



Ministry
of Justice

Victoria Atkins MP
Minister of State for Justice and
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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
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Dear Chair,

**HMP COLDINGLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 AUGUST 2020 – 31 JULY 2021**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 July 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. I was saddened to hear there was a death in custody during the reporting year. My officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I am grateful for the Board's acknowledgment of the significant investment to improve the conditions at HMP Coldingley. The major programme of work is on track to start in January 2022 and is expected to run through to early 2026. I am pleased to hear that the temporary accommodation units installed last year have provided a high standard of living. These units will remain in use for the entire length of the work project.

I note the Board's continued concerns about prisoners serving indeterminate sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) who are now considerably over their tariff period. I am also aware these issues have been raised by other IMB Boards. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is committed to doing all it can to support the progression of these prisoners. As the Board may be aware, the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act abolished the IPP sentence in late 2012, but this was not applied retrospectively. To re-sentence these individuals would result in prisoners who are still assessed as dangerous being released into the community and would expose the public to considerable risk of serious harm. I am, however, looking into IPPs at the onset of my appointment.

This is not a simple task, and HMPPS continues to work with these individuals to offer them opportunities to reduce their identified risks. For these reasons, there are some prisoners serving the IPP sentence who have spent a significant number of years in custody after completing their tariff. There are a broad range of work streams, aimed at both the progression towards a safe release, and towards the sustainability of that release, following a positive parole outcome. These efforts have, in recent years, delivered a substantial reduction in the number of IPP prisoners who have never been released. That number stood at 1,661 at the end of September 2021. This is down from 1,895 at the end of September 2020 (a 234 reduction).

All indeterminate sentenced prisoners (ISPs) should be located at the establishment best placed to meet their sentence planning needs in terms of interventions, and prisons will seek out suitable locations for ISPs who are assessed as needing to access certain interventions in other prisons, as promptly as is

reasonably possible. ISPs may have their parole reviewed at least every two years, depending on the specifics of individual cases, and may transfer during a parole review if it is to access a progression opportunity and providing it does not disrupt an impending parole hearing date. Prisons will otherwise seek out opportunities to progress their indeterminate prisoners at the earliest opportunity following the conclusion of a parole review to increase the chances of a timely and successful transfer.

Locally at HMP Coldingley, although the IPP forum, the local initiative introduced by the Senior Probation Officer unfortunately has come to an end, the monthly multi-disciplinary panel meetings consisting of external enforcement law partners will recommence shortly (as the prison transitions over the coming months to Stage 1 of the National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services). This will provide an opportunity for prisoners to discuss the challenges faced and provide some hope through the information they receive. Strong relationships have also been developed with staff at those prisons facilitating progressive regimes who are responsible for providing support and care, resulting in a demonstrable reduction in those serving this category of sentence.

Turning to some positive comments captured in your report, it was encouraging to read that HMP Coldingley effectively managed to contain the outbreak of Covid -19 in September 2020, and I note in January 2021 the placing of prisoners in 'household bubbles' allowed more than five hours out of their cell on each given day. I was pleased to hear you view staff and prisoner relations as positive and commended the Head of Learning and Skills for providing in cell packs.

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 very important 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 Coldingley.

Yours ever,



VICTORIA ATKINS MP

HMP COLDINGLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 AUGUST 2020 – 31 JULY 2021

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Violence and Bullying

Violence

In the 12 months to March 2021, there has been a 40% decrease in assaults and a 47% decrease in serious assaults across all prisons. HMPPS recognises that these figures are reflective of the exceptional period since the very start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the restricted regimes put in place in prisons to safely manage the risks of infection.

As establishments begin to reopen their regimes in a safe way, they are being provided with a range of recovery support. This includes guidance on the effective use of the Challenge, Intervention and Support Plan, the framework for managing violence that is centred around the individual and their specific needs. HMPPS is supporting prison staff to create local strategies to tackle debt and are working on several initiatives to support prisoner wellbeing. A Keywork recovery toolkit has been developed for use in conduction key work sessions. It is encouraging to see that the efforts of prison staff to maintain key worker interventions throughout the reporting period have been recognised by the Board. Key work continues to develop constructive staff-prisoner relationships, fosters positive behaviours, builds prisoner trust, confidence, hope and commitment to change.

In terms of allocating resources to help keep prisoners safe, Governors can bid for capital projects (below £150,000) on an annual basis, to enhance their prison across priority areas including security, safety, decency and reducing reoffending. These bids are collated regionally and then prioritised prior to being submitted for consideration.

As the Board have identified, HMP Coldingley saw an increase in assaults from 2019 to 2020. However, as with other prisons nationally, violence has decreased since the start of the pandemic and the overall number of all violent incidents experienced has been lower than previous years. This trend commenced before national lockdown. The Safety team now investigates all incidents, with external colleagues BELONG completing a minimum of 50% post incident debriefs.

CCTV

As mentioned in last year's response to the Board, unfortunately the older style wings built in 1969 have rather low ceilings. HMP Coldingley has been allocated funding for a new state of the art CCTV system. The project has part completed and once the major programme of works projects begins in January 2022 and the first wing is decanted, all options will be explored.

HMPPS has created a new policy framework on CCTV which will govern how CCTV is managed in prisons and probation settings to help prevent and detect crime and contribute to the safety and security of prisons across the estate.

Cuckooing

The new cuckooing initiative bespoke to HMP Coldingley and is designed to address, disrupt and prevent local activity such as:

- Using a cell to deal, store or take drugs.
- Taking over a cell to financially abuse an individual.

The prison's algorithm identifies people potentially at risk on arrival at HMP Coldingley and this allows staff to utilise existing mechanisms to safeguard and prevent any untoward behavior. Any suspected cuckooing incidents are highlighted through the adjudication process.

Covid-19 Recovery

HMPPS is supporting prisons to expand regimes and progress as rapidly through the National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services as local risks levels permit. At Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the National Framework, Governors have significantly increased scope to deliver a regime which is shaped around their establishment's specific needs. More broadly, HMPPS continues to keep under review the balance of responsibilities across different areas and different levels of the organisation.