



## Children in custody 2024–25

An analysis of 12–18-year-olds' perceptions of their experiences in secure training centres and young offender institutions

September 2025



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# Introduction

This report provides an analysis of surveys conducted in young offender institutions (YOIs) and Oakhill Secure Training Centre (STC) in England and Wales between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. The report also provides an overview of our findings from independent reviews of progress conducted during this period. As with last year, outcomes continue to be worryingly poor and, in some cases, children's perceptions of their time in custody have got worse.

Too many children continue to spend long periods locked up behind cell doors. Only 61% of those surveyed said they got more than two hours out of their cell on weekdays, which dropped to 45% for the weekend. When children make it to education or other activities, the quality on offer is rarely good enough and sessions are often restricted or curtailed because of staff shortages. Findings at our inspection of Cookham Wood in 2023 were appalling, and the establishment was closed during this reporting year, adding greater pressure on other already troubled institutions.

Levels of violence remain much higher than in the adult estate, which makes it unsurprising that children's perceptions of safety have not improved. There has been a failure to introduce and use effective behaviour management systems, and a worryingly low number of children say they are supported and motivated to behave.

Children are often negative about staff effectiveness and this year just 49% of children felt cared for by most staff. Despite there being many more staff than children at every establishment, one in three children said there was no one to turn to if they had a problem. The proportion of children on remand, often for short periods of time, is 40%; this means there is not enough time to build the strong, supportive relationships that are essential if these troubled children are to be rehabilitated.

Parc YOI, however, continues to buck the trend, and is far more effective than the other establishments we inspect. Children there are much more positive about time out of cell, behaviour management and relationships with staff. The Youth Custody Service must learn from the success of Parc and use it as a benchmark to measure improvements in the treatment of and conditions for children elsewhere.

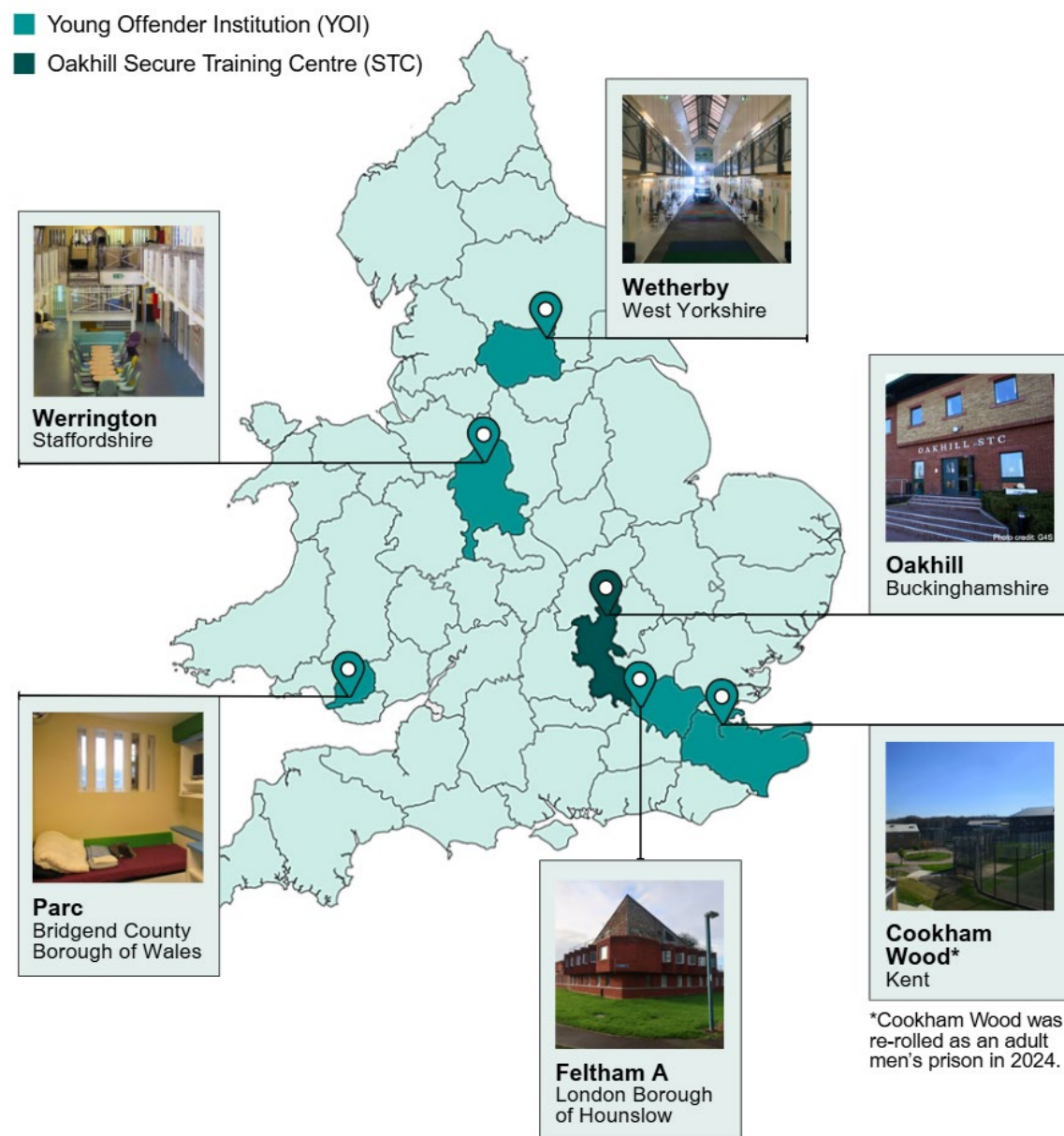
**Charlie Taylor**  
Chief Inspector of Prisons  
September 2025

# Background

In 2024–25, children in custody were held in one of four settings: Oakhill secure training centre (STC), secure children's homes (SCHs), young offender institutions (YOIs), and the newly opened secure school, Oasis Restore, which accepted children from August 2024. During the year, HMYOI Cookham Wood was re-rolled as an adult male prison after consistently failing to improve outcomes for children, and to help address the critical demand for more accommodation in the adult estate.

As the children's estate has become more fragmented, it has become increasingly difficult to assess outcomes, measure progress or compare the different types of establishments which hold children.

**Figure 1: Map of counties which have Youth Custody Services inspect by HMI Prisons**

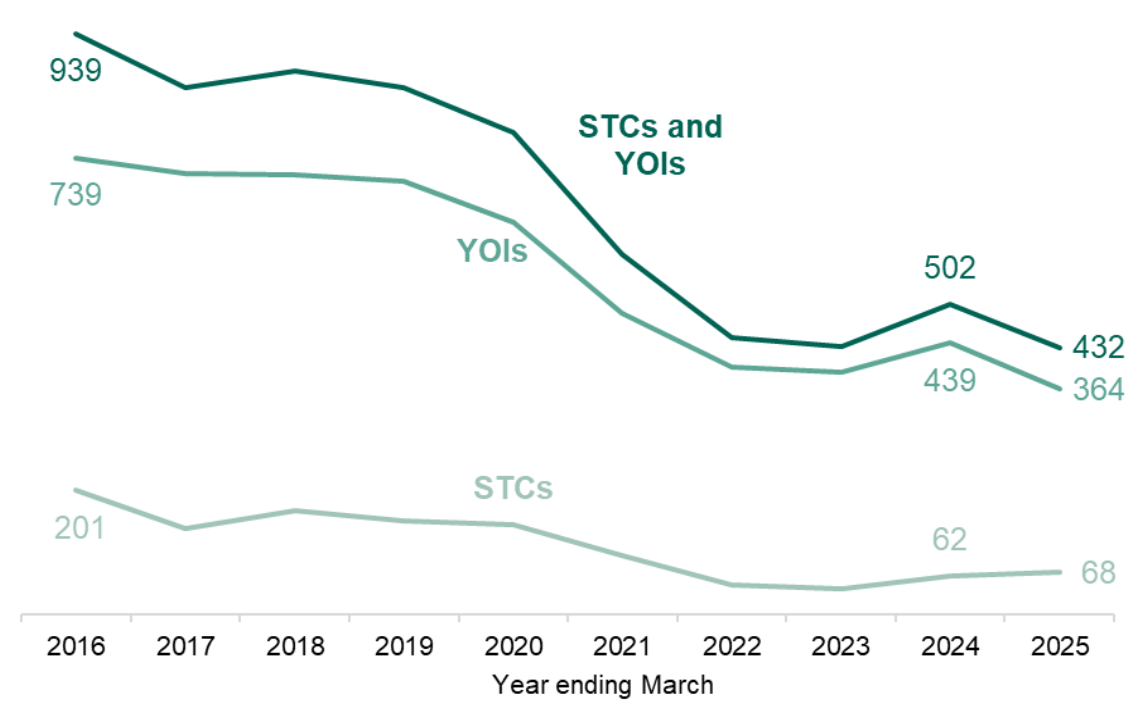


Outside of this section, this report draws on inspection findings and surveys of children and staff carried out by HMI Prisons in 2024–25 from five YOIs and one STC across England and Wales.

