



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Liverpool
68 Hornby Road
Liverpool
L9 3DF

30 October 2023

Dec Chair,

HMP LIVERPOOL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY to 31 DECEMBER 2022

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 December 2022 and for providing a comprehensive picture of HMP Liverpool over the reporting period, especially as you operated with a significantly reduced complement of members.

I was saddened to hear there were four deaths in custody during the reporting year. 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.

Segregation should be used only as a last resort whilst maintaining a balance to ensure it remains an option for disruptive prisoners and where all other options have been tried or are considered inappropriate. All segregated prisoners are managed by a local Segregation Review Board (SRB) which must consider any additional steps to safeguard the mental health of prisoners whilst in segregation including care plans that detail how their mental wellbeing is to be supported. The SRB will ensure measures are put in place to safeguard the mental health of segregated prisoners including enhanced observations, dialogue and Mental Health Team input. Listeners, or other appropriate prisoner support groups, are also able to attend the segregation unit where appropriate.

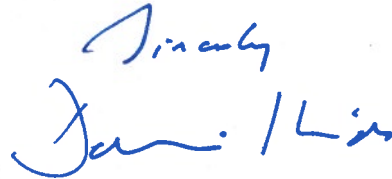
For those who require transfer to hospital settings for mental health assessment and treatment, the Government published the Draft Mental Health Bill on 27 June 2022. This included a commitment to introduce a 28-day statutory time limit for transfers from prison to hospital for patients requiring in-patient mental health treatment under the Mental Health Act. This time limit mirrors that introduced in NHS England's good practice guidance, published in June 2021, starting at the point of an initial referral and ending at the point of the prisoner's admission to hospital. The Bill also introduces a statutory notice process to create a clear starting point for the 28-day period. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is responsible for determining the location of prisoners whilst they await a transfer to ensure safety and security. NHS England does not commission secure accommodation in the prison estate for those with serious mental health difficulties. I would like to assure the Board that HMP Liverpool has governance processes in place to ensure that prisoners segregated pending transfer to secure hospital are reviewed weekly and that progression is monitored via health commissioners and the Prison Group Director.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that incidents of violence against staff have reduced, that there are positive interactions between prisoners and staff, and that a more structured approach has contributed to the overall settled atmosphere across the prison. I was also pleased to read that despite

the post-covid challenges the education team provided a range of enrichment courses and workshops, and that the improved prison visiting regime now includes prisoners now running the snack bar with profits being reinvested into the prison's visits budget.

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 Liverpool.

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

Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Re-Role, Facilities, and Staffing

Re-role and Facilities

There has been significant investment in recent years to improve the infrastructure and accommodation at HMP Liverpool. Transitioning from a category B Reception prison to a category C Training and Resettlement prison would require HMPPS to revisit how buildings and facilities are being used. Before HMP Liverpool transitions to a category C Training and Resettlement prison, a full review of resources needs to be undertaken and the prison given the staffing model needed to fulfil its new role. The strategic plan to fully re-role HMP Liverpool as a Resettlement category C prison is dependent on nearby HMP Altcourse absorbing the remaining remand function. This significant change has been delayed until early 2025 to allow HMP Altcourse to make the necessary adjustments. The Governor will develop a comprehensive plan for the re-role of the prison over the coming months as preparation for the transition. Training needs for staff will form part of any project planning considerations.

Staffing

HMP Liverpool has invested in the recruitment of a Prison Employment Lead with direct responsibility for engaging with local employers for prisoner training and employment needs. This approach will allow for investment from private sector employers to ensure prisoners receive training within the prison setting in order to be ready for employment at the point of release. An example of this is the planned opening of a training venue within the prison that will replicate a Marston's pub providing prisoners with the training and skills to be employed immediately from release.

HMP Liverpool has also invested in the appointment of a new Head of Education Skills and Work who will work closely with the Prison Employment Lead and Strategic Housing Specialists to further strengthen the managerial attention in improving prisoner rehabilitation and preparing them for release back into society. This includes work to further improve the regime and ensure improved activity attendance.

Prisoners' Property

HMPPS notes the Board's concerns about the transfer of prisoners' property despite implementation of the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework on 5 September 2022. The Framework places an emphasis on ensuring compliance with volumetric control limits, since anything within these limits will be transferred with the prisoner. Volumetric control limits apply to all prisons and the Framework contains a leaflet to explain these limits to prisoners. The Framework introduced a new requirement that prisons must transfer excess property within four weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances which make this impossible. The Framework is clear that Governors should ensure management checks are undertaken to have confidence that prisoners' property is being handled correctly and with care. HMPPS will monitor the impact of the new Framework going forward and will continue to look at what further improvements can be made.

The introduction of digitally recorded Prisoner Escort Records (dPER) includes a property section that accurately records the number and type of sealed property 'owned' by and transferred with the prisoner and an accurate record of property handover between different stakeholders. This is now embedded as business as usual. The digital process has assisted with investigations for property that is lost in transit with Prisoner Escorting and Custody Services suppliers. In accordance with the HMPPS Prisoner Property Framework, if the limit of items allowed in possession has been reached, and if there is no space

on the escort vehicle to transport items safely and securely, the responsibility for transfer of any remaining items remains with the sending prison.

Staff Absence

HMPPS aims to reduce sickness absence by creating and maintaining a culture that supports the physical and mental health of employees and, where possible, preventing health problems from occurring. The Supporting Attendance policy and procedure focuses on managers supporting employees to stay in work by helping them when they experience ill-health, or to return to work as soon as they are well enough following a period of sickness absence. The Ministry of Justice has recently introduced refreshed supporting attendance information with a focus on support and streamlining the number of documents to make it easier for managers and employees to find the information they need.

Attendance management processes are well embedded at HMP Liverpool, and the Governor has a determined focus on reducing sick absence. The Governor has also reviewed how staff are deployed on a daily basis in order to maximise the opportunity for prisoners to consistently attend activities.