



# **Behaviour management across the secure estate for children and young people**

**A study conducted by Ipsos MORI for  
the Youth Justice Board**

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# Foreword

Since the publication of our *Independent Review of Restraint in Juvenile Secure Settings*<sup>1</sup> in December 2008, we have remained closely involved in monitoring the programme of work to implement the various recommendations that we made. We have been encouraged by the significant progress to date, including:

- the establishment of the Restraint Accreditation Board
- the development of a new system of restraint to replace the systems in young offender institutions (YOIs) and secure training centres (STCs)
- the development of restraint minimisation strategies at every establishment within the secure estate for children and young people
- an increase in the understanding of secure estate staff about how to manage the challenging behaviour that is sometimes displayed by young people in custody.

We are pleased that the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales has responded to recommendations 55 to 58 of the *Independent Review of Restraint* by commissioning Ipsos MORI to undertake this qualitative study. The in-depth interviews that Ipsos MORI researchers undertook with both staff and young people at YOIs, STCs and secure children's homes have enabled a report to be produced which furthers our collective understanding of the complex, interrelated issues that surround the use of restraint.

Within the *Independent Review of Restraint* we questioned why levels of restraint were lower in the YOI sector and suggested some possible explanations. This report provides greater clarity in many of these areas. Some of the explanations we offered are supported by this study, such as the lower staff-to-young person ratio in YOIs and the fact that young people in YOIs spend less time out of their rooms compared to young people in other sectors of the secure estate. Other possible explanations that we offered are not supported by this study. For example, the fact that pain compliance techniques may be used in YOIs is not thought to be a factor contributing to lower levels of restraint, and neither is the adjudication system that operates in this sector.

The report makes an interesting finding with regard to the varying levels of restraint that can exist within establishments of the same type. Staff acknowledged that colleagues can have different attitudes and approaches towards de-escalation and restraint, and that they can also have different competencies in relation to particular restraint techniques. We look forward to the greater consistency of practice that will follow the introduction of the new system of restraint within YOIs and STCs.

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<sup>1</sup> *Independent Review of Restraint in Juvenile Secure Settings*, Smallridge, P. and Williamson, A. (HMSO, London, 2008). This review is referred to as the *Independent Review of Restraint* throughout this report.

The relationship between separation and restraint is particularly complex and this report underlines that fact. In the short term, separation can have an impact on restraint levels, by removing young people whose behaviour is particularly challenging. However, the young people interviewed during this study did not feel that separation was an effective method of enabling them to change their behaviour in the long term.

With regard to recommendation 58, we acknowledge that a long-term clinical study would be required to come to firm conclusions about the psychological impact of restraint, but we also note the interesting findings that have emerged from this study. In particular we are pleased to note that both staff and young people recognised the importance of post-restraint debriefs, with restorative approaches being used in some establishments. We look forward to debriefing becoming even more firmly embedded across YOIs and STCs following the roll-out of the proposed new system of restraint.

Overall, this is a thought-provoking study which adds to the ongoing debate about this complex, sensitive operational practice. We are sure that the Restraint Accreditation Board will find it of particular relevance as they continue their scrutiny of the proposed new system of restraint. We are also confident that the broad range of issues surrounding restraint will continue to be discussed and analysed by relevant Government departments and by children's charities and reform groups. We welcome that ongoing debate.

**Peter Smallridge and Andrew Williamson**

Authors of the *Independent Review of Restraint in Juvenile Secure Settings*

# 1. Summary

## 1.1 Background and objectives

This study explores aspects of the use of restraint across the secure estate for children and young people, in conjunction with behaviour management approaches such as separation and adjudications. The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out the study in response to four of the recommendations outlined in the *Independent Review of Restraint in Juvenile Secure Settings* (Smallridge and Williamson, 2008 – this review is referred to as the *Independent Review of Restraint* throughout this report). These recommendations were:

- recommendation 55: The Government should ask the Prison Service and YJB to examine the basis for the relatively low level of use of force per child reported in YOIs [young offender institutions]. This should include an assessment of the impact of the Prison Service adjudication system on managing young people without the need to use force
- recommendation 56: The YJB should research the reasons why the same young people can receive significantly different levels of restraint in different parts of the secure estate
- recommendation 57: The Government should explore the relationship between single separation and restraint to see how use of single separation by establishments influences their need to use restraint
- recommendation 58: The YJB should research the psychological impact that restraint has on both young people and staff.

Qualitative in-depth interviews were carried out with staff and young people in young offender institutions (YOIs), secure training centres (STCs) and secure children's homes between February 2010 and May 2010. In total, 33 interviews were carried out with young people and 35 with staff. The young people who were chosen to be interviewed had recently experienced restraint within establishments which had recorded a high number of restraints. Therefore, conclusions drawn from the interviews should not be generalised to the wider population or taken to be representative of the secure estate as a whole.

The qualitative findings are summarised below in relation to each of the recommendations from the *Independent Review of Restraint*.

## 1.2 Summary of findings

### **Findings in relation to recommendation 55 of the *Independent Review of Restraint***

Recommendation 55 of the *Independent Review of Restraint* states that the Government should ask the Prison Service and the YJB to examine the basis for the relatively low use of force per child reported in YOIs; this should include

an assessment of the impact of the Prison Service adjudication system on managing young people without the need for force.

This present study adds additional weight to several of the theories posed in the *Independent Review of Restraint* as to why there are fewer incidents of restraint per child in YOIs. These include staff-to-young person ratios in YOIs, the amount of time young people spend out of their cells in STCs and secure children's homes, and the age and experience of young people in YOIs.

The interviews we conducted with young people revealed that staff-to-young person ratios in YOIs impacted on the time taken to respond to an incident in YOIs. Additional elements, such as the design of the building, further impacted on response times. This led to incidents defusing before staff had an opportunity to intervene, which resulted in reduced use of restraint.

We found that young people in STCs and secure children's homes spent more time with peers than young people in YOIs. Indeed, the ethos at STCs and secure children's homes appeared to actively encourage young people to spend time with peers, rather than in cells. Logically, the increase in the time young people spend together can lead to incidents arising which require restraint, such as fighting.

To some extent, the age and experience of young people in YOIs meant that they tended to be more aware of the consequences of becoming involved in incidents. For example, the older ones thought they would receive additional charges if they injured their younger peers. Nonetheless, this finding needs to be considered in the context of young people reporting that fighting is part of the culture in YOIs. In addition, the young people were not deterred from fighting once an incident had escalated past a certain point. As such, the previous two points offer a stronger explanation.

However, there were several theories posed by the *Independent Review of Restraint* that we did not find to offer an explanation for the variations in the use of restraint. Firstly, the use of pain compliance techniques in YOIs did not appear to be a deterrent to young people. Young people in YOIs did feel angered and alienated to some extent by the use of pain compliance techniques, but once again the culture of fighting and disregard of the consequences meant that pain compliance techniques did not deter young people.

Secondly, contrary to the theory posed by the *Independent Review of Restraint*, we found that there was more focus on relationships and conflict resolution in STCs and secure children's homes than in YOIs. We found that staff in YOIs could feel they did not have time to focus on de-escalation, while the closer relationships and regimes in STCs and secure children's homes facilitated wider dialogue as part of conflict resolution.

Finally, we also explored the use and effectiveness of adjudications,<sup>2</sup> considering the impact that they had on levels of restraint. We found that adjudications did little to deter young people from incidents that could lead to restraint, for several reasons:

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<sup>2</sup> See section 5.1 for a description of adjudications.

- the sanctions given as a consequence of adjudications were not seen to be significant enough to act as a deterrent
- there was often a blurring of lines between the sanctions elements of the rewards and sanctions schemes and the outcomes of adjudications
- the penalty of additional days added to a sentence was not applicable for young people on Detention and Training Orders (DTOs). The limitations of the adjudication process in this respect meant that overall adjudication had less of a deterrent effect for young people on DTOs
- there was a lack of consistency in the outcome of adjudications, due to different staff members being involved.