HMI Prisons has no remit to inspect the secure school or SCHs. This statutory responsibility rests with Ofsted in England and with Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn in Wales.

In 2024–25, the number of children held in STCs and YOIs decreased after rising last year. The average population of children and young people held in these establishments – which includes some who are over 18 – was 432 in 2024–25, compared with 939 in 2015–16. The lower population has improved staff-to-child ratios in all settings and all sites have continued to operate at well below capacity.

**Figure 2: STC and YOI populations continue their longer-term falls, although the fall has slowed in recent years**  
Youth Custody Service data, England and Wales, includes 18-year-olds

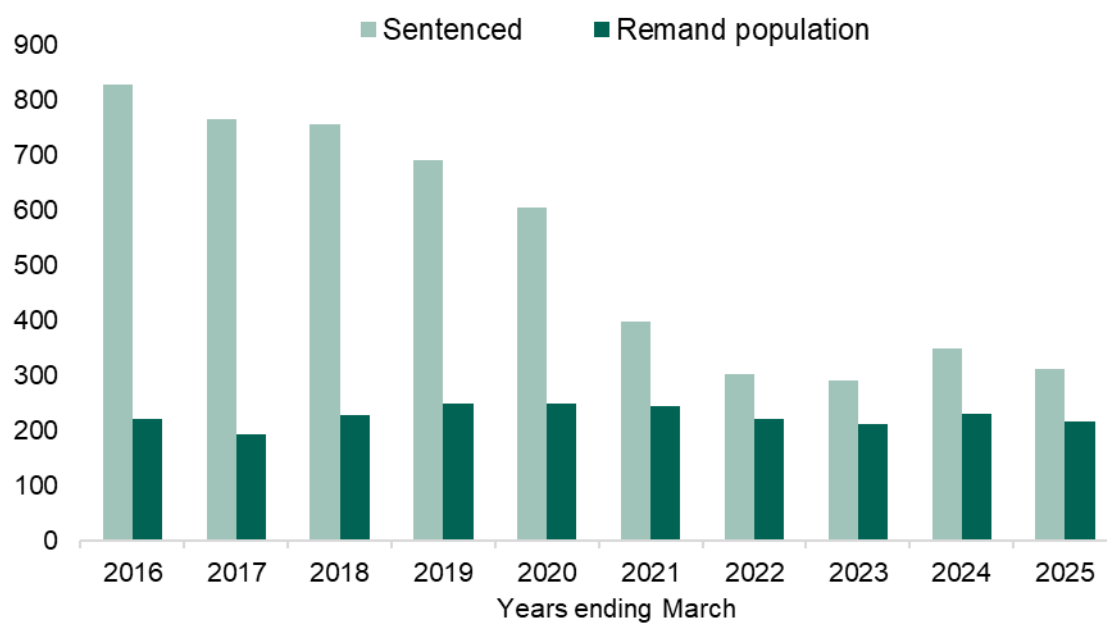


Source: Youth Custody Report, 2025

Despite this fall in population the number of children held on remand has plateaued.

**Figure 3: The proportion of children on remand has increased, as the sentenced population in STCs and YOIs has fallen over time**

Youth Custody Service data, England and Wales, includes 18-year-olds



Source: Youth Custody Report, 2025

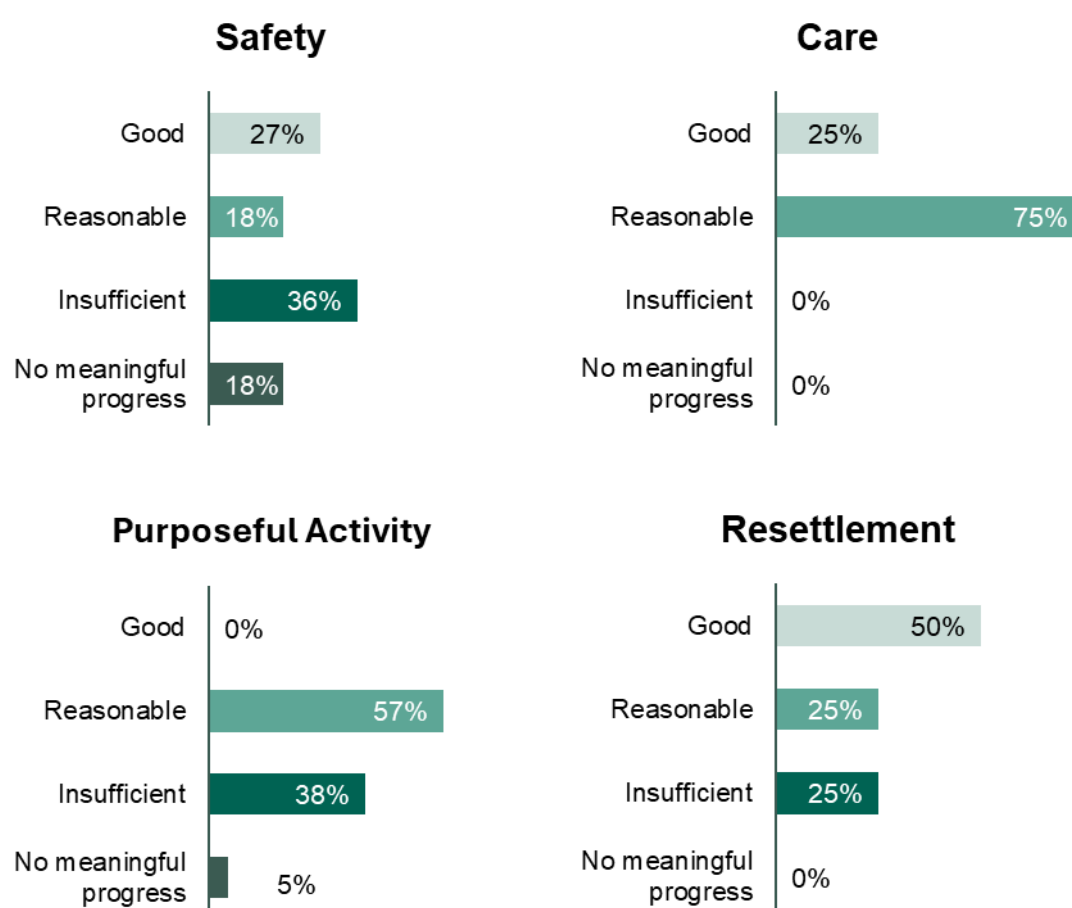
## Overview of independent reviews of progress

In 2024–25, HMI Prisons carried out five independent reviews of progress (IRPs) in YOIs to follow up on the concerns raised at full inspections in 2023–24. At these inspections, we found the majority of YOIs were unable to manage very high levels of violence and disorder and most leaders resorted to keeping children who were in conflict apart. However, the levels of conflict were so high that this strategy meant children were unable to access education or offending behaviour programmes, which resulted in too many spending most of their days locked up alone in their cells. We found the weakest outcomes in our tests of safety and purposeful activity. Only Parc was safe enough and none of the YOIs delivered a suitable education for the children in their care.

We followed up 41 concerns across the five YOIs. There was insufficient or no meaningful progress in 17 areas and reasonably good or good progress in 24.

**Figure 4: Of the 41 concerns we followed up, 57% had good or reasonably good progress**

IRP findings in YOIs 2024–25



Note: Due to rounding percentages may not total 100%



Although the picture appears broadly positive, it masks a lack of progress in the areas of greatest concern: behaviour management, the time children spend out of their cells and the provision and quality of education.

Many of the fundamental weaknesses identified in the 2023–24 inspections remained. There was little to motivate children and staff often failed to challenge poor behaviour effectively. This allowed the children's poor behaviour to escalate and made it much harder to safely deliver a purposeful regime. With minimal time out of their cells, children did not have enough time to build relationships with staff, attend a meaningful amount of education or take part in other useful activities.

The closure of Cookham Wood, while necessary, was emblematic of leaders' inability to make improvements at the site. This closure impacted other YOIs, most notably Feltham, where the catchment area from which children were received increased and caused both a rise in the population and the potential for violence.

Our first visit of the year to Oakhill found similar problems and the centre was judged to be inadequate. It routinely separated children who were refusing to attend education and there were weaknesses in health care. However, at our two follow-up visits leaders had addressed the issues we raised.



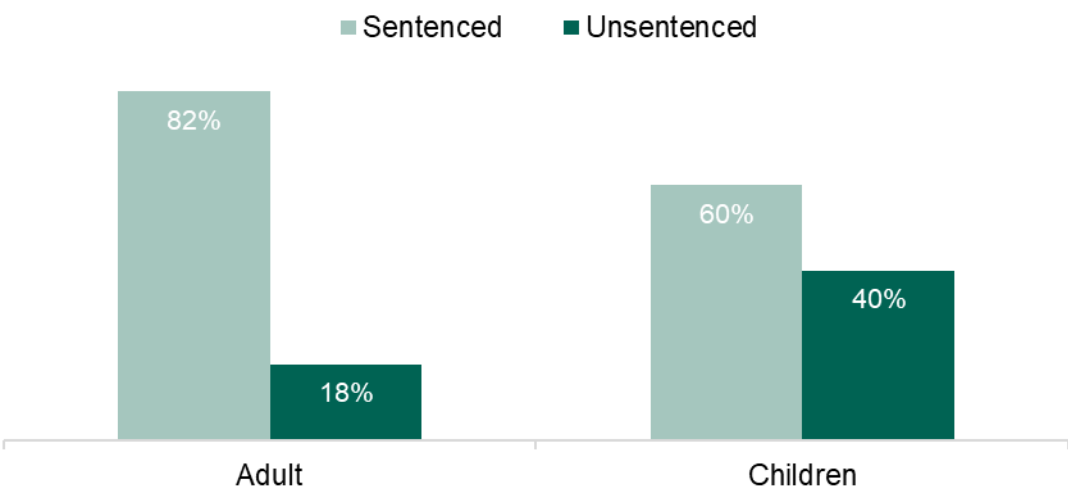
# Section 1 Who are the children in custody?

