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13 March 2023

**HMP DARTMOOR; INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 OCTOBER 2021  
– 30 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Thank you for your letter of 21 February 2023 on behalf of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Dartmoor. I address below the specific points you have raised.

The Ageing Population Strategy is being prepared for publication later in 2023. It is not possible to provide a more specific date as details of the strategy are still being worked on which will set out how HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) will make improvements to services for older prisoners, the prison regime, health and care, as well as preparation for release and resettlement. HMPPS will shortly be releasing two updated policy frameworks in respect of Diversity and Inclusion. Whilst these are not specific to older prisoners or staff, they do reinforce the need for prisons to be proactive to meet the obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010. In the meantime, NHS England continues to commission and develop services for older prisoners with regular reviews of patient needs taking place to ensure services are appropriate. Where overnight individual care plans are required and can be facilitated within the prison environment, additional resources have been and will continue to be deployed at HMP Dartmoor in partnership with HMPPS and Devon County Council. Discussions are also taking place with nursing and care home partners within the region to identify further support opportunities for older prisoners and further solutions are being discussed between HMPPS and NHS England at a regional level. In addition, the Two Bridges day centre will shortly be re-opening (supported by a tutor from Weston College).

Regarding the task and finish group led jointly by HMPPS and NHS England, initial outcomes are anticipated during 2023. The terms of reference look to provide longer term solutions for the older population at HMP Dartmoor and across the South West region, with the current focus on improving the management of hospital escorts and bed watches. Scoping exercises are looking at:

- What other services could be provided within prisons, such as X-ray and dialysis.
- Strengthening links with community services such as nursing and care homes and in-reach hospital provisions.
- Developing more appropriate prison accommodation.

To provide further clarification on the health and social care support, the National Partnership Agreement for Health and Social Care for England (2022-2025) already commits to a cross-government partnership approach. It includes a specific priority focused on responding to the projected increase in the prison population, including facilities and capacity to enable care for more prisoners with increased social care

needs and can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-offenders>. The recommissioning of health services in the South West region provides greater focus on the needs of each prison, with individual specifications developed for each site. Whilst the responsibility for social care at HMP Dartmoor remains with Devon County Council, as previously noted services are co-commissioned by NHS England and Devon County Council, which is a model of good practice and is now being used in other areas. The new healthcare provider Oxleas has committed to providing overnight care at a category C prison in Devon which will be a pathway available to prisoners at HMP Dartmoor. Discussions are taking place on how Oxleas will implement this provision, but in the meantime, the Governor at HMP Dartmoor will continue to engage with NHS England and Devon County Council to ensure access to social care provision is delivered in line with services available in the community.

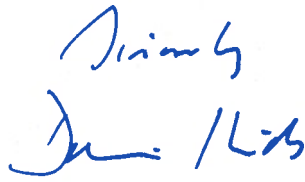
Regarding the difference of a standard cell to that of cell with reasonable adjustments for disability, these would generally be bigger to allow for wheelchair access and movement, including wider doorframes but the adaptations would be based on local assessment and available funds, rather than there being a standard specification. Other examples of adaptations may include in-cell washing facilities and a remote-control cell call. In my response of 1 February 2023 to the Board's report, I advised that funding had been secured. Regrettably it is not possible to deliver this in the current financial year, funds will need to be sought in the 2023/24 financial year. The wider works across F wing to create better accessibility was a feasibility study by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Property Directorate and has yet to proceed into a project mandate for delivery. As such, there are no associated timescales for delivery.

In terms of improving Equality Act 2010 compliance across the rest of HMP Dartmoor, as I am sure the Board can appreciate, to make every cell compliant would be impossible due to the construction at HMP Dartmoor. HMPPS has dedicated diversity and inclusion policies, including the process of equality analysis, which support the prison estate in understanding and meeting the needs of prisoners with disabilities and help to inform any future plans for building or adapting prisons. HMPPS is reviewing options to reinstate the places currently out of use in C wing at HMP Dartmoor and as part of that refurbishment programme consideration will be given to improving accessibility for prisoners. The Governor has also submitted a bid via the 2023/24 Asset Investment Board for disabled access to the chapel.

The Workforce Delivery Project, which is undertaking the national review of resources within category C prisons, is unlikely to lead to any extensive changes to staffing models before the financial year 2024/25. Therefore, the Governor has taken the decision to commission a local profiling exercise rather than deferring until the wider national review is complete. However, it should be noted that the local reprofile will not generate additional resources for HMP Dartmoor. Only where there are business changes, such as capacity expansion or a change of function, would the resource model be reviewed automatically. Where the Governor and Prison Group Director are concerned that the existing staff models are insufficient, a business case can be made for consideration and a review from the central resource modelling team will be arranged.

Turning to your comments about the digital TV upgrade at HMP Dartmoor, the current TV service is received through a digital signal which is then converted to analogue. A site-wide review of in-cell TV systems was undertaken recently, which found that the system remains operable in the current configuration. HMP Dartmoor is not unique with most TV channels moving to high definition; this is affecting prisons across the estate. Work is therefore underway to assess the current service provision and develop a roadmap with the MoJ Digital Team and MoJ Property Directorate for moving to a fully digital service in the longer term and as funding allows. The provision of any upgrade will need to be aligned with any refresh of the relevant policy and prisoner enhancements, and also with continuing provision of National Prison Radio.

Thank you for writing to me on these important points, I hope this information is useful. I value the role played by the members of Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Dartmoor.

Handwritten signature of Damian Hinds in blue ink.

**Damian Hinds**  
**Minister for Prisons and Probation**