### **Findings in relation to recommendation 56 of the *Independent Review of Restraint***

Recommendation 56 of the *Independent Review of Restraint* states that the YJB should research the reasons why the same young people can receive significantly different levels of restraint in different parts of the secure estate.

As reported above, the principal reasons we found for the variation in levels of restraint between different parts of the secure estate are:

- differences in staff-to-young person ratios
- the increased time young people in STCs and secure children's homes spend out of their cells compared to young people in YOIs
- the age and experience of young people in YOIs.

We also explored the variations *within* establishment types, which were highlighted in the *Independent Review of Restraint*. We found two factors to explain the variations between establishments of the same type:

- interviews with staff revealed that, where certain types of population are present in the establishment, restraint levels are higher. Predominantly, staff felt that relationships in the local community between rival gangs impacted on relationships in the establishment, resulting in more incidents leading to restraint
- some young people felt that some staff members were more willing to restrain than others. Staff too felt that some colleagues were more comfortable with restraint techniques. Factors influencing the willingness of staff to use restraint can include:
  - the level of their negotiation skills and their confidence in using them
  - their prior experiences, such as being harmed by young people, which may make them quicker to physically restrain in the future
  - personality variations
  - their physical capability in carrying out restraint techniques.

### **Findings in relation to recommendation 57 of the *Independent Review of Restraint***

Recommendation 57 of the *Independent Review of Restraint* states that the Government should explore the relationship between single separation and restraint to see how use of single separation by establishments influences their need to use restraint.

We found that the use of separation influenced the need for establishments to use restraint in two main ways:

- in STCs and secure children's homes in particular, separating young people and allowing them a period of time to cool down (before incidents escalated) was felt to be effective in minimising the need for restraint
- it tended to be the most volatile young people who were separated for longer periods of time, therefore minimising the likelihood in the short term that they would be involved in further incidents leading to restraint.

To some extent we found that longer term separation, be it in a cell on the wing or to a segregation unit, deterred young people from incidents that could lead to restraint. In particular, the experience of segregation was mentioned as a punishment. However, understanding the deterrent nature of punishments or negative experiences for young people is complicated. Overall, young people felt that they gave little thought to the consequences of their actions once they had become involved in incidents such as fights. We also found that experiences of longer term segregation did not have a positive impact on young people's behaviours, and indeed could make some young people more likely to become involved in incidents.

### **Findings in relation to recommendation 58 of the *Independent Review of Restraint***

Recommendation 58 of the *Independent Review of Restraint* states that the YJB should research the psychological impact that restraint has on both young people and staff.

Our interviews with staff and young people revealed some important information about the impact of restraint.

- On the whole, young people accepted that restraint may be needed at times, but felt that it should be applied fairly and consistently.
- Staff reported that young people's past experiences can influence their experiences of restraint and the subsequent impact this has on them. It was felt that young people who had a history of abuse could find restraint traumatic (either in general, or with reference to specific restraint techniques).
- Those young people who had been restrained less frequently reported being more affected by restraint when they experienced it. It could be suggested that it is just as important to understand the psychological impact of restraint on those who report being less affected by it. The findings from staff interviews suggest that restraint is not a pleasant experience, yet secure establishments provide an environment in which this is seen to be acceptable by some young people.

- Post-restraint approaches were felt to minimise the negative psychological impact of restraint on young people. For example, debriefs were seen to provide an important support mechanism by which staff and young people could come to terms with the impact of restraint. In STCs and secure children's homes, debriefs were seen as important tools in addressing issues, improving relationships and enhancing understanding of a young person's 'trigger points'. In some establishments, restorative approaches were also used post-restraint, although the extent to which they affected the psychological impact of restraint was less clear.

### 1.3 Future research

As outlined above, this study aimed to gather qualitative information from staff and young people in relation to four of the recommendations put forward in the *Independent Review of Restraint*. During the study, several questions for future areas of exploration arose. Possible research studies are outlined below.

- An in-depth programme of research on restraint, immersing researchers in case study establishments. This would include techniques such as observations and shadowing of staff in the use of restraint, and all the processes surrounding this. Case study establishments would span the whole of the secure estate, allowing for a more in-depth understanding of the variations in restrictive physical intervention (RPI) data.
- Development of a good practice guide on restraint or further development of those that are in place, based on the findings of this report and discussions with practitioners. For example, guidance could be developed on workable solutions to ensure staff are able to balance the importance of post-restraint debrief sessions with regime and time pressures. Providing clarity around the adjudication process and refocusing the reasoning behind it could also form part of this work.
- A larger scale longitudinal study following up young people to allow a more in-depth understanding of the reasons for any variations in experiences in secure children's homes, STCs and YOIs. Insight would also be gained into experiences in different establishments of the same type. Work with young people could be backed up by detailed analysis of methods of recording data about restraint and interviews with staff in particular establishments. The study could include both quantitative and qualitative research, and an 'influence mapping' exercise to explore the relationship between different aspects such as a young person's experiences in custody, their background, attitudes to staff, whether they have been restrained, and whether they feel deterred by restraint and other behaviour management techniques.
- A clinical psychological impact study would be beneficial in looking at the psychological consequences of restraint. This study would need to be carried out by expert psychologists using specialist tools. It would require pre- and post-analysis of young people's experiences in custody, supplemented with information on the psychological welfare of the young people. The most challenging aspect would be isolating the impact of restraint from other factors in young people's lives. Therefore, we would

recommend that the value and possible outcomes of a psychological impact study for this population are assessed before any research commences.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Background and aims

The three establishment types that make up the secure estate for children and young people, YOIs, STCs and secure children's homes, vary greatly in terms of their environment, approach to restraint and behaviour management, and the demographics of young people held there. While approaches to behaviour management differ across these establishment types, there are clear guidelines, issued by the YJB and outlined by statute.<sup>3</sup> The YJB aims to ensure that the behaviour of young people in custody is dealt with in a constructive and positive way wherever possible, with physical intervention kept to a minimum.<sup>4</sup> The YJB and National Children's Bureau's 2008 review of safeguarding<sup>5</sup> and the 2008 *Independent Review of Restraint* demonstrate a strong commitment to safeguarding children and young people in custody and the appropriate use of restraint.

The *Independent Review of Restraint* showed that use of restraint is falling overall across the secure estate. This finding was based on restrictive physical intervention (RPI) data collected by the YJB since April 2007 to measure levels of restraint across the secure estate. The definition of RPI provided to assist in the collation of this data was:

*Any occasion when force is used with the intention of overpowering or to overpower a young person. Overpower is defined as 'restricting movement or mobility'.*

*Independent Review of Restraint* (Smallridge and Williamson, 2008: 6)

As noted by the *Independent Review of Restraint*, this definition does not include lower level restraint deemed as 'non-restrictive' intervention, such as placing a hand on a young person's shoulder to lead them away from an incident.

In light of the findings and observations in the *Independent Review of Restraint*, Ipsos MORI was commissioned by the YJB to explore aspects of the use of restraint across the secure estate, in conjunction with behaviour management approaches such as separation and adjudications. The aim of the study was to gather qualitative information from staff and young people that would help inform the YJB's response to four of the recommendations put forward by the *Independent Review of Restraint*. Conclusions were drawn based on interview responses from staff and young people. The young people interviewed had

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<sup>3</sup> The Young Offender Institution Rules 2000, The Secure Training Centre Rules 1998 and The Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

<sup>4</sup> See *Code of Practice: Managing the Behaviour of Children and Young People in the Secure Estate* (Youth Justice Board, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> See *A Review of Safeguarding in the Secure Estate* (Youth Justice Board and National Children's Bureau, 2008).

recently experienced restraint in establishments with recorded high levels of restraint. This should be taken into account when interpreting the findings and the findings should not be generalised to the wider population.

