



HM Prison &
Probation Service



Official

Charlie Taylor,
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
3rd floor, 10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
Youth Custody Service
Executive Director
8th Floor, Area 8.40
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

28 November 2024

Dear Charlie,

HMIP report on an Independent Review of Progress at HMYOI Wetherby between 04 November – 06 November 2024

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMYOI Wetherby, where you followed up on six priority concerns and two Ofsted themes from your most recent inspection in Dec 2023.

I am encouraged to note that you found reasonable progress across four priority concerns and note the following:

- **Safety** – Recognising there have been no new placements of girls at HMYOI Wetherby for the previous three months as well as it remaining the placement of last resort which must be approved by the Deputy Director YCS Operations. The independent review into the placement of girls has now commenced.
- **Safety / Use of force** – The number of full searches under restraint had reduced substantially, whilst also acknowledging a large backlog of the quality assurance of use of force had been addressed.
- **Care / Living conditions** – Recognising that leaders had taken several actions to address this concern and improvements to the environment was evident to see on some units. The implementation of Q Branch was a pragmatic response to getting issues sorted promptly.
- **Purposeful activity / time of cell** – Acknowledged the implementation of the new profile and core day leading to improved time out of cell outcomes for children as well as leaders and managers working on ways to reduce the number of groups on residential units.

In respect of the two priority concerns and two Ofsted themes where you found insufficient or no meaningful progress, I can confirm that all the IRP findings have been carefully considered and steps will be taken to address them as appropriate. This will include the following:

- **Safety/separation** – Leaders and managers will focus on maintaining reduced groups on main residential units. Integrated care will underpin the correct support mechanisms to improve the outcomes for children who are self-separating and support will be provided through conflict resolution and enhanced support teams as required. The placements team are prioritising the transition of those young people who are over 18 years old, which will reduce the population and provide more opportunity for smaller groups across residential units to engage in purposeful activity safely. There is clear consistent data on separation between the establishment and central team.
- **Care/relationships between staff and children** - Leaders and managers will continue to improve the Custody Support Plan (CuSP) delivery both in terms of quantity and quality. The introduction of further senior leadership oversight will drive and improve outcomes for supporting our children. The new model of one member of staff to one child will create further opportunities for individual care.
- **Education** – Leaders and managers will improve the quality assurance process to provide greater accountability. Consideration is being given to a curriculum review to understand the provision and need as well as forming part of forward planning for learning within Wetherby to improve outcomes for the children. The Governor is exploring further opportunities for vocational learning, which children have told us they would engage with.

The Governor, with the support of the Deputy Director YCS Operations, will continue to progress the full action plan covering all the original priority and key concerns.

I remain committed to ensuring continued progress at HMYOI Wetherby and have confidence in the Governor and his leadership team in delivering the changes required. I can assure you that through my operational assurance functions I continue to closely monitor progress.

Yours sincerely,

Ed Cornmell
Executive Director
Youth Custody Service

CC:

Amy Rees, HMPPS - Director General Chief Executive Officer
Phil Copple, HMPPS - Director General of Operations