



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Wormwood Scrubs  
Du Cane Road  
London  
W12 0AE

**MoJ ref:** SUB93568

27 January 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP WORMWOOD SCRUBS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 JUNE 2020 – 31 MAY 2021**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 May 2021. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you are now operating with a reduced allocation of Board members and the pandemic has impacted on the Board's monitoring. I was saddened to hear there were two deaths in custody during the reporting year. My officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I recognise the Board's concerns around prison safety and the funding of projects supporting this work. Following the cessation of the 10 Prisons Project in July 2019, HMP Wormwood Scrubs joined the Prison Performance Support Programme (PPSP) in September 2019. PPSP provided central support to improve performance issues at the prison, including around safety and security. PPSP has supported and sourced funding of almost £1.3 million since then for work including the Visits refurbishment, enablement for PAVA (incapacitant spray) and Rigid Bar Handcuffs, and CCTV.

The Enhanced Gate Security project from October 2020 saw the prison allocated a standardised resource uplift that included three prison officers, a custodial manager and a further eight Operational Support Grades. It was established that there was some duplication of purpose and not all of the latter investment is required. Consequently the prison has not recruited for all of the additional posts and they will be removed from future workforce targets. Additionally, over the last 20 months the prison received significant permanent resource uplifts including 63 prison officers for offender management (including keyworkers), two officers for increasing the use of video-links for court hearings, a security collator and an intelligence analyst. The Governor has made prison safety their most significant priority and will continue to make every effort to build on the improvements of the past few years working closely with the London Prisons Group Safety Lead.

A procurement process for the next generation of Body Worn Video Cameras (BWVCs) is currently underway, for rollout commencing in early 2022. The procurement process will represent a substantial uplift of the numbers of newer, more technologically advanced cameras which will be available for all prison officers on shift at any time and additional cameras will also be available. A maintenance contract remains in place with the current BWVC supplier, including a refresh of the batteries of the current camera stock to minimise faulty units.

In conjunction with the procurement of new cameras, a review of the current Prison Service Instruction (PSI 04/2017) is currently being undertaken to ensure the new policy framework reflects the new procedures of camera use including current best practice. This will include the mandatory wearing of cameras by operationally facing band 3–5 Prison Officers with establishments also able to target their use elsewhere on the site through their Local Security Strategy. The revised Policy Framework is scheduled to be published alongside the rollout of the next generation cameras in early 2022. Although it has been another challenging reporting period, it was encouraging to receive your comments about the reduced use of force incidents, that all emergency and urgent mental health referrals were seen within the recommended timeframes, and that the prison managed the outbreaks very well. I was also pleased to note the appointment of an equalities officer providing an impetus for a range of activities and the opening of the new staff canteen 'The Escape' that doubles up as catering/hospitality training facility for prisoners.

I am sorry to hear of the Board's concerns about the recommended complement of members. My team have forwarded your concerns to the IMB Secretariat who will respond to you directly. 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 Wormwood Scrubs.

Yours ever,

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

**VICTORIA ATKINS MP**

**HMP WORMWOOD SCRUBS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 JUNE 2020 – 31 MAY 2021**

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

**Prisoners Property**

*Policy Framework*

Following a pause in the development of the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework due to Covid-19, HMPPS has circulated the draft framework with internal and external stakeholders, including the IMB Secretariat and the IMB representatives previously consulted. Further operational engagement was necessary following that consultation together with a consideration of the large number of comments received. The framework is now expected to be published early in 2022.

*Property Transfer Directive*

Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) provide transportation for prisoners and their property. The vehicle fleet is designed to carry the number of custodies it is intended for, together with their property in line with the volumetric limit which is governed by PSI 12/2011. In addition to this, the escort contractor will take a reasonable volume of legal documentation. As mentioned earlier this year, the new vehicle fleet has increased capacity to facilitate an additional half bag of property for consumables to the limit of 7.5kg.

There are arrangements in place to routinely send a prisoner's excess property on to them if they transfer to another prison. The new policy framework aims to ensure staff and prisoners are clear on the arrangements in place and provides stronger guidance to ensure volumetric control limits are respected so that prisoners do not build up excessive amounts of property.

Locally, there was one regrettable example of apparent lost property as a result of a breakdown in communications. Procedures for processing requests for the allocation of property have since been reviewed and updated to provide assurances to prevent any repeat incident(s).