The four recommendations from the *Independent Review of Restraint* considered in this study were:

- recommendation 55: The Government should ask the Prison Service and YJB to examine the basis for the relatively low level of use of force per child reported in YOIs. This should include an assessment of the impact of the Prison Service adjudication system on managing young people without the need to use force
- recommendation 56: The YJB should research the reasons why the same young people can receive significantly different levels of restraint in different parts of the secure estate
- recommendation 57: The Government should explore the relationship between single separation and restraint to see how use of single separation by establishments influences their need to use restraint
- recommendation 58: The YJB should research the psychological impact that restraint has on both young people and staff.

## 2.2 Methodology

In-depth interviews were carried out between February 2010 and May 2010 with young people who had experienced restraint at their current establishment, whether a YOI, STC or secure children's home. Interviews were also conducted with staff covering different roles in the establishment, including the governor or manager, wing staff, education staff and health/psychology staff. In seeking to understand the experiences of young people across all establishment types, interviews were conducted in eight establishments, of which four were YOIs, two were STCs, and two were secure children's homes. The intention was to interview five young people and five members of staff at each establishment. However, given that interviews were carried out specifically with young people who had experienced restraint, some establishments did not have sufficient numbers of applicable cases, meaning that this target was not always achieved. When this occurred, additional interviews were carried out in establishments of the same type, where possible.

Establishments were selected for the study using YJB RPI data. The number of restraints per establishment was graded into 'high', 'medium' and 'low'. Given that the study was to focus on young people who had experienced restraint, only establishments with higher recorded numbers of restraints (those falling into the high or medium categories) were selected. Establishments remain anonymous throughout this report.

Interviews with young people were carried out face-to-face by Ipsos MORI researchers. Staff interviews were also carried out face-to-face at four of the establishments, although for one YOI, two secure children's homes and one STC these were conducted by an Ipsos MORI researcher via telephone. The table below outlines the number of interviews with young people and staff at

each establishment, and the total number of interviews achieved across YOIs and STCs/secure children’s homes.

**Table 1: Number of young people and staff interviewed**

<b>Establishment type</b>	<b>Number of young people interviewed</b>	<b>Number of staff interviewed</b>
YOI	5	4
YOI	5	4
YOI	4	5
YOI (female only)	3	3
<b>YOI total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>
STC	5	4
STC	2	5
Secure children’s home	7	5
Secure children’s home	2	5
<b>STC/secure children’s homes total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>

For the most part, interviews with young people were conducted one-on-one with no staff present in the room. However, it should be noted that, for some interviews, staff concerns around safeguarding young people meant that they were also present. There was no evidence that this affected the responses of young people, and the observed rapport between staff and young people in such cases was always relaxed. Most interviews with young people in YOIs were digitally recorded, then transcribed and analysed. Some establishments (one YOI, both secure children’s homes and both STCs) did not permit the use of digital recorders and in such cases detailed notes were taken at the time of interviewing. For staff interviews, most were again digitally recorded and then transcribed, apart from interviews at one YOI and one STC, where detailed notes were made.

Ipsos MORI researchers used separate discussion guides for interviews with young people and staff. Both were designed to understand approaches to behaviour management, experience of and attitudes towards restraint, and also the use of adjudication and separation.

## **2.3 Interpretation of the data**

This study aimed to aid a deeper understanding of a range of thematic issues relating to the use of restraint, from the perspectives of young people and staff. Conclusions were drawn based on the responses given during interviews, but

claims cannot be made about the extent to which these may be generalised to the wider population.

There are a number of additional points which must be considered in interpreting the data, particularly in light of the four recommendations from the *Independent Review of Restraint*; these points are set out below.

- It is important to remember that due to the selection criteria for young people interviewed during this study, the views of the young people given in this study represent only those who have been restrained. We sought to speak to those who had been restrained in the last month, but for some establishments this was not possible due to low levels of restraint. In these instances we spoke to those who had been restrained at any point during their time at the establishment, which could have been six months previously. As a result, it is possible that this affected the responses young people gave on their experiences, as levels of recall may have differed for those who had been restrained recently compared to those who had been restrained at any time.
- Using only RPI data to select the sample for this study meant that we were unable to identify young people who had experienced lower level 'restraint' or 'use of force' (e.g. being held by the elbow and guided back to their room). However, while lower level restraint is not captured in the YJB's RPI data, staff and young people regularly referred to the use of such an approach when discussing experiences of restraint techniques. Therefore, consideration is given in this report to both the use of non-restrictive and restrictive physical interventions in managing the behaviour of young people.
- While some young people within the interview sample had been in other establishments previously (either within or across establishment types), this was not the case for all young people. Therefore, many were not able to reflect on possible differences to other establishments and some of the comments made were based on hearsay. Where staff had worked at other establishments this was more likely to have been in an adult prison, and for STC and secure children's home staff, previous roles were often in a social care or education-related capacity. No staff had moved across establishment types within the secure estate for children and young people.
- The authors of the *Independent Review of Restraint* believed that significant lessons could be learned if young people who experienced high levels of restraint could be tracked through the secure estate, and reasons for any changes in the levels of restraint used on them examined. This study did not seek to track young people. Rather, this report provides a 'snapshot' of young people's experiences in their current establishment, and any comparisons to other establishments are based on young people's recollections of previous establishments they had been to.
- The *Independent Review of Restraint* highlighted the need to research the psychological impact of restraint on young people. Again, the methodological scope of this study means that it explores the views and experiences of restraint among young people and staff, rather than carrying out a psychological impact study. The complexities of carrying out a psychological impact study (in terms of the tools needed to do so and the

challenge of isolating restraint from other factors impacting on the lives of young people) are discussed further in the recommendations section of this report.

## 2.4 Definitions

### Behaviour management

When referring to 'behaviour management' we take the YJB definition of behaviour management as "ways for secure estate operators to manage and respond to the difficult behaviour of the children and young people in their care".<sup>6</sup>

### Incidents

When referring to 'incidents' throughout the report, we include such situations as when young people become angry or aggressive, damage their rooms, hurt themselves, or hurt other people, or when fights break out between young people. It is worth noting that this is the definition used by our research team rather than a formal definition of 'incident'.

## 2.5 Acknowledgements

Ipsos MORI would like to thank Laura Caplin, Daniel Shotter, Ali Hawker and their colleagues at the YJB for their help and assistance in the development of the project. We would also like to thank all the young people and staff at each of the eight establishments who participated in this study.

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<sup>6</sup> *Managing the Behaviour of Children and Young People in Custody: An Information Briefing.* (Youth Justice Board, 2007).

## 3. Behaviour management

The aim of this chapter is to briefly discuss general approaches to behaviour management across the secure estate. This provides necessary context to the findings presented throughout the rest of the report on the experiences and perceptions of staff and young people in relation to restraint, adjudication and separation in light of the *Independent Review of Restraint* recommendations.

We found three common elements to effective behaviour management across the secure estate. These are outlined below before being discussed in more detail in turn:

- the use of rewards and sanctions schemes
- building positive relationships
- conflict resolution and de-escalation.

