



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Kirklevington Grange
Kirklevington
Yarm
TS15 9PA

20 July 2023

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI KIRKLEVINGTON GRANGE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 December 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 Kirklevington Grange over the reporting period.

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

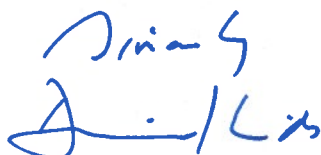
I understand the Board's continued concerns regarding the prison's reduced operational capacity. The Rapid Cell Deployment project will be delivering temporary modular accommodation at HMP/YOI Kirklevington Grange with a life cycle of 15 years which will provide space for up to 152 prisoners. However, it is recognised that the project has been significantly delayed due to the requirement to satisfy nutrient neutrality regulations as part of receiving planning permission which involves providing a Sewage Treatment Plant, as well as the power infrastructure to support the plant. To expedite delivery, discussions are being held between ministers from the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in May 2023 to explore the possibility of the MoJ being prioritised for nutrient neutrality credits, which will allow the development to progress. These discussions have been positive to date and assuming the MoJ achieves these credits it is estimated that the accommodation would be ready for use by prisoners in mid to late 2024. In addition, locally HMP/YOI Kirklevington Grange has carried out detailed planning in order to be ready to take the increase in prisoners once the new accommodation units are operational.

Turning to the positives within your report, it was reassuring to receive your comments that the prison is a well run and safe environment where facilities, such as the visitors' room, have been improved over the reporting year. I was pleased to note that retention of staff is good and that they are knowledgeable about the prisoners in their care and are able to resolve issues effectively, ensuring fair and humane treatment. I was encouraged to read that healthcare services are provided to a high standard and that prisoners are consulted on diversity and inclusion matters to make improvements with one officer winning a Butler Trust Award for work with the gypsy, roma and traveller community and another officer winning a Nepacs award for work with veterans.

I was also pleased to read that there is good resettlement support, with the prison working with a variety of organisations, including some set up by former prisoners, and that all prisoners had accommodation to go to at the point of release. It was also encouraging to note that the work of the local Employment Advisory Board has helped increase the number of prisoners employed after their release.

I note that in raising two local issues of concern in your report about prisoners being returned to closed conditions and prisoner complaints you have recognised the improvements that the prison has made. I too am grateful for the hard work and professionalism of everyone working at the prison for addressing these and making other improvements and the Governor will continue to keep you aware of the progress being made locally as this work continues. HM Prison and Probation Service (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 Kirklevington Grange.



Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners' Property

The *Prisoners' Property* Policy Framework, which was implemented in September 2022, 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 prisons, 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 Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) vehicle fleet will carry the number of custodies it is intended for, together with their property in line with the volumetric limit set out in the *Prisoners' Property* Policy Framework. PECS monitor all aspects of the contractors' performance and on occasions where it fails to meet the agreed levels this is raised with the contractor for improvement. The introduction of digitally recorded Person Escort Records including property tags will also assist with investigations should any property be lost in transit with PECS suppliers.

The Framework is also clear that Governors in public sector prisons and Directors in contracted prisons should ensure management checks are undertaken to have confidence that prisoners' property is being handled correctly and with care. This includes, for example property cards being accurately completed and the volume of property held by prisoners being checked regularly to ensure it does not become excessive. Work is ongoing across the North East prison group to ensure that prisons are adequately storing prisoners' property safely and securely, as well as ensuring that when a prisoner transfers, either all their property goes with them on the day or it follows quickly thereafter. In addition, HMPPS plans to undertake work in due course to establish the impact of the new Framework nationally across the estate.

It is also recognised that there are inconsistencies across the estate with permissible items of property that prisoners can have, as these are chosen by prisons from the National Facilities List (NFL) within the *Incentives* Policy Framework. The freedom to select items is important as it allows Governors and Directors to tailor their local incentives policy in a way that better incentivises their prison population. However, all items of prisoners' property must remain subject to volumetric control limits. The NFL consisting of two lists, the first part being items that must be permitted to all prisoners where requested, and then a second part of those items that prisons are able to include in their local incentives policy on an optional basis.