



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
Stuart Andrew MP
Minister of State for
Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Kirklevington Grange
Yarm, Cleveland
TS15 9PA

16 July 2022

Dear Chair

**HMP/YOI KIRKLEVINGTON GRANGE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY – 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 given the constraints Covid-19 has had on your monitoring. I was saddened to hear there was one death in custody during the reporting year. As you are aware the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) carry out independent investigations into deaths in custody and I would like to assure the Board my officials take recommendations from the PPO very seriously.

I understand the Board's concern regarding the reduced operational capacity at the prison. The availability of Category D spaces has been impacted by the closure of a number of accommodation blocks in the open prison estate during 2020, including HMP/YOI Kirklevington Grange, which no longer met statutory fire safety standards. The impact is being managed with temporary accommodation across the estate, which was already present at some sites as part of HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Covid-19 contingencies measures, as well as new temporary accommodation being introduced.

Delivery of these new temporary places has been split into two tranches due to affordability. Funding has been approved for 480 places to be delivered by December 2022 and the prisons that will be receiving these have already been informed by the Rapid Deployment Cells Project. A further 520 places are planned by July 2023. HMP/YOI Kirklevington Grange has been notified the site falls into this second tranche and discussions are ongoing about delivery of the new units. Locally, demolition of the three de-commissioned units has now taken place and the Governor has appointed a local Project Manager to co-ordinate the delivery of the new units, as well as anticipate and manage any challenges as the prison's capacity increases. The Governor is also working to identify the required resources needed to manage the larger offender management caseloads generated by the increase in the prison's population.

It is also recognised that there remains a high demand for Category D places resulting in many adult men having to be held in closed conditions. The Government has committed to investing £3.8 billion over the next three years to deliver 20,000 additional modern prison places across England and Wales by the mid-2020s. As part of this project HMPPS intends to deliver 660 additional places through expansion of the Category D estate by adding one or two new 60-bed units at a number of sites across the country. Whilst HMP/YOI Kirklevington Grange is not included in this expansion, these new units will be single-cell occupancy with integrated ensuite facilities and include a kitchenette and laundry room on each of the two floors. These places will improve the options for the staged rehabilitation of people in prison in supervised

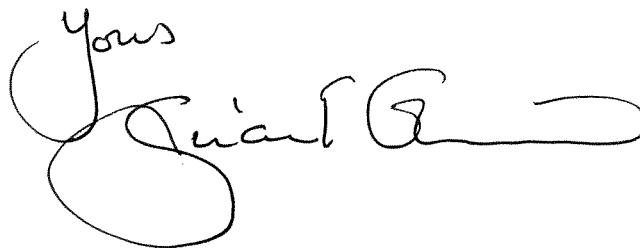
conditions and will offer advantages for safe management and resettlement compared to release directly from closed prisons.

Despite your concern, it was reassuring to receive your comments that the prison is well run and remains a safe environment where prisoners are treated with respect. I was pleased to note the improved levels of decency and I am assured that further funding has been approved for fire alarm upgrades and residential kitchenette improvements across the prison, as well as replacement on the water mains and tank. I note the Board commends the Governor and staff for their prompt response to reduce the transmission of Covid-19 and that the healthcare provision continues to build on its successes. I too am grateful to everyone working at the prison for their continued hard work and professionalism during these challenging times.

It was encouraging to read that prisoners appreciate the efforts to provide them with opportunities to help them following their release, such as the return to paid placements at the levels prior to the pandemic and that all prison leavers were found accommodation to go to on release. I was also reassured to note that staff have good knowledge of prisoners and communicate positively, which has enabled the prison to continue to promote equality and inclusion through regular consultation meetings and focus groups to listen and act upon concerns.

I note you have raised two local issues of concern in your report, on which the Governor will continue to keep you updated 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/YOI Kirklevington Grange.

Yours


RT HON STUART ANDREW MP

HMP/YOI KIRKLEVINGTON GRANGE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2021 – 31 DECEMBER 2021

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners' Property

Further to HMPPS' response last year, the further consultation feedback has now been considered and adjustments to the new Property Framework have been made where appropriate. The new Framework is currently going through clearance and it is now anticipated that publication will take place this Summer. Digital improvements within property processes do continue to be explored but will not form part of the Framework at this stage. However, the Framework will ensure that staff and prisoners are clear on the arrangements in place by providing clear requirements and strengthening guidance on known problem areas, such as volumetric control limits to ensure these are respected so that prisoners do not build up excessive amounts of property which require transfer. It is also reassuring that the Board recognise that property processes have improved from the previous year with the number of individuals that had issues with property on arrival to HMP/YOI Kirklevington Grange having reduced from the previous year.

Prisoners' Bank Account

The Prisoner Banking Programme is helping eligible prisoners to set up a basic bank account towards the end of their sentence so that it is ready for them to use when they are released. This is a new national arrangement providing bank accounts for prison leavers and enables prisons to opt into the programme, managed by the HMPPS New Futures Network, who are then partnered with a participating bank. As the Board is aware the programme is generally available in the six months prior to release from custody, for those who do not have an existing bank account and need an account for use on release. Due to the scale of the new national agreement and the need to mobilise, recruit and embed the new arrangements it was not viable for this particular programme to support the setting up of bank accounts for serving prisoners accessing Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL). However, there is an intention to revisit this once the prison leaver scheme is established. HMP/YOI Kirklevington Grange has opted in and has received a staff resource uplift providing a Prison ID and Banking Administrator who will help prisoners to access bank accounts in line with national policy. Those accessing ROTL can and do have bank accounts, even when being temporarily released where this is more than six months prior to release. For those prisoners undertaking paid work it is recognised that they do need to have an account and it is encouraging that the Board have acknowledged the efforts made by the prison to support access to bank accounts.