### 3.1 The use of rewards and sanctions schemes

Across all the establishments that participated in the study, the use of rewards and sanctions schemes was acknowledged as the central approach to managing behaviour. Although the terminology and details of the schemes varied by establishment, the principle of these as a way of shaping behaviour was similar. Staff saw the schemes as central to behaviour management, predominantly because the ability to reward good behaviour made these schemes distinct from other tools available to them. It was this element of praise that was perceived to be particularly effective with young people:

*What we tend to do is to really positively reward positive good behaviour...eventually people respond to praise.*

Staff member, secure children's home

Indeed, praise was often attributed to motivating the young people. Staff said that it gave young people something to work towards by using a points-based system to provide a clear path towards an end goal. Motivation was also enhanced by a sense of 'healthy competition' evoked by the schemes:

*There's a bit of competition between the other lads to see who's doing well and who's not and who's got the most points that day.*

Staff member, secure children's home

Despite staff being very positive about the rewards and sanctions schemes, there were some concerns voiced about the sanctions element of the schemes. Firstly, several mentioned a need for caution when imposing sanctions. It was felt that young people can become demotivated if they regularly lose privileges, and sanctions no longer act as a deterrent. This view was reinforced by one or two young people:

*This is bad because the bully then thinks he's got nothing to lose so he will cause trouble.*

Young person, STC

One staff member who worked in education also highlighted that, while sanctions and the removal of privileges may be effective on the main wing or unit, they can be less effective when young people are off the wing and in education. This was because education staff could not impose loss of education as a sanction, and they felt removal of association was more effective when imposed by wing staff.

Despite the few concerns raised by staff, most young people were positive about the rewards and sanctions schemes. They too felt that they provided a tangible target for them to aim for, with the link between their behaviour and the outcome of a reward or sanction being very transparent:

*I've learnt now that it's better to behave yourself, 'cause you'll get more things.*

Young person, STC

Therefore, as a tool for behaviour management, the rewards and sanctions schemes encouraged praise and provided tangible realistic goals for young people. As such (and as will be discussed further in relation to adjudication), the rewards and sanctions schemes were seen to be a very effective tool for managing behaviour.

### **3.2 Building positive relationships**

There was common agreement among staff and young people that positive relationships between staff and young people played a significant role in ensuring the behaviour of young people was managed effectively. Positive relationships were seen to help staff to understand the needs of young people and identify triggers of negative behaviour:

*Lots of underground stuff, behind the scenes stuff if you like, to stop behaviour before it occurs.*

Staff member, YOI

However, there were clear barriers to overcome in developing positive relationships. Young people and staff both recognised that there may be an ingrained mistrust of adults and authority among young people:

*A lot of the young people don't trust adults in general, a lot of them have been let down by adults and a lot of them do not trust people in uniform and see us as punishment as opposed to offender management.*

Staff member, YOI

The development of respect in a relationship over time was one of the ways this barrier could be overcome. The importance of mutual respect was a key theme in achieving positive relationships for both staff and young people. Staff often mentioned that if young people treated them with respect then the relationship worked well, and this was something that several young people recognised too:

*If I treat with respect, they give you respect.*

Young person, secure children's home

*We say to kids when they arrive, treat us with respect and you'll get respect back.*

Staff member, secure children's home

This emphasis on respect was in keeping with the *Independent Review of Restraint*, which found that:

*[...] being treated with respect by staff would go a long way to calming a young person and helping them to feel it was worth co-operating with the regime. We met many members of staff in YOIs, STCs and SCHs [secure children's homes] who understood this and took the time and effort to develop constructive relationships with young people where they could.*

Smallridge and Williamson, 2008: 18

Indeed, most of the young people who took part in this study said that there was at least one staff member they felt that they could talk to, with a few spontaneously mentioning this as important to them. However, some young people did feel that their relationships with staff could be better and that their actions could be misread by staff, for example when they were play-fighting. Other young people felt that their relationships with staff varied and depended largely on individual personalities. Staff also felt that their relationships with young people were often dependent on the characteristics of the young people there at the time:

*You get to know the lads that you can talk to, have a joke with, trust, and you obviously know the ones that you can't, it's just an ongoing relationship between staff and lads.*

Staff member, YOI

### **3.3 Conflict resolution and de-escalation**

There was a clear consensus among staff that conflict resolution and de-escalation were critical in managing behaviour. A common approach was that restrictive intervention was always to be used as a last resort and only when all other attempts to de-escalate a situation had failed. Across all establishments staff mentioned the importance placed on trying to 'talk down' young people to prevent incidents escalating.

Many staff also referred to a cultural shift in thinking, with the focus now being on spending time speaking with young people and addressing incidents or episodes of anger with de-escalation techniques:

*We talk to the kid, and much more than we ever used to, in terms of allowing that extra couple of minutes to try and resolve it without resorting to restraint.*

Staff member, YOI

This cultural shift towards a focus on de-escalation was reflected in the training that staff spoke about, where a strong emphasis on de-escalation techniques underpinned all types of restraint-related training:

*It [control and restraint training] used to be an eight-hour day, just looking at techniques, but now there's a huge element of de-escalation that's inbuilt into the training.*

Staff member, YOI

Conflict resolution was also often felt to be part of the day-to-day culture of an establishment, linked closely to the idea of building relationships with the young people. Young people were not necessarily aware that staff were using specific behaviour management approaches such as therapeutic crisis intervention (TCI),<sup>7</sup> and other de-escalation techniques:

*TCI is our secret weapon. So the kids are always surprised that they tell us so much.*

Staff member, STC

However, young people did recognise that staff across establishment types tried to 'talk them down' when a fight occurred, before physical intervention was used. There was some acknowledgement among young people that this was a good approach, but, in keeping with the above finding that techniques such as TCI often went undetected by young people, they did not comment extensively on this. However, some young people did mention that 'talking them down' would not always be effective if an incident had escalated beyond a certain point. In line with this, staff acknowledged that there were instances in which de-escalation may not be appropriate, an example being fights which occur spontaneously and necessitate immediate physical intervention by staff. In addition, there was a feeling among a minority of staff that perhaps too much emphasis on de-escalation can mean that young people feel staff are not in control of incidents. However, on the whole, staff were positive about de-escalation and felt that it was practised as widely as possible in their establishments.

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<sup>7</sup> Therapeutic crisis intervention is a crisis prevention and intervention model used by staff to manage crises without the need for physical intervention. It includes methods to handle stressful situations and de-escalation techniques.

## 4. The use of restraint

This chapter focuses on the use of restraint and considers the findings in relation to two of the recommendations made in the *Independent Review of Restraint*.

- recommendation 55: The Government should ask the Prison Service and YJB to examine the basis for the relatively low level of use of force per child reported in YOIs [...]
- recommendation 56: The YJB should research the reasons why the same young people can receive significantly different levels of restraint in different parts of the secure estate.

### 4.1 Variations across establishment types

The *Independent Review of Restraint* posed several theories on why there are fewer incidents of restraint per young person in YOIs. Table 2 below groups these theories according to whether or not supporting evidence was found during this study. The findings relating to each theory are then discussed in more detail below. The *Independent Review of Restraint* also suggested that the use of adjudications in YOIs may relate to the lower levels of restraint. The use of adjudication and experiences of adjudication are explored in more detail in the next chapter.

**Table 2: Theories from the *Independent Review of Restraint* to explain lower levels of restraint in YOIs: findings from this study**

Supporting evidence found	No supporting evidence found
Staff numbers	Pain compliance techniques
Time out of cell	Skills in de-escalation and conflict resolution
Age and experience of young people	

### Factors found to contribute to the lower levels of restraint in YOIs

#### *Staff numbers*

The interviews highlighted that several young people in YOIs felt that staff in YOIs did not step in to deal with an incident quickly enough. They thought that staff sometimes stood around and watched incidents escalate before stepping in:

*When I was fighting, I was fighting for about five minutes, took five minutes and that. When I was fighting everyone just looks about.*

Young person, YOI

*You're getting jumped, you're getting beaten up and they're just watching, and if you get your head stamped on or they could be stabbing you and they just, they're all just watching till there's the right amount of govs.*

Young person, YOI

Staff in YOIs are required to have at least three members of staff present to carry out control and restraint techniques.<sup>8</sup> Young people and staff highlighted that this could delay staff being able to step in when young people were fighting or during other incidents. However, to some extent this also meant that incidents could be resolved before restrictive physical intervention was needed. For example, one young person spoke about an incident in which he was climbing high up on his wing, for which he was aware that extra staff were needed to restrain him to move him down. He had climbed down of his own accord by the time the correct number of staff were present.

