



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Kirkham
Freckleton Road
Preston
Lancashire
PR4 2RN

MoJ ref: SUB 97266

28 June 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP KIRKHAM: 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, particularly as you continue to have a number of vacancies and due to the constraints that Covid-19 placed on your monitoring.

I understand the Board's continued concerns regarding the suitability of some prisoners within Category D establishments. Further to my predecessor's response last year, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) recognises that adjusting to life in an open prison can take time for some prisoners and building good relationships with both staff and fellow prisoners is key to this successful adjustment. Restrictions, that have been necessary during the Covid-19 pandemic, including isolation upon arrival, will no doubt have had an effect.

I would like to assure the Board that there is a specific assessment in place for consideration of a prisoner for Category D and open conditions. As part of this assessment, they must meet a number of criteria, including being assessed as low risk of abscond and unlikely to otherwise take advantage of the low security. HMPPS will also consider whether the person is likely to commit further crimes in custody, such as bringing drugs and illicit mobile phones into the prison. The assessment includes any danger the individual may pose to others and whether the person is likely to disrupt the security or good order of the prison.

In addition to risk management meetings and health-led substance misuse support HMP Kirkham now benefits from a joint Department of Health commissioned Pathways Enhanced Resettlement Service (PERS), part of the Offender Personality Disorder service and is specific to open prisons. It is clinically-led and provides a psychologically informed outreach service to those who present as a high risk of harm. HMP Kirkham continues to focus on ensuring access to Release on Temporary Licence at the earliest opportunity to enable resettlement and acquisition of valuable employment skills in preparation for release. Despite all the support that can be provided it is acknowledged that some prisoners may require return to closed conditions.

Although it has been a difficult reporting period, it was reassuring to receive your comments that prisoners are treated fairly and humanely and that there are good relationships between staff and prisoners. I was

encouraged to read that health and wellbeing is a priority and those that tested positive for Covid-19 received good care by the Healthcare team. I was pleased to read that the efforts of the previous Governor have been recognised in keeping staff and prisoners safe and providing proactive engagement about regime changes during the pandemic, and the continued hard work and professionalism of staff during these challenging times. The Healthcare team should also be proud of their work following the Healthcare Manager's shortlisting in the Nursing Times award. It was also encouraging to read about Kirkham Council's forum to communicate with prisoners and that prisoners feel more positive about employment and accommodation due to the additional support from the accelerator project.

I note you have raised four 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 Kirkham.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Victoria Atkins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

VICTORIA ATKINS MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Lighting

The temporary lighting initially deployed to improve visibility in the absence of permanent fittings has been replaced by the facilities management provider, Amey, who have installed approximately 30 fittings on various buildings in the affected area. It is recognised that some delays were experienced due to Covid-19, as well as the availability of contractors and materials, these delays are expected to improve and have less of an impact on future projects as the UK lives with Covid-19. Faults were also found with the underground cables which enabled a number of existing lighting columns that had not been working to be fixed. The newly installed and repaired lights should now provide a suitable illuminated route in the area for prisoners and staff, however a site visit is due to be undertaken later in 2022 to verify this and if any lighting is inoperative the facilities management provider will be instructed to carry out the necessary work.

Gym

The importance of sports provision for prisoners at HMP Kirkham is recognised which is why temporary gym facilities have been created following some safety issues with the existing building facilities. Whilst it has not yet been confirmed that a new Sports Hall can be delivered within the funding available, every effort is being made to finalise plans for the new facilities and the Governor and Prison Group Director actively continue to seek that this matter is resolved. Discussions between the preferred contractor and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Project Delivery teams in relation to the cost of the project are ongoing and once agreed, final approval to deliver the remainder of the project will be sought.

Disability Access

HMP Kirkham remains committed to improving access to the prison as available funding allows and as the Board recognises parts of the Disability Review have been incorporated within a wider project being delivered to improve roads and footpaths. These include the introduction of tactile paving (a textured surface) at several pedestrian crossing points to help people who are visually impaired to recognise potential hazards, access ramps to buildings, reinstating disabled parking bays with signage and a designated drop off point for people of low mobility. In addition, the new accommodation unit opening during 2022 will include two bespoke cells for prisoners with mobility issues.

IT System

HMPPS recognises that the current IT system, Quantum, is coming to end of life and is outdated. The Prison Technology Transition Programme has already started to deploy MoJ Official in prisons and user feedback has been positive with an emphasis on the speed of the system, collaboration features and the overall stability of the IT system. The deployment of MoJ Official is part of the complete replacement of Quantum being delivered across all prison and non-prison sites which will provide a significant IT upgrade by introducing a modern desktop to prisons that will improve staff efficiency and ways of working. HMP Kirkham is due to have MoJ Official deployed in August 2022.