



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Winchester
Romsey Road
Winchester
Hampshire
SO22 5DF

6 October 2023

Dear Chair,

HMP/YOI WINCHESTER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2022 – 31 MAY 2023

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 May 2023. 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 Winchester over the reporting period. I noted the Board's comments about attrition and am sorry to hear of the problems experienced recruiting new members. My team have forwarded your concerns to the IMB Secretariat who will respond to you directly.

I met the Governor and your colleagues Cord and Amelia when I visited HMP/YOI Winchester on 6 January 2023 and was pleased to discuss some of the themes in more detail which I hope proved helpful. 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. I address below the specific points you have raised for my attention.

Under the new resettlement approach all resettlement prisons, including HMP/YOI Winchester, have an embedded resettlement provision managed by or otherwise linked to a Probation Delivery Unit (PDU). Pre-release teams identify and address immediate resettlement needs and provide pre-release support for all people in prison, including those people on remand. The minimum is to screen for resettlement needs via a Basic Custody Screening Tool completion, and signpost to specialist services within the prison such as Prison Banking Administrators, Healthcare and Rehabilitative Services.

Prisoners that have been on remand and are released on the date of sentence (due to time served) are subject to probation supervision and are also eligible for Commissioned Rehabilitative Service (CRS) support after release. CRS Accommodation providers are mandated to have a presence in the resettlement prisons in their region, including HMP/YOI Winchester. Although the CRS Accommodation services were initially only available for sentenced prisoners, an extension to the South Central Probation Region CRS Accommodation contract commenced in November 2022 to provide a service to those on remand at HMP/YOI Winchester.

The Ministry of Justice and HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) recognise the need to ensure services, support, and accommodation for older prisoners are appropriate. We have been developing an Ageing Population Strategy and are currently consulting with relevant stakeholders with a view to publishing proposals later this year. Victorian prisons such as HMP Winchester and many of those built in

the 1960's and 1970's were not initially designed with access for those with a disability in mind, though alterations have been made to accommodate those individuals who are disabled.

At HMP/YOI Winchester, décor is used to follow known principles designed to aid a person's wayfinding and accounts for needs around dementia and other cognitive impairments prevalent with the older prisoners. There are also specific activity spaces that enable older prisoners to engage in age-appropriate activities. Wings A, B, and D are Victorian but C wing was rebuilt in the 1990's. It has a lift, larger doors, and a number of the cells have wider doorways and lower beds. The cells are bigger and there is suitable space for communal recreational opportunities. The Residential Assurance Team within the prison ensure that their current cells are all in working order and decent on a weekly basis and conduct minor repairs if required. HMP/YOI Winchester is also exploring the feasibility of relocating the Persons Convicted of Sexual Offences (PCoSO) cohort to C wing to improve access as they are mostly older prisoners. HMP/YOI Winchester is committed to always improving and exploring innovative ideas for their increasing number of older and disabled prisoners.

Nationally, the aims and intentions of the New Prison Capacity Team is to build a modern, efficient prison estate that is safe and productive to live and work within. This involves improving the physical design and structures of the sites to encompass the safety of all individuals. At new prisons such as HMP Five Wells, Fosse Way, Millsike, and in the expansion projects that use the new houseblock design, we have catered for a growing number of elderly and/or disabled prisoners by providing an increased number of accessible cells including low mobility type; wheelchair accessible cells and medical cells associated with older prisoners. Amenities have been designed to ensure that there is equality of access for all prisoners through their locations on ground floor levels ensuring lifts are available and by building technology infrastructures that enable the use of hearing loops and other technological advances that can support access and care for older prisoners.

It was encouraging to receive your comments about the improving staff attrition rate at HMP/YOI Winchester together with the robust recruitment pipeline, that headquarters' support for the prison ceased its activity early as it considers the prison has met its requirements and in fact can be used as success model for Victorian prisons, and the conversion of the basement of A wing to house enhanced status prisoners. I was also pleased to note the resumption of the Prison Council, the work of the BearFace Theatre group with prisoners, and the awards won from the Koestler Art Scheme along with the murals that made a noticeable difference to the corridors.

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/YOI Winchester.

Yours ever,

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

Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

HMP/YOI WINCHESTER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2022 – 31 MAY 2023

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

New Care and Separation Unit (CSU)

The design of the new CSU was agreed by all stakeholders and the project was approved to be funded from the 2023/24 capital maintenance allocation. The construction of the new CSU has been delayed due to two main issues. Firstly, the contractor has seen a large increase in inflationary costs for building materials, particularly following the Covid pandemic and more recently the actual rate of inflation. Negotiations are taking place for additional finance to offset these costs. The second issue is the concerns raised by the establishment regarding the design of the building. The redesign is currently taking place and the proposed changes undergoing consultation. Delivery timescales will be confirmed once this is complete.

Although there is no fixed date for the contractor to return to the site and resume construction, the provisional date for resumption is April 2024, subject to agreed design and finance agreement. This would then push the expected completion date towards the end of 2024.

CCTV System

Further to last years' response, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) projects team has been to the site to conduct initial feasibility and design studies to prepare for tender. It is not possible to provide a date for the installation or completion at this stage and the extent of the project is still reliant on receiving adequate funding.

The Board may also be aware that there is a need to replace the dilapidated Emergency Control Room. As a result of recent issues with leaks in the control room, options studies are currently being conducted regarding the relocation or refurbishment of the existing control room to include replacement of the equipment therein and the complete CCTV system. The project is a priority for HMPPS and once the reports are complete it will be considered for inclusion in the capital maintenance programme.

This is a significant capital investment and the prison is working proactively with MoJ property and Government Facilities Services Limited (GFSL) to expedite this work. As mentioned earlier, the project is subject to securing finance and demands for maintenance are much greater than the available funding. Therefore, once a bid for a project is received, HMPPS has to prioritise works very carefully to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency.

Capital Investment

HMPPS acknowledges the Board's concerns about maintenance and the fabric of the prison. The Hearn Wing had heating issues and a temporary containerised boiler was installed for the area and has provided hot water and heating to the wing with no further issues. A permanent solution is now being pursued.

The Chapel/E wing issues were caused by a major leak in the pipework within the control room. This has resulted in the system having to be drained down. This is not possible to repair without moving the control room from its current location, either temporarily or to a new location as mentioned above. In the interim, contingencies are being progressed to upgrade the electrical boards for the chapel and E Wing to give the capacity to enable the installation of electric heaters. Contractors have attended the prison, quotes

obtained, and costs approved. Work is due to commence in October, and following completion temporary heating devices will be hired for the area.

A bid for roof works on Westhill was submitted as a major maintenance item on a number of occasions but has not been successful. The latest bid was submitted in April 2023. Contractors have attended to provide quotes for the weights room and this work will be funded at a local level by HMPPS' Property Directorate. This is planned to be completed as soon as possible, subject to the contractors' availability. GFSL has surveyed the old administration building roof and have engaged with the contractor to carry out repairs. A number of repairs have been carried out on the healthcare unit roof with limited success as the issue seems to relate to the old tank room. GFSL will continue to provide patch repairs, and the removal of the tank room is under consideration as a long-term solution.