



Ministry
of Justice

Damian Hinds MP
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
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Dear Chair,

HMP BULLINGDON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JULY 2021 – 30 JUNE 2022

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 June 2022. 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 Bullingdon over the reporting period.

I was saddened to hear there were six deaths 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 address below the specific points you have raised for my attention.

I appreciate the Board's ongoing concerns about overcrowding. Further to the response to last year's report and my predecessor's letter from May 2022, I can confirm that we remain committed to building 247 more places at HMP Bullingdon. The Board will be aware that we have committed to creating 20,000 new prison places across the estate and will soon have 3,100 of those spaces available with the opening of HMP Fosse Way next Spring. HMP Fosse Way will hold a further 1,700 offenders when full. Extra capacity across the estate will help alleviate overcrowding.

As mentioned previously, I recognise that accommodating two prisoners in a cell designed for one is not desirable but continues to be necessary across the estate in order to accommodate all those committed to custody by the courts. It is also difficult to predict how these national trends will play out at a local level and the proportion of prisoners held in crowded cells at any prison will ultimately depend on regional population levels and demand. The installation of 260 privacy curtains at HMP Bullingdon will help improve conditions in cells needing them. Additionally, the 2023/24 Fire Safety Improvement programme at HMP Bullingdon will see some accommodation that is currently crowded being decanted and refurbished.

I acknowledge there are staffing issues at HMP Bullingdon. In late 2021, the Ministry of Justice launched a retention tool kit to help Governors to tackle the main drivers of attrition in their prisons. We are using the data from this and enhanced exit interviews to better understand why employees are leaving. Since April 2022, we have invested in several new initiatives to improve the experience of new joiners and increase retention of employees. These include a new peer-to-peer learning scheme, the introduction of mentors for new employees, a supervision pilot in two prisons, and new leadership training in prisons facing retention challenges.

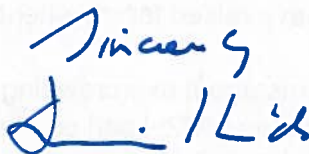
Locally, HMP Bullingdon is working closely with the recruitment team at headquarters to improve attraction and recruitment. This includes collaborative working with the Department for Work and Pensions and local colleges and the exploration of different types of advertisement platforms to showcase the prison. The Governor has developed a People Plan which sets out how Bullingdon will support, develop and retain staff together with a refreshed induction programme that increases management oversight to welcome and support new people at the prison. Staff training now includes building capability and confidence for both managers and prison officers alike.

We made a significant investment in pay for prison staff through the 2022/23 pay award. This delivered an increase in base pay of at least 4% for all staff between bands 2 to 11, alongside further targeted pay rises for our lowest paid staff of up to £3,000. This resulted in an increase in prison officer pay to at least £30,000. All of the measures taken has already seen staff retention levels improve at HMP Bullingdon.

Despite another difficult reporting period, it was encouraging to receive your comments about the successful commissioning of the body scanner and enhanced gate security, along with the increased rigour around equality and diversity data analysis. I was further encouraged to hear the prison is already benefitting from the Reoffending Reducing Accelerator project and that the new management-led repair/replacement/cleaning initiative is working well.

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 and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Bullingdon.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Damian Hinds', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

HMP BULLINGDON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JULY 2021 – 30 JUNE 2022

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Drugs

Nationally, HMPPS is implementing the £100 million Security Investment Programme (SIP) aimed at cutting crime in prisons, a part of which includes increased steps to tackle corruption. Through the SIP HMPPS has delivered:

- Airport-style gate security in 42 high risk sites, including HMP Bullingdon
- 75 x-ray body scanners across the entire closed adult male estate, including HMP Bullingdon; as of April 2022, approximately 20,000 positive indications were detected nationally
- Additional specialist staff, drugs dogs and security equipment
- 45 additional drug trace detection units, bringing the total to 135 units, to identify and prevent drugs like spice entering prisons
- The launch of the Counter-Corruption Unit; the unit now has additional capability to robustly pursue where corruption occurs and against the Serious and Organised Crime nominals who attempt to corrupt staff, together with a preventative service to support those staff less resilient to corruption

These measures are already making a difference as in the twelve-months to March 2022, the number of incidents where drugs were found in prisons decreased to 17,700 from 20,295, a decrease of 13% on the previous twelve-month period. During the same period, the number of incidents where mobile phones were found in prisons decreased by 9% to 7,988 from 8,793 in the previous year. At HMP Bullingdon, the use of body-scanners stopped over five-hundred illicit items from entering the prison helping to reduce violence.

HMPPS is also going further following the publication of the cross-government Drugs Strategy in December 2021. The strategy sets out a ten-year plan to reduce the supply and demand of drugs, deliver a high-quality treatment and recovery system, and reduce the harms drugs cause. The strategy is underpinned by a record £900 million investment to tackle drug misuse over the three-year spending review period, with the Ministry of Justice investing £120 million of this on additional security measures and to engage more offenders in treatment. This includes the deployment of counter-drone technology to prevent the conveyance of illicit items, enhancing mobile phone blocking technology, and enhancing the volume and range of drug testing across prisons and probation ensuring users are identified and referred into treatment. A Drug Diagnostic Support Visit was conducted at HMP Bullingdon in February 2022, making twenty-three direct recommendations with a further five considerations.

Prisoner Work, Education, and Training

The Head of Reducing Reoffending at HMP Bullingdon is actively engaged in finding skilled work opportunities and courses that are tailored to the needs of remand and short-term prisoners. HMP Bullingdon will ensure learners are placed on appropriate courses and will take into account individual sentence plans to ensure enough time is available to complete courses entered into.