



Ministry
of Justice

A Response to the HMIP Inspection: Children on short-term remand

Action Plan Submitted: 7 July 2026

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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.



ACTION PLAN: July 2026

Rec No	Concerns	Response Action Taken/Planned	Responsible Owner	Target Date
Concerns				
1.	<p>Many children with no prior experience of custody were held on remand for under two weeks, only to then be released on bail or to local authority care. This caused disruption to their life, destabilised youth custody establishments, and diverted resource from other children in custody.</p>	<p>MoJ recognises that children residing in custody for under two weeks before being released on bail, or to local authority care, could indicate that the remand to custody might have been avoided if a suitable remand placement or bail package was available at the first hearing. Short remands should therefore be reduced as far as possible through stronger partnership working and increasing the availability of placements and robust support packages.</p> <p>It is the duty of the child's local authority to find accommodation for the child if needed. However, we also recognise a widespread lack of suitable placements for children on Remand to Local Authority Care. MoJ funding arrangements for remand over the past decade have not successfully or sustainably supported local authorities to invest in community remand and bail placements.</p> <p>Following a consultation on the youth remand funding, we have changed the remand funding formula as of April 2026. Local authorities who have children on bail ISS, bail support and supervision, or Remand to Local</p>	MOJ	Remand reduction ambition to be delivered by July 2029



		<p>Authority Accommodation (RLAA) will no longer be financially penalised by the funding formula, which risked dis-investment in those services. We have also provided multi-year certainty of annual remand funding levels for the first time, to help local authorities to better plan their remand spend. We have released £5m additional grant funding over 2026/27-28/29 to enable authorities to invest in regional remand partnerships (this is called the Alternatives to Youth Custodial Remand Programme).</p> <p>The Youth Justice White Paper set out a commitment to reduce unnecessary custodial remands, including an ambition to reduce the youth remand population in custody by 25% over this Parliament.</p>		
2.	<p>Bail and release to local authority care were often arranged too late to avoid short-term remand. Youth justice services were frequently not informed when a child was first detained or remanded and were not always available to provide a package that managed a child’s best interests and risks.</p>	<p>Remand to custody, whether at the police station or at court, should be a last resort for children. If the police remand a child post-charge they must appear in court the next day, limiting the amount of time that Youth Justice Services have to coordinate a strong bail package proposal.</p> <p>We are conducting a joint project with the Home Office this year to examine whether remand is being used appropriately for children, which will inform future policy considerations regarding police remand practice.</p>	MoJ and Home Office	Joint MoJ and Home Office project to conclude April 2027



		<p>When it is necessary to detain a child in police custody, the Youth Remand Concordat sets clear expectations that all partners—including police, Youth Justice Services (YJS), children’s social care and courts—share information early and work collaboratively to prepare for remand decisions.</p> <p>The Home Office and the Ministry of Justice are also working together to commission work that looks across the criminal justice system to improve the join-up of data. This sits alongside wider data improvement work that the Home Office are undertaking with the National Police Chief’s Council and College of Policing to support earlier and more confident information sharing with youth justice services. This should help to address the concern that YJS were often not told promptly when a child was first detained.</p>		
3.	<p>A lack of effective communication between youth justice service and the judiciary, inconsistency between decisions in different local authority areas, and challenges in finding suitable accommodation meant alternatives to custody were not always used.</p>	<p>There is a national lack of suitable placements for children with more complex needs and criminal justice involvement.</p> <p>DfE’s expanded fostering hubs launching in September 2026 should be coordinating remand fostering regionally wherever possible to enable better communication, sufficiency, forecasting and sharing of resources given the relatively small size of this cohort.</p>	MoJ and Department for Education	<p>Recommendations for youth specialist legal sector training due Summer 2026</p> <p>Home Again programme launching in 2026/27</p>



		<p>This is spearheaded through the MoJ-funded regional remand partnerships which aim to increase the number of specialist remand foster carers and suitable accommodation placements, as well as the availability of mentoring, education and family support for children on intensive bail and community remand.</p> <p>DfE have also committed to establishing stronger evidence to identify what works, share learning between areas and support effective models to scale regionally.</p> <p>More widely, children's social care, health and justice partners are experiencing increasing difficulty in securing appropriate placements that meet the needs effectively of children with complex and overlapping needs.</p> <p>To address this issue in 2023 DfE established a cross-government programme of work, co-led with NHS England and the Ministry of Justice, to address challenges across systems in caring for children at risk of being or deprived of their liberty.</p> <p>The programme has several work strands all with the aim of improving how systems work together to reduce crisis escalation, improve outcomes for children, and reduce reliance on unsuitable, high-cost placements. Work has included:</p>		
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- Investing in a Community of Practice, for local authorities, providers, charities, health practitioners, academics and other professionals to improve cross-sector support for children in complex situations with multiple needs.
- Investing £90m of capital funding from 2025/26 to create places in suitable residential homes for children with multiple, complex needs.
- Developing and testing a child-centred, practical model designed to bring together professionals across education, health, social care and youth justice to better understand and respond to children's needs at an earlier stage. This will start with Home Again programme launching in 2026/27.

