Since October 2022 Oakhill STC also opened a facility specifically for girls, which gives more choice to find the right placement option for individuals.</p>	<p>YCS Operations Team YCS Quality Development Team</p>	<p>Completed</p>
3	<p>Girls were far more likely than boys to harm themselves, experience restraint and to be involved in violence during their time in custody.</p> <p>While there are occasions when staff have to use restraint to prevent girls harming themselves, we saw examples of girls being restrained multiple times in a short period with little support offered after the incident to</p>	<p>The YCS have commissioned the Centre for Mental Health to help create an Effective Practice Briefing for frontline staff specifically in the area of girls and self-harm. The development of the briefing will include clinical expertise input from the NHSE Managed Clinical Advisory Group (MCAG) and engagement with girls currently placed in the secure estate.</p> <p>The YCS psychology team will review the use of restraint on girls at Wetherby, which will inform our programme of work moving forwards.</p> <p>YCS will also develop a Safeguarding Strategy and Policy so that staff working in the secure estate, with both boys and girls, are clear about child protection responsibilities.</p> <p>The YCS are undertaking a training needs analysis for staff at Wetherby YOI looking at the training needs required for managing both girls and boys in their care. Further support will be provided to staff at Wetherby to recognise and respond to the distinct needs of girls.</p> <p>A joint learning approach over and above the local quality assurance by the establishment's Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint (MMPR) Co-Ordinators has been introduced at Wetherby; restraints involving girls are collaboratively scrutinised by Wetherby's Safeguarding Team and YCS</p>	<p>YCS Quality Development Team</p> <p>HMPPS YCS Psychology Team</p> <p>YCS Safeguarding Team</p> <p>HMPPS YCS Psychology Team</p> <p>YCS Operations Team</p>	<p>March 2023</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>January 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p> <p>Completed</p>



	address the underlying cause of self-harm.	<p>specialists within the fields of Use of Force, Restraint, Integrated Care and Psychology.</p> <p>Additional assurances are in place at Wetherby regarding the development of MMPR handling plans for all girls to provide consistency and continuity within the decision-making process prior to and during restraint.</p>	YCS Operations Team	Completed
<u>Progress against commitments – concern 3 (November 2023)</u>				
		<p>The <i>Effective practice briefing on supporting girls in the CYPSE who self-harm</i> was published in June 2023. It was introduced in the YCS Girls' Practitioners' Forum, distributed in the CYPSE (YOI, STC and SCHs) and available on the Intranet.</p> <p>YCS Psychology Services conducted research into the use of physical restraint with girls at Wetherby YOI. Results have been shared across the business and will inform the future programme of work specifically around operational support and staff training and learning.</p> <p>YCS developed a Safeguarding Strategy and Policy so that staff working in the secure estate, with both boys and girls, are clear about child protection responsibilities. It was distributed within the CYPSE and available on HMPPS Intranet.</p> <p>Building on the policy, YCS sites are developing Local Operating Procedures and related assurance activity.</p> <p>YCS Psychology Services conducted a Training Needs Analysis for staff working with girls in Wetherby YOI to identify additional training, development, and support to enable effective practice with the girl's population. Recommendations were shared and the Girls Oversight Board is overseeing the recommendations and next phase of work. Staff training and Learning is a key workstream on the YCS Girls delivery plan and will be developed in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.</p>	<p>YCS Quality Development Team</p> <p>HMPPS YCS Psychology Team</p> <p>YCS Safeguarding Team</p> <p>HMPPS YCS Psychology Team YCS Quality Development Team</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>



