



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Swansea
200 Oystermouth Road
Swansea
SA1 3SR

25 January 2024

Dear Chair,

**HMP SWANSEA: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JUNE 2021 – 31 OCTOBER 2022**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Swansea. I have read your report with care and I commend the Board for carrying out its statutory role effectively, particularly as you continued to operate with several vacancies. I was deeply saddened to hear that there were two deaths during the reporting year, in custody or shortly after release. I would like to reassure the Board that I take recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I appreciate the Board's concerns about the level of Home Office support for immigration detainees. HMP Swansea is covered by a mobile team that visits the establishment on a fortnightly basis to conduct inductions and taskings and hold an open surgery if required. Appointments with an Immigration Officer can also be requested through the prison's Offender Management Unit. The Home Office's Immigration Prison Team recently completed the recruitment of two Immigration Officers to be based within their Cardiff team. This will enable them to visit both HMP Swansea and HMP Cardiff on a more regular basis. HMP Swansea also has a dedicated Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to assist Foreign National Offenders (FNOs). They explain the process, assist with completion of documents, serve paperwork, and liaise with solicitors, community offender managers, and the Home Office.

When a decision is made to detain a Foreign National Offender (FNO) following the completion of their custodial sentence, the Home Office will conduct a careful risk assessment of their suitability to transfer to the immigration removal estate. The normal expectation is that the prison spaces made available for the Home Office by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) will be used to hold FNOs who are assessed as unsuitable for detention within the immigration removal estate. Decisions to allocate specific individuals, whether time served FNOs or otherwise, to prison accommodation will be based on the presence of one or more of the risk factors or criteria as set out in chapter 55 of the Home Office Enforcement Instructions and Guidance. Individuals that are deemed suitable for transfer will be placed on a waiting list but will remain in prison accommodation pending that transfer. They are transferred as soon as possible following the conclusion of the risk assessment process. Local data indicates that the transfer process is now quicker and most FNOs are transferred within a few days of their conditional release date. Any delays are escalated by the prison's FNO SPOC.

I recognise that challenges remain in ensuring prisoners leave custody with safe and stable accommodation, which is key to reducing reoffending, cutting crime, and protecting the public. The Board will be aware that our 12-week transitional service, known as Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS3), was expanded to Wales in June 2022 and I am pleased to advise that there are now 149 grant-agreed bedspaces in Wales. Roll out to the remaining English probation regions took place last year. By

the end of March 2023, CAS3 had accommodated 5,796 prison leavers, and the service will support thousands more as the roll out continues. HMPPS is also expanding CAS Tier 2, which provides suitable gender-specific accommodation for bailees and prisoners eligible for Home Detention Curfew (HDC), to those who might be remanded or not released due to lack of suitable accommodation.

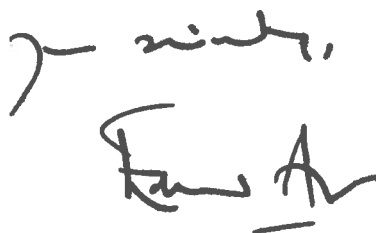
HMPPS in Wales is actively engaged with the Welsh Government and committed to supporting its action plan to end homelessness, including the identification of housing needs and provision of interventions to individuals leaving the secure estate. They are also developing areas to improve early intervention and targeted prevention measures, smoothing pathways for groups at risk of homelessness. Probation Practitioners are actively referring to the CAS3 service for individuals leaving HMP Swansea in support of provision of accommodation on release.

Mental health provision is continually improving at HMP Swansea, and since October 2023 the Inreach team has been permanently based at the prison which allows healthcare and Inreach services to work collaboratively together which will help reduce any waiting times and increase effectiveness between the teams. The Inreach team can provide improved review and intervention for those with secondary care needs, and there is now a weekly single point of access meeting where referrals and interventions are discussed. The healthcare provider has committed to train and upskill mental health nurses within all teams to enable a range of interventions to those in our care. I would like to assure the Board that improving mental health provision at HMP Swansea is constantly under review to ensure all aspects of mental health requirements are met.

Although the Board has repeated its concerns from previous reporting periods, it was encouraging to note that HMP Swansea continues to be a safe prison and that the prisoner representative meetings with the Governor and other officers contribute to positive staff/prisoner relations. I was also reassured to hear that notable progress was made in the development of workshops and activities to prepare the prisoners for release. I would like to commend the prison library for being identified as an example of best practice in collaborative and partnership working both internally and externally and for marking 75 years of operation in 2023.

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.

I appreciate the valuable contribution from members of Independent Monitoring Boards and I am grateful for the work you do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Argar', with a stylized flourish underneath.

RT HON EDWARD ARGAR MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prison Population Management

HMPPS strives to maintain offender flows despite the population pressures that has recently affected the entire adult male prison estate. The remand population has grown to unprecedented levels because of the courts backlog and industrial action taken by the Criminal Bar Association and the impact is being felt in prisons in England and Wales. The convicted unsentenced population has also had a direct impact on spaces in reception prisons.

HMP Swansea accepts prisoners from the courts it serves, and as a national HMPPS resource the establishment will receive prisoners from other prisons in England and Wales. As mentioned in the October 2022 response, Court redirections and prison transfers are often necessary to manage the prison population, and this means that HMP Swansea will receive prisoners from HMP Cardiff. Court redirections prevent expensive and unnecessary lock outs, resulting in prisoners being accommodated in police stations cells. All redirections are cleared with the Wales Regional Office before the escort contractor is requested to action them. HMP Swansea holds a very small number of prisoners with a non-Welsh resettlement address and there is no evidence that large numbers of 'out-of-area' prisoners are redirected into the prison. Our priority is to maximise capacity in reception prisons to serve the courts, to encourage prisons to support offender flows, and to ensure that the rehabilitation needs of each prisoner is met and protected.