



Her Majesty's Prison Feltham

Feltham Young Offenders Institution (more commonly known as HM Prison Feltham) is a prison for male juveniles and Young Offenders Institution, occupying 0.184 square kilometres (45 acres) south-west of Feltham in the London Borough of Hounslow, in west London, England. It is operated by Her Majesty's Prison Service.

History

The original Feltham institution was built after 1857 and opened on 1 January 1859 as an Industrial School and was taken over in 1910 by the Prison Commissioners as their second Borstal institution. The existing building opened as a Remand Centre in March 1988.

The current institution was formed in 1991 as a result of a merger between Feltham Borstal and the Ashford Remand Centre. It is managed directly by Her Majesty's Prison Service, rather than management being contracted out to a private firm.

Publicity of a pre-2005 wave of violence at the Institution was coupled with alleged racism amongst certain officers. These reports took as case-in-point the murder of Zahid Mubarek by racist cellmate Robert Stewart on the day Mubarek was due for release. Proposals made to distance HMP Feltham from its reputation included a renaming such as to 'HMP Bedfont Lakes'; receiving scant support. The site falls in the parish (and thus historic civil parish) of Feltham, rather than Bedfont.

An inspection by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons was made in May 2005. The 2005 Report highlighted the progress made and praised the effective reception and induction procedures, the Outreach Team that deal with self-harm issues and the measures in place to deal with race relations issues. Voluntary sector work takes place within Feltham; its Voluntary Sector Co-ordinator manages performance of more than 25 agencies for those convicted and placed on remand (detained pending a trial).

Another inspection was made in July 2013 which was critical of what was considered "an excessive use of force" by prison staff in some incidents which had taken place in 2012 and "unacceptably high levels of violence" in the institution. The Howard League for Penal Reform said that the report revealed the prison to be a "frightening, violent, ineffective and astoundingly costly institution".

On 4 September 2013, the Ministry of Justice announced that it was undertaking a feasibility study on replacing the existing buildings at Feltham with a new larger adult prison and youth detention centre.

A 2014 inspection of the prison found that progress had been made in some areas but there were still some major concerns such as levels of violence remaining high, although with fewer incidents than previously, and prisoners having a lack of activities available and being kept locked up in cells for long periods.

The prison is making inroads towards pacifying inmates with violence indicators who self-identify as violent gang members and behave, initially, accordingly. Among three ex-prisoners who came forward to the BBC in 2015, one reported seeing another having his head being stamped on. Feltham in 2015 was the most violent prison in England and Wales having hosted 894 attacks/fights so serious and demonstrable that proportionate, prescribed, legal punishments were imposed. Among these, inmates who have committed acts of violence may be kept in their own accommodation for 23 hours a day, seeing one hour free from solitary confinement. Officers knew of 48 gangs in 2015 among "the teenagers" (changing population) of Feltham's interned.

The prison today

Young adults and juveniles occupy different residential units. Units housing young adult offenders hold approximately 60 prisoners. Units housing juveniles hold 30 prisoners. Almost all the juvenile rooms are for single occupation. There is a mixture of double and single accommodation for young offenders (mostly double). All rooms have integral sanitation and TV and all areas operate the IEP scheme (incentives and earned privilege scheme).

The prison's regime includes education (full/part-time), workshops, vocational training in the construction industry, farms and gardens, works, and NVQs. Various types of offending behaviour groups are available. Other features include the use of voluntary agencies, one-to-one teaching, substance misuse work, and pre-release courses.

An unannounced inspection of 2017 found that the juvenile units, taken together were not safe for either staff or boys, and that violence had increased in the section for older young men; prompting a Commons debate. A serious assault on a staff member took place during the inspection. The prison was criticised for the 23-hour detention, in that although exercise was possible, showers were not on those days, and sought to improve this. Health care was good and mental health care impressive. Efforts to resettlement offenders back in the community after release were also good.