



Ministry  
of Justice

**Damian Hinds**  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP/YOI Styal  
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**MoJ ref: SUB100661**

/ November 2022

**HMP/YOI STYAL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 MAY 2021 – 30 APRIL 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 April 2022. I was pleased to note there were not any deaths in custody during this time.

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 Styal over the reporting year. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work during another difficult reporting period.

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

I acknowledge the Board's concerns about staffing levels together with the associated issues of recruitment, retention and remuneration. To alleviate the pressures around escorts and the regime, HMP/YOI Styal conducts daily regime-focused meetings and regularly redeploys resources to ensure a maximum regime for the prisoners. Hospital escorts are also monitored daily at the morning meeting and the Governor meets with the Head of Healthcare every week to ensure staff shortages have minimum impact.

I would like to assure the Board that every effort is being made to recruit to the new staffing levels which aims to support the Early Days and Young Adults projects. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has a number of initiatives in place to support prison officer recruitment which includes Advance into Justice. This is a fast-track scheme designed to support armed forces staff and veterans to become prison officers. Additionally, HMPPS has recently implemented an extra step in the process for prison officer recruitment in the female estate to help test candidates' motivations and understanding of working with women in custody. This is further supplemented by the roll-out of bespoke foundation training for new officers in the Women's Estate. The centralised recruitment team also continue to tailor marketing materials to highlight the challenges but also the skills and abilities HMPPS is looking for.

The Government recently announced a pay award which gives at least a 4% increase to all prison staff, and significantly more than this to Prison Officers and Operational Support Grades who are on modernised pay arrangements. This is expected to positively affect both recruitment and retention. Separate talks are ongoing around the probation pay award with the recognised trade unions.

To further improve prison officer retention, work is being undertaken to embed an outreach strategy to ensure all candidates are engaged with prior to joining the service, and that they have the opportunity to visit the prison and ask any questions that they may have around the role and HR issues. HMPPS has also implemented a 'supporting each other' initiative which includes New Colleague Mentor and Buddy Schemes which are being implemented across all prison regions throughout 2022-23. This package of initiatives is specifically designed to create a supportive and helpful environment for prison staff and to ensure that they feel capable and confident in their role.

Further to last year's response about the ingress of drugs, HMPPS is currently legally permitted to use x-ray body scanners on adult male prisoners only. In the Prisons Strategy White Paper published in December 2021, the Ministry of Justice committed to exploring options to increase the use of the cutting-edge x-ray body scanners. As mentioned last year, there is a known increased risk to a foetus from ionising radiation and it is not possible to know whether individuals with female reproductive organs are pregnant. HMPPS is considering this risk as part of exploring the Prisons Strategy White Paper commitment.

I recognise the challenges of managing prisoners that present with mental health problems or complex needs. In 2021 NHS England and HMPPS jointly commissioned the National Women's Prisons Health and Social Care Review with the aim of improving health and social care outcomes for women in prison and on their release. The Review is expected to report shortly. The findings and recommendations from the Women's Review will inform all commissioners of prison healthcare and social care for women to develop a shared understanding of what actions are needed to improve outcomes. The Review will also determine whether more specialised units are needed for the most complex women in the system. NHS England continues to focus on the pathway for women with mental illness including transfers and remissions to and from mental health hospitals, and the development of a whole-pathway approach to the care of women including their diversion from the criminal justice system where appropriate and reconnecting those leaving custody with health services in the community.

It was encouraging to receive your comments about relationships between staff and prisoners remaining positive, and that the 'Time for Me' counselling service continues to be successful. I was further pleased to note the ongoing success of the 'Stepping Stones' programme and that there has been significant progress in the care of pregnant prisoners and new mothers following the Prison and Probation Ombudsman's (PPO) report into the death of a baby in custody in 2021. This was a tragic event, and we are determined to ensure the lessons learned prevent this from happening again. I would like to assure the Board my officials take recommendations from the PPO very seriously.

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 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/YOI Styal.

*Yan Jaitling*  
*D. Hinds*

**Damian Hinds**

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

**Fire Safety**

A stand-alone fire detection system, which provides information to the communication and control room, is currently being installed on all houses and is due for completion in November 2022. This is a temporary system and HMPPS will replace this in February 2023. Further Fire Safety Improvement (FSI) work on approximately 75 sets of fire doors was also recently completed.

**Refurbishment and Living Facilities**

A feasibility study and costing exercise has been completed on bringing all houses up to the required standard. Funding was recently secured and it is hoped the works will be carried out at the same time as the FSI work. The refurbishment works is due to commence later this calendar year and the establishment will operate with one house empty for the duration of this project to allow the prison to decant one house at a time.

The expansion planned at HMP/YOI Styal will provide more modern accommodation for approximately 76 prisoners and the use of these facilities will be prioritised over the older living quarters which will allow for less overcrowding on the houses.

**Through the Gate (TTG) Services**

HMPPS remains committed to the effective resettlement of female prison leavers back into communities to reduce the risk of reoffending and this remains a priority within wider government work. HMPPS is aware there are current challenges with resettlement delivery and we are putting plans in place to address these issues, including ensuring clear alignment of different aspects of the resettlement service. The Female Offender Strategy delivery plan, due for publication soon, will set out our vision in how we intend to achieve better outcomes for female prisoners on release.

HMPPS is also working to extend the Commissioned Rehabilitative Service (CRS) Women's Services provision to all unsentenced women and immediate releases this year. There are regular prison release meetings, also attended by CRS providers, where case reviews facilitate discussion with solutions found and referrals made where appropriate. CRS providers are able to contribute and identify any potential No Fixed Abode (NFA) releases at an early stage. Homelessness Prevention Teams (HPT) work closely with the accommodation specialist at HMP/YOI Styal to identify, diagnose and generate solutions to pre-release processes wherever evidence highlights problems and identify and share innovations to improve housing outcomes.

**Prisoner Clothing**

HMPPS acknowledges the Board's concerns around this matter and has set out to resolve the issues raised by developing six female-prisoner specific garment ranges due to be manufactured for the women's estate. These include sports bras, underwear, pyjamas, loose fit tops and bottoms. Mass production of these garments is due to start in January 2023. In the meantime, HMP/YOI Styal's shop will continue to sell clothes to the prisoners that are provided via a charity. Separately, several charities also regularly donate clothing and underwear to the prison.

Transgender prisoners can access appropriate clothing via a number of routes. HMP/YOI Styal can contact nearby male prisons and collect a stock of male underwear and pyjamas. HMP Askham Grange

has developed a swap-shop which can be accessed by all establishments. The shop has a stock of binders and clothing appropriate to different genders. There are also local purchasing opportunities from Amazon for binders and other trans equipment, and prisoners can have appropriate items sent in if it supports them living in their acquired gender.