



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Wormwood Scrubs
Du Cane Road
London
W12 0AE

29 March 2023

Dear Chair,

**HMP WORMWOOD SCRUBS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JUNE 2021 – 31 MAY 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 May 2022. I met the new Governor and staff when I visited the prison on 2 February 2023, and I was pleased to discuss some of the themes in more detail. I am very much aware of the amount of effort that goes into producing annual reports and thank you for providing a comprehensive picture over the reporting period.

I note sadly six men died during your reporting year. I would like to assure the Board that the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman recommendations are taken very seriously, and I am encouraged that the prison team acted swiftly to implement changes to early days in custody processes to make the prison safer. The new Governor has a strong focus on safety and has implemented cohorting in smaller group activity which has seen a reduction in levels of violence and self-harm.

I address below the specific points you have raised for my attention:

Citizens Advice resumed service last summer for one day per week. I am pleased to announce that external funding has been secured for Citizens Advice to provide a service at HMP Wormwood Scrubs three days a week from April 2023.

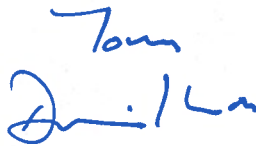
Turning to the Board's concern about prisoners with severe mental ill health who require a transfer to a secure hospital, it is recognised that prisons are not an appropriate setting. We are committed to improving mental health outcomes for people in contact with the criminal justice system, to ensure that those with severe mental health needs receive timely support, in the most appropriate setting. In June 2022, the Government published the draft Mental Health Bill which was recently subject to pre-legislative scrutiny. The Bill contains measures to speed up access to specialist inpatient care and treatment. This includes the introduction of a statutory 28-day time limit for the transfer of patients from prison to mental health hospitals. This time limit, together with operational improvements, aims to reduce unnecessary delays and deliver swifter access to treatment. I hope to reassure the Board that NHS England has introduced new performance metrics to monitor patients being referred, assessed, and transferred under the Mental Health Act. These commenced in April 2021 and work is ongoing to improve consistency and quality. This will provide oversight to ensure that for every individual referred, the best decisions are made to enable access to the most appropriate service, in the correct geographical location, at the right time. NHS England has also developed a new process for collecting and monitoring data on transfers. A data input portal implemented from April 2021 enables providers to submit transfer and remission data. This is analysed to identify trends and areas where further improvement is needed to meet the 28-day timeframe.

Monitoring of the monthly data is ongoing and if timeframes are breached, targeted work is carried out with local and regional teams and NHS funded providers.

Although it has been a difficult reporting period, it was encouraging to hear that the prison has been successful in moving some self-isolating prisoners out of the segregation unit and back onto normal location. I am pleased that Chaplaincy and its pastoral care role remains very strong and effective and several prisoner forums and focus groups have been established / reinstated. I appreciate the Board's positive feedback about The Escape staff café and the musical sessions facilitated for prisoners held in the inpatient unit.

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 issue raised in your report is 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 Wormwood Scrubs.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom' above 'Damian Hinds'.

Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

**HMP WORMWOOD SCRUBS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JUNE 2021 – 31 MAY 2022****HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report****Prisoners' Property**

The newly published Prisoners' Property Policy Framework came into effect 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 managing cell clearances, the handling of valuable property, 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 assist with investigations for property that is lost in transit with Prisoner Escort and Custody Services suppliers.

HMPPS notes the Board's concern about the need for digital improvements to handling property. This continues to be explored but the nature of that work means that any such changes are longer-term and as a result it was not possible to include in the new Framework.

Local arrangements are in place to ensure cell clearances are carried out effectively. The Governor can discuss this in more detail with the Board.