The *Independent Review of Restraint* highlighted that "YOIs have the lowest staff-to-young offender ratio of all sectors of the estate, of approximately 3-6 officers for 30-60 young people" (Smallridge and Williamson, 2008: 24). As a result, it could take longer for staff to arrive at an incident in YOIs. Therefore, the findings of this report support the theory suggested in the *Independent Review of Restraint* that the lower number of incidents of restraint per child in YOIs may result from lower staff-to-young person ratios and the fact that staff in YOIs could sometimes miss incidents or step in at a later stage.

In addition, factors such as the size and design of a building impact further on response times. YOIs tend to be significantly larger, older buildings than STCs and secure children's homes, with the latter often being modern, purpose-built establishments. This can lead to longer response times in YOIs. Differences in the size and design of buildings can also offer an explanation for variations in response times between establishments of the same type. For example, one young person who had moved between one YOI and another commented on the different reaction times of staff he had experienced between the two establishments. He attributed the faster reaction time to the building design:

*There's like a big round, like a big football pitch in the middle and there's wings this side, one side of it and wings the other side and they just come running out from everywhere ... they come running. There's about three different places you can come on. For each wing there's three exits and [staff] will just swarm in.*

Young person, YOI

These variations are discussed further in section 4.2.

### *Time out of cell*

The *Independent Review of Restraint* also suggested that the variations in levels of restraint between YOIs and STCs/secure children's homes may "reflect the regimes in YOIs, where young people spend more time in their rooms than their counterparts in STCs and secure children's homes, hereby reducing time

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<sup>8</sup> Staff are taught how to undertake a restraint with fewer than three staff members present, but this would then count as a use of force/restrictive physical intervention rather than as control and restraint.

and opportunity for flashpoints which may come with greater association and other common activities” (Smallridge and Williamson, 2008: 29).

While very few young people who participated in this study had served sentences in an STC or secure children’s home before a YOI, those that had done so highlighted that there were fewer opportunities for incidents to occur in YOIs. These young people said that they were allowed less association time in YOIs, or that staff in YOIs wanted fewer people out of their cells at the same time:

*[They] always want you banged up so there’s less people in association and that.*

Young person, YOI

Staff that we interviewed also noted that young people in STCs and secure children’s homes are given a greater amount of time in communal settings with other young people. This may increase the likelihood of young people in STCs and secure children’s homes being involved in incidents that could lead to the use of restraint or force. Staff linked the increased likelihood of restraint being used to times when there were breaks in structured education, meaning that young people had more association time.

#### *The age and experience of young people*

The *Independent Review of Restraint* also highlighted that the characteristics of young people vary between YOIs and STCs/secure children’s homes, which may also offer an explanation for the variations in the number of restraints per young person. For example, it was suggested that “young people in YOIs are generally older, more mature and arguably may be less volatile than those in SCHs [secure children’s homes] and STCs” (Smallridge and Williamson, 2008: 29).

We found that some young people in YOIs had more experience of practices in the youth justice system than their peers in STCs and secure children’s homes. One young person thought that, to some extent, this meant he was more likely to avoid incidents that could lead to restraint. For example, he spoke about previous experiences in which he would have damaged his cell, leading to him being restrained. However, he saw no point in this anymore. This may suggest that previous behaviour management tools he had experienced were effective in the longer term.

*You realise, here I am now, so there’s no point in kicking off, do you know what I mean? Most of us start kicking the door in, smashing your pad up, but what’s the point?*

Young person, YOI

In addition, several young people in YOIs mentioned being worried about the consequences of getting into fights with younger peers. They were more cautious about fighting younger people because they believed it would lead to them receiving additional charges:

*I’m 18 now, if I hit anyone I get put on Child Protection and I can get outstanding charges.*

Young person, YOI

Therefore, the findings do suggest that the age and maturity of some young people meant that they actively wanted to avoid incidents that could lead to restraint. However, the extent to which this impacted on the likelihood of their becoming involved in an incident was less certain. As will be discussed in the section on pain compliance techniques below, a common theme throughout interviews with young people was that when something angered them, very little deterred them from acting on that anger.

## **Factors not found to contribute to the lower levels of restraint in YOIs**

### *The use of pain compliance techniques*

A small number of young people in the sample who had moved between establishment types reported feeling that restraint techniques were more extreme in YOIs compared to STCs and secure children's homes. This reflects the differences in the techniques available to staff in the different establishment types, as staff in YOIs are able to use pain compliance techniques as part of control and restraint, unlike colleagues in STCs and secure children's homes. However, experiencing pain as part of restraint was not necessarily unique to young people in YOIs. Indeed, some young people in STCs and secure children's homes spoke about receiving carpet burns as an unintended result of the techniques used in these establishments.

The *Independent Review of Restraint* suggested that young people in YOIs may be deterred by the use of pain compliance techniques and may therefore seek to avoid incidents that lead to restraint, which would impact on the levels of restraint recorded.

However, a strong theme across interviews with young people was that restraint in any form did very little to deter them from incidents, and in particular from being involved in fights:

*If a fight's going to happen it happens...It's just jail, you've got to fight.*

Young person, YOI

The above quote highlights a culture among young people in which they place the consequences of negative behaviour as secondary to other priorities. For example, when faced with the choice between fighting or trying not to, many young people felt that they had to fight for reasons such as 'saving face'.

Young people across establishment types spoke about 'seeing red' once they were involved in an incident, at which point they were unable to think about the consequences of their actions. Therefore, most young people acknowledged that while restraint could be unpleasant and sometimes painful, this intervention by staff was necessary in instances of anger or when fights broke out:

*Well, I do mind being restrained but I don't look at it like, oh, I don't want to be restrained. When I get angry they're going to have to restrain me.*

Young person, YOI

Therefore, for the young people interviewed in this study, pain compliance techniques did not appear to significantly alter the likelihood of them becoming involved in incidents leading to restraint.

However, the young people included in this study had been selected because they had experienced restraint, some on multiple occasions. Therefore, there

may be an element of bravado at play, with these young people not wishing to express the extent that restraint affected them. Future research could consider the implications of the use of pain compliance techniques for young people who have been restrained less frequently or who have not been restrained.

We also found that young people who had experienced pain compliance techniques became angrier in the short term. There was some frustration expressed by these young people, as they felt that using pain compliance techniques acted as a negative response to their behaviour and only sought to antagonise them further:

*He was bending my legs up so I got mad.*

Young person, YOI

*They're bending my arms back and I'm shouting at them because they're hurting me. But ended just doing it more and it's like what do you want me to do. You're hurting me I can't not shout at you.*

Young person, YOI

Therefore, in the short term, pain compliance techniques often led to greater feelings of anger towards staff and resentment about being restrained.

