



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Preston
2 Ribbleton Lane
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 5AV

MoJ ref: SUB119316

21 November 2024

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI PRESTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2023 – 31 MARCH 2024**

Thank you for submitting your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Preston. I have read your report in detail and I am extremely grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work and dedication in carrying out your statutory role so effectively despite being significantly below your recommended complement of Board members. I hope this position improves over the next reporting period.

I recently spent two days at HMP/YOI Preston learning about what happens in the prison and how the team and prisoners work together. It was an invaluable experience.

I was deeply saddened to read about the death of four prisoners. Whilst three deaths were due to natural causes, it was upsetting to read about the suicide despite the care and attention given by staff. Every death in our prisons is a tragedy and I offer my heartfelt condolences to all their friends and family. I have noted the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) recommendation contained in the report and would like to reassure the Board that all recommendations made by the PPO are taken very seriously.

I understand the Board's ongoing concerns regarding kitchen maintenance and the timescales taken to repair faulty equipment. As the Board will be aware, the current kitchen at HMP/YOI Preston is ten years old and requires substantial levels of support with maintenance and reactive repairs. The commercial service provider at HMP/YOI Preston has been changed, which my officials tell me has already resulted in an improved service. HMP/YOI Preston also has an asset replacement plan in place and it is expected that this will result in a reduction in equipment breakdowns in the longer term.

I have noted your longstanding frustrations about the fabric of HMP/YOI Preston, and particularly the reception area, gate house, and Offender Management Units (OMU). The Board will be aware that in 2023, HMP/YOI Preston explored the feasibility of purchasing the former Lancashire Museum from the County Council. As the museum is a listed building, this was seen as cost prohibitive. The Ministry of Justice Property team are now considering moving the gate area to be shared with the visitors' entrance on Ribbleton Lane and are seeking funding for this. The OMU building has been identified for replacement and the bid is currently undergoing the consideration and funding process.

HMP/YOI Preston being a Victorian prison naturally presents various challenges. However, I would like to assure the Board that HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) will continue to work with all

stakeholders and contractors to ensure that the prison provides decent accommodation. The cumulative investment over the past few years that allowed the prison to undertake significant refurbishment of the showers, flooring, and external wall, should help to provide better conditions for the prisoners. The local Clean, Rehabilitative, Enabling and Decent (CRED) programme will also continue its good work in refurbishing cells to a high standard.

Thank you for bringing the issues with the RECONNECT service provision to my attention. NHS England have advised that at the time of implementation, every RECONNECT service in each county was set up differently. This was due to the way they receive their funding. Consequently each service has different thresholds around referral criteria, including need and level of risk, depending on their staffing model and staffing skills/experience and expertise. A national evaluation of RECONNECT is underway and it is anticipated that the model and thresholds will be explored as part of this exercise. The RECONNECT service at HMP/YOI Preston is provided by Lancashire and South Cumbria Service who are not aware of any individuals being rejected. However, there is a possibility this may happen if a prisoner is then referred to the RECONNECT service in their home area. I have been assured that this issue will be investigated further by NHS England and the national RECONNECT team. Prior to release, staff at HMP/YOI Preston will continue to support prisoners in their preparation and will include healthcare and resettlement services to minimise reoffending.

Whilst there is no doubt there are challenges at HMP/YOI Preston, I was encouraged to receive your comments about the success achieved in increasing opportunities for time out of cell. I was pleased to note the work of the employment hub and its support by a multi-agency forum which I have a keen interest in. I was also pleased to hear that the key worker programme was being delivered once again..

Local issues of concern raised in your report will be addressed by the Governor who will continue to keep you aware of progress as work continues. HMPPS comments in response to other issue raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Secretary of State and I are hugely appreciative of the invaluable 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 Preston. We would like to wish those Board members who will be leaving at the end of their 15 years the very best for the future and thank them for the pivotal role they played in fulfilling a statutory service.



Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Staff Training

Pro-Social Modelling and De-Escalation

Foundation training focusses throughout on pro-social role modelling and building good working relationships. Five Minute Interventions (FMI) is introduced early in the training scheme and the skills are practised throughout the remainder of the programme to officers in different contexts. These include the use of the skills to de escalate situations through conversations with individuals. The use of force is emphasised to be a last resort when all other interpersonal and de-escalation skills have not been effective. An e-learning module on autism is offered, and an introduction to mental health is delivered which includes some elements of neurodiversity.

Neurodiversity

HMPPS have successfully rolled out The Neurodiversity Support Manager (NSM) role across the prison estate and NSMs are responsible for improving support for prisoners with neurodivergent needs. To enhance capability, NSMs are responsible for providing training and guidance to staff to equip them to better understand and support neurodivergent prisoners, which is underpinned by the Neurodiversity Support Manager Framework.

At HMP/YOI Preston the NSM delivers monthly training sessions to all new staff as well as existing staff. In 2023, 207 members of staff successfully completed the training. In the current year 112 members of staff have completed the training so far, which has resulted in good progress in terms of treatment, understanding, and support of neurodiverse prisoners. HMPPS can assure the Board that concerns raised are taken very seriously and have a range of interventions, including disciplinary action and police referral where appropriate, to ensure that Prison Officers who treat prisoners in a disrespectful way are challenged and held accountable for their actions.