



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/ YOI Peterborough
Saville Road
Peterborough
PE3 7PD

MoJ ref: SUB121700

21 February 2025

Dear Chair,

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

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Peterborough (men). I am hugely grateful to the Board for carrying out its statutory role effectively and for the considerable work put in to capture your findings about the prison. Please do pass on my thanks to your colleagues for their contributions especially as you have continued to do this whilst operating with several vacancies.

I was deeply saddened to read that a prisoner died during the reporting year. I offer my heartfelt condolences to his friends and family and would like to reassure them and the Board that any recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are taken extremely seriously.

I fully understand that the Board remains concerned about the number of people on remand. The Board will be aware that the Crown Court caseload has risen substantially over recent years as a result of the pandemic and an increase in the number of cases coming before the criminal courts. The Ministry of Justice also recognises the relationship between the Crown Court caseload and the remand population. The growth of the remand population is driven in part by more cases coming into an already pressurised system and the faster criminal courts work through remand cases that are ready to be heard, the faster defendants leave the remand population. We are committed to reducing the caseload and bringing waiting times down and the Judiciary continues to prioritise cases involving custody time limits, as well as prioritising cases that involve vulnerable complainants and witnesses (including youth cases, domestic abuse and serious sex cases). As part of our efforts to reduce the outstanding caseload we have increased magistrates' court sentencing powers from 6 to 12 months' imprisonment for single triable-either way offences to free up capacity in the Crown Court. We are also funding 108,500 days at the Crown Court for the financial year 2024/25, the highest level in almost 10 years and we continue to use 16 Nightingale Courtrooms across all jurisdictions to allow the courts to hear more cases. These measures will help us to bear down on the remand population, ensuring those on remand are tried and sentenced quicker.

We recognise we must go further to tackle the outstanding caseload in the longer term which is why the Lord Chancellor has commissioned an independent review of the criminal courts, led by Sir Brian Leveson. This review will consider how the criminal courts could operate as efficiently as possible, as well as longer-term reforms.

I appreciate that the prison provider has recognised the challenges they have experienced with providing a stable regime and that the provision of education, work and skills required substantial improvements

which they have been working towards. It is important that people in prison have these opportunities to improve their chance of successful reintegration into society and it is really encouraging to read that early signs of progress are good. Despite these challenges, I was reassured to read that good relationships have continued to be maintained with prisoners and resources have continued to focus on reducing violence and self-harm.

I note you have raised two local issues of concern in your report which the Director will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to the issue you raised in your report for its consideration 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 very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP/YOI Peterborough.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'James', written in dark ink.

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

HMP/YOI PETERBOROUGH MEN: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2203 – 31 MARCH 2024

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Release Accommodation

HMPPS recognises that providing a settled place to live is key to reducing reoffending, cutting crime, and protecting the public. HMPPS offers a three-tier structure of temporary accommodation known as Community Accommodation Service (CAS). CAS1 is the accommodation with a public protection focus for higher-risk offenders, known as Approved Premises and in recent years the capacity has been expanded to provide space for an additional 115 men. A new digitalised approach to Approved Premises referrals is also being developed, with a National Central Referral Unit that will oversee assessment for suitability and eligibility, matching individuals to placements and maximising the occupancy and use of the national capacity. CAS2 provides places for low to medium risk offenders on Home Detention Curfew or bail and currently has 851 bed spaces in over 275 properties across England and Wales and continues to have capacity increased. Finally, CAS3 is now operating in all probation regions and new places continue to be added as the service develops, providing up to 12 weeks basic accommodation for prison leavers at risk of homelessness. In addition, embedded Homelessness Prevention Teams within Probation regions are strengthening strategic relationships between prisons, probation and local authorities and build accommodation pathways. There are 49 Full Time Equivalent prison based Strategic Housing Specialists (SHS) covering England and Wales, including one at HM/YOI Peterborough who liaises closely with local housing providers including the local authority to improve housing outcomes.