- 1.1 On the day of the survey, HMI Prisons attempt to offer all children in the establishment a questionnaire, which covers self-report demographic information. For this annual report, the data from all surveys throughout the year is combined. Due to the nature of self-report data, the proportions seen may not align with national statistics, rather they reflect the answers of the children.
- 1.2 The overwhelming majority of children in custody are boys and nearly all are above the age of 15.
- 1.3 Our survey data consistently shows children in YOIs and STCs differ dramatically from the population in the community. Of children surveyed in 2024–25, 65% told us they had previously been in local authority care, 46% said they had health problems and 33% reported being disabled, highlighting the difficult start many of them have before they encounter the criminal justice system. One in 10 reported being parents themselves. Eight per cent of children reported being from the traveller community which continued to be the most overrepresented group in children’s custody.

## Children on remand

- 1.4 Of the children who responded to our survey, 40% had either not been convicted and were being held on remand, or were waiting to be sentenced. This is a much higher proportion than in the adult system.

**Figure 5: The proportion of children not sentenced is higher than in the adult estate**  
Responses of adult men and women surveyed during the 2024–25 HMI Prisons annual report year, and children surveyed in YOIs and STCs in the 2024–25 annual report year

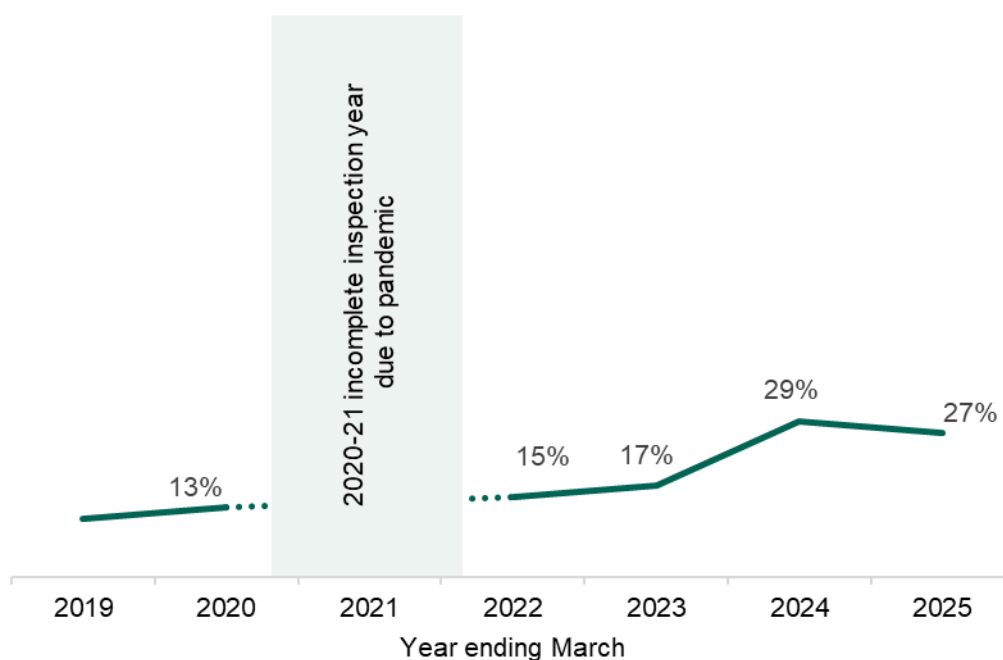


Source: HMI Prisons Survey data, 2024–25

## Young adults in the children's estate

- 1.5 The number of 18-year-olds in the children's estate remains high and accounts for 27% of the overall population. The main reason that this has not returned to previous levels is the reluctance of adult establishments to take these young adults, despite a change in policy. As a result, the number of children who are turning 18 in custody is similar to the number being transferred out of the system.

**Figure 6: The percentage of survey respondents aged 18 years and over has increased in recent years**  
YOIs and STC

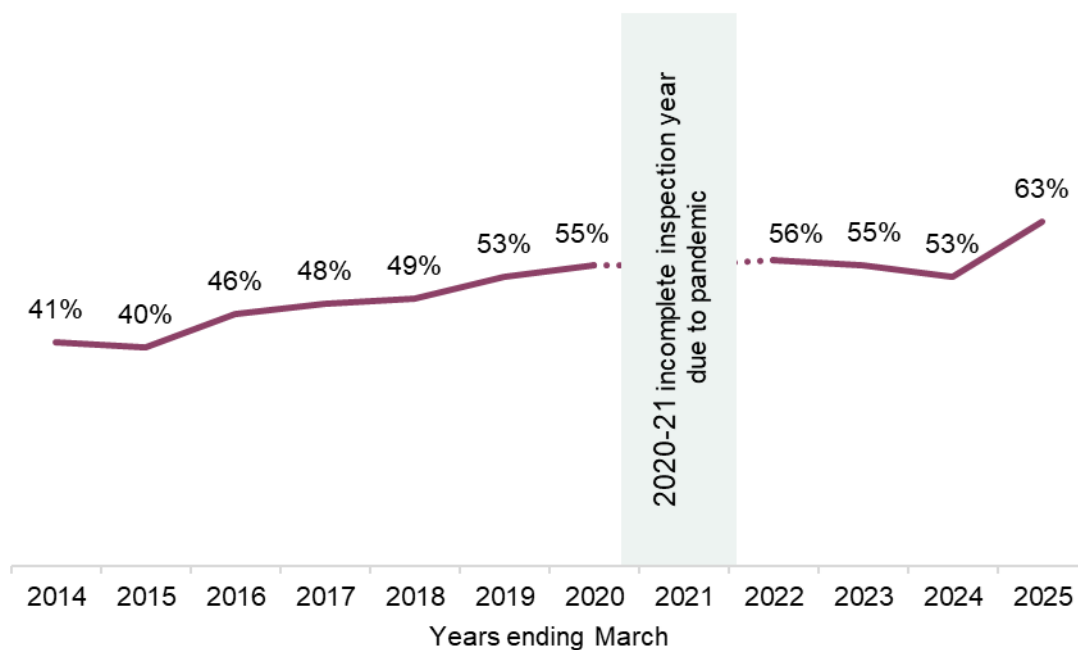


Source: HMI Prisons Survey data

## Some groups continue to be overrepresented

- 1.6 In recent years the youth justice system has been much more successful at diverting some groups of children away from custody than others. As a result, while the number of children held has fallen, Muslim children and those from an ethnic minority background have become increasingly overrepresented when compared with data from the 2021 census. In 2024–25 this trend has continued, children from an ethnic group other than white make up 63% of the population, compared with 33% when we started asking this question in 2001. In addition, Muslim children now make up a third of the population.

**Figure 7: The percentage of survey respondents from an ethnic group other than white has increased**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data

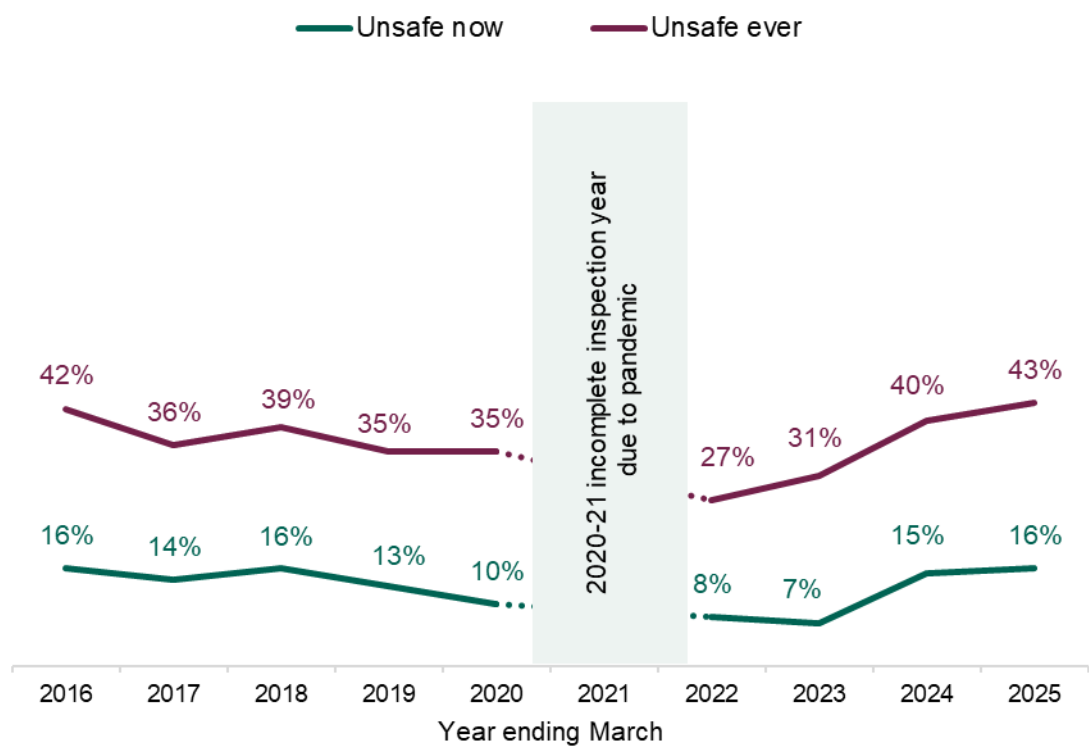
## Section 2    Perceptions of safety have not improved

“I don't think [being in custody] helps stop offending since being here I have become extremely violent and react on impulse.”

