



Ministry
of Justice

Victoria Atkins MP
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Grendon and Springhill
Grendon Underwood
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP18 OTL

MoJ ref: SUB96779

31 May 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP GRENDON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR
1 JANUARY 2021 – 31 DECEMBER 2021**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 December 2021. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you had a number of vacancies and only a few trained members. I was pleased to note there were no deaths in custody for another reporting year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for monitoring the journey of a vulnerable prisoner through the prison estate, and I am grateful to the team at HMP Grendon for managing his ongoing care. It would not be appropriate to discuss the circumstances of this individual in this response, but I hope to reassure the Board that his needs are adequately being met. The Governor will discuss this matter with you at the next scheduled meeting.

Whilst you have not raised any other specific issues of concern for my attention, it was encouraging to read that Covid-19 outbreak control measures were well managed, and the rollout of the vaccination proved effective in mitigating more serious effects. I am pleased the levels of violence and self-harm have remained at pre - Covid levels. Likewise, although the regime was heavily restricted a significant amount of therapeutic work went ahead and the monitoring of equality and diversity has greatly improved, with a better focus on outcomes.

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. HM Prison and Probation Service (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 Grendon.

Yours ever,

VICTORIA ATKINS MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Work Projects

Fire and Safety Delays

A significant amount of effort has been taken to ensure that this project does not impact upon staff and prisoners (such as factoring in noisy work and identifying temporary workspaces for staff to vacate to rather than working with contractors in situ). As the Board will appreciate, the pandemic has played a part in this, and so has the time taken to resolve various issues with the original design which were not agreed earlier in the project. Delays arose in the project delivery by the contractor, [REDACTED]. There are also some working time constraints placed on the contractors whilst therapeutic clinical sessions are being held, owing to this, work is therefore being carried out during evenings and lunch times. Exact working times have now been agreed between the Governor and the contractor(s). The finance has also been agreed for this project and the Health and Safety Team has put some measures in place on the wings (available for staff should it be required).

Improvement to the Prison Fabric

MoJ Property Services is working within their budgetary constraints. At HMP Grendon, reactive maintenance has been delivered to the value of £270,000, as well as other projects, such as the Vidicom System, fitting of new flooring in the main kitchen area and the Tannoy System upgrade. This financial year will see the roof replacement of the conference centre and completion of the fire safety works.

The wings will also be redecorated, and new flooring installed as the projects progress. Bids are submitted via the Asset Investment and Major Maintenance routes for fabric upgrades and smaller 'Additional Works Requests' are prioritised for business critical work (for example, a recent bid was submitted for upgrade to the outside sports and exercise yard - to date funding has not been confirmed). A significant amount of new gym equipment was purchased towards the end of the 2021/22 financial year and a painting and redecorating programme is planned. Like with all projects funding is limited and largely outside of the Governor's remit.

Night Sanitation

As mentioned in last year's response, it is recognised that the electronic night sanitation system presents some challenges and is not designed to meet the current demands of HMP Grendon. The new software will be more reliable in terms of prisoners having access to the toilet facilities when required and will help staff identify who has left their cell and for how long. Due to some handling issues with the contractor, the upgrade has not yet been carried out. The Governor will keep you informed of any further developments.

Access to Showers During Night State

Regarding the safer custody concerns during night state, much work was done several years ago to implement a robust system that raises the alarm from the control room when a prisoner is out of cell for more than eight minutes. A temporary decision was taken during the pandemic to allow access to showers during patrol state, but not to exceed the eight-minute access time.

In-Cell Telephony

Like the Board, the Governor welcomes this investment and HMPPS recognises the importance of having this technology across the prison estate as it aids access to family ties, friends and support networks. Installing infrastructure into the prison environment is complex and can take up to 12 months to install in-

cell telephony into each prison. As of April 2022, in-cell telephony has been implemented in 71% of prisons within the public closed estate. Funding is not currently available for HMP Grendon. It is hoped that central funding will be secured this financial year; HMP Grendon will be added to the scope of works when funds become available.