



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Littlehey
Perry
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE28 0SR

7 November 2023

**HMP LITTLEHEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2022 - 31 JANUARY 2023**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 January 2023. Thank you for providing a comprehensive picture of HMP Littlehey over the reporting period, especially as you had several vacancies.

I was saddened to hear there were 16 deaths in custody during the reporting year, 13 of which were due to natural causes. 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 understand the Board's continued concerns about prisoners being held in crowded conditions and thank you for drawing this to my attention. It is recognised that accommodating two prisoners in a cell designed for one is never desirable but continues to be necessary across the estate in order to accommodate all those committed to custody by the courts. HMP Littlehey supports these operational capacity requirements, but the manageable level of crowding is set by those who are operationally responsible for managing the prison taking into consideration risks to safety and stability not by the wider supply and demand issues. It is worth noting that the number of single cells that are shared by two prisoners at HMP Littlehey has recently been reduced by eight with the opening of a new wing.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is delivering 20,000 additional modern uncrowded prison places to ensure the right conditions are in place to rehabilitate prisoners, helping to cut crime and protect the public. Around 5,400 of these places have already been delivered including a new 60 place unit at Littlehey which opened in July 2023 and the new prisons, HMP Fosse Way, which started accepting prisoners at the end May 2023, and HMP Five Wells which opened last year.

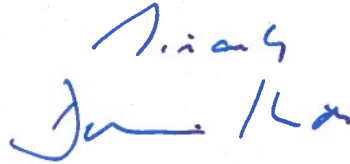
There may be options in future to further reduce crowding levels, for example if the population growth is slower than projected. This would enable targeted reductions of the least suitable prison places such as crowded places, but it is not possible to commit to this based on the latest projected population. In addition, the proportion of prisoners held in crowded cells at HMP Littlehey will depend on regional population levels and demand.

Despite this concern it was encouraging to receive your comments that the HMP Littlehey continues to be safe and secure prison where prisoners are treated with respect, decency and humanity. I was pleased to read the recognition given to staff for their professionalism in managing difficult situations and those prisoners with serious health conditions. It was also reassuring to note health and wellbeing needs are

well met and the engagement and support during end-of-life care for prisoners and their families is handled with compassion and respect. It was interesting to read about the efforts of those involved in maintaining the gardens and I was pleased that these efforts were recognised at the Windlesham Trophy national prison gardens competition.

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 Littlehey.



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 is clear that all complaints must be investigated in accordance with the Prisoner Complaints Policy Framework and the Finance Manual. The Framework sets out that Governors must ensure that property complaints and disputes are investigated thoroughly and efficiently, with prisoners being offered appropriate compensation where items have been lost or damaged. Where prisoners have transferred, prisons must liaise with each other to ensure such complaints are investigated and answered efficiently and promptly without placing unnecessary burdens on the prisoner who has been transferred. HMP Littlehey continues to raise any concerns directly with managers at the appropriate prisons to ensure that timely responses are received and there is an established process for escalation where necessary. Governors can escalate persistent issues with their Prison Group Director where there are avenues to communicate significant concerns that are not being addressed appropriately.

24 Hour Healthcare

HMP Littlehey has a significant older population, and it is acknowledged that it accommodates a number of people with health and social care needs, all of whom have been transferred to the prison from another location. Any prisoner transferring will have been given an examination and assessed as fit to be transferred which is a local decision made by the sending prison. Medical providers ensure that medical records and information is shared for all transfers. The healthcare team at HMP Littlehey always makes its own assessment at the point of reception and responds accordingly to their health needs. For those with complex medical needs, the sending prison will also communicate prior to the transfer in order to ensure that appropriate support and care can be provided at HMP Littlehey. If a situation arises, at any point, where it becomes apparent that 24-hour healthcare is necessary, an appropriate alternative location will be sought.

Gym Equipment

HMP Littlehey recognises the need to replace gym equipment and this continues to take place using its recreation budget on a priority basis.

Heating

HMPPS invested around £11 million to replace the heating pipework at HMP Littlehey and this work was completed in January 2023. There are currently no cells out of use due to heating issues, but it is recognised that there are ongoing faults in the under-floor heating on several wings. This has been escalated and the additional works required are being scoped. The prison also has portable heating available should any further issues be experienced.

Offender Behaviour Programmes (OBPs)

Programme teams are funded by a national OBPs budget with the investment allocated across all Accredited Programme delivery sites. HMP Littlehey is due to deliver 60 Horizon places this year and Kaizen is a rolling programme which will have spaces arise during the year. The prison currently has 36 prisoners (29 awaiting Horizon and 7 awaiting Kaizen) assessed as suitable and on waiting lists for an accredited OBP. Staff are currently assessing prisoners 12-18 months before their relevant release or parole dates with 95 prisoners referred for a Programme Needs Assessment (PNA). HMP Littlehey and Psychology Services are working together to maximise completed PNAs in priority order and there are no current plans to increase provision of accredited programme delivery at HMP Littlehey.