**Child at Wetherby**

- 2.1    Of the children surveyed in 2024–25, 16% reported feeling unsafe at the time of the survey, and 43% said that they had felt unsafe at some point since they had been in custody. These were among the worst responses we have seen in our surveys.
- 2.2    Children’s perceptions of safety varied dramatically across establishments. At Cookham Wood, 29% of children felt unsafe at the time of our visit, compared with 11% at Parc.

**Figure 8: The percentage of children who have ever felt unsafe and feel unsafe now has increased**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data

- 2.3    Sixty-one per cent of surveyed children reported having experienced some form of bullying, violence or victimisation from other children.

More than half (57%) reported experiencing verbal abuse, and 30% said they had been physically assaulted by their peers.

- 2.4 Shockingly, only 27% of children said they would report bullying or victimisation by other children to staff. This finding suggests that all forms of bullying and violence are underreported in YOIs and STCs, a real concern when reported violence is already high across the estate.
- 2.5 Of the 41 concerns we followed up this year, three were about the violence and poor behaviour management seen at our inspections of Cookham Wood, Feltham and Werrington in 2023–24. In all three cases progress against these concerns was insufficient.



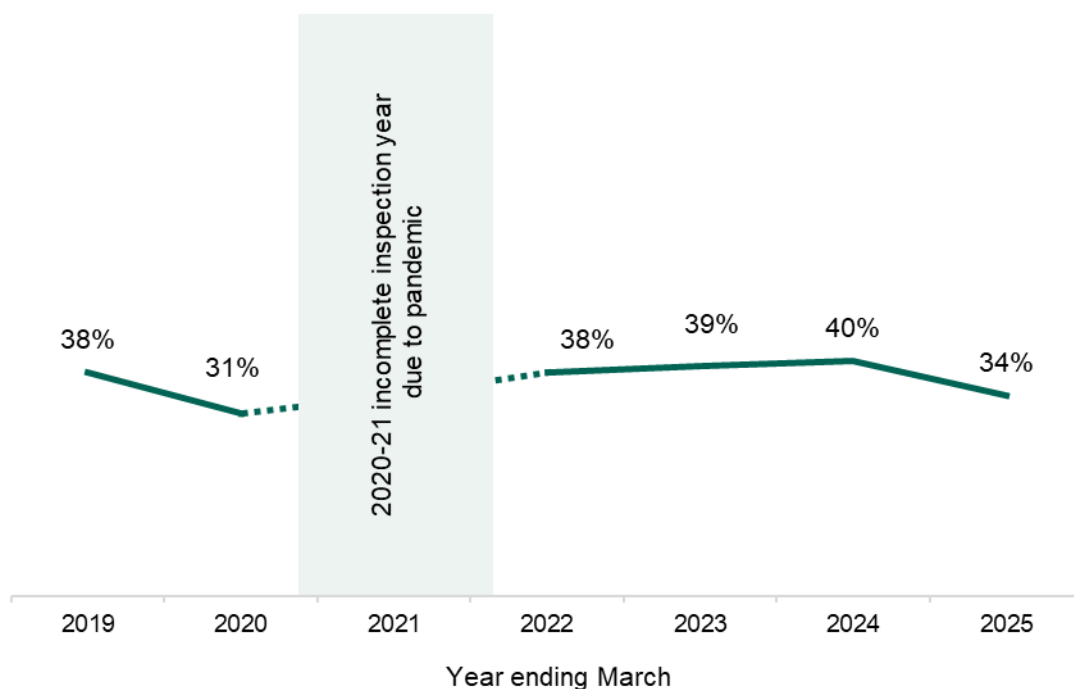
**Cell occupied by a child containing racist graffiti in the shower, Cookham Wood IRP, April 2024**

- 2.6 At Feltham, violence had not reduced, and serious incidents were increasing, which had a huge impact on both the children and staff who were injured in these incidents. This led to a shortfall of staff and reduced the YOI's ability to deliver important services for children.

## Section 3 Ineffective behaviour management

- 3.1 One of the persistent problems seen in the children's estate is the ineffective nature of the rewards or incentives schemes for good behaviour. This year, just 34% of children reported that these schemes encouraged them to behave well.
- 3.2 However, perceptions did vary substantially across the YOIs and STCs. At Feltham, just 19% said they were motivated by rewards or incentives schemes, but at Parc 72% said this was the case. It was concerning that Parc, the smallest establishment we inspect, was the only site where more than half of children reported positively about behaviour management.

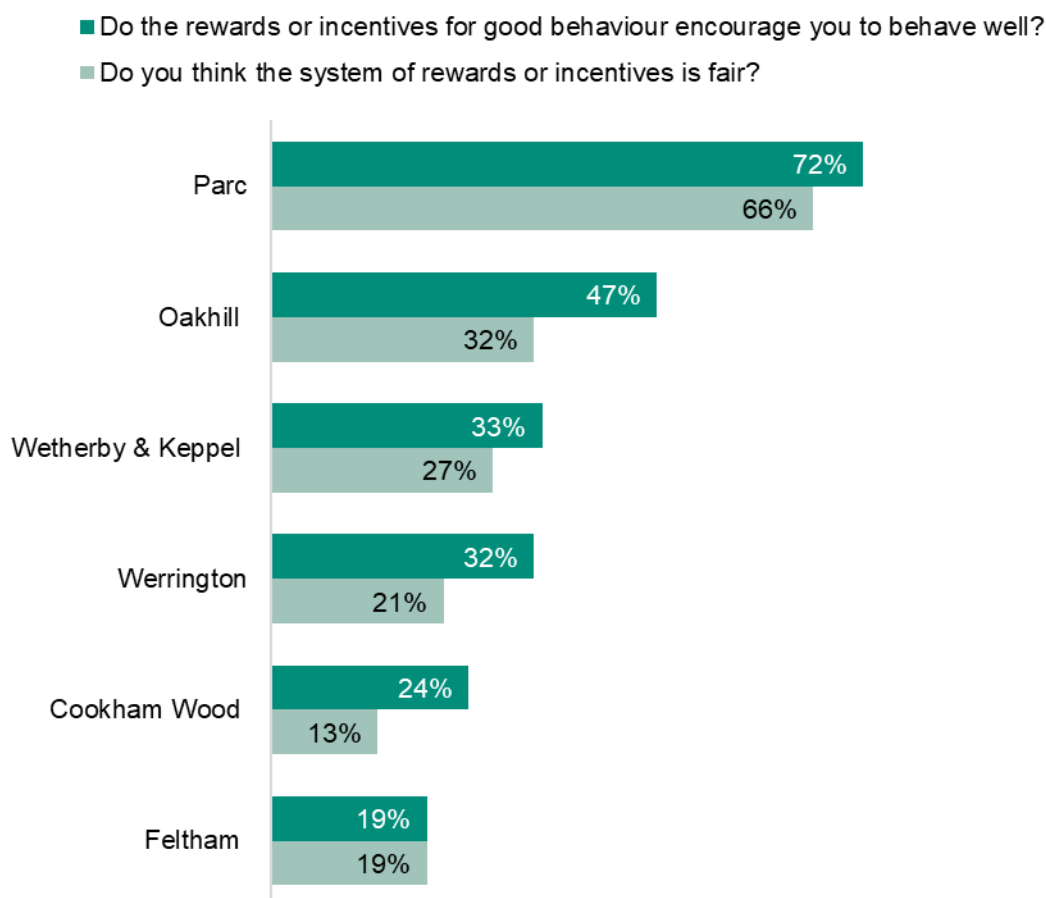
**Figure 9: The percentage of children who said that the rewards or incentives for good behaviour encourage them to behave is lower than in recent years**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data

- 3.3 Just 26% of children said the rewards or incentives schemes were fair and, again, more children at Parc said this was the case than at other YOIs. The key concern for many children was that those who behaved and were at the top of the incentives scheme were not rewarded.