#### *Skills in de-escalation and conflict resolution*

As was discussed in chapter three, developing strong relationships with young people and conflict resolution were common approaches across establishment types. However, a key finding of this report is that young people and staff thought that relationships were, on the whole, closer in STCs and secure children's homes than in YOIs, facilitated by the ratio of staff to young people in STCs and secure children's homes:

*It's definitely the relationship between staff really, the ratio plays a big part, the two to one, which YOIs don't have that luxury.*

Staff member, secure children's home

This finding reflects the fact that STCs and secure children's homes are designed to provide support specifically tailored to the needs of the youngest and most vulnerable young people in the custodial system. In one STC it was explained that the ethos had been to recruit a mix of ages so that there would be staff in their twenties who would have a connection with the young people, and older staff in their forties to offer a more parental figure. The small number of young people who had been to different establishment types also often spoke of the differences across sectors, with staff being deemed 'nicer' in STCs and secure children's homes than in YOIs. One young person currently in a YOI who had previously been in a secure children's home said of staff in the secure children's home:

*They were nicer. They're not so strict.*

Young person, YOI

Staff in STCs and secure children's homes spoke more about being able to work with young people as part of a group, developing relationships that in turn aided their ability to de-escalate situations:

*De-escalation, we do that as part of a day-to-day living. And a lot of the times something will be brewing and because we've worked with these kids for a while, because we've worked as a team for a while you pick up a sense something's not quite right.*

Staff member, secure children's home

The *Independent Review of Restraint* suggested that one possible explanation for the lower number of incidents of restraint per child in YOIs could be that staff in YOIs are more "adept at intervening with de-escalation and conflict resolution techniques without needing to recourse to restraint" (Smallridge and Williamson, 2008: 29). However, as outlined above, while there was certainly a focus on de-escalation in YOIs, the closer relationships in STCs and secure children's homes were felt to facilitate wider dialogue as part of conflict resolution. Young people and staff in YOIs described de-escalation and conflict resolution as something that happened at the very last minute before physical intervention was needed. There was general agreement that staff in STCs and secure children's homes were able to step in sooner to de-escalate situations, while staff in YOIs did not appear to have the same time or opportunity to focus on building relationships, conflict resolution and de-escalation.

### **Case study 1: Young person's experience of being held in a secure children's home and then a YOI**

Peter is currently serving an 18-month sentence in a YOI. He has previously served a custodial sentence in a secure children's home and was able to clearly identify how his time at one establishment differed from the other. He spoke of being out of his room for most of the day in the secure children's home, with more things to do, and said that he found the staff there friendlier and not so 'strict' or 'aggressive' as at the YOI. While he experienced restraint at the secure children's home, he felt that generally he did not become as angry there compared to now. He felt that the environment in the YOI made him feel angrier and increased his involvement in fights, which had resulted in him being restrained multiple times.

This was not something Peter felt was just specific to him. He considered the environment to be generally different in the YOI, with fights more commonplace than at the secure children's home. He also referred to the difference in staff responses to fights and incidents of young people getting angry. In the secure children's home, staff were seen to be less likely to restrain young people during a fight – they would just try to come between the young people to break it up. Peter remembered that the restraint techniques used at the secure children's home were not as aggressive as those used in the YOI (which is reflective of the different approaches used as standard by these different types of establishment) and felt that not as much force was used in the secure children's home compared to the YOI. He attributed the difference in approach to the generally lower age of the young people held in the secure children's home.

## 4.2 Variations within establishment types

In addition to drawing attention to variations between establishment types, the *Independent Review of Restraint* highlighted that the same young person could have different experiences of restraint across establishments of the same type. The *Independent Review of Restraint* noted that such variable experiences were consistent with patterns in the RPI data provided by the YJB. We found two main reasons why levels of restraint could vary across the same sector: changing population characteristics and variations in approaches to the use of restraint techniques.

### Changing population characteristics

Staff thought that the characteristics of the young people at the establishment impacted on the levels of restraint used. They said that if certain types of young people were present in a population, this caused other young people to become more likely to be involved in incidents that could lead to restraint, therefore leading to an increase in the number of restraints:

*It's hard to say because sometimes we can have an awful lot because we have an unsettled group of boys, a bad mix. When we have new admissions coming in, that often unsettles groups because lads fight for top dog. So you can go through occasions whereby there's much more than normal.*

Staff member, secure children's home

Staff in YOIs also referred to certain times when the population of the YOI included more young people involved in gang activities, which increased the number of incidents and the potential for restraint. In these instances, what was happening in the community between rival gangs was reflected within the establishment. Such variations in the characteristics of the population help to explain the variations in the use of restraint between establishments of the same type.

### Staff approaches to the use of restraint techniques

A few young people thought that certain staff members were more willing to restrain them and that this was sometimes a way of staff addressing a grudge against them. This was mentioned more frequently by young people in YOIs.

*Some want you to just go over the line so they can do it.*

Young person, YOI

*You have like a grudge, like you don't get on with a certain gov and they might have a grudge against you or something, they'll deliberately get involved in a restraining and try and hurt you.*

Young person, YOI

In addition, young people also felt that while some staff were more willing to become involved in restraint, others were more wary:

*It all depends on the staff, some staff are scared.*

Young person, STC

These comments suggest that, where there are higher numbers of staff who might have grudges against certain young people or are more comfortable using restraint techniques, this could result in higher levels of restraint in these establishments.

Staff also felt that some of their peers were more willing than others to use restraint for another set of reasons. These were:

- variations in staff negotiation skills and their levels of confidence in using them:

*Some people would think, look, you have to go behind your door, and they negotiate for a little bit but their negotiation skills aren't that good so they would have them controlled and put behind their door.*

Staff member, YOI

- prior experiences, such as being harmed by young people, making staff members quicker to physically restrain in the future
- personality variations
- physical capability in carrying out restraint techniques:

*I'll actually make room for one of my other colleagues...and if they can't do it I'll support them in getting it right, even knowing full well that I know how to do it but physically I can't do it.*

Staff member, secure children's home

### Case study 2: Young person's experience of being held in YOI (A) after being held in YOI (B)

John is currently serving a two-year sentence at YOI A and has previously served a custodial sentence at YOI B. In explaining the differences between the two, he said that he found the current environment in YOI A to be more relaxed, with better relations between staff and young people.

John described how in YOI A, if a young person gets angry and it looks like a fight might happen, the young person is asked to go back to their room; if the young person refuses, the young person is "twisted up". John has experienced this directly. However, John said that when he got angry at YOI B, he was restrained straightaway, and officers took him back to his room in a "head lock and stuff with your arms all bent up". This experience was very different to the approach in YOI A, where officers instead asked him to co-operate with them. They still continued to use force if necessary, but asked whether young people were willing to co-operate before becoming more physical. John also found that in YOI A, the attitude was to move forward after the restraint, while at YOI B, the officers were more likely to hold a grudge or frequently remind the young person of the incident.

## 5. Separation and adjudication

This chapter focuses on the use of separation and adjudication, and considers the findings in relation to two of the recommendations of the *Independent Review of Restraint*:

- recommendation 55: The Government should ask the Prison Service and YJB to examine the basis for the relatively low use of force per child reported in YOIs. This should include an assessment of the impact of the Prison Service adjudication system on managing young people without the need for force
- recommendation 57: The Government should explore the relationship between single separation and restraint to see how use of single separation by establishments influences their need to use restraint.

### 5.1 The use and effectiveness of adjudication

An adjudication is a quasi-judicial process used in response to a particular incident. Adjudications are only used in YOIs. Examples of behaviour that may result in an adjudication include fights where restraint may have been used, as well as incidents of disorder or rudeness to staff.

The *Independent Review of Restraint* suggested that the use of adjudications in YOIs may act as an additional behaviour management tool and play a role in minimising the need for restraint. That is, the adjudication system could act as a deterrent, discouraging young people from becoming involved in punishable incidents, including those involving restraint. However, we found that staff and young people's opinions about the effectiveness of adjudication in managing behaviour were mixed. One or two young people felt that the removal of privileges, such as canteen allowances, had a deterrent effect, and some staff also felt that adjudications could act as a deterrent through the removal of association time:

*In general, though, I think they are useful because one of the awards that you can give is loss of association and if a kid's being disruptive, continually threatening or being a problem and you take them out of association then it's actually resolved the problem.*

Staff member, YOI

However, a key finding of this report is that the losses received as a result of an adjudication were often not considered significant by young people, minimising the effectiveness of adjudications for these young people:

*Really when you go to adjudication they give you losses of association and canteen. But loss of association don't bother me... Only thing that probably would bother me if I go to the block.*

Young person, YOI

As with other elements of the study, slight caution must be exercised here, given that there may have been an element of bravado at play when young people spoke about their experiences of behaviour management. Nonetheless, several members of staff and young people also suggested that there is a risk that, if young people constantly receive sanctions imposed at adjudication, they can feel like they have nothing to lose and the possibility of losing privileges has little impact on them. Furthermore, the combined use of both adjudications and rewards and sanctions schemes meant that there was some confusion among young people. Some sanctions that could be imposed as a result of an adjudication (such as removal of television) could also occur as a result of dropping down a reward level due to bad behaviour, making it unclear what differences the adjudication process could bring. Even where differences were clear, the findings revealed that the rewards and sanctions schemes were seen to be more effective in managing behaviour, as outlined in chapter three.

