



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Isle of Wight  
Albany  
Newport  
Isle of Wight  
PO30 5RS

16 October 2023

*Dear Chair,*

**HMP ISLE OF WIGHT: 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 was saddened to hear there were seven deaths in custody during the reporting year. I would like to assure the Board my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

Thank you for providing a comprehensive picture of HMP Isle of Wight over a difficult reporting period, especially as you had several vacancies. The Governor passes on his thanks to the Board for your continued support and helping to improve outcomes for prisoners.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Effective Practice and Service Improvement Group (EPSIG) is facilitating the Building Better Competence and Confidence Tool, a diagnostic assessment to establish what staff feel confident and competent in, with HMP Isle of Wight. Approximately 80% of the Band 3 staffing group completed the assessment and they looked at 68 core work tasks scoring themselves against each one. An action plan was produced following the feedback and this led to further work being completed over the summer of 2023. This is currently in the evaluation phase, and some follow up questionnaires have been sent to the staff. Once these have been returned, the National Service Improvement Team within EPSIG will provide the Governor with a report that should show changes in their self-assessment of confidence/ competences, and highlight areas for continued development.

Leadership is recognised as a key enabler for retention. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has recently refreshed its Leadership Code, this creates a common understanding of what an excellent leader looks like across the MoJ and its governing agencies, and forms the basis for all leadership development. A new HMPPS Leadership and Management offer is currently being developed and is focused on building leadership at all levels. The content will address management capability, all elements of leadership, and include role and context of specific needs pertinent to the unique environments of HMPPS. Locally, the Senior Management Team at HMP Isle of Wight have acted on a previous staff survey, and is now focused on being more visible to staff and leadership is moving in the right direction.

In terms of recruitment, as with other areas of the prison service, recruitment at HMP Isle of Wight has been challenging over the past few years largely due to a competitive local labour market. However, the staffing position has dramatically improved and is supported by incentivised overtime schemes to maintain operational delivery. Although still challenging, recruitment in psychology posts has noticeably improved, however, some partner agencies including healthcare and facilities management providers are still finding recruitment and retention challenging. A great deal of work has been conducted locally to

encourage and support recruitment such as local advertising, recruitment fairs including guided tours at the prison, stalls at several county fairs and at public events.

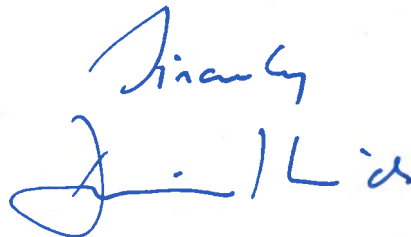
I hope to reassure the Board that the Centralised Recruitment Team has a strategy to address shortfalls in staffing by recruiting from elsewhere in the country and offering enhanced payments to interested candidates (for their first two years of employment as a prison officer). The First Deployment scheme (for first time prison officers) target for HMP Isle of Wight is 35 candidates, four prison officers have already joined and a further 13 are currently undergoing recruitment related checks. HMP Isle of Wight has a Learning and Capability Custodial Manager in place, plus New Colleague Mentors to provide support and advice to new entrants and existing inexperienced staff. HMPPS has provided an update on the Custody and Detention Professional Apprenticeship and training in the attached annex to this response.

To bring back previous experience, HMPPS launched an Alumni scheme which encourages former prison officers to return to the service. Attrition levels and the reasons why people exit the service are monitored and reviewed during quarterly performance meetings. At HMP Isle of Wight there are several staff members currently on temporary promotion, staff progression is encouraged through various means.

Turning to some positive comments captured in your report, despite it being a challenging reporting period managing Covid-19 and the increasing population of Category C prisoners, it was encouraging to note some welcomed progress made. It was also pleasing to note the Board recognised some commendable work to improve the quality of complaint responses and the excellent support work around dementia.

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 Isle of Wight.



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

## **HMP ISLE OF WIGHT: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2022 – 31 DECEMBER 2022**

### **HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report**

#### **Holding Category C Prisoners**

HMPPS continues to strive to maintain offender flows in the face of the ongoing, unprecedented population pressures across the entire adult male prison estate. The remand population has grown to unprecedented numbers as a result of the courts backlog and recent criminal barrister industrial action strike and the impact is felt across the prison training estate.

As such Governors/Directors of male Category B and Category C training prisons have therefore been asked to continue holding certain cohorts to keep space available in the resettlement estate for use by reception prisons. The request for flexibility in their cohorts is a short-term measure, which we anticipate, should be mitigated by the continued ramp up of HMP Five Wells, and the recent opening of HMP Fosse Way. HMPPS will continue to analyse data to understand if any longer-term changes are required and priority nonetheless is to continue to encourage prisons to respect offender flows as much as possible.

