



Ministry  
of Justice

**Lord Timpson**  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP/YOI Lewes  
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11 October 2024

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI LEWES: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2023 – 31 JANUARY 2024**

Thank you for submitting your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Lewes. I have read your report with care and I am grateful to you and your colleagues for the effort and hard work that has been put into capturing the current state of the prison.

I was deeply saddened to hear two prisoners died in custody during the reporting year. Any death in our prisons is a tragedy and I offer my condolences to all their friends and family. I would like to reassure the Board that recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are taken very seriously and this is something that I discuss with Governors whenever I have the opportunity to visit prisons. I was reassured to hear that the Board considers the actions of prison management and staff following any death in custody to be compassionate and sensitive.

I appreciate the concerns raised by the Board, some of which I note were also raised last year. An approved schedule of work is now being delivered to improve the living conditions at HMP/YOI Lewes. I am pleased to say that the majority of the cells at the prison have now been refurbished and there is active work on the remainder. Shower upgrades are also underway and further funding has been approved to progress other identified infrastructure work. This includes CCTV upgrades, the perimeter wall project, upgrading site-wide fire systems, and fire doors.

Increasing the provision of specialist mental health services for offenders with serious mental health problems remains a challenge. The Ministry of Justice is working with the Department of Health and Social Care to reform the Mental Health Act (1983) and introduce the Mental Health Bill in this parliamentary session. The Mental Health Bill sets out vital reforms to support people with severe mental illness in the criminal justice system with the aim of speeding up access to specialist in-patient care and ensuring that offenders and defendants with severe mental health needs are able to access timely support in the most appropriate setting.

Due to the increase in the remand population, HMP/YOI Lewes has been approved to extend the current accommodation provision which covers all unsentenced prisoners, both remand and those awaiting sentencing. A new remand strategy, which includes a provision of resettlement needs and accommodation support, commenced implementation during September 2024.

Sentencing guidelines are developed by the Independent Sentencing Council for England and Wales and as such any review of the guidelines is at the Council's discretion. To address prison population and capacity pressures, the Government has already enacted policy to reduce the time those sentenced to standard determinate sentences (SDS) serve in prison from 50% to 40% of that sentence. This measure, known as SDS40, will not apply to prisoners sentenced for sex offences and certain offences of domestic abuse, and will also exclude serious violent offences with a sentence of four years or more. This ensures prison is reserved for the most dangerous offenders. We will continue to assess the impact of these measures on the prison population.

I understand the Board's continued concerns about prisoners subject to Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences. The Lord Chancellor has announced that from November 2024, anyone who was released on IPP licence five or more years ago and has spent at least the last two years of that period in the community without being recalled, will have their IPP licence terminated without the need for a review by the Parole Board. The Secretary of State will also have two new 'Risk Assessed Recall Review' powers. The first enables her to not reset the two-year period after someone is re-released from a recall. Secondly, she will be able to re-release people who have been recalled at any point without referring the case to the Parole Board. These measures will make an overall difference to the number of IPP prisoners held across the estate and mark a positive first step. The Lord Chancellor and I are committed to making progress towards a safe and sustainable release for those continuing to serve an IPP sentence whilst ensuring that protection of the public is not compromised. Area Executive Directors for England and Wales will continue to develop and implement operational IPP delivery plans that will improve front line support to help those serving IPP sentences achieve the objectives within their sentence plans and move towards a prospective safe and sustainable release.

I was very encouraged to read the positive comments in your report, particularly those relating to the increased engagement of prisoners in purposeful work and educational activity. I noted that the Board also highlighted the Independent Review of Progress completed by HM Inspectorate of Prisons in February 2023 which expressed confidence in the delivery of healthcare at HMP/YOI Lewes resulting in the prison healthcare team winning a Practice Plus Group (formerly Care UK) 2023 award for most improved provider. Although infrastructure and maintenance issues are ongoing, it was encouraging to read that the Board saw noticeable and cost-effective improvements to the residential wings at the prison due to the constructive work completed by the Lewes Assurance and Multi Skilled (LAMS) team of enhanced prisoners.

Local issues of concern raised in your report will be addressed by the Governor who will keep you updated as work progresses. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Secretary of State and I are hugely appreciative of the valuable role Independent Monitoring Boards play throughout the estate and we are extremely grateful to you and your team for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP/YOI Lewes.



**Lord Timpson**  
**Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending**

## **HMP/YOI LEWES: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2023 – 31 JANUARY 2024**

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

#### **Maintenance**

Performance measures indicate that the contractor, Government Facilities Services Limited, has been performing to a good level and compliant in completing the planned maintenance work at HMP/YOI Lewes. However, it is recognised that reactive work is sometimes delayed. The Ministry of Justice is supporting the Governor to help improve living conditions through a Local Asset Manager team. This is a rehabilitative project initiated by the Governor which is working well in progressing flooring and painting and decorating projects. The Lewes Assurance and Multi Skilled (LAMS) prisoner teams on each wing have also been expanded and 60% of all cells at the prison have now been refurbished and work is ongoing on the remaining 40%.

#### **Education and Skills**

##### *Education*

Education funding is set as part of a national formula which considers prison type and population. In view of the overarching funding pressure on education, it is not expected that additional funds will be allocated to HMP/YOI the Lewes to support improvements. Since April 2024, the prison has however sought to maximise the education budget and now has an Employment Advisory Board and implemented a new curriculum to best meet the needs of the population. Education attendance has continued to improve over this reporting period.

##### *Skills and Employment*

HMP/YOI Lewes has a functioning Employment Hub. The Hub is run by the Prison Employment Lead, who helps prisoners prepare for work. This includes supporting them with CVs, fulfilling other resettlement needs, and securing training and industry-recognised qualifications for men wanting to start employment, such as the construction sector. Since June 2023, the ID and Banking Administrator has provided prisoners with 116 accounts, 45 driving licences, and 444 birth certificates. These products and documentation enable prison leavers to take up work opportunities and support other resettlement activities. A review of the classroom capacity is also taking place this year so that provision can be increased across the prison. The Hub runs a minimum of four employment events a year and hosted its first 'Unlocking Construction' events in June 2024. These events are supported by HMPPS' New Futures Network team alongside a range of employers such as Balfour Beatty. Prison Industries also facilitated a visit to introduce Dulux Academies, and the prison is working to progress this partnership.