Young people also thought that whether adjudication acts as a long-term deterrent largely depends on what type of sentence a young person is serving. For example, young people on Detention and Training Orders (DTOs) commented that adjudications could not alter their sentence length, whereas their peers on longer term sentences could have additional days added to their sentence as a result of an adjudication. When discussing the possible outcomes of an adjudication and the impact on them, young people felt that the loss of early release would be the greatest deterrent to them getting involved in incidents. The limitations of the adjudication process in this respect meant that overall adjudication had less of a deterrent effect for young people on DTOs:

*But if you're on DTO they're more likely to just dismiss it because a Section 91 goes straight to the outside judge. They come in and give you extra days. They're not going to want to spend all this money when you've already got four months to do to give you a four months, do two running concurrent and it will cost them thousands of pounds to get you out to court.*

Young person, YOI

The effectiveness of the adjudication process was also thought to be limited by how consistently it was used. While the purpose and procedures of adjudications were generally seen to be relatively uniform, it was thought that the actual outcomes were more inconsistent and depended on the member of staff leading the adjudication. Staff expressed the need for outcomes to be more consistent if adjudications are to be effective in minimising negative behaviour:

*There should be a rule book for it, so it's more 'black and white'.*

Staff member, YOI

This was reinforced by several young people, who felt that it was easy to get certain staff to be lenient at an adjudication:

*The adjudication process is also, I think, inconsistent because it's managed by all different governors and different governors give different awards, and you've got some governors who always give really lenient awards and some governors who give fuller awards.*

Young person, YOI

In addition, while some members of staff thought that an adjudication provided a useful opportunity to discuss behaviour, it was only really seen to be effective in this sense if it took place soon after the incident.

## 5.2 The use and effectiveness of separation

The use of separation, or the removal of a young person from association with his or her peers, varied across establishments. In STCs and secure children's homes the term 'separation' was used to refer to the removal of a young person from the group (usually to their room) and the removal of association for a limited amount of time. In line with the *Independent Review of Restraint*, we found that separation in these establishments could be used as a way of giving young people 'time out' and allowing them time to calm down. In contrast to this, in YOIs the rules allow separation to be used for a greater variety of reasons and lengths of time. For example, a young person can be separated for up to 72 hours in order to maintain 'good order or discipline', after which a review meeting must be undertaken. It can also be used where the young person has been found guilty at an adjudication of offences against discipline. In these cases the maximum duration of separation is 21 days. However, for any period of separation longer than 24 hours the YOI must involve the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) in the decision.

The *Independent Review of Restraint* asked the YJB to explore the relationship between separation and restraint, and, more specifically, whether the use of separation influences the need to use restraint. We found that short-term separation was often seen to be preventative in order to stop an incident taking place by giving young people time to calm down. For example, staff in STCs and secure children's homes highlighted that often young people may be taken away from the group to an alternative space, such as a quiet area or quiet room for a short period of time to do this. It was felt that this time to calm down and reflect made separation an effective day-to-day tool:

*It's actually giving the kids five minutes to get their heads together and calm down. Because if you take the, like, the focus away or the things that are causing them grief away then hopefully it calms the situation down.*

Staff member, STC

In STCs and secure children's homes, separation was also used following an incident that had involved restraint, as outlined in the case study below. Staff felt that separation in this situation could be a deterrent for negative behaviour, because young people did not like to lose free time or other privileges as a result of separation:

*Boys don't want to be singly separated, lads of that age, by and large, want to be with their peer group, whether it's watching a film, talking, playing football, whatever it is. So as a deterrent against poor behaviour it works well.*

Staff member, secure children's home

However, staff in both secure children's homes and STCs also reported that they aimed to keep separation where the young person is removed to their room to a minimum as far as possible. Overall it was felt that alienating young people was not effective, and the ethos was for young people to continue to be

allowed to associate with their peers rather than sending them to their room, wherever possible. This ethos was not so evident in YOIs. As a result of this ethos in secure children's homes and STCs, the extent to which any deterrent effect of separation would impact on restraint levels in these environments is questionable. Nonetheless, as the case study below highlights, longer term separation did mean that the most volatile young people could be removed from the group setting, minimising the possibility of incidents taking place.

### Case study 3: Separation in a secure children's home

Linda is a member of the care staff at a secure children's home, having worked there since the unit opened. When speaking about separation, Linda made the distinction between the various types of separation used at the unit. Generally, separation involved a young person being "managed away from the group", which Linda saw as distinct from sending/taking the young person to their room. Sometimes a young person would actually choose to be managed away from the group in a quiet area or quiet room, but the room would not be locked.

Linda considered confining a young person to their room to be the most extreme way of separating a young person from the group, and highlighted that this would only be used in cases where there were high levels of violence or aggression:

*[To] singly separate a young person – that means they would be down in their bedroom and away from the group, the bedroom door would be locked up so that they couldn't actually exit the room...that is the extreme form that would follow a restraint.*

Linda outlined that when a young person is separated, they are constantly monitored and the emphasis is on getting them out of single separation as soon as possible, so that they can be given elected time out rather than enforced separation as soon as the level of aggression becomes more manageable.

As well as the possible length of separation being different in YOIs compared to secure children's homes and STCs, the type of separation can also vary. In YOIs, young people may be separated to their rooms or to designated segregation units, the latter usually being used as a punishment or a way of addressing particularly extreme behaviour:

*It's used occasionally as a punishment when you need to move somebody away from a unit, either to give the other boys and staff a bit of respite because this boy's behaviour is so disruptive.*

Staff member, YOI

It should be noted that the YJB's code of practice *Managing the Behaviour of Children and Young People in the Secure Estate* (YJB, 2006) outlines the principles around the use of a young person's removal from their normal location and states that any removal should not be used as a punishment.

Separation to a designated unit is solely found in YOIs, with young people in YOIs referring to this as going to 'the block'. However it is worth highlighting that we did find variations across YOIs, both in the existence of segregation facilities and the objective or culture of using this approach:

*No, they don't really do that here. Only extreme things like if you hit a gov. In [name of YOI] they remove you from the wing near enough every time. You'd have ten days down the block.*

Young person, YOI

A small number of the young people we interviewed in YOIs regarded the experience of longer term separation as positive, as it allowed them space and time to themselves. However, the experience of longer term separation and the perceptions held of 'the block' were a deterrent to difficult behaviour for some young people. This was either because it would mean that they would be away from their room and would lose privileges or, as one young person mentioned, because of the general condition of the segregation facilities. This point is particularly evident in the case study below. For other young people separation proved more difficult. Indeed, for some it actually negatively impacted on their behaviour rather than deterred them, as they felt bored or frustrated while separated, which led to the need to release energy, which consequently led to negative behaviour:

*All my energy's stored up till the next morning till when I go into the yard. And when I go out into the yard I take out all my energy and then I get into more trouble for playing around in the yard.*

Young person, YOI

#### Case study 4: Segregation units in YOIs

Jack is currently serving a three-month sentence in a YOI. He has served two previous sentences in the same YOI. He recalled his experience of going to the segregation unit ('block') during a previous sentence at the establishment. He was put into segregation for eight days following an incident in which he climbed on a balcony. Jack reported that he felt the conditions on the segregation unit were poor. He also said that during his experience of separation to the segregation unit he would only be out for half an hour's exercise. While he felt that the time he spent there went quickly, spending time in isolation negatively impacted on his behaviour when he returned to the wing.