**Figure 10: More children at Parc than at other sites reported that the rewards system was fair and motivated them to behave well**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data, 2024–25

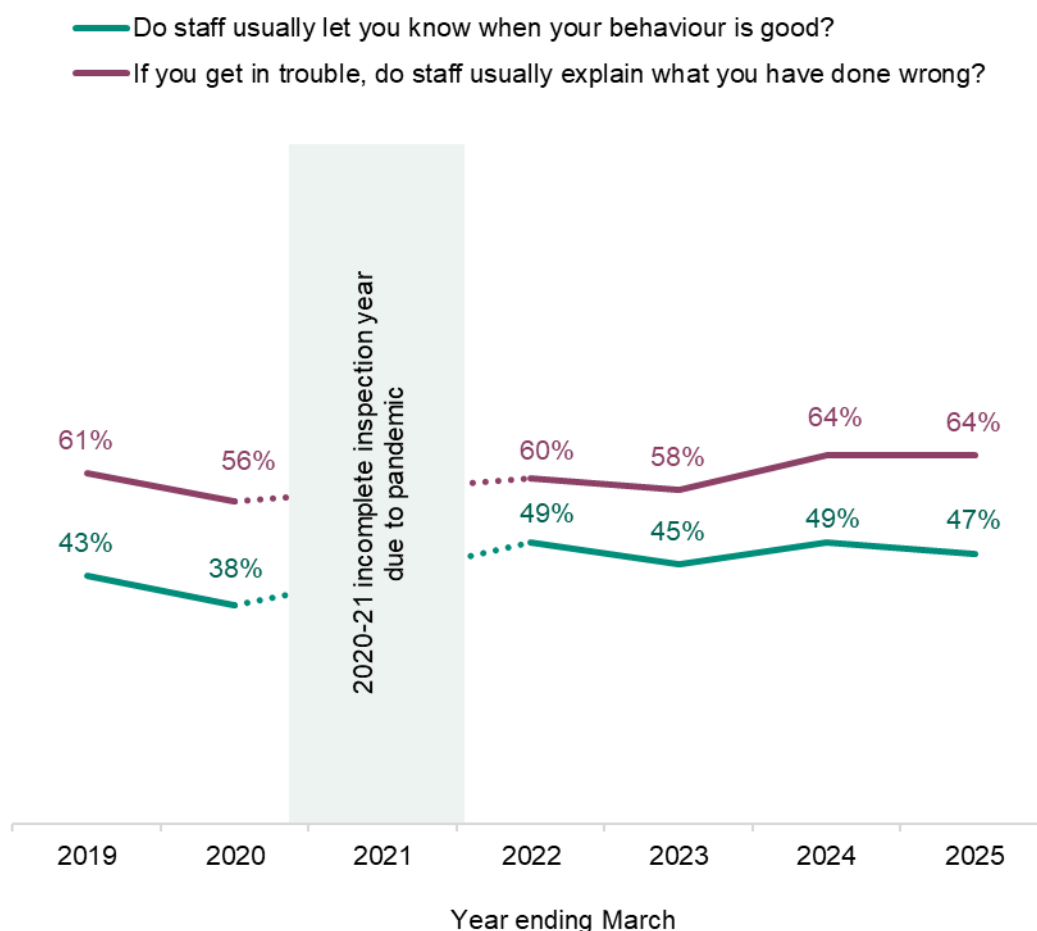
“People that are on gold should get more time out their cell because the people in gold can prove to you that your [sic] changing and that they just want to do their sentence and go home.”

#### **Child at Werrington**

- 3.4 At Werrington, we found staff did not consistently challenge or address poor day-to-day behaviour, such as blocked observation panels and play fighting. This failure to set basic standards undermined the ability of staff to deal with more serious behaviour like violence.
- 3.5 Children were more likely to report that staff talked to them about their negative rather than their positive behaviour, despite evidence that shows behaviour management schemes work better when more attention is given to those doing the right thing. This has been a persistent problem over many years and was identified as a weakness as far back as 2018 in our [thematic inspection into behaviour management](#).



**Figure 11: The percentage of children who are told by staff when their behaviour is good has been consistently lower than the percentage who are told what they have done wrong when they get into trouble**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data

- 3.6 Children had so little time out of their cells, that there was not much that staff could offer them to reward good behaviour. This also meant that staff had no privileges to remove when children behaved poorly. At Cookham Wood, the adjudication system was chaotic and failed to deal with more serious incidents of poor behaviour, including violence.

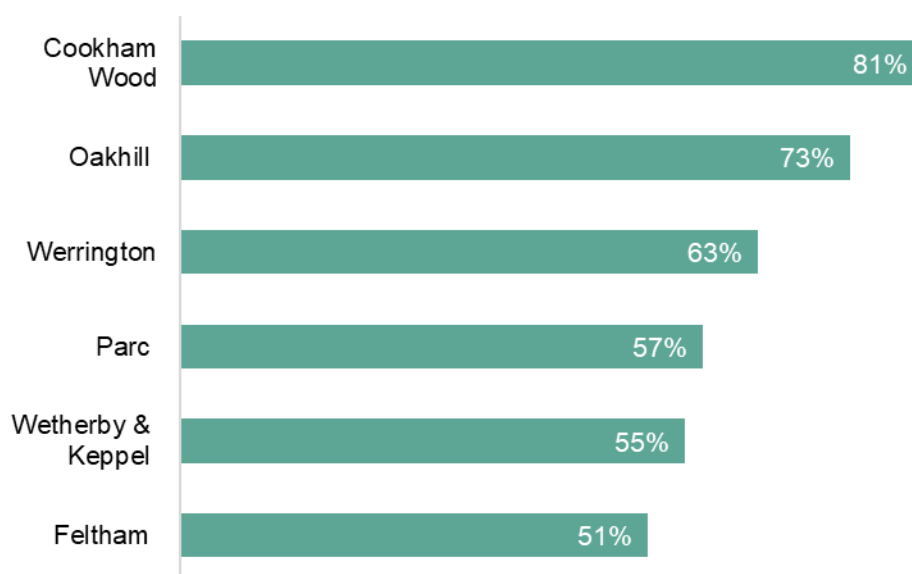
'In the last six months, there had been 592 adjudications, most for offences of violence and unauthorised items such as drugs or weapons. Just under half of these were not proven, often because they were out of time rather than for a lack of evidence.'

**Cookham Wood IRP report, 2024**

- 3.7 In the absence of effective behaviour management schemes, staff too often resorted to keeping children apart from each other, or in extreme cases separating children completely from their peers. Evidence from our inspections suggests that these high-level interventions had

become commonplace: 61% of children reported having been separated from their peers because of something they had done. While this varied from 81% at Cookham Wood to 51% at Feltham, it was more than half of the children at every YOI and STC.

**Figure 12: The percentage of children who reported they have been locked up and stopped from mixing with other young people as a punishment was highest at Cookham Wood and varied by site**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data, 2024–25

“I’ve been on rule 49 [separated] for 2 months and I’ve only been offered 20 minutes 1 to 1 education everyday without no yard or exercise leaving me on 23:40hr bang up everyday, staff make you feel forgotten about and left my mental health to deteriorate.”

**Child at Wetherby**

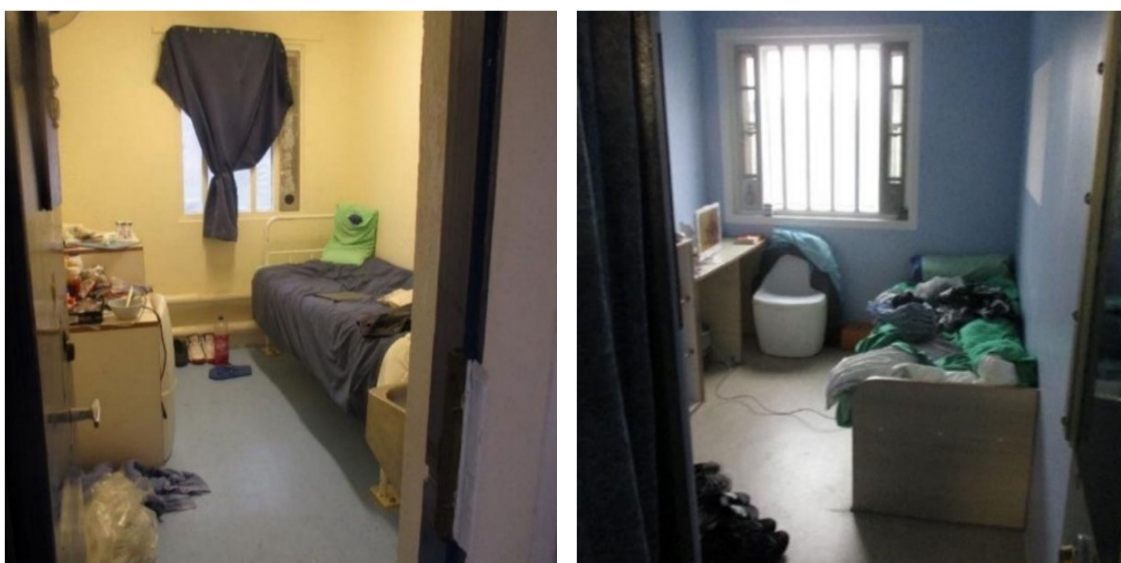
- 3.8 In some cases, children were so scared that they did not leave their cells at all. These children were managed using the same separation process as those who had been segregated because they were a risk to others, but they often stayed in their cells for longer.

