

Signs of improvement at Feltham as population is reduced by over a third

- Feltham A won't take any new offenders until there are significant improvements
- Immediate action has made the situation better and the YOI is running a normal regime
- Young people already getting more time out of cells and in education

The Ministry of Justice has today (21 August 2019) announced plans to address the serious issues identified at HMYOI Feltham A, including extra staff training and limiting the population until significant improvements are made.

The action plan responds to the Urgent Notification issued by the Prisons Inspectorate last month and details improvements to be made to safety, staff, education and living conditions.

Some of the immediate changes, such as a specialist team working one-to-one with offenders in the prison, have already improved the situation and young people are now getting more time out of cells and in education, and a normal regime is running.

There have also been major changes to staff, including the appointment of a new Head of Safeguarding and the short-term secondment of Mike Woodbine, an experienced Deputy Governor from HMYOI Cookham Wood.

Woodbine was deputy governor at Medway Secure Training Centre after it was brought into public ownership from G4S, and has worked for the Youth Justice Board.

By November, the prison hopes to have recruited a trauma expert to help staff better understand some of the reasons driving challenging behaviour at the prison, such as young people who have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence.

Significant refurbishments have already begun – broken cell bells have been repaired, shower facilities improved and the first steps taken towards installing telephones in all cells by next summer.

Work has also been undertaken to prepare young people for their transition back into the community, by prioritising family contact and working to help local authorities implement a scheme which will identify suitable accommodation one month before release.

Secretary of State for Justice, Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

We are urgently making the improvements Feltham A so desperately needs – and starting to see results.

These efforts will not be allowed to slow and I am working closely with the prison to change the culture and make Feltham A somewhere that young people can get the support and structure they need to turn their lives around.

Ministers set up the Urgent Notification protocol in 2017 to ensure that immediate steps are taken to address serious concerns identified by inspectors.

The Secretary of State's letter [response and action plan](#) can be found on GOV.UK. It also sets out how Feltham's progress over the coming year will be regularly monitored.

The final inspection report for HMPYOI Feltham A will be published by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons around 3 months after the inspection. A long-term action plan responding to all recommendations in the HMIP report will also be published.

Last week the Prime Minister announced plans for an extra £100 million to be invested across the prisons estate to boost security and safety so we can protect staff, cut violence, and rehabilitate offenders.

The government will also be investing up to £2.5 billion in an extra 10,000 prison places.