Regarding the lack of effective communication between Youth Justice Services and the judiciary, the Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Services must respect the independence of the judiciary, so careful consideration is given to appropriate engagement on this subject. We will engage both the Judicial Lead on Youth Justice, Ms Justice Norton, and the Senior Presiding Judge to raise awareness of the new regional remand partnerships and the alternatives to custody that are being developed in these areas.

At a local level, Youth Justice Services (YJSs) should engage with Court User Groups, particularly to discuss



		<p>any new community remand placements and bail support being developed. YJSs should ensure that court representatives are also invited to Youth Justice Service Management Boards upon occasion.</p> <p>To address long-standing concerns around the quality of legal advocacy for children, the government is working with the legal sector to develop a new model for specialist training requirements for criminal lawyers representing children in England and Wales. An Expert Advisory Group has been commissioned, bringing together representatives from the different legal professions, to help set the standards of criminal advocacy for children. This will improve advocacy for children and may help support remand and bail decision-making processes in court.</p>		
4.	<p>Short-term custodial remand offered too little time to provide children with constructive support. Children did not always know why they had been taken into custody and too often did not receive entitlements such as telephone calls.</p>	<p>When a child is remanded to custody, the courts and youth justice services are responsible for communicating to the child why this decision has been made, and what the next legal steps will include.</p> <p>During early days in custody, a range of multi-disciplinary screening and support meetings take place. If it is identified that the child does not understand why they have been remanded to custody, action is taken locally to address this which is then communicated to key stakeholders in the community to support system learning. Formulations developed for each young</p>	Youth Custody Service (YCS)	<p>Induction materials will be reviewed and revised by March 2027</p> <p>A response to the Children's Commissioner</p>



		<p>person are used to help identify any communication considerations that would improve understanding in the future.</p> <p>The YCS will work with custodial sites to undertake a comprehensive review of induction materials and processes. This will include a specific focus on supporting remanded children, ensuring their needs and entitlements are met, including understanding why they have been remanded into custody.</p> <p>The Youth Custody Service (YCS) acknowledges the importance of ensuring consistent understanding and delivery of entitlements on arrival. Children received into custody at Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) are offered a telephone call at the point of reception. PIN accounts are activated the next working day to enable contact as soon as numbers are approved. To meet safeguarding commitments to those in custody, the current advice includes using a call enabling approach and that all numbers are approved by Youth Justice Services before being added. Local systems are in place to monitor and escalate any delays in YJSs responding to approval requests for PIN number additions.</p> <p>When children are remanded for very short periods of time it can be challenging to make that time constructive, particularly given the uncertainty of the</p>		<p>report on education in Young Offender Institutions will be provided by November 2026.</p>
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		<p>release date. The Children’s Commissioner is undertaking a review of education in YOIs, including for children on remand, and the YCS will provide a response to any reflections or recommendations regarding education for children on remand by November.</p>		
5.	<p>In some areas, low numbers of remanded children meant youth justice services lacked the necessary skills and experience to manage these children in the community and were ill-suited to engaging with the national courts and tribunal service. There was often not enough financial incentive for them to advocate for an alternative to custody.</p>	<p>The YJB supports a regional approach between Youth Justice Services to share best practice around the bail/remand process (including how to effectively engage with courts and other agencies) and to increase the viability of developing community placements. It can be more challenging for individual local authorities to invest in dedicated Remand to Local Authority provision if their remand numbers are small and volatile. The MoJ is therefore funding the expansion of a regional approach to improving remand provision and practice, which has been piloted successfully in Greater Manchester in recent years and in the YJB’s London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP).</p> <p>The Youth Justice Board will take on the role of ‘learning partner’ for the Alternatives to Youth Custodial Remand Programme. Whilst the extent of activity the YJB are able to deliver will be subject to the outcome of ongoing reform to its structure and function, we anticipate this may involve sharing good practice regarding remand/bail across regions and running forums or communities of practice on specific remand</p>	Youth Justice Board (YJB)	Ongoing – a plan of YJB activities as remand programme ‘learning partner’ (with confirmed timelines) expected to be in place by Autumn 2026



		<p>and bail-related topics to further share and embed emerging learnings from the regional projects. This will also draw on learning from the ongoing YJB-funded London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP). Any Youth Justice Services not taking part in the Alternatives to Youth Custodial Remand Programme will still be able to access these resources and learn from the regional remand partnerships.</p>		
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