While this was Jack's only experience of being placed on the segregation unit for separation purposes, he also reported visiting the unit up to 13 times due to adjudications taking place there.

Jack reported that on his current sentence he discovered that the segregation unit had been moved and was now on the wing. He felt that this would be a better environment.

## 6. Experiences of restraint

This chapter focuses on the experience of restraint and considers the findings in relation to recommendation 58 of the *Independent Review of Restraint*.

- recommendation 58: The YJB should research the psychological impact that restraint has on both young people and staff.

The *Independent Review of Restraint* found that the experience of being restrained can be upsetting and emotionally traumatic for both young people and staff. The review argued that, if we understood more about these feelings, then action to reduce the use of restraint could be better directed. Although psychological impact cannot be explored fully in this report, levels of acceptance and experiences of restraint for young people and staff are explored in more detail below.

### 6.1 Levels of acceptance

As suggested earlier in this report, although restraint was often seen by young people as an unpleasant experience, overall young people accepted the use of restraint as a necessary means to manage behaviour, seeing it as the 'right' of staff to ensure that safety is maintained:

*If you're having a fight and, say if you went to attack a gov then they've got a right to restrain you. The only way I think they should restrain people is if [a young person is] trying to attack them or trying to hurt yourself or something.*

Young person, YOI

However, the level of acceptance varied according to whether young people felt that restraint was being used in a fair and appropriate manner. Young people were quick to mention that the use of restraint techniques should be consistent and performed as respectfully as possible:

*You have to get restrained, but the reason I didn't like it [was] because the other boy that was fighting me, he didn't get restrained. Don't know why. We were both fighting, so we both get restrained.*

Young person, YOI

Staff echoed the sentiments of young people on this issue. They too spoke of restrictive intervention as being an unpleasant experience for staff, but one that at times was the only way to safeguard the young person. To support this, staff highlighted the clear guidelines in place to inform staff when the use of restraint would be appropriate:

*There is a place for C&R [control and restraint]. There will always be times for a boy's own safety... There may be times when one individual has to be saved from attack by another.*

Staff member, YOI

*We have clear guidelines for criteria for physical intervention, and they would be an assault, risk of harm to another young person, risk of harm to a member of staff, it could be self-harm, a serious breach of order or criminal damage.*

Staff member, secure children's home

## 6.2 Prior experiences

Despite an overall acceptance of restraint, we found varying consequences of the use of restraint techniques, depending on each young person's prior experiences. Many young people in custody have previously experienced abuse and/or neglect, as was highlighted in the 2008 YJB publication *A Literature Review into Children Abused and/or Neglected Prior Custody* (Day, Hibbet and Cadman, 2008). This review outlined that "anywhere between 33% and 92% of children in custody had experienced some form of maltreatment" (Day, Hibbet and Cadman, 2008: 6). Staff members that we interviewed highlighted that such experiences need to be taken into account when young people are being restrained, to ensure the suitability of using such techniques. If young people have experienced abuse, this can affect how they react to restraint and how staff choose to use restraint:

*If we're dealing with a young person who's been abused, it's obviously, psychologically, it's going to affect them massively. You just have to be careful, you have to sometimes judge...Is that just because they've been restrained or is it because they're having some flashbacks to something that's happened to them in the past?*

Staff member, STC

Therefore, the findings suggest that the prior experiences of young people can impact on their experiences of restraint. Staff also highlighted that young people can interpret physical intervention in different ways, which determines the impact it has on them. For example, where young people don't understand why they are being restrained they may become more traumatised, as the example in the quote below highlights:

*I think sometimes people that might be psychologically shocked when they think something else is going to happen to them, like we had an Afghan boy who we had to restrain, and because I speak Farsi they asked me to translate things he was saying. He was absolutely terrified but he would have hurt anybody if he could have got one of his arms free or bitten them or anything, but I think he thought he might be raped or something.*

Staff member, YOI

In contrast to this, another member of staff highlighted that some young people might potentially seek to be restrained as a way of experiencing human contact:

*Some young people look for it, and get sort of enjoyment from it, because it is the only physical contact that they've ever had in their lives. It's like how I will give my little girl a cuddle.*

Staff member, STC

The impact of restraint on young people was also shown to differ according to the number of restraints a young person had experienced. During our interviews with young people, there were instances where those who had been restrained less frequently seemed more affected by being restrained. In keeping with this, for some young people who had been regularly restrained, this had become routine and the impact diluted. For instance, in one establishment there was a marked difference between the attitude of a young person who had been restrained multiple times and the attitude of another who was new in custody and had been restrained once, with the latter more upset by the experience. Another young person, while claiming that they were now not affected by restraint, recalled their shock at their first experience:

*The first time it happened...I never really knew about prison so it came as a bit of a shock when they started to twist me up.*

Young person, YOI

### 6.3 Post-restraint approaches

The staff we interviewed reinforced the importance of building relationships with young people in minimising the impact of restraint. The approach adopted to maintain and rebuild the relationship after a restraint had taken place was also seen to be central to minimising the impact:

*I would actually say that if the incident happened and there was no post-incident monitoring and discussion, then obviously the kids will actually feel pretty het up, there may be psychology aspects which they weren't happy with or it might cause them discomfort and feelings of unhappiness.*

Staff member, YOI

The post-restraint debrief acted as an opportunity to talk through with the young person what issues caused the incident and led to the restraint. Indeed, interviews and debriefs were mentioned in several establishments as being important, particularly as they ensured transparency in the restraint process and therefore protected both young people and staff. In addition, staff debriefs and write-ups were seen as an important support mechanism by which staff themselves could come to terms with an incident. In STCs and secure children's homes, such tools were seen to be important in addressing issues and improving relationships following restraint, as they could enhance staff members' understanding of an individual young person's 'trigger points'. However, for staff in YOIs the focus on debriefs was somewhat more process-driven. As discussed previously, the staff-to-young person ratio in YOIs is lower, and one member of staff indicated that this can also limit the time staff in YOIs have to conduct debriefs:

*It should be as soon as afterwards, but the trouble is that there's never enough staff to be able to have a debrief, you're supposed to have a debrief and check is everyone OK, how could that have been prevented and things, or perhaps that went really well, and there isn't time for debriefs.*

Staff member, YOI

## Restorative approaches

Restorative approaches focus on repairing the harm done to a relationship as a result of an incident. This often involves discussions between young people, or young people and staff, about the effects of an incident and ways forward. We found that these approaches tended to form part of an ongoing dialogue with the young person. They were also seen to have a preventative purpose, based on the supposition that working through an incident prevented similar incidents occurring in the future.

Restorative approaches were mentioned by staff and young people in all establishment types. In some establishments these approaches seemed embedded, whereas in others they were seen as something gradually being introduced. Young people did not appear to have any strong feelings as to whether restorative approaches were useful. However, in the main, staff were in favour of restorative approaches, both in their use between young people and between a young person and staff member. Some staff members felt that being able to use restorative approaches would change attitudes to dealing with incidents and have a positive impact on their relationships with young people:

*I think if there was more trust in staff, if staff had more power to just get two people together and to try and sort things out everything wouldn't be distant ... you would actually be a member of staff yourself seeing things through to the end and making a difference instead of just punishing I think.*

Staff member, YOI

While acknowledging the benefits of restorative approaches, staff members did also highlight some issues. In some instances, staff felt that they should receive training to administer them. In addition, one staff member at a secure children's home said that although restorative approaches could be positive, they were not always appropriate:

*Between the adult and the young person I think they can be really meaningful meetings, and I think between staff they can be really meaningful meetings...my issue is that that's not used appropriately really, that it can be used to rubber stamp something and say everything's fine after restraint when that's not necessarily the case.*

Staff member, secure children's home

## Works cited

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**Stock code: D130**