



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Risley
Warrington Road
Risley
Warrington
WA3 6BP

6 March 2023

Dear Chair,

HMP RISLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2021 – 31 MARCH 2022

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 March 2022. I was saddened to hear there were four deaths in custody during the reporting year, three of which were due to natural causes. 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 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 Risley over the reporting period, especially as you had several vacancies.

I address below the specific point you have raised for my attention about improving the repatriation and deportation procedures for foreign national offenders (FNO) and thank you for drawing this ongoing concern to my attention. It is recognised that the ability of the UK to deport FNOs was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic due to limited return routes and Covid-19 outbreaks, but in responding to these unique circumstances FNO deportations continued wherever possible.

Last year in working with the Home Office, the Early Removal Scheme was expanded in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 to allow FNOs to be removed up to twelve months before the earliest release point of their sentence, instead of nine months. The Prisoner Transfer Agreement with Albania also entered into force in May 2022, and the UK is now looking to negotiate new Prisoner Transfer Agreements with EU Member States and wider-world countries.

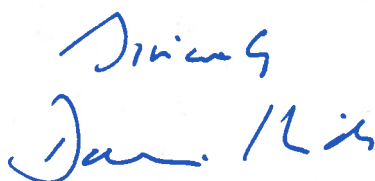
I can assure the Board that the removal of FNOs remains a Government priority with the Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) continuing to work closely with the Home Office to maximise the number of deportations, including exploring ways to reduce the timeframes of the removals.

Turning to the positives within your report, I was reassured to read there were fewer incidents of violence and use of force since the previous year and that good support is provided to prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm. It was pleasing to note that prisoners are treated fairly, have respectful relationships with staff and the introduction of in-cell telephony has improved the opportunity for prisoners to maintain family ties. I was interested to read about the joined-up approach to work and accommodation and the employability mini roadshow.

I understand from the Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire Prison Group that the prison was swift in its recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic to return to full delivery of services and since your reporting period the prison has made improvements to employment outcomes and received a positive Ofsted assessment. I therefore look forward to the Board being able to report on the progress the prison has made in the coming year.

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 Risley.



Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

**HMP RISLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2021 – 31 MARCH 2022**

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners' Property

The new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework was published August 2022. The Framework is the result of extensive consultation including with the IMB. It was 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. The introduction of digitally recorded Person Escort Records, including property tags, will also assist with any investigations for property that is lost in transit.

It is noted that the Board has recognised that there have been improvements locally and HMP Risley has implemented a number of systems to improve the handling of prisoners' property. This includes working with sending prisons to ensure all property is transferred allowing this to be processed with the prisoner on their arrival at HMP Risley. Staff training sessions on the processing of property have been conducted due to a high number of new staff in post which has led to improvements in the timeliness of processing property. Management quality assurance checks have also been implemented with regular updates provided to residential managers and the processing of parcels and orders is being monitored regularly with staff working in this area quickly rectifying any delays.

In addition, HMP Risley has worked in partnership with a charitable foundation to establish a shop which is based outside of the prison. This is open to visitors to make purchases, such as clothing, on a prisoner's behalf, which is then issued to the prisoner promptly. The prison is now looking to build on this partnership to expand the range of items that are available.