



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Peterborough
Saville Road
Westfield
Peterborough
PE3 7PD

10 November 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI PETERBOROUGH: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2021 – 31 MARCH 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 March 2022. I was saddened to hear there were three deaths in the male prison 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 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/YOI Peterborough over the reporting period.

As your Board covered both establishments, I address below the specific points you have raised for my attention:

Thank you for bringing to my attention the length of time some remand male prisoners are held at the prison. The Bail Act 1976 creates a presumption in favour of bail. Those who are deemed by the court to be a risk to public safety, are likely to reoffend, abscond or obstruct the course of justice are likely to be held in prison on remand. The judiciary continue to work to prioritise cases where there are Custody Time Limits (CTL) active to ensure cases are listed at the first available opportunity, as well as prioritising cases involving vulnerable complainants and witnesses (including youth cases), domestic abuse and serious sexual cases. We continue to closely monitor the situation and volume of CTL cases.

We have deployed a range of measures, including unlimited sitting days, implementing Nightingale courts, and increasing Magistrates' Courts' sentencing powers, which kept justice moving in the face of an unprecedented pandemic. As a result, the outstanding caseload in the Crown Court reduced from 60,600 cases in June 2021 to 57,900 cases at the end of March 2022. Locally at HMP/YOI Peterborough, the Video Conferencing Centre hours of opening have been extended to allow for court proceedings to take place.

Regarding the number of women serving very short sentences, I would like to reassure the Board the Government recently announced it will make up to £24 million funding available over the next three years to providers of community-based services. This is to help vulnerable women who might or have been involved in the criminal justice system to improve community support for women who may be at risk of committing further crimes. We are developing a Residential Women's Centre in Wales, which will provide an alternative approach for around 50 women a year who would otherwise have been handed short custodial sentences.

This is alongside plans to pilot a new Problem-Solving Court targeted at women with complex needs, including drug and alcohol abuse. The Justice Select Committee's recent report on women in prison looked at additional facilities having the potential to improve custodial conditions for those who are imprisoned, as well as going some way towards achieving the Female Offender Strategy aim of making the female estate more trauma informed. The Delivery Plan announced in the Prison Strategy White Paper, will set out clear plans for progressing this work over the next three years. We aim to publish the Delivery Plan in due course.

Locally, the Director is working with probation officers and Commissioned Rehabilitative Service (CRS) providers to ensure women who receive short sentences have their resettlement needs met. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report about resettlement services are set out in the attached annex.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that across both sites, prisoner safety was taken very seriously and that HMP/YOI Peterborough achieved a great deal during a difficult reporting year. In particular, the appointment of a special educational needs co-ordinator and achieving the target for accommodation on release, which is pivotal in helping reduce reoffending. It was pleasing to hear some women are working towards vocational qualifications in catering and on the male site a continued downward trend in violence seen and improvements in the living accommodation.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Director will continue to keep you aware of as work continues.

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 Peterborough.

Yours sincerely,



Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the reports

Resettlement Services

The Director of HMP/YOI Peterborough acknowledges that the transition period following the unification of Probation affected the continuity of delivery of resettlement services. The prison team continues to work closely with Probation colleagues and CRS providers to ensure the needs of the men and women are being met. The Director is proud of the successful Outside Link facility initiative in supporting prisoners post release and in the wider community.

More broadly and to clarify, as part of the unification changes made, contracts have been let in each Probation Region to providers of Accommodation services for sentenced prisoners (including the East of England Region where HMP/YOI Peterborough is located). These CRS providers are mandated to have a presence in the resettlement prisons in their region. HMPPS is currently in the process of extending these contracts to provide services to all people in prison who have accommodation needs and hope to have the extended service in place by the end of 2022. In addition, East of England and other regions are commissioning for a single multi-regional custody Finance, Benefit and Debt (FBD) service (for remanded and sentenced men) which will commence in 2023.

Under the new resettlement approach all resettlement prisons including locals, will have an embedded resettlement provision (managed by or otherwise linked to a Probation Delivery Unit). The embedded Pre-Release teams are to provide immediate resettlement needs and pre-release support for all people in prison including the unsentenced and people out of area, including pre-release services not currently available via CRS including FBD services. The minimum will be to assess under the Basic Custody Screening Tool 2, undertake specialist immediate needs and support services to the people in prison. The Pre-Release teams will liaise with the Community Offender Manager or Short Sentence Function as allocated and support pre-release planning activity throughout the sentence, including progressing referrals that have been made to CRS suppliers and providing a point of contact for CRS suppliers seeking to engage with the individual. Regional Probation Directors are working to stabilise the Pre-Release teams and CRS provision in their regions to improve service delivery to all people in prison.