## Separation of children – A review of progress

In 2020 HMI Prisons published the thematic report '[Separation of children in young offender institutions](#)'. The findings were shocking, with children subject to widespread solitary confinement, and spending more than 22 hours a day locked in their cells with no meaningful human contact or oversight.

Depressingly, with high levels of violence and disorder dominating YOIs, almost all of the failings outlined in the report have continued. [Our 2024 review of progress](#) found that 479 children had been separated from their peers in 2023–24, either because they posed a risk to safety or elected to stay in their cells, mostly because they were concerned about being involved in violence or scared to venture out.

We found that many children continued to be subject to solitary confinement and were unable to access the basic elements of daily life, including exercise. Leaders were unable to provide most separated children with adequate access to education and other interventions, which in some cases were limited to just a few minutes a day. In the worst cases, on some days, children did not leave their cell for any reason at all.

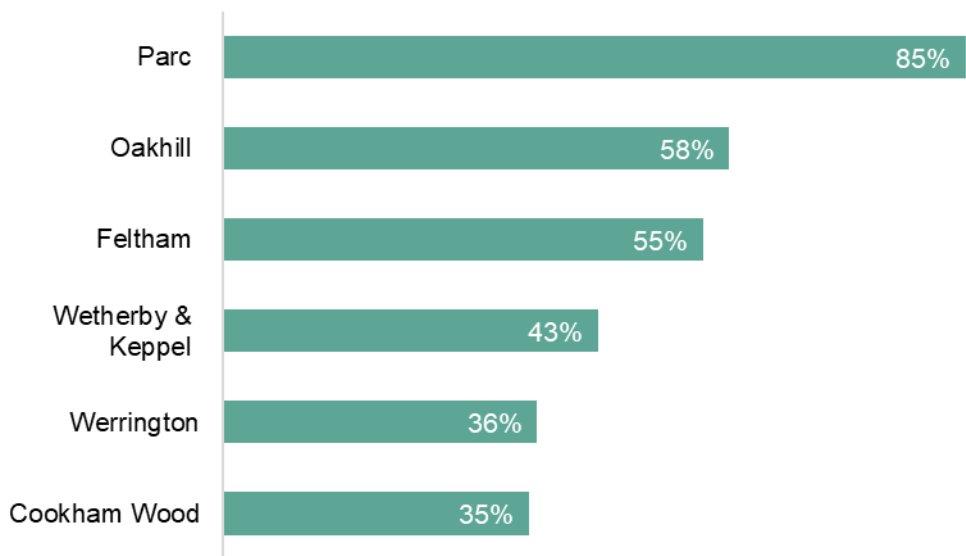


Feltham segregation unit cell (left) and Cookham Wood segregation cell on the wing (right)

## Section 4 Weak relationships with staff

- 4.1 At most children’s establishments we inspect, relationships between staff and children are not good enough. This prevents staff from being able to effectively motivate children to engage with activities and to challenge their poor behaviour.
- 4.2 In 2024–25, just 49% of children felt cared for by staff, and despite there being many more staff than children at every establishment, one in three children said there was no one to turn to if they had a problem.
- 4.3 Only at Parc, where 85% of children felt cared for, were responses to these questions good enough.

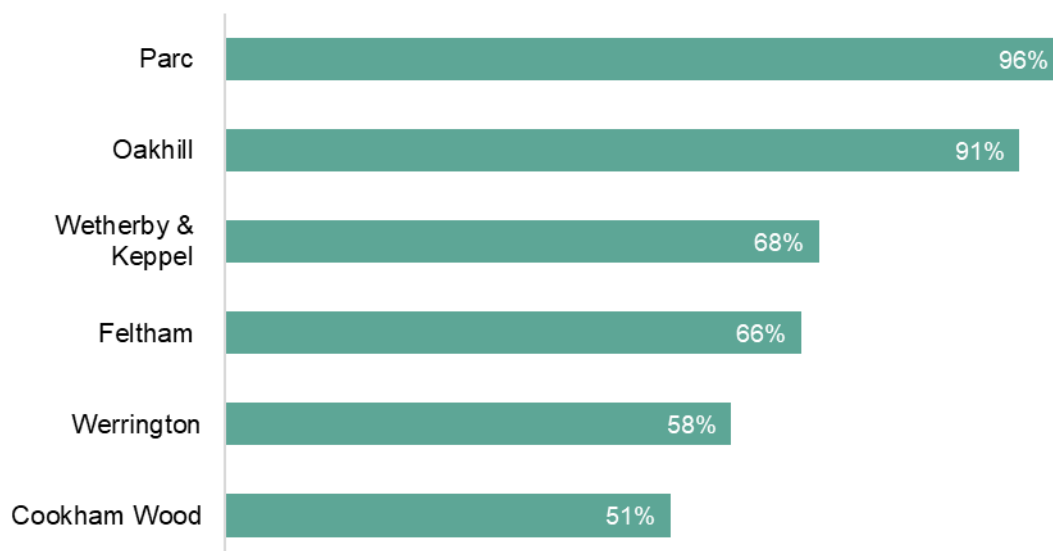
**Figure 13: The percentage of children who said they felt cared for by staff at Parc YOI was over double that at some other sites**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data, 2024–25

- 4.4 Responses throughout the survey demonstrated the effects of these poor relationships. For example, just 52% of children who arrived with problems said that that they were helped by staff.
- 4.5 In addition, just 69% of children said that staff encouraged them to attend education, training or work. This varied from 51% at Cookham Wood to 96% at Parc.

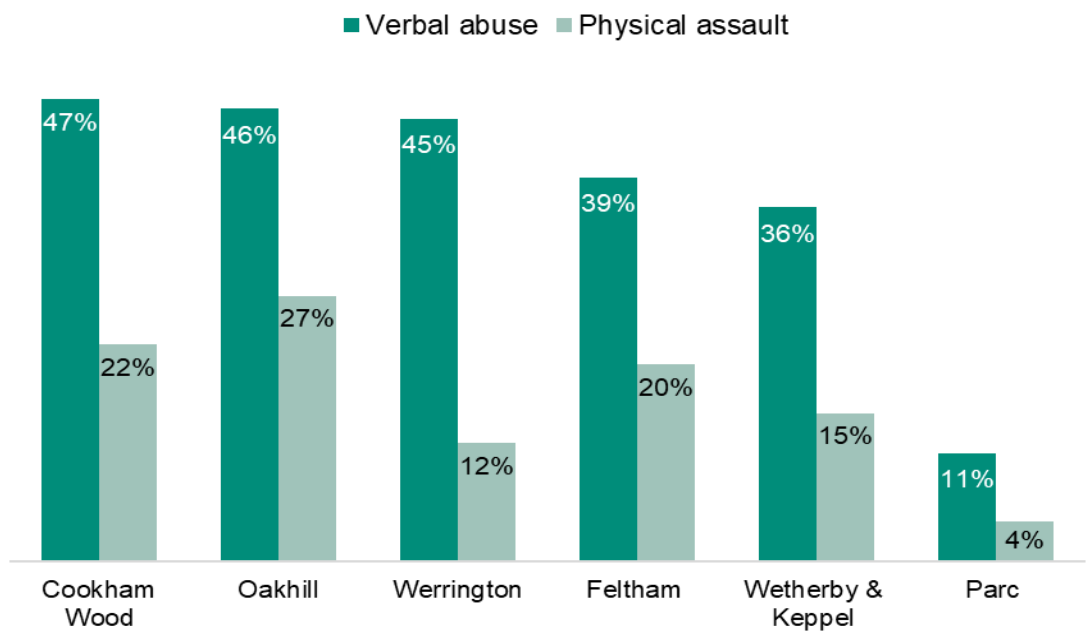
**Figure 14: The percentage of children who reported that staff encouraged them to attend education, training or work was highest in Parc YOI and lowest in Cookham Wood YOIs and STC**



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data, 2024–25

- 4.6 Similarly, only 66% reported that staff were supporting them to achieve their sentence plan objectives or targets. This varied from 45% at Cookham Wood to 90% at Parc.
- 4.7 Concerningly, 45% of children said that they had experienced victimisation from staff. Most commonly this was verbal abuse, reported by 39% of children, but 17% said they had been physically assaulted by staff. Unsurprisingly the prevalence of these issues was much lower at Parc where relationships were better.

**Figure 15: The percentage of children reported verbal or physical abuse by staff varied by site**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data

4.8 In common with other years, a small but significant 4% of children reported having been sexually assaulted by staff and this was as high at 15% at Oakhill. In line with our child protection policy, HMI Prisons referred every child who reported being physically or sexually assaulted to safeguarding teams to carry out an investigation.

## Section 5 Impact on education and activities

- 5.1 The combination of weak relationships with staff, a lack of motivation, and high levels of unpredictable and often reckless violence, meant that many children were simply unable to take part in productive activity during their time in custody.

