



Ministry  
of Justice

Lord Timpson  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP North Sea Camp  
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Dear Chair,

**HMP NORTH SEA CAMP: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 MARCH 2023 – 28 FEBRUARY 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP North Sea Camp. I have read your report with care. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations, particularly as you continued to operate with several vacancies.

I appreciate the Board's continued concerns around the delays in the Offender Assessment System (OASys) risk assessment process. The Regional Probation Director and the Governor have informed me that the situation has significantly improved, with progress being made in reducing the backlog. An escalation process has also been introduced to address any delays in gaining responses from Community Offender Managers.

I understand the Board's ongoing concerns around prisoners serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences. The IPP sentence was recently further reformed in the Victims and Prisoners Act ('the Act') which gained Royal Assent on 24 May 2024.

On 5 September, the Lord Chancellor announced that the Government would implement reforms we supported in opposition to the IPP licence period in the Act. These commenced on 1 November, when the licences for 1,742 IPP offenders in the community were terminated. The remaining reforms will be implemented on 1 February 2025, when the reduced qualifying period for consideration of licence termination will see around 600 additional referrals made to the Parole Board.

Additionally, in February 2024 the Director General of Operations at HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) commissioned Area Executive Directors in England and Wales, as well as the Executive Directors of the Long-Term High Security Estate, the Women's Estate and Contracted Prisons to develop operational IPP delivery plans. These delivery plans directly target front-line delivery in support of helping those serving IPP sentences to work on and achieve the objectives within their sentence plans and move towards a future prospective safe and sustainable release and, when in the community, towards a future termination of their licence.

It is right that IPP sentences were abolished. The Lord Chancellor is determined to support the rehabilitation of IPP offenders through a refreshed Action Plan, which we published on 15 November 2024. The refreshed Action Plan was published in our IPP Annual Report and can be accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hmpps-annual-report-on-the-ipp-sentence-2023-to-24>

It was encouraging to receive your comments regarding paid outside work opportunities, I am delighted to read that these are enabling prisoners to gain valuable experience of the workplace, demonstrating to prospective employers that they can be trusted in a community working environment. It is also heartening that significantly more prisoners are achieving Functional Skills (FS) in English and maths since the adaptation of the FS delivery model, and the introduction of evening, weekend and Saturday classes to allow those in full-time employment the opportunity to further develop and engage in learning.

Additionally, it was pleasing to read about prisoners' participation in the Queen's Canopy Project that has seen the prison grow 30,000 silver birch trees on site, tended by prisoners, which has been a major contributor to the national reforestation efforts.

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 Lord Chancellor and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP North Sea Camp.



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

## **HMP NORTH SEA CAMP: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MARCH 2023 – 28 FEBRUARY 2024**

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

#### **In-Cell Telephony**

In-cell telephony is now available in all closed prisons. However, there are currently no plans to install fixed in-cell telephony as standard in open prisons due to the greater ability to access services within the establishment. HMPPS are considering alternative options to improve access to PIN phones for prisoner use within open establishments.

Our in-cell technology programme (known as 'Launchpad') in Public Sector Prisons, has been introduced into 17 establishments and will roll-out to a further two by March 2025. To date open prisons have not been prioritised for Launchpad as there are fewer restrictions on prisoners to access services within the establishment than in closed prisons. It is acknowledged that prisoners will sometimes transfer to HMP North Sea Camp from prisons that have in-cell technology, but in general open prisons are able to offer good levels of access to services.

Launchpad is one of many new digital services that are being made available to prisons to improve access to information and data, reduce the time taken to undertake administrative duties and facilitate communication. Investment of this kind is a central element of the MoJ's business plan and strategy, and prioritisation is agreed collaboratively across the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and HMPPS. HMP North Sea Camp already benefits from improved digital systems and will continue to gain from new services as they are implemented across the estate.

#### **Quality of Accommodation**

In Spring 2022, HMPPS published a revised framework for the certification of prisoner accommodation, from which the useable operational capacity of the estate is derived. While most single cells in the prison system could physically hold two people, the determination of the maximum crowded capacity of a particular establishment is a matter of operational judgement, considering risks to safety and stability. In times of severe population pressure, establishments will be expected to hold as many prisoners as they can safely accommodate, but the revised framework is equally clear that that number should be determined by the operational managers responsible for managing the prison, not by a central process or by wider supply and demand issues.

HMPPS, the Prison Group Director (PGD), and the Governor will continue to review operational capacity at HMP North Sea Camp in line with the revised framework for the certification of prisoner accommodation to reduce overcrowding where/if possible.

A site-wide programme of shower refurbishments is in development and delivery will be considered for funding in future financial years. Any further requests from the establishment will also be considered, noting that demands for maintenance are much greater than the available funding. Therefore, once a bid for a project is received, HMPPS must prioritise works very carefully to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency.

HMPPS is continually reviewing the investment required across the estate, in this and for the next Spending Review period. The proposals will be underpinned by the data collected in recent condition

surveys which assessed the fabric, cells, and critical assets at each prison. These will inform long-term forward maintenance registers, which can be prioritised against future capital budgets.

Locally, rooms do meet the national standard for decency and cleanliness. It is acknowledged that the rooms cannot accommodate 2 standard sized tables and chairs, so greater use is made of communal facilities. However, prisoners are only required to be in their rooms from 23:00 – 05:00 hours and at all other times they have access to association areas, external areas, and the grounds.

### **Dormitory Accommodation**

Unfortunately, the situation remains unchanged from the previous response provided to the Board, whereby, there is not a budget allocated to convert the dormitories to more suitable accommodation. This project went through the MoJ's small projects team but wasn't successful. The previous Governor also explored different avenues to obtain funding for this work, but was again unsuccessful. The MoJ property team and Amey will continue planned and routine maintenance on these buildings. However, the 6 and 4 bed dormitories have had their occupancy reduced to 4 and 3 respectively, following a reduction in the total number of dormitories at the start of the decade.

### **Prisoners' Property**

HMPPS notes the Board's concerns about property when a prisoner transfers establishments. The emphasis must remain on prisoners complying with volumetric control limits, since any property within these limits will be transferred with them. This includes items which are exempt from volumetric control, such as legal papers. It is simply not possible to transfer with a prisoner all excess property which they might have accrued above these limits. Any excess property must, however, be forwarded on within four weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent this. HMPPS is aware of the problems around property and continues to look at what further can be done.

Prisoner Escort Custody Services (PECS) review complaints during monthly formal meetings with the PECS Supplier. During the last 12 months there have been no complaints received from HMP North Sea Camp in relation to the loss of property attributed to PECS. For property delay, in-line with the HMPPS Prisoner Property Framework if the limit of items allowed in possession has been reached, and if there is no space on the Escort Vehicle to transport items safely and securely, then responsibility for transfer of any remaining items remains with the sending prison.