We recognise the frustration experienced by those Category B prisoners who have their placement on a programme pushed back, this is necessary given there are prisoners with a more imminent release or release opportunity. HMPPS continues to prioritise based on this imminence and staff at HMP Isle of Wight are working hard to try and ensure the right prisoners receive access to programmes, in line with the national prioritisation process. For those waiting for allocation to a programme, there is a range of other areas of rehabilitative activity which prisoners are encouraged to work on pending their placement on a suitable programme.

Partly due to prisoner feedback on a prison wide project, Albany site now houses predominately Category C prisoners. Further development within the project is on-going to create an enhanced Category C provision to include the creation of wing kitchens, more vocational opportunities, and an adapted open regime in line with Category C conditions, whilst still managing Category B prisoners through reception, inpatient healthcare unit(s), social care unit(s) and remand.

#### **Mental Health Provision / Staff Shortages**

Since the IMB's reporting period, the healthcare services at HMP Isle of Wight were recommissioned on 1 April 2023. The existing service provider, Practice Plus Group, was awarded the contract to continue delivering the services, and subcontracted the mental health service delivery to another provider; Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust, who is responsible for the day-to-day operational service, including recruiting key mental health staff. It is widely recognised there is a national shortage of qualified registered mental health nurses, which is exacerbated by the island location of the prison which is a challenging region to attract and retain qualified staff.

The NHS England Health and Justice Commissioning Team are actively working with Practice Plus Group and Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust to support them and have established regular post-mobilisation meetings to review their recruitment and retention action plan and have also introduced a recruitment tracker and project plan to develop workforce strategies.

Practice Plus Group did raise concerns with HMPPS about the increasing number of prisoners with complex needs transferred to the prison, which often placed additional pressure on existing healthcare

resources, particularly when there is a significant physical health or social care element required. Regarding the transfer of prisoners to a secure hospital setting, this has been very challenging, and the reasons are multi factorial. As the Board is aware, there is often a shortage of beds for individuals requiring treatment. Delays are also caused when individuals who have been assessed are then later required to undergo further assessments. The development of the mental health pathway from the prison estate is being reviewed at a regional and national level. Although the number of complex individuals at HMP Isle of Wight awaiting transfer to a secure hospital has reduced, NHS England Health and Justice Commissioning Team remains actively involved in supporting the providers to address recruitment and complex transfer issues and where appropriate, support Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust in discussions with us to ensure the impact and risks associated with any transfers of complex cases, particularly those involving social care are thoroughly understood.

### **Funded Projects / Decisions**

As the Board is aware, all requests from the Governor are considered, however demands for maintenance are much greater than the available funding. Therefore, once a bid for a project is received, we must prioritise works very carefully to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency.

In terms of updates, issues with the new heating system early on into commission have been rectified by the contractor. The Chapel roof, the Tailors' workshop and the roof of Parkhurst sites control room have all been replaced. The main laundry on Parkhurst design works is currently being carried out but no date has been agreed on when the actual works will commence. The kitchen programme to provide facilities for Category C prisoners continues to progress (work already completed on houseblocks 12 and 13). The Recesses toilets on houseblocks 11-15 have been replaced with white porcelain, decorated and resin flooring laid. The work request to replace the hot water calorifiers on houseblocks 11-15 is being tendered via the MoJ Projects Team and no decision has been made.

### **New Prison Officer Training**

In August 2023 a decision was made to cease mandatory enrolment on the Custody and Detention Apprenticeship (due to current operational pressures within the prison estate) and its viability is to be reviewed in 2025. There is one exception to this, the programme is currently running for candidates who applied through the apprenticeship recruitment campaign, and they will continue to be supported to end point assessment.

The MoJ People Group are engaged with the company Timpson and the Enable programme, this project is to scope prison officer training in the future, with a primary focus on building their skills and capabilities whilst managing the challenges within the prison estate. Such projects will ensure that newly recruited prison officers have access to high-quality, professional, consistent initial learning (accredited as appropriate) and all underpinned by the appropriate support mechanism and centred on relational practise.

The Learning and Development (L&D) Team for HMPPS continually reviews the appropriateness and impact of the training offer for prison officers and this includes a viability assessment against organisational challenges and pressures. The new prison officer foundation training has recently undergone transformation. To support the training of prison officers for HMP Isle of Wight and to manage the complexities associated with travel, the L&D Team are currently delivering a course to new officers at the establishment, which commenced on the 2 October 2023. This team will continue to work closely with the Governor to explore the feasibility of providing other courses (dependant on the number of participants).