

Throughcare: Cultural and religious needs

<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research with young men in YOI's found that the majority of black young men had experienced racism whilst in custody.¹ • An environment where racism was allowed was described by one young person who said that prison posters were defaced with racist language¹. • The young people interviewed had a poor understanding of official complaints procedures and lacked faith in the system.¹ • Cultural awareness in individual YOI's has been criticised in inspection reports. 	<p>Young peoples rights for their religious and cultural rights to be met and respected.</p> <p>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</p> <p><i>'States parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic and recreational activity.'</i>²</p> <p><i>'States parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.'</i>³</p> <p>UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty</p> <p><i>'Juveniles deprived of their liberty shall not for any reason related to their status be denied the civil, economic, political, social or cultural rights to which they are entitled under national or international law'</i>⁴</p> <p><i>'Every Juvenile should be allowed to satisfy the needs of his or her religious and spiritual life...'</i>⁵</p>
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¹ Wilson (2003)

² UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (1989). *Article 31.*

³ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (1989). *Article 14.*

⁴ UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, 1990. II.13

⁵ UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, 1990. G.48

Feltham YOI Remand Liason Service

The Feltham YOI remand liaison service works with all young people under 18 years old remanded to Feltham YOI. It aims to maximise the opportunities for getting release for young people on bail, by linking young people with their YOTs, families, carers, and key professionals. If this is not achieved, a remand planning meeting involving YOT, family, personal support officer and staff offering training and education is arranged to support the young person during remand and to reduce the harmful effects of custody.

Young asylum seekers

The project has found that increasing numbers of young asylum seekers and some illegal immigrants are remanded to Feltham, often for offences for which others would receive bail. Many courts remand young people because they do not have confidence that the young person has community ties despite a permanent address. Others do not appear to have a permanent address and often live chaotic and unsettled lives. As a result of this, it can often be very difficult for staff in the project to secure bail places, offer the court realistic bail support programmes, or secure YOT involvement. Where this is the case, these young people may be discriminated against in that they do not get the appropriate community support for their application for bail. These young people are also particularly vulnerable and isolated due to language difficulties and being cut off from their own communities.

Key tools for working with young asylum seekers:

- **More effective and inclusive use of interpreters and translating service**
Project documents have been translated into a number of key languages, ensuring that the young person has access to knowledge about the provision of the remand liaison service (RLS). The young person has the option to read documents in their own language and then respond either in English or write their replies in their own language, which can be faxed for interpretation. The young people are better informed so they can decide whether they need an interpreter.
- **Telephone translation service**
A telephone “Language Line” interpretation service is available and can be accessed by staff rather than having to bring an interpreter into the prison. The prison pays for this service.
- **Policy and guidance**
A policy document and guidance has been issued to all project staff outlining the key issues that they need to consider when interviewing foreign nationals (e.g. type of refugee status, where they entered the UK, where they have been staying, agencies that they are in contact with). This information helps staff to locate other agencies already involved with the young person.
- **Locating home YOT**
If there is no home address, in the case of an accommodated child, the team will contact the local authority responsible, or contact the placing asylum team if they have one. If this fails, it is the responsibility of the YOT in the area where the offence was committed to hold the case.
- **Develop other support links for the young person**
Feltham YOI has a “Friends of Feltham” support programme and a visitors

scheme. Feltham also runs specific support groups for different groups of foreign nationals.

- **International phone calls**

If the young person has no family or visitors, the prison pays for them to make one phone call home (abroad) every month.

Outcomes

- Young people are able to access more information about the remand liaison service;
- Young people are able to contact their own families;

How is the work an example of rights based and participatory practice?

- Young people have their individual cultural needs met;
- Young people are better informed;
- Policies and practices are in place to promote anti-discriminatory practice.