		The YCS continue to adopt a more consistent approach to collaboratively scrutinising and quality assuring the use of restraint involving girls, aligned to the individual behaviours displayed and the harm being prevented. Individual MMPR handling plans have improved and continue to support the staff in their decision-making processes.	YCS Operations Team	Completed
4	<p>Girls who needed tier 4 mental health beds waited too long for transfer to hospital.</p> <p>During this delay, very unwell girls were held in institutions unable to meet their needs.</p>	<p>From 2018 – 2019 to 2021 – 2022, three girls transferred to a secure hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983 Part III from the Children & Young People Secure Estate. Most children transfer to a secure hospital in a timely way. There are a small number of cases where the child either has a complicated presentation that requires an extended assessment period; the right type of bed is not available or where the child does not fit the criteria for admission and/or detention. For example, access to extra care areas, gender specific services or services for children and young people with a learning disability can all affect bed suitability. Additionally, during this time period, there was an unprecedented pressure on inpatient placements linked to the COVID-19 response.</p> <p>NHS England Specialised Commissioning has invested capital funding from 2021 to 2023 for environmental changes to ensure the right provision is available to meet the needs of all children who require assessment and treatment under the Mental Health Act 1983.</p> <p>The revised procedure for the transfer or remission of children under the Mental Health Act 1983 Part III for the Children and Young People Secure Estate was published in November 2021. The revised procedure is designed to support staff to work well with colleagues to ensure that the established transfer process works smoothly and that there are no unacceptable delays in providing a child with inpatient mental health care if that is what they need. Children who await transfer to a mental health bed may require enhanced observation during this period. In YOIs this is delivered by YCS and funded by NHS England. In SCHs additional provision is provided by NHS England if appropriate, though in some cases additional care staff may be required as agreed with YCS. The</p>	<p>NHS England</p> <p>NHS England and Youth Custody Service</p>	<p>December 2023</p> <p>Completed</p>



		<p>contracted healthcare provider in each setting would continue to provide additional oversight and support as needed.</p> <p>Centre for Mental Health have been commissioned by NHS England and the Youth Custody Service to conduct a review of current evidence, policy, and practice on enhanced observations. The final report, including recommendations to improve policy is due to be presented to NHS England and the towards the end of the year.</p>	NHS England and Youth Custody Service	December 2022
<u>Progress against commitments – concern 4 (November 2023)</u>				
		<p>NHS England are refreshing the service specifications for medium secure units (MSU) and forensic child and adolescent mental health services (FCAMHS) with an aim for implementation in 2024/25 contracts, revisions have included aligning time frames with the transfer and remissions process and ensuring clarity on the referral and admission process. The specifications are currently progressing through clearance stages and will be shared at the earliest opportunity. Stakeholder engagement and alignment with Health and Justice colleagues has been central to the revisions ensure delivery is timely and provide equitable care. A shared learning event will also focus on the needs of our most high-risk high harm cohort of children in November 2023 with an overarching aim to ensure aligned coordinated care.</p> <p>Centre for Mental Health and Leaders Unlocked completed the review of the current evidence, policy and practice of enhanced observation in the children and young people secure estate in February 2023. This internal review aimed to establish benchmarks for child-centred best practice, support consistency across the secure estate, and improve understanding of the role, purpose, and effective use of these practices. The report and recommendations were presented to NHS England and the YCS and were used the inform the 2023 Intercollegiate Healthcare Standards for Children and Young People in Secure Settings.</p>	NHS England	April 2024
			NHS England	Completed



5	<p>Transition plans had little impact on the day-to-day experience of young women when they were transferred to the adult estate.</p> <p>Cases we examined showed 18-year-olds were often overwhelmed by the transition and did not know how to adjust to life in adult establishments.</p>	<p>In April 2022, YCS published the ‘Transition of young people from youth to adult custody’ policy framework which sets clear requirements for both youth and adult custodial settings and is expected to be implemented by March 2023.</p> <p>Operational guidance for young adult women in prison has now been developed. Women’s prisons will be required to develop a local response to key elements of the guidance to ensure they meet the needs of girls transitioning from the youth estate.</p> <p>Women’s team are piloting a bespoke residential approach to better support young adult women in custody, including girls who are transitioning from YCS provision. The unit/s will provide a trauma responsive, multi-disciplinary and more individualised and therapeutic approach to working with young women. This will include an enhanced staffing model, more effective key work and other services, such as social care, trauma interventions and additional psychology and health provision.</p> <p>A local prison lead/case manager for each girl being transitioned from YCS will be identified in advance via the Women’s Estate Case Advice and Support Panel (WECASP) system. A visit or video call will be organised for girls to meet the identified staff prior to arrival in the establishment. Post-transition meeting to be held for all girls to review the transition process and receive girls’ feedback.</p>	<p>YCS Placements, Casework & Operational Contract Management Team</p> <p>Women’s Directorate</p> <p>Women’s Directorate</p> <p>Women’s Directorate</p>	<p>March 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p>
		<p><u>Progress against commitments – concern 5 (November 2023)</u></p>		
		<p>YCS is working in line with the Transitions Policy Framework for girls.</p>	<p>YCS Placements, Casework & Operational Contract</p>	<p>Completed</p>



