



Joint Committee on Human Rights

Committee Office · House of Commons · London · SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 2797 Email JCHR@parliament.uk Website www.parliament.uk



From Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP, Chair

Edward Argar MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London, SW1H 9AJ

2 May 2019

Dear Edward,

Youth Detention: Solitary Confinement and Restraint

On 18 April, the Joint Committee on Human Rights published its report on the use of separation and restraint on children in detention. Our report considered the use of pain-inducing techniques, and we recommended that they should be prohibited in Youth Offenders' Institutions (YOIs), whilst recognising the right of prison officers to act in self-defence. We have since been asked whether this recommendation is confined to YOIs alone.

As we noted in our report, there are fewer grounds for the use of restraint in Secure Training Facilities (STCs). Nonetheless, when restraint is permitted in STCs, pain-inducing techniques can be used, and in our report in 2008 we called for these methods to be prohibited in STCs. We are aware of ongoing concerns about these practices in STCs, for example as expressed in recent reports about Medway STC, and we are also aware of similar concerns relating to children in transit to and from institutions. We note that the review by Charlie Taylor is considering the use of pain-inducing techniques across all of these settings. The evidence that we received about pain-inducing techniques raises the same concerns about children detained in any of these settings. We want to make it clear that our support for the prohibition of pain-inducing restraints extends to all parts of the Youth Custody Estate, whilst recognising the right of staff to act in self-defence.

We are grateful for your contribution to the inquiry, and we look forward to receiving your response to the report in due course, as well as the conclusions of the review by Charlie Taylor.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP
Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights