



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Cardiff  
Knox Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 0UG

MoJ ref: SUB 95788

20 April 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP CARDIFF: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 – 31 AUGUST 2021**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 August 2021. I understand that my predecessor, Alex Chalk MP, visited HMP Cardiff on 26 August 2021 and I hope this visit proved useful. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations during another difficult reporting period. I was saddened to hear there were four deaths in custody during the reporting year. My officials always take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I appreciate the Board's ongoing concerns around prisoners' mental health. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) takes the health and wellbeing of prisoners seriously and this has remained a priority throughout the pandemic. However, we recognise that the regime restrictions required to control Covid-19 infection in prisons may have exacerbated prisoners' mental health needs and consequently a number of interventions were introduced to support prisoners' including increased access to telephones, secure video calls, time in the open air where possible, provision of distraction packs, and continued provision of The Samaritans phone services together with the peer-support Listeners scheme. Regarding mental health transfers, the Welsh Government has recently revised and republished the Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan in response to the impact of Covid-19. The revised plan includes an audit of current secure in-patient provision and a commitment to develop a secure in-patient strategy for Wales. We expect the audit to be completed shortly and timescales for follow up actions will be agreed once the recommendations have been considered.

Through the Community Sentence Treatment Requirements Programme, health and justice partners are working together to ensure greater use and improved access to timely and appropriate mental health and substance misuse services for offenders who need them. This includes the expansion of the scheme in Wales with its first site in 2021, a pilot at HMP Swansea. The programme is continuing to explore how to implement further Welsh expansion, but HM Prison and Probation Service's (HMPPS) role is limited as it doesn't control the healthcare provision or the number of places available. Officials continue to work with the UK Government on the reform of the Mental Health Act, which includes proposals to improve the timeliness of transfers from prison to secure mental health units.

Turning to the Board's continued concerns around Foreign National Offenders (FNOs), when a decision is made to detain a FNO, Home Office colleagues conduct a careful risk assessment of their suitability to transfer to the immigration removal estate (IREs). FNOs that are detained on IS91s in the prison estate (i.e. held beyond their sentence expiry; subject to an Immigration Removal Notice; and treated as remand

prisoners) have access to Home Office representatives via the Immigration Prison Teams (IPT). The Home Office has hubs where IPT teams are embedded, and FNOs can normally be seen or responded to within twenty-four hours. Prisons where this service doesn't exist, FNOs can submit applications to see immigration officers and they will be seen on the Home Office's next visit to the prison. Urgent enquiries are responded to in writing and delivered via the local Offender Management Units or FNO co-ordinator in the prisons. The Home Office has also acknowledge that Covid-19 restrictions has had an impact on the capacity within the IRCs along with IPT's ability to attend some prisons. However, as Government guidelines relating to Covid-19 change, issues with moves to IRCs will lessen. IPT presence in prisons has been at normal levels for several months now.

I will also address those issues raised for the Welsh Government. Regarding cover for pharmacists, the prison has recently recruited a full time pharmacist to work as part of the team and pending the completion of the recruitment process, it is expected they will be in post from May. General Practitioner (GP) provision has seen a significant uplift at the prison over the past four months with an extra five sessions per week together with an additional Clinical Director session. Officials have met and continue to work with representatives of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (healthcare provider) to address workforce pressures. Workforce challenges identified from this review are in common with other parts of the NHS and include the impact of Covid-19 and self-isolation requirements and general shortages in the pharmacy sector as a whole.

Homelessness Prevention Taskforces (HPTs) set up to oversee the Covid Accommodation Emergency have been retained as a permanent feature of HMPPS to develop relationships with local authorities and other strategic partners in order to embed and expand housing options for prison leavers. To address availability and suitability of accommodation, HMPPS in Wales has been provided with funding from central Government to set up a Community Accommodation Services Tier 3 project (CAS-3). The project in Wales will be funded for three years and is intended to provide accommodation to those at risk of being homeless upon release from prison or as part of their resettlement, and move on from an Approved Premises or a period at a Bail Accommodation and Support Services (BASS) residence. It will also support transition into settled accommodation.

Although it was another challenging reporting year, I was pleased to hear the management and staff at HMP Cardiff continued to provide a reasonably safe and humane environment for the men in their care. I was further encouraged to receive your comments about the substantial reduction in instances of self-harm, and that parole hearings continued weekly using a 'virtual parole room': a new way of working that has allowed prisoners to video-link from the new laptops to the parole board.

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 Cardiff.

Yours ever,



**VICTORIA ATKINS MP**

## HMP CARDIFF: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 – 31 AUGUST 2021

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Living Conditions**

HMP Cardiff has an ongoing cell refurbishment programme which has continued from last year and is expected to complete a further 65 cells by the end of the current financial year. Heating issues were due to older boilers and these have been replaced in wings C, D, E, and F. TV systems are being upgraded with new TVs to fit with the upgrade.

Due to the ongoing numerous infrastructure improvement projects at HMP Cardiff, the disturbance has resulted in increased visibility of pests. The pest control contractor attends HMP Cardiff weekly and addresses all areas around the prison. They investigate any new reports of pests and action plans are given to the site team and establishment to comply with. To date, all recommendations by the pest control contractor have been completed.

#### **Wheelchair Users**

HMP Cardiff had several shower upgrades throughout 2021/22 on B and F wings, including a fully Equalities Act compliant shower and toilet facility on F-wing (the F2 landing). The F2 landing is also being adapted to facilitate prisoners with reduced mobility and will enable wheelchair users access to education. The B-wing (level 2) shower doorway has been widened to allow wheelchair access with a seat fitted in the shower area. The C-wing showers upgrade programme started in March 2022. The Ministry of Justice Estates Team will take into consideration full Equalities Act compliance in future projects.

#### **Regime Recovery**

The prison was authorised to move to Stage 2 of the National Framework for Regime Recovery from the week commencing 28 February 2022 and preparation to move to Stage 1 of the framework is already underway. Covid-19 Protocols however remain for all prisons across England and Wales as prisons are classed as higher risk environments. HMP Cardiff is nevertheless expediting progression to Stage 1 of the framework which will see the removal of the vast majority of restrictions in line with Welsh Government legislation. The prison's latest outbreak was closed on 3 March 2022 and the prison's progression to Stage 2 will not be affected. A date for progression to Stage 1 cannot be provided at present and will be subject to agreement with Senior Management and the Unions. Details of the National Framework can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-national-framework-for-prison-regimes-and-services>.

#### **Body Worn Video Cameras**

HMP Cardiff's Body Worn Video Cameras (BWVCs) were serviced in November 2021 and the prison is now fully stocked with the required complement. The replacement of the existing cameras is due in February 2023. The procurement exercise for the next generation of camera equipment remains ongoing, with the first establishments in the rollout schedule set to receive new equipment in May 2022. The procurement exercise will represent a substantial uplift in available camera numbers, with the aim of having sufficient cameras for use by every operational band 3–5 Prison Officer with surplus for other roles.

The Implementation Team is also liaising with establishments further along the rollout schedule to redistribute cameras during the programme and transfer older stock whilst they await their new equipment. This will provide an increase in camera numbers in those establishments in the short term.

**Men from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background (BAME) labelled as dangerous**

The Security and Diversity and Inclusion departments work together to identify and investigate any disproportionality. This is reviewed on a monthly basis in order to focus on any developing trends which appear. The last twelve months which have been audited show no disproportionate numbers.