



Ministry  
of Justice

Rt Hon Edward Argar MP  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMYOI Werrington  
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27<sup>th</sup> February 2024

*Dear Chair,*

**HMYOI WERRINGTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 – 31 AUGUST 2023**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMYOI Werrington. I commend the Board for carrying out its statutory role effectively, especially as you had several vacancies.

I have read your report with care. I appreciate the Board is concerned that a third of the population at HMYOI Werrington are over eighteen. The adult male prison population has been under acute pressure since September 2022. Due to the ongoing pressures on the adult male estate, Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) are expected to hold 18-year-olds longer than they have historically. A Ministerial Directive was made in November 2022, allowing those who turn eighteen to remain in the youth estate until prior to their nineteenth birthday. I hope to assure the Board that such decisions are taken on a case-by-case basis, considering both the young person's needs, and the safety and safeguarding of others. Subject to review and consideration, the temporary change in policy may well come to an end by January 2025.

It was encouraging to note that during the reporting year young person-on-young person assaults reduced by almost a third due to a marked improvement in Conflict Resolution and Reducing Reoffending. Thank you for recognising the valuable pastoral care provided by Chaplaincy and for acknowledging that HMYOI Werrington family contact is fundamentally important and is encouraged. Likewise, it was pleasing to note the Board is impressed with HMYOI Werrington's resettlement process. I welcome the links established with HSBC bank, enabling accounts to be set up for the young people prior to discharge.

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. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Local Authority's comments in response to the 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.

**RT HON EDWARD ARGAR MP**

## **HMYOI WERRINGTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 – 31 AUGUST 2023**

### **Local Authority and HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report**

#### **Social Work**

It is acknowledged that the social care department suffered during the reporting year from staffing shortages because of maternity leave and sick absences. Internal secondment and agency staff adverts were posted in July / August 2022. However, neither attracted any suitable candidates. This team is in a much better position, as there is currently a complement of three social workers (as an agency worker joined in January 2024 and remains in post).

#### **Looked After Children's Allowance**

There is no set figure for the 'Looked After Children's' allowance. It is the responsibility for the home authority to provide an allowance, which is usually in the region of £10 per week. Where it is evident that a child cannot buy basic items from their allowance, the social worker at HMYOI Werrington should contact the home authority about increasing the allowance.

#### **Library Closure**

As the Board may be aware, the library reopened in December 2023 and bi weekly it operates on Saturday mornings. Creative writing classes are now available on Wednesday evenings. As HMYOI Werrington has been identified as an establishment to provide book reviews, this will form part of the Reading strategy. The library manager is planning on holding Cultural Awareness Events this year to encourage additional learning.

#### **Education Provision**

Education must be, in the first instance purposeful. It may be helpful to reiterate that allocations firstly look at what prior knowledge and skills a young person has developed up until the point of coming into custody. Employment aspirations and opportunities are looked at and how a young person should be enabled to get there. The team that records the young people's choices are often encouraged to have a second career conversation after the young person has completed their induction, to ensure choices are educational. As the Board is aware, employment is available full-time for those who have achieved Level 2 or above in English and maths.

The Education provider submits a data report monthly which is analysed by the Contracts team to monitor delivery. Risks and concerns are escalated in the monthly performance review meeting. The commissioned annual delivery plan(s) includes higher qualifications. There are seven curriculum areas that offer Level 2 study and were being delivered during the last academic year. HMYOI Werrington is awaiting approval to become a GCSE centre and the delivery of GCSEs to be rolled out this academic year. Young people who are working at Level 3 are offered the opportunity to access distance learning courses. However, the new Head of Education Skills and Work is currently looking at the curriculum design for these learners to be able to offer a bespoke learning journey.

YCS currently has a national Management Information dataset on the public sector YOIs (HMYOIs Werrington, Wetherby, Cookham Wood and Feltham). It holds education delivery detail including site level planned education hours and education hours delivered. YCS receives monthly Management Information from each of the education providers that links to contractual key performance indicators (KPIs), about the learners' profile and on staffing, including whether key roles and appropriate staffing levels are in place.

YCS is committed to developing the 'Curious' education contract management system so that case and site level detail on educational progress on children and young people's engagement and assessment scores can be reported and aligned to classroom attendance data. This is envisaged to be the basis of a new national dataset and KPIs tracked through the YCS Performance Tool. Quality of delivery has been a key focus since the introduction of the Head of Education, Skills and Work post in September 2023. Classroom cancellations are monitored regularly. The delivery of education for separated children is currently being reviewed. Wing education is regularly monitored to evaluate consistency and quality of provision. There is a strong evidence base to suggest that frustration, poor behaviour, and lack of engagement can be addressed through having a rich, broader and ambitious curriculum delivered by motivated and influential facilitators. HM Inspectorate of Prisons and Ofsted have announced they will be undertaking a thematic review of the quality of education in the four YOIs, and we await the outcome of that.