



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

MoJ ref: SUB121093

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Leeds
2 Gloucester Terrace
Stanningley Road
Leeds
LS12 2TJ

3 February 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP LEEDS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY 2023 – 31 DECEMBER 2023**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Leeds, which I have read with care. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in producing this report and capturing the key issues, especially as you had a significant number of vacancies. I sincerely hope that the planned recruitment campaigns for 2024 have been successful in appointing new members.

I am very sad to hear that eight prisoners died during the reporting year and I offer my deepest condolences to all their family and friends. I want to reassure the Board that recommendations made by the PPO are taken very seriously. It is important in these tragic circumstances that we act on recommendations, and I was comforted to read that the Board were satisfied with the action taken by the prison in implementing the PPO recommendations.

I understand the Board's continued concern about overcrowding and the impact that this has on prison life. The consideration of prisoners' safety is uppermost when determining the maximum crowded capacity of a particular establishment. Operational standards consider risks to safety and stability to ensure that prisoners are accommodated safely even when held in crowded conditions. On 12 July, the Lord Chancellor announced a package of measures aimed at addressing the current capacity challenges. With headroom generated by SDS40, there is flexibility to deactivate the most operationally challenging crowding, at least for a period of time. This could enable targeted reductions of the least suitable prison places. To ensure a long-term solution, on 11 December, the Lord Chancellor announced the release of our 10-year Prison Capacity Strategy. This strategy not only sets out plans to deliver 14,000 prison places, but to maintain the places in our estate to ensure we have sufficient accommodation and explore the acquisition of land should we need to build further prison places. We are keeping our plans under constant review so we can ensure we are responding to the demand in the system and providing value for money. Alongside this, we have also launched an Independent Sentencing Review, chaired by former Lord Chancellor, David Gauke. This Review will be tasked with reviewing the sentencing framework to ensure we are never again in a position where the country has more prisoners than places in prison.

Whilst I acknowledge your concerns about budgets, they have been increasing in recent years and the direct cost per prisoner place, after adjusting for inflation, has increased. Governors are empowered to use their budgets to best target the needs of their prisoners, with the main budgets directly affecting prisoners at HMP Leeds (e.g. Food, prisoner clothing and cleaning budgets) all receiving an increase during local budget allocation in 2024/25 compared to previous years. The Governor has recognised the need to improve the environment and has implemented a number of projects to try to improve the lives of prisoners in her care. This includes work undertaken by their Q Branch to improve the physical

environment in communal areas, improving the link between C Wing and the Kitchen, making it brighter, and undertaking a decoration project of the route taken to attend the education building, helping to improve the visual environment for prisoners.

I share your concerns for the wellbeing of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentenced prisoners and this Government is continuing to support the rehabilitation of IPP prisoners through the refreshed IPP Action Plan, published on 15 November 2024. The Plan puts an important emphasis on effective frontline delivery in both prisons and probation, to ensure that those serving IPP sentences have robust and effective sentence plans, which they are actively engaging with, and that they are in the correct prison to access the right interventions and rehabilitative services. This is the most effective way to help them to reduce their risk so that they can progress towards safe release from custody. His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is also putting in place further measures to boost the support to those serving IPP sentences in both custody and the community, including holding multi-disciplinary Progression Panels for offenders to oversee their cases at critical points, such as the early period following release, or following a recall to custody. Progress of the Plan, and consultation with expert organisations and campaign groups is continually monitored ensuring that all options are considered. Locally, the progression of IPP prisoners is actively managed. The establishment has put in place an IPP monthly forum, has IPP points of contact within the Offender Management Unit and regularly liaises with psychology colleagues to ensure that its IPP populations receives appropriate guidance and support.

I agree with the Board that it is essential that the mental health of those in our care remains under review and they receive the appropriate treatment. Liaison and Diversion (L&D) services are well established across the North East and Yorkshire with strong relationships with remand prisons, including HMP Leeds. The L&D services are identifying vulnerable individuals within the Police Custody Suites and Courts in order to divert them into health support and away from Criminal Justice services. NHS England has also commissioned the Mental Health Treatment Requirement element of the Community Sentence Treatment Requirements which is a psychological intervention, which can be included as part of a Community Order or Suspended Order sentence. Mental Health Treatment Requirement services are available in North Yorkshire and South Yorkshire with plans to roll out this service to the West Yorkshire region in 2025. RECONNECT (Through the Gate support) is well established at HMP Leeds to support those being released from prison. This aims to reduce patients returning to prison following release.

It was encouraging to receive your comments about the good work that HMP Leeds is doing in relation to smaller specialist units to help manage vulnerable prisoners with complex needs. I was heartened to read about the dedication of staff, their positive relationships with prisoners and the particular example you cited of the remarkable change in one prisoner who found security and confidence after a long stay in the complex needs unit.

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 very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Leeds.



Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

HMP LEEDS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2023 – 31 DECEMBER 2023

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners' Arrival From Court

It is inevitable that numerous prisoners will arrive from both Magistrates and Crown Courts at reception prisons between 18:00 and 19:00 as courts are scheduled to run until 16:30 or 17:00. HMPPS measures the performance of the escorts contracts through contract delivery indicators including one which specifically measures the arrival times of prisoners 30 minutes prior to the latest reception time which is consistently achieving circa 95%. Whilst arrivals times have recently been impacted by a lack of HMPPS capacity, resulting in unprecedented numbers of redirections, a review of receptions for HMP Leeds shows that the majority prisoners are received into reception during agreed opening hours with approximately 80% received prior to 18:00.

It is unfortunate though that due to court scheduling and escort contractual restrictions, some prisoners will arrive late at HMP Leeds. The escort contract requires Young Adults to be delivered to their respective establishments prior to adults. HMP Leeds does not support young adults and as such are required to be escorted after this has been completed. To ensure provision for those who do arrive late, the Healthcare Provider has amended their shift patterns and staffing profile following the award of additional funding from NHS England (NHSE) to increase the number of staff available in reception. Furthermore, NHSE has agreed that the Healthcare team have the ability to utilise the shorter version of the primary reception screening for those patients with minimal risk factors, with the assurance that these prisoners will undergo a full secondary screening within 24 hours. HMP Leeds has also reprofiled the reception teams and recruited officers who want to be part of this important part of a prisoner journey. These staff are working as a team and show goodwill and professionalism to be flexible to manage late receptions and are to be commended for this. Collaboration between the safety team and operations team also means that safety is a priority focus with training, support and processes being updated.

Gatekeeping Process

The responsibility for secure mental health beds lies with the local NHS provider where the patient resides, or the NHS Specialised Commissioning Mental Health Team dependent on the level of security required to keep both the public and the patient safe.

HMPPS and NHS England are fully committed to the 28-day timeframe, working together to improve the transfer and remission process, ensure delays are reduced and avoid prison being used inappropriately. The focus is on improving efficiency across the whole pathway, i.e., ensuring appropriate lengths of stay, reducing transitions and thereby improving throughput. This will make better use of existing capacity across the whole system, including the pathway to and from prison. For adult medium and low secure beds, the 15 Adult Secure NHS-led Provider Collaboratives play a lead role in managing the patient pathway and addressing the needs of their local population whilst also being involved in strategic national commissioning and preserving the integrity of the overall secure estate. In respect of high secure beds, the 5-year commissioning approach was developed in September 2022 and describes the clinical model, pathways and capacity required for implementation by 2026.