



Ministry  
of Justice

**Damian Hinds MP**  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
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10 January 2023

*Dear Chair,*

**HMP THAMESIDE: 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 Thameside over the reporting period, particularly as you operated with a large number of vacancies. I address below the specific points you have raised for my attention.

As explained in last year's response, in June 2021, the Government published the draft Mental Health Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny. The Bill contains measures to ensure people with acute mental health needs in contact with the criminal justice system receive timely support and in the most appropriate setting. This includes the introduction of a statutory 28-day time limit for transfers from prisons and other places of detention to secure hospitals to reduce unnecessary delays and deliver swift access to treatment.

As the Government's focus shifts towards implementation, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has established the Transfer Time Limit Working Group (TTLWG). The TTLWG is a partnership between the MoJ, Department of Health and Social Care, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), Home Office, and NHS England to develop and deliver a clear implementation plan, and identify and mitigate any risks and issues, to ensure that transfers take place safely within 28-days.

The London Probation Region is currently operating at approximately 73% staffing capacity. To address this shortfall HMPPS has allocated more staff to London through voluntary redeployment and recruitment initiatives and plan to deploy 36 newly trained probation officers across London from December 2022 until March 2023.

Whilst the Probation Service has accelerated the recruitment of trainee probation officers over the last two financial years (2020/21 and 2021/22), the service has committed to recruiting another 1500 trainees during the next financial year to increase staffing further. Other initiatives include centralising the recruitment of key operational roles to expedite the onboarding of new hires in priority regions, including London; receiving and reviewing monthly exit interview data enabling the service to identify drivers of attrition and target retention activities; and, developing retention measures which include career pathways

and greater flexibility for staff wishing to continue working past retirement date together with exploring different ways to encourage former staff to return on a permanent basis.

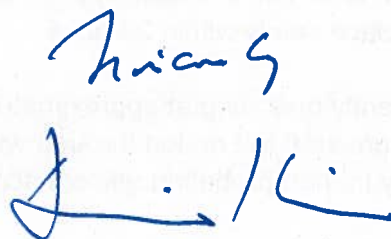
To support prisoner resettlement, part of the changes made for the unification of probation services in June 2021 allowed for contracts to be issued in each Probation Region (including the London Region) to providers of accommodation services for sentenced prisoners. These Commissioned Rehabilitative Service (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, including unsentenced prisoners, who have accommodation needs and hope to start delivery of this extended service by the end of the year.

Under the new resettlement approach all resettlement prisons, including HMP Thameside, have an embedded resettlement provision managed by or otherwise linked to a Probation Delivery Unit (PDU). These embedded pre-release teams will identify and address immediate resettlement needs and provide pre-release support for all people in prison (including people unconvicted and people out of area). The minimum will be to screen for resettlement needs through the Basic Custody Screening procedure and direct prisoners to specialist services within the prison such as Banking Administrators and Healthcare and provide pre-release services not currently available via CRS suppliers. It is acknowledged that unification of probation services affected the delivery of resettlement services in some prisons. The London Regional Probation Director is working to stabilise the pre-release team and CRS provision in her region to improve service delivery to all people in London prisons.

I appreciate it has been another difficult reporting period, it was therefore encouraging to receive your comments about the performance of the facilities management provider, the successful implementation of the new incentives scheme, and the continued good work of the social enterprise group Turning Point. It was very thoughtful of the library staff to contact all of the main embassies to increase the offering to foreign national prisoners and I was impressed to learn of the team's award for outstanding feedback.

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. 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 Thameside.

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 THAMESIDE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JULY 2021 – 30 JUNE 2022**

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

#### **Prisoners' Property**

The new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework was implemented on 5 September 2022. 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.

HMP Thameside deals with a high number of movements and transfers on a daily basis and it is recognised this puts a strain on the system. Additional resources have now been deployed and performance has improved together with a significant reduction in the backlog.

#### **Category D Capacity**

The availability of Category D spaces was affected by the requirement to close a number accommodation blocks in the open estate over the course of 2021 which no longer met statutory fire safety standards. The impact on the overall open estate has been managed through replacing some of these places, particularly in the south, with existing temporary accommodation which was already in place on some sites as part of HMPPS' Covid-19 contingencies. Other sites were managed with new temporary accommodation. HMPPS is investing £3.8 billion over the next three years to deliver 20,000 additional modern prison places across England and Wales by the mid-2020s. This portfolio of work includes expansion of the Category D estate at a number of sites across the country with the creation of 1320 places, comprising of 685 additional places through expansion, and 635 places to replace the decommissioned modular units which no longer met statutory fire safety standards.

#### **External Providers and Contract Management**

Restructuring of resources and the introduction of the Community Rehabilitation Service will see better oversight of resettlement outcomes for prisoners. A wider review of education contracts will drive improvement in education delivery in Privately Managed Prisons. There has also been local investment in services for the remand population at HMP Thameside.