



Ministry
of Justice

Damian Hinds
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall
The Drive
Lichfield
Staffordshire
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30 November 2022

Dear Chair,

HMP/YOI SWINFEN HALL: 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 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 Swinfen Hall over the reporting period, particularly as you have a number of vacancies.

I note you have not raised any issues for my attention, but I do recognise the strain placed on the Board with producing your annual report. I also note your concerns that the prison has not been as supportive as the Board would have expected and I thank you for drawing this to my attention. I have received assurance from the Governor that HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall will ensure that the Memorandum of Understanding between IMBs and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is fully met during your next reporting period.

I was pleased to receive your comments recognising the Governor's efforts to reshape the prisons culture and that the clean, rehabilitative, enabling and decent programme is improving the wing environment. It was reassuring to read that monitoring via the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee has improved, as well as there being significant progress in addressing racial imbalances. I was encouraged by the opportunities that are available to prisoners, such as the horticulture workers growing food for the prison and the barbering academy which helped 39 learners through their introductory qualification. I was also pleased to note that in-cell telephony has now been installed providing improved opportunities for prisoners to maintain family ties.

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 and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall.

Damian Hinds
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Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

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

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoner Transfers

The Board's concern is recognised and the introduction of a Safety Analyst at HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall will support the prison to identify any safety or security concerns of newly received prisoners before they arrive. This work will take place in consultation with Offender Management Unit to ensure a good transition into the prison.

Prisoners' Property

Since the Board's reporting period, 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.

Locally at HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall a review of internal processes relating to prisoners' property will be taking place to ensure that the distribution of received prisoner property and the authorisation of clothing parcels is effective. In addition, the management of the Reception is being aligned with Early Days in Custody to assist with continuity and ownership of processes. The issuing of annual clothing parcels has also had a responsibility change moving from Key Workers to Residential Officers in light of the reduced Key Work activity.

Prison Complexity

HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall is assessed as a Standard Plus complexity rating, Category C prison looking after a diverse group of 18 to 28 year-old prisoners serving long sentences. Many of these prisoners have complex needs but the prison continues to support them through bespoke services such as those described in the Board's report.

It is worth noting that Standard Plus was a new complexity level following the Job Evaluation Scheme review in 2020 and was first introduced into prison budgets and senior management structures for the 2022/23 financial year. Previously prisons were only able to be rated Standard or Complex. HMPPS regularly reviews complexity ratings and will be reviewing a number of prisons in the New Year. Governors and Prison Group Directors are asked to contribute to the review by completing a complexity pro forma. The review panel, chaired by the HMPPS Chief Operating Officer, ratifies the complexity categorisation using the qualitative data provide by Prison Group Directors and their Governors against eight indicators. Following the decision-making process there is an appeals stage where prisons have the opportunity to make further submissions if they have further evidence not already seen by the panel that will support their case.

Eight criteria indicators are used when determining a prisons complexity rating which include, the size of population; size of staffing group; complexity of prisoner population and risk management; people management (location, turnover, corruption or primary employer); site logistics (split sites, multiple receptions); categorisation and reconfiguration; stakeholder scrutiny; and financial management.

Offender Assessment System

The Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model moved the responsibility of the completion of Start Custody Offender Assessment System (OASys) for long term custodial cases, into the prison estate. Prisons received refreshed staffing profiles for Prison Offender Managers (POM) to reflect the change in responsibility and completion of task. Prisons with a trainer and resettlement functions are resourced to undertake OASys activity, therefore, HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall receives prisoners without an OASys when they are allocated directly from reception prisons post sentencing and ideally this should happen within ten working days. There are also instances where prisoners transfer from training and resettlement prisons to another without an OASys, this is largely due to resourcing pressures, this has created a national backlog of start OASys assessments. The OASys Task Force are working with HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall to reduce the current backlog and establish processes to ensure new cases do not enter backlog. The prison is undertaking a review of capability, which includes how case administration resources can be used more effectively to support completion and gain a more proportionate balance between quality and quantity of assessments to optimise delivery.