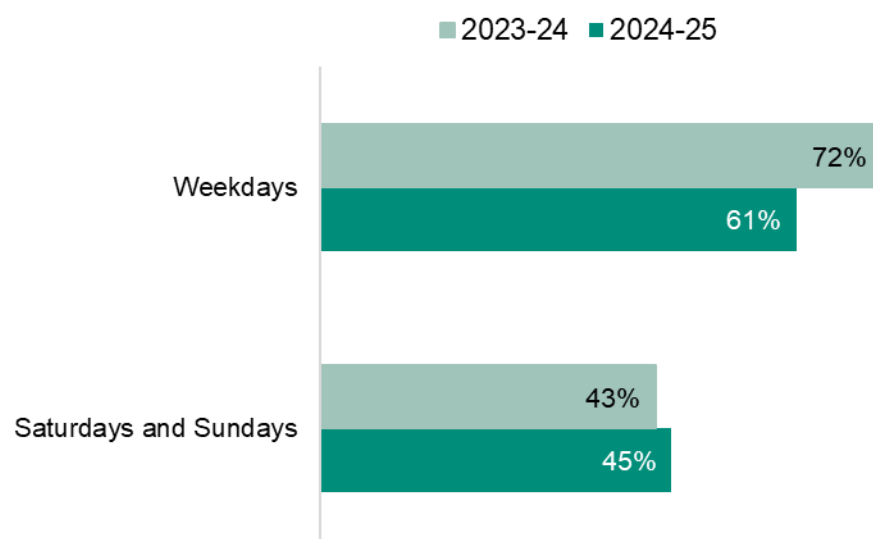
“To be honest this jail/YOI isn't good. I'm in my cell most of the time as education gets cancelled a lot 23 hour bang up most days for a while now and on weekends sometimes 24 hour bang up. It effects [sic] me quite a bit. Also not a very safe jail not just for me but for everyone, staff and YOs. I need to focus on my sentence which I don't feel I can do here.”

**Child at Cookham Wood**

### Time out of cell

- 5.2 The number of children that reported spending more than two hours out of their cell on weekdays dropped to 61% and fewer than half (45%) said this was the case at the weekend. Responses to these questions were markedly better at Oakhill and Parc where we found consistent daily routines.

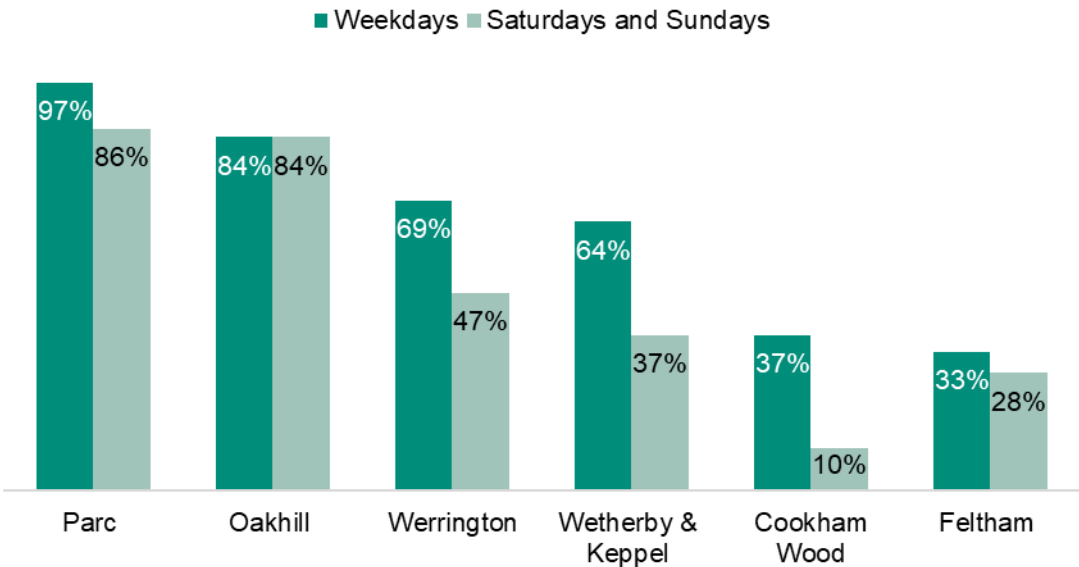
**Figure 16: The percentage of children who report spending two hours or more out of their cell on weekdays has fallen, but remains similar at weekends**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data, 2023–24 and 2024–25



**Figure 17: The percentage of children who report spending two hours or more out of their cell on weekdays was higher than at the weekend**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data, 2024–25

5.3 This year, we followed up three concerns about the time children spent out of their cell at Feltham, Werrington and Wetherby. While progress was reasonable at Wetherby, it was insufficient at Werrington and at Feltham there had been no meaningful progress.

“I get 30 mins yard a day and sometimes wing education for 45 mins. VERY VIOLENT JAIL.”

**Child at Werrington**

5.4 At Wetherby there had been careful planning to deliver changes to improve time out of cell for children. This included developing a new staffing profile and daily routine which went live during the week of our review visit. There were, however, concerning findings at Feltham:

‘During summer 2024, there had been a small number of serious incidents of disorder that had had a catastrophic impact on staffing resources. During this period, time out of cell fell to its lowest point, where half the population received less than two hours out of cell each day and some children were receiving less than 30 minutes, which was unacceptable.’

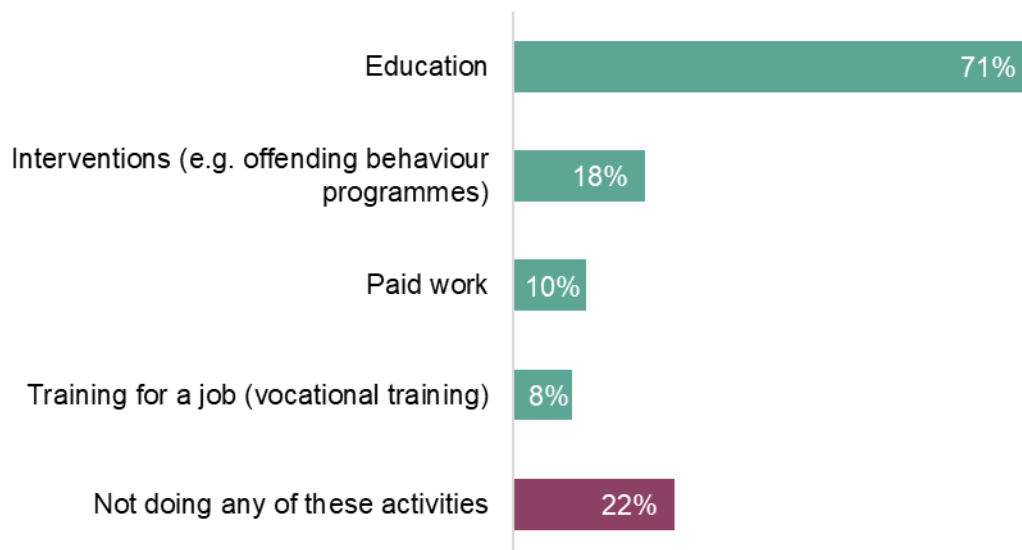
**Feltham A IRP report, 2024**

### Purposeful activity

5.5 In relation to types of activity, children most commonly reported being engaged in education and offending behaviour programmes. Smaller

numbers said they were taking part in paid work and vocational training.

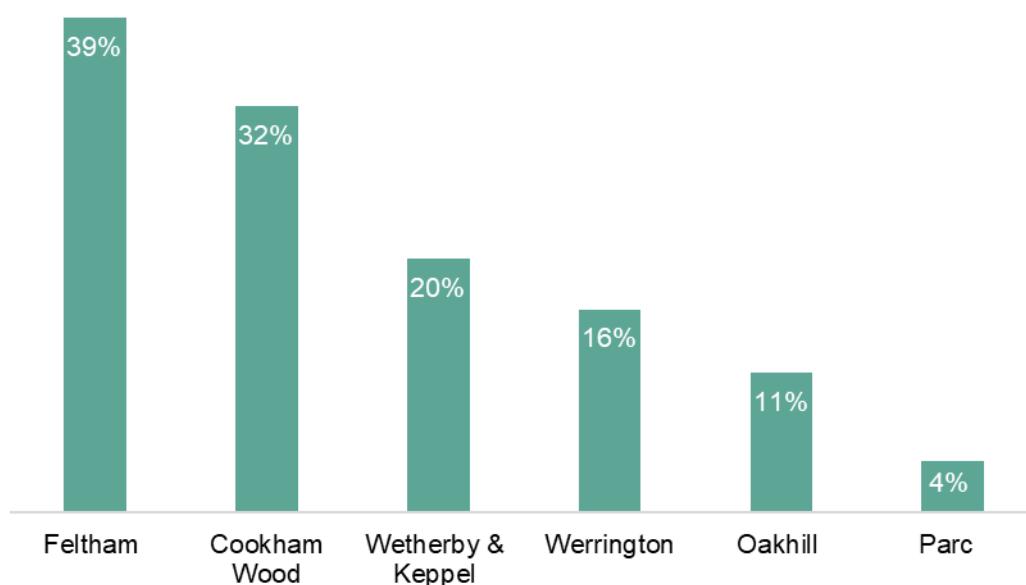
**Figure 18: Children were most likely to report that they took part in education than any other form of purposeful activity**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data, 2024–25

5.6 However, 22% of children said they were not doing any of these activities; this ranged from 39% at Feltham to 4% at Parc.

