



Ministry  
of Justice

**Damian Hinds**  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMYOI Werrington  
Ash Bank Road  
Werrington  
Stoke-On-Trent,  
Staffordshire  
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8 February 2023

Dear Chair,

**HMYOI WERRINGTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2021 – 31 AUGUST 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 August 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 HMYOI Werrington over the reporting period, especially as you had several vacancies.

I address below the specific point you have raised for my attention, which includes the matter raised also for the Youth Custody Service.

Firstly, I would like to assure the Board that as Minister for Prisons and Probation I have taken time to specifically discuss HMYOI Werrington with my officials in the Youth Custody Service after reading your report. I am aware of the findings of the HM Inspectorate of Prisons inspection and review of progress in 2022. Notably I am alert to the concerns around managing behaviour and providing a purposeful regime, issues which your Board has touched upon, and my officials have updated me on.

I note your concern that there has been limited improvement at HMYOI Werrington in the period of the Board's report. As the Board may be aware, some of the lost ground has been affected by resource challenges. HMYOI Werrington has seen an improvement in staff morale and the significant changes to the senior leadership team have provided a new direction and focus. Progress has been made in areas such as living conditions, healthcare and the provision of offending behaviour interventions. Support is being given to children to resolve their conflicts with each other, to increase their time in the classroom and increase skills development through quality enrichment activity. The current staffing position at HMYOI Werrington is considered adequate; staff in post is 103 against a target staffing figure of 115. A new profile was implemented in January 2023.

In relation to the time children spend out of their rooms, there has been a particular focus on improving time out of room and meaningful activity since August 2022. Staff are exploring ways to expand the purposeful activity provision at the weekends (including a focus on those children who are unfortunately separated from the main population) and engage the children in more community-based activities. The education provider has increased the timetabled hours for Maths and English to support the development of children's functional skills and has facilitated individualised learning planning.

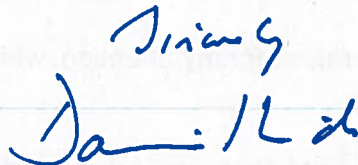
Although the Board's concern about the safety of young people and staff have not been raised as a specific concern for my attention, I wish to assure the Board that new safety strategies have been

embedded to address violence and behaviour management. The strategy for reducing violence has been focused on consistent enrichment activities in the evenings and at weekends which incentivises positive behaviour. HMYOI Werrington saw a three-month consecutive reduction in violence from September to November 2022, as well as resulting in a fewer number of weapons found. I acknowledge the serious incident that took place last April and thank you for drawing this issue to my attention. I hope to reassure the Board that the Senior Leadership Team have been reminded of the need to notify your Board when a serious incident takes place, as per the Memorandum of Understanding between HM Prison and Probation Service and the Management Board of the Independent Monitoring Boards.

Despite it being a difficult year, it was encouraging to receive your positive comments about the primary and mental health services and the level of support provided to the young people by the Kinetic Youth team and Chaplaincy. It was pleasing to note that the family engagement manager's newsletter brought the children and their families together.

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. A new Governor took up post on 30 January 2023, after a comprehensive handover from the former interim-Governor, to ensure continuity for the children and staff at HMYOI Werrington.

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 HMYOI Werrington.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Damian Hinds', is positioned above the printed name and title.

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