		<p>Operational Guidance has been distributed to prisons. Each prison that takes girls from YCS is developing local policies as part of the Young Adult Project.</p> <p>The two pilot sites have different models. HMP Bronzefield has a residential option and HMP Styal are developing a Young Adult Hub. Services are being put in place to meet the therapeutic, educational, and social needs for development.</p> <p>Two girls have transitioned from secure children's home in 2023 and these have been case coordinated and managed through WECASP with named contacts, online transition support, orientation and regime options being coordinated in a multidisciplinary team between sending and receiving sites. Digital and other information will be made available as the pilot sites develop their services.</p>	<p>Management Team</p> <p>Women's Directorate</p> <p>Women's Directorate</p> <p>Women's Directorate</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>January 2024</p> <p>Completed</p>
6	<p>Suitable accommodation was not secured early enough before release.</p> <p>This prevented effective planning for health care and education, training and employment. When accommodation was arranged it was not always suitable.</p>	<p>The MoJ recognises the importance of suitable and timely accommodation arrangements for constructive resettlement journeys out of custody. To support YOTs to develop robust and effective processes in relation to arranging accommodation, MoJ has established a new 'key performance indicator (KPI)' focused on the suitability and timeliness of accommodation arrangements for children (this is being introduced alongside a number of new YOT KPIs which will be launched in April 2023).</p> <p>Whilst local authorities (LAs) have statutory duties to ensure sufficient appropriate accommodation for children in their area, we recognize that some LAs sometimes find it difficult accessing the most appropriate accommodation, including for girls in the justice system. The lack of available and suitable placements for the most vulnerable children is something this Government takes seriously, and we are taking significant steps to support LAs to fulfil their statutory duties, as set out above in <i>Concern 1</i>.</p>	<p>Youth Justice Board</p> <p>Looked After Children's Division, Department for Education</p>	<p>April 2023</p> <p>December 2022 to December 2025</p>



		<p>In Wales, the Youth Justice Blueprint Resettlement and Transitions workstream has ensured that the Welsh youth justice workforce has received training in Constructive Resettlement (CR) and Identity Shift. Relevant guidance and resources are available on the Youth Justice Board Resource Hub.</p> <p>The workstream has commissioned, at the request of YOT Managers Cymru (YMC) and key stakeholders, a CR guidance document for Wales, this is currently in the drafting process.</p>	<p>Youth Justice Blueprints project board, WG</p> <p>Youth Justice Blueprints project board, WG</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>March 2023</p>
<u>Progress against commitments – concern 6 (November 2023)</u>				
		<p>The Association of YOT Managers will provide KPI data from quarters 1 and 2 at the end of October 2023. Once the data is received, a process of Quality Assurance and extract testing will be completed in December 2023. Data will be received on high level measures such as the numbers of children going into suitable accommodation, and this can be broken down by characteristics including gender. It is worth noting that Youth Justice Services use different case management suppliers some provide case level data and others summary level data.</p> <p>Constructive Resettlement is the new model for resettlement of children coming out of custody adopted and endorsed by the Youth Justice Board. This Constructive Resettlement Guidance is specifically for Wales and is culturally different and with divergence of policy about children in many areas. The Guidance will help Youth Offending Teams put this new model into practice. WG are currently planning for the guidance to be published before the end of March 2024.</p>	<p>Youth Justice Board</p> <p>Youth Justice Blueprints project board, WG</p>	<p>December 2023</p> <p>March 2024</p>