**Figure 19: 39% of children at Feltham A reported not taking part in any of the listed activities, but this figure was much lower at Oakhill STC and Parc YOI**  
YOIs and STC



Source: HMI Prisons Survey data, 2024–25

- 5.7 In addition to children not getting enough education, there were issues with the quality of provision, as identified in our joint thematic inspection with Ofsted, 'A decade of declining quality of education in young offender institutions: the systemic shortcomings that fail children', published in October 2024.
- 5.8 This thematic reviewed 32 full inspection reports, and five reports following independent reviews of progress, across a 10-year period from June 2014 to March 2024. It concluded:

'Too often, our colleagues in Ofsted find that attendance is very low, behaviour is not good enough, the curriculum is not suitable, and the quality of teaching is poor. We need to see a transformation in the quality of education in our YOIs if we want to see less youth crime and more children going on to lead successful lives.'

- 5.9 We found that relationships between education providers and governors were poor, and that resources and infrastructure were of low quality, including dirty classrooms with offensive graffiti on the walls, a lack of whiteboards and in some cases even a lack of chairs.
- 5.10 There were severe staff shortages in education departments, and the staff in post often had low qualification levels and a lack of training, all of which led to children receiving poor quality education that failed to meet their needs. In addition, staff lacked the skills to meet the needs of children with special educational requirements or disabilities (SEND).
- 5.11 The thematic also found that children had far fewer hours of lessons per day than children in the community, caused by the systemic issues in YOIs. Over the past 10 years, work experience opportunities and links with employers had also become more limited, which left children without the skills and training necessary to help them secure employment on release.
- 5.12 Severe youth custody staff shortages had made it difficult for staff to form any kind of relationship with the children in their care, and overly restrictive mixing arrangements between children meant they spent too much time in their cells rather than at education or training. This created a vicious cycle, whereby children felt isolated, disheartened and frustrated, which led to poor behaviour and further restrictions on children's movement around YOIs as leaders attempted to manage it.
- 5.13 The thematic's findings were clear: poor leadership and collaboration between education providers and governors over the last 10 years meant that few effective and sustainable measures had been put in place to deal with the rapidly declining standards in education provision in YOIs.

## Appendix I Demographic and background characteristics

Demographic and other background characteristics of children who completed a questionnaire – overall, between types of, and within establishments – from self-reported data.

				YOIs			Total YOIs	STCs	Total STCs	Total all children
		Cookham Wood	Wetherby and Keppel	Werrington	Feltham	Parc		Oakhill		
<b>Gender</b>	Male	100%	97%	100%	100%	100%	<b>99%</b>	98%	98%	<b>99%</b>
	Female	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>
	Non-binary	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	<b>1%</b>	2%	2%	<b>1%</b>
<b>Age</b>	14 or under	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	2%	2%	<b>0%</b>
	15	3%	1%	0%	6%	0%	<b>2%</b>	13%	13%	<b>4%</b>
	16	15%	21%	9%	13%	14%	<b>15%</b>	37%	37%	<b>18%</b>
	17	44%	41%	62%	56%	61%	<b>51%</b>	44%	44%	<b>50%</b>
	18 or over	38%	36%	29%	25%	25%	<b>31%</b>	4%	4%	<b>27%</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	21%	51%	30%	30%	57%	<b>38%</b>	28%	28%	<b>37%</b>

	Mixed	21%	18%	21%	21%	21%	<b>20%</b>	25%	25%	<b>21%</b>
	Asian	46%	14%	27%	35%	11%	<b>26%</b>	25%	25%	<b>25%</b>
	Black	13%	11%	14%	13%	4%	<b>12%</b>	11%	11%	<b>12%</b>
	Arab	0%	1%	0%	1%	4%	<b>1%</b>	0%	0%	<b>1%</b>
	Other	0%	5%	8%	0%	4%	<b>3%</b>	11%	11%	<b>5%</b>
<b>Traveller</b>	Yes	5%	7%	6%	10%	4%	<b>7%</b>	9%	9%	<b>7%</b>
	No	95%	93%	94%	90%	96%	<b>93%</b>	91%	91%	<b>93%</b>
<b>Religion</b>	No religion	9%	30%	24%	19%	44%	<b>25%</b>	20%	20%	<b>24%</b>
	Christian	57%	43%	34%	41%	36%	<b>41%</b>	33%	33%	<b>40%</b>
	Buddhist	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>
	Jewish	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>
	Muslim	34%	24%	40%	39%	20%	<b>32%</b>	43%	43%	<b>33%</b>
	Sikh	0%	1%	2%	3%	0%	<b>1%</b>	0%	0%	<b>1%</b>
	Other	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	<b>1%</b>	4%	4%	<b>1%</b>
<b>Health problems</b>	Yes	55%	53%	44%	48%	32%	<b>48%</b>	35%	35%	<b>46%</b>
	No	45%	47%	56%	56%	68%	<b>52%</b>	65%	65%	<b>54%</b>

<b>Disability</b>	Yes	28%	35%	25%	32%	39%	<b>32%</b>	40%	40%	<b>33%</b>
	No	72%	65%	75%	68%	61%	<b>68%</b>	60%	60%	<b>67%</b>
<b>Been cared for in local authority</b>	Yes	72%	73%	48%	74%	62%	<b>67%</b>	57%	57%	<b>65%</b>
	No	28%	27%	52%	26%	38%	<b>33%</b>	43%	43%	<b>35%</b>
<b>Have children</b>	Yes	8%	12%	9%	10%	14%	<b>11%</b>	7%	<b>7%</b>	<b>10%</b>
	No	92%	88%	91%	90%	86%	<b>89%</b>	93%	<b>93%</b>	<b>90%</b>

## Appendix II Methodology

### Administering the survey

At the time of the survey, researchers from HMI Prisons attempted to invite all children in every secure training centre (STC) and young offender institution (YOI) to complete a questionnaire. In some instances, for example when a child was at court or an outside hospital, it was not possible to speak to all children. In total, 95% of children detained in YOIs and STCs at the time of our survey were offered the opportunity to complete a questionnaire. Every effort was made to speak to each child individually to explain the purpose and confidentiality of the survey, its voluntary nature and the independence of the inspection process. We also offered to administer the questionnaire via an interview for children who said they needed assistance.

We asked children to not put their name on their questionnaire, but to enable us to follow up any child protection and safeguarding issues, each questionnaire was numbered so that any relevant comments could be traced back to the respondent. Children were made aware of this. Self-completed questionnaires were placed in sealed envelopes and collected by HMI Prisons researchers.

### Response rate

For 2024–25 surveys, as shown in Table 1, questionnaires were completed (either through self-completion or via an interview) and returned by 82% of children in the available sample (representing 76% of the children who were resident in the establishment at the time of the survey). the response rate ranged from 76% at Wetherby & Keppel to 100% at Parc.

**Table 1: Sample sizes and response rates across STCs and YOIs during 2024–25**

The response rate for YOIs and STCs has been calculated as a proportion of the total number of children who were offered a questionnaire.

YOI	Date of survey	Population on survey date	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of returned questionnaires	Response rate
Cookham Wood	10 April 2024	48	47	39	83%
Wetherby & Keppel	22 October 2024	149	140	107	76%
Werrington	07 May 2024	83	76	65	86%
Parc	22 January 2025	29	29	29	100%



Feltham A	30 September 2024	113	99	81	82%
<b>YOI Total</b>		<b>422</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>82%</b>

STC	Date of survey	Population on survey date	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of returned questionnaires	Response rate
Oakhill	22 May 2024	69	65	54	83%
<b>YOI and STC total</b>		<b>491</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>82%</b>

## Non-responses

Missing data, where respondents have not answered a question, have been excluded from the analysis. This means that the percentages calculated are from a total sum where there may have been different response rates to each question within the survey.

Figures quoted in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole number. In some cases, due to the way we round the data, a result of 0% can, in fact, have been reported and/or experienced by a very small number of children. For example, across the entire YOI sample of 337 individuals, the response of one child on a given issue would appear as 0% in our report.

## Analyses conducted

In addition to presenting the aggregated survey responses for children in custody (across all STCs and YOIs), additional analyses are reported:

- a comparison of survey responses in 2024–25 with those in 2023–24
- a comparison between survey responses received from children in STCs and YOIs
- responses from children in each STC and YOI as well as the overall response from children in that type of custody setting
- statistical comparisons between different sub-groups within the 2024–25 responses, where numbers allowed. Highlighting is used in tables to show where there are statistically significant differences.

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Printed and published by:  
HM Inspectorate of Prisons  
3rd floor  
10 South Colonnade  
Canary Wharf  
London  
E14 4PU  
England

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