



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Littlehey
Perry
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE28 0SR

MoJ ref: SUB101010

11 November 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP LITTLEHEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2021 – 31 JANUARY 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 January 2022, especially as you were short of members. I would like to offer my condolences to the Board for the loss of a valued member, who sadly passed away. I was also saddened to hear there were 14 deaths in custody during the reporting year all due to natural causes. 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 am very much aware of the amount of effort that goes into producing annual reports and thank you for providing a comprehensive picture of HMP Littlehey over the reporting period.

I address below the specific points you have raised for my attention:

Thank you for your comments about the resettlement provision. HMP Littlehey is a specialist training prison for men convicted of sexual offences, and there is a clear expectation that the cohort should progress from a specialist training prison to a resettlement prison ahead of their release, which in this instance includes HMP Five Wells.

My officials have advised that there are currently some issues being felt across the prison estate with reconfiguration, which includes the transfer of men convicted of sexual offences into HMP Five Wells and is dependent on available spaces. For those men who require pre-release support but remain in HMP Littlehey until their release, East of England Probation Service are providing pre-release support in the prison. This will improve as HMP Five Wells increases its capacity levels and reconfiguration is successfully implemented across England and Wales.

More broadly, there has been a transition period following the unification of Probation in June 2021 which has affected the delivery of resettlement services in some prisons. Regional Probation Directors are working to stabilise the Pre-Release teams (managed by or otherwise linked to a Probation Delivery Unit) and Commissioned Rehabilitative Service provision in their regions to improve service delivery to all people in prison.

I acknowledge the Board's comments about prisoners being held in crowded conditions. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) published a revised framework on 22 April 2022 for the Certification of

Prisoner Accommodation, from which the useable operational capacity of the estate is derived. The determination of the maximum crowded capacity of a particular establishment is a matter of operational judgement, considering risks to safety and stability. In times of severe population pressure, establishments will be expected to hold as many prisoners as they can safely accommodate, but that number should be determined by the operational managers responsible for managing the prison, not by a central process or by wider supply and demand issues. There may be options in future to reduce crowding levels if population growth is slower than projected and there is sufficient headroom in the prison estate, to enable targeted reductions of the least suitable prison places including crowded places. However, it is not possible to commit to this based on the latest projected population. It is also difficult to predict how national trends will play out at a local level and the proportion of prisoners held in crowded cells at HMP Littlehey will ultimately depend on regional population levels and demand.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that HMP Littlehey continued to be a safe prison and with a relatively low rate of prisoner-on-prisoner violence. I am grateful to the Board for highlighting some areas of excellence, in particular, an award for outstanding contribution to Fine Cell work, the Koestler Awards scheme entries for arts in criminal justice and coming fourth in the national prison gardens competition. It is pleasing to hear such positive work taken place at the prison. Likewise, the proactive work to address the needs of the older prisoners and the successful roll out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

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 the other issues raised in your report for their attention 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 Littlehey.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Damian Hinds', is positioned above the printed name.

Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

HMP LITTLEHEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2021 – 31 JANUARY 2022

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners' Property / External Complaints

Property

The newly *Prisoners' Property* Policy Framework came into effect on 5 September 2022 and replaces Prison Service Instruction 12/2011 - *Prisoners' Property*. The framework has been designed with procedural justice at its core and aims to ensure consistency and fairness and enhance prisoners' satisfaction with processes and outcomes. Given the nature of property, and the movement of prisoners between establishments, the framework looks to provide greater direction and standardisation on a national basis. It strengthens processes in relation to the main problem areas identified by IMBs and staff including the handling of valuable property, managing cell clearances, compliance with volumetric control and forwarding on excess property following a prisoner's transfer.

Complaints

HMP Littlehey is monitored on timeliness of complaints and there is a metric on HMPPS Performance Hub. However, the Governor has no control over the timeliness of replies from other prisons. As mentioned in last year's response, the Prisoner Complaints Policy Framework published in July 2019 specifically addresses complaints that relate to another prison or property lost in transit (see sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the framework).

G Wing Replacement

The Rapid Deployment Cell (RDC) project is a key part of the commitment to deliver 20,000 additional prison places to address the increasing demand. The RDC project team had to go through the appropriate processes before building could commence. This included a careful site selection process, feasibility studies of each site, designing the new units, completing a tender process and undergoing governance to secure approval and funding for the project.

The RDC units are being built on the astro-turfed pitch (as the demolished G-Wing plot of land is not big enough to facilitate the units and deliver the required places). The location of the units was determined in consultation with the Governor as an under-used space.

The RDC units have been designed to help meet current demand while permanent and long-term capacity is being built. They differ from the Covid-19 temporary units in several ways meaning they are constructed to resemble traditional houseblocks and can be either single or double stacked accommodation. The design also allows the cells to be moved from one prison to another if needed and they have a longer lifespan of 15 years. Regarding adequate roofing, an exercise took place to explore the necessity of canopies. It was concluded these were not seen as value for money, instead it was agreed to maintain the original design. Construction work has started at HMP Littlehey to prepare the ground for installing the units. It is anticipated the units will be ready for occupancy by the end of March 2023.

Temporary Freezers

£150,000 has been allocated to replace the freezer units on site, which is currently being tendered by the Ministry of Justice Project team. The work is expected to be completed this financial year 2022/23 and will

see the removal of all temporary freezers.

In-Cell Telephony

Given the problems encountered with the communal phones over the reporting year, we recognise the importance of having in-cell telephones implemented across prison estate and this technology allows better access to family, friends, and support frameworks.

To install in-cell infrastructure into the prison environment is complex and can often take up to 12 months to complete. There are seven closed public sector prisons within England and Wales that require funding for telephony which includes HMP Littlehey. Surveys are currently taking place at HMP Littlehey to establish the detailed costs for the implementation of services and once completed will be evaluated.