



MEDIA RELEASE

29 November 2023

*Tim Bullard, Secretary
Department for Education, Children and Young People*

Improving Practices at Ashley Youth Detention Centre

There is no greater priority than the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and our staff, including in our Youth Justice system.

Ensuring Ashley Youth Detention Centre is well staffed is absolutely key to providing the services, supports and culture that young people and staff need to be safe and well.

At times, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people and staff, there may be periods of restricting the movement of young people around the Centre (known as restrictive practice).

Under restrictive practice young people continue to access education, leisure activities and outdoor common areas on a rotational basis, however, are required to remain in their Units, and on some occasions their rooms, for periods during the day.

In October 2022, the Department for Education, Children and Young People became aware that the restrictive practice constituted isolation under the *Youth Justice Act 1997*. Therefore when young people remain in their room under restrictive practice the Department needs to record this and check on them every 15 minutes.

Under previous arrangements, children and young people were monitored by staff every 20 minutes during a period of being restricted to their rooms.

In October this year, I became aware that the required recording arrangements and monitoring had not been implemented as expected and requested that this occur. These arrangements have now been put in place.

I have requested advice on why there was a delay in putting the required arrangements in place in a timely manner, and on any further actions necessary to ensure this does not occur again.

Information on whether restrictive practice will be in use at the Centre is provided in a daily Situation Report to key stakeholders including the Custodial Inspector and the

Commissioner for Children and Young People, and the Department will continue to work the Custodial Inspector and the Commissioner to determine processes for providing further information.

I would like to acknowledge the staff at Ashley Youth Detention Centre who are working hard to ensure that safety and young people's access to key programs are prioritised.