



MoJ ref: SUB121988

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Kirkham
Freckleton Road
Preston
PR4 2RN

4 February 2025

Dear Chair,

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

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Kirkham. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work and dedication that has been put into capturing your helpful observations, especially as you were short of members during the reporting year.

I was very saddened to read that one person died in custody during the reporting period apparently from natural causes but remains subject to investigation by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO). I offer my sincere condolences to their friends and family and would like to reassure the Board that recommendations made by the PPO are taken very seriously.

I have read your report with great care and fully recognise the considerable impact the Temporary Presumptive Recategorisation Scheme (TPRS) had on HMP Kirkham and the prisoners in their care. TPRS was part of a range of capacity measures introduced over an 18-month period designed to create places in the reception estate to enable HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to fully utilise capacity throughout the prison estate. HMP Kirkham had very low occupancy, and therefore had more prisoners arriving than its comparators. I want to thank all of the staff at HMP Kirkham for their efforts to keep this cohort of prisoners safe and provide as much release planning as possible whilst assisting with capacity during what was a challenging period.

The TPRS scheme which was introduced at the time did not allow access to Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL), and we acknowledge HMP Kirkham's performance for ROTL was impacted by this. Although prisoners transferring on the standardised categorisation scheme did continue to be able to access a full range of resettlement provision, the TPRS scheme was revised in June 2024. This now allows prisoners to move to open conditions 12 months before their Conditional Release Date and be able to access ROTL through the established risk assessment process. Whilst some of the effects of TPRS are still being felt at HMP Kirkham, the updated scheme allows for fuller participation in the regime and addresses many of the issues inherent in the original scheme. I'm also informed that to better manage new arrivals to the prison and their introduction to open conditions, the safer custody department has now taken over the admissions and induction unit which has significantly improved prisoner interactions with staff.

It was encouraging to receive your comments about the library and education. It is very pleasing that the library continues to be well staffed and stocked, remaining popular during the day and evenings. I was

reassured that attendance at education classes has improved over the year, given the competing gym sessions and ROTL opportunities.

I'm also aware of the new sports hall facility which I believe is the most modern in the prison estate. Moreover, I understand that a physical education custodial manager has been appointed to increase the programme of physical education. In addition, I welcome that the Board has been able to report positively on the progress made to two of the concerns raised last year with funding enabling CCTV system upgrades to be made, as well as improvements to the roads and paths for the safety and accessibility of staff, prisoners and visitors.

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 the other issue raised in your report is set out in the attached annex.

The Lord Chancellor and I greatly 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 Kirkham.

Yours sincerely,

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

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Unused Buildings

Bids have been submitted to remove the unused buildings and are currently awaiting a business case. As you will understand, such projects are costly, lengthy and need to be considered carefully against similar needs in the estate. Although all requests are being considered, demands for maintenance are much greater than the available funding and HMPPS is therefore prioritising works very carefully to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency. When funding becomes available these buildings will be demolished, but in the meantime, the Ministry of Justice and the prison will continue to inspect the security of the buildings to minimise any risks.