



Ministry  
of Justice

**Victoria Atkins MP**  
Minister of State for Justice and  
Minister for Afghan resettlement

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Wakefield  
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23 November 2021

Dear Chair,

**HMP WAKEFIELD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 MAY 2020 – 30 APRIL 2021**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 April 2021. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you were short of Board members during the reporting year. I was saddened to hear there were fourteen deaths in custody. My officials always take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I note the Board's request that the availability of the '0800 applications line' at HMP Wakefield should be time limited to prevent individual prisoners making frequent calls. My team have forwarded your concerns to the IMB Secretariat who will respond to you directly.

I acknowledge the Board's repeated concerns regarding the assessment and transfer to hospital of prisoners with serious mental health and personality disorders. I wish to assure you that Ministers take your concerns very seriously. Health and justice partners are committed to providing a standard of health care in prisons equivalent to that available in the community. The NHS England/NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) Access Assessment Guidelines (2019) details the process for assessment and admission for individuals referred to and deemed appropriate for admission to Secure Mental Health Services. This includes High Secure, Medium Secure and Low Secure services. As outlined in my predecessor's letter to the Board of 29 March 2021, a White Paper on Reforming the Mental Health Act was published earlier in the year. The Government has committed to introduce a new statutory time limit of 28 days for transfers to mental health hospitals from custody, and this will be commenced once revised NHSE/I guidance has been fully embedded in practice. In addition, a new independent role will oversee the transfer process to help reduce unnecessary delays.

I am pleased to inform you that the West Yorkshire NHS-led Provider Collaborative for adult low and medium secure services went live from 1 October 2021. The Collaborative is being led by South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and as the Lead Provider they remain accountable to NHS England and NHS Improvement for the commissioning of high quality specialised services. The Provider Collaborative comprises of a group of providers of specialised mental health, learning disability and

autism services who have agreed to work together to improve the care pathway by taking responsibility for the budget and care pathway for the West Yorkshire adult low and medium secure population.

I appreciate the Board's concerns regarding prisoners serving indeterminate sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). Covid-19 continues to present a unique set of challenges that we must address to maintain services in custody and the community. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) remains committed to supporting prisoners serving the IPP sentence in their progression and efforts to reduce their risk to the point where the Parole Board determines that they may be safely released. This commitment is delivered by means of a bespoke and regularly refreshed IPP action plan, which includes such initiatives as case reviews of those who are struggling to progress, delivered by Psychology Services to help identify the most appropriate pathway for each individual. It also includes a work stream that oversees the establishment and delivery of specialist progression regimes, which give prisoners a chance to develop and test their ability to manage their risks and lives in an environment of increasing freedoms and responsibilities. There are a broad range of work streams in the plan, aimed at both the progression towards a safe release, and towards the sustainability of that release, following a positive parole outcome.

The latest published figures show the unreleased IPP population standing at 1,661 at the end of September 2021, a reduction from 1,895 at the end of September 2020. This is good progress considering that the population of unreleased prisoners serving IPP sentences was, at its highest in 2012, over 6,000. It is important to note that as the number of IPP prisoners who have never been released continues to decrease, the proportion of those that remain in prison who committed more serious offences and whose cases are complex grows. As the Board is aware, many of these prisoners are still assessed to pose a high risk of committing further violent or sexual offences and have a complex set of risks and needs, and these must be addressed before the Parole Board can consider release. This is not a simple task and HMPPS continues to work with these individuals to offer them opportunities to reduce their identified risks.

Although it has been another challenging year, I am pleased that once again the Board considers HMP Wakefield to be a calm environment despite its challenging prisoner mix and changing population profile. I was pleased to read that the Board continues to commend the Assessment and Intervention Centre in respect of the breadth and depth of its interventions programme. It was encouraging to receive the Board's comments acknowledging the positive steps that have been taken at HMP Wakefield to progress prisoners into the normal population and to hear about the positive outcomes from the prisoner forums.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HMPPS comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Justice Secretary and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Wakefield.

Yours ever,



**VICTORIA ATKINS MP**

## **HMP WAKEFIELD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MAY 2020 – 30 APRIL 2021**

### **HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report**

#### **Pathways to Progression**

HMP Wakefield operates two specific services within the Pathways to Progression umbrella. The Mulberry unit is a specialist service for prisoners with Autistic Spectrum Disorder traits who struggle to progress or maintain their position on normal location; a multi-disciplinary team works with prisoners on an individual basis to enable them to progress back to mainstream prison or other specialist services. This service links to the Pathways to Progression Central team, which in turn reports to the clinical and operational leads for Pathways to Progression. The Close Supervision Centre (CSC) at HMP Wakefield holds some of the most violent and disruptive prisoners in custody and provides an assessment function for those prisoners entering CSC. The unit links to the central CSC Management team, which in turn reports to the clinical and operational leads for Pathways to Progression.

HMP Wakefield also holds a number of complex prisoners both on normal location and in segregated conditions. These prisoners may have been remitted from hospital to HMP Wakefield or have been allocated from other prisons. All prisons within LTHSE have a role in accepting prisoners back from hospital through the remission process. LTHSE remits prisoners who meet LTHSE criteria direct back into their prisons rather than through the nearest reception prison to the hospital to best meet the needs of the prisoner in terms of health, risk reduction and opportunity to progress; whilst balancing the operational demands on our prisons. This process is outlined in the NHS good practice guidance for remission and the Security Category Policy Framework. For all complex cases the Pathways to Progression Complex Case Team are available to support the local management team.

#### **Healthcare Complaints**

HMPPS is not responsible for the management of healthcare complaints and concerns. Practice Plus Group (Lead Healthcare Provider) is required to manage all complaints and concerns in line with the NHSE/I National Complaints process, not HMPPS complaints policies. Complaints and concerns are reviewed on a monthly basis via Practice Plus Group's embedded Governance Processes. Figures, themes and trends are shared with the NHSE/I Commissioning team as part of the routine quarterly contract monitoring process.

#### **Legal Resources for Prisoners**

The Early Days in Custody Prison Service Instruction (PSI) sets out how advice on accessing legal services should be provided to newly arrived prisoners, and how similar advice should be made available to prisoners after the early days and induction period. In addition, the Residential Services PSI outlines that residential staff must assist prisoners who wish to access legal advice. The availability of PSIs is covered in PSI 02/2015 - Prison Library Service.

#### **SystmOne Project**

HMP Wakefield is currently awaiting funding for In-Cell Telephony. A survey is planned to gain an understanding of the costs associated with the implementation, however, at present there is not a set date for installation.

**Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist**

The mental health needs of prisoners at HMP Wakefield are supported and treated by clinical psychiatry which is an NHSE commissioned service. An adult psychiatrist will have the necessary skills to assess and treat and to refer under the Mental Health Act 1983 if indicated, at which point if there was a specific need for a forensic psychiatrist, this could be arranged on a bespoke basis. Specific forensic services fall within the remit of HMPPS with interventions being delivered at HMP Wakefield by the Assessment and Interventions Psychology Team. The clinical and forensic psychiatry and psychology services at HMP Wakefield mirror those in place in other LTHSE prisons.