



Ministry
of Justice

Damian Hinds
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP North Sea Camp
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MoJ ref: SUB100753

2 November 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP NORTH SEA CAMP: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MARCH 2021 – 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 28 February 2022. I was saddened to hear there were two deaths in custody during the reporting year 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 North Sea Camp over the reporting year. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work, especially as you had a number of vacancies. I hope my predecessor Victoria Atkins' visit to the prison in February 2022 was helpful.

Thank you for drawing to my attention that there have been some delays with documentation completed by Community Offender Managers (COMs). My officials advise that every effort is made to obtain the necessary documents so Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) boards can be held promptly, and Parole Board hearings are not postponed. Return of paperwork reminders are regularly sent to COMs and escalated to the Head of Offender Management five weeks prior to the ROTL Board. If there is further delay, where the prisoner has been allocated to a COM and responsibility transferred from the Prison Offender Manager, matters are escalated through the local probation senior management.

Turning to some positive comments captured in your report, it was encouraging to read that HMP North Sea Camp provides a safe and decent environment. Like the Board, I applaud the work of the Governor and his team in their response to the Covid-19 pandemic and increasing the number of outside employment opportunities. It is pleasing to note the recycling initiative has helped reduce landfill waste and the employment opportunities this will generate.

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. We are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP North Sea Camp.

Yours faithfully

Jan. 1/16

Damian Hinds

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Poor Accommodation

HMPPS is considering options for longer-term replacement of the decommissioned Harrison and Llewelyn modular units, and is undertaking a strategic review at HMP North Sea Camp as part of the agency's long-term estates strategy. This is looking at how the reduction in capacity might be reversed to reduce overcrowding, whilst also taking into account the risks of flooding at the site.

Mobility Access

The shower refurbishment work is due to start mid October 2022. It will involve additional disabled access into North Unit and fit for purpose showers and toilets that comply with current standards. A brand-new mobility scooter charging waterproof shelter has recently been fitted in the main residential area, which will provide a bespoke facility to charge electric mobility scooters safely.

Disabled access at Approved Premises

HMPPS is currently expanding approved premises bed spaces by 200, with over 130 already delivered to date. Geographic distribution and improving accessibility for disabilities will be taken into account in the planning for additional capacity.

Funding

Regarding prisoners sharing dormitories, it is recognised that the rooms are not large enough for two tables, but prisoners are not constrained to their rooms and the regime is structured so that comparatively little time is spent indoors. Work activities encourage people to make the most of the 300 acres of this resettlement establishment.

At this time there is no budget allocated to converting the dormitories to smaller rooms. A Small-Scale Investments team are commissioning a feasibility study on the options available to refurbish various buildings. This includes erecting partition walls in three dormitory rooms located in South Units 1 and 2 to create seven double-occupancy rooms.

Prison Maintenance Work

It is acknowledged that the performance of facilities management (FM) has sometimes fallen below expectations. Performance is measured through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), tracking results periodically and applying financial penalties where necessary. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Property Directorate will continue to work with the FM provider to improve reactive maintenance.

Prisoners' Property

The newly published Prisoners' Property Policy Framework came into effect on 5 September 2022 and replaces Prison Service Instruction 12/2011 - Prisoners' Property. The Framework is the result of extensive consultation, including with the IMB. It 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.

End of Life Care

Like the Board, NHS England Health and Justice is concerned about the limited healthcare facilities, including dental suites at HMP North Sea Camp, when meeting the needs of an aging prison population (the facilities at HMP North Sea Camp are not the responsibility of NHS England and does present challenges for healthcare service delivery). Ordinarily patients requiring palliative care would not be transferred to alternative settings.

Although prisoners requiring palliative care are managed on-site and not normally transferred until they become end of life, Health partners have established links to local services who support end of life care (N.B a recent referral and transfer took place within 24 hours). However, this type of care requires available bed space and therefore we cannot state a set period in each and every case.

The MoJ is developing a national strategy for managing the ageing population which is expected to be published this year. The strategy focuses on improving outcomes for older prisoners in four key areas namely, the physical estate; regimes; health and care; resettlement and release. As such, we will work in partnership with NHS and Social Care providers to improve the health and care of our older population.