



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Ford
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West Sussex
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MoJ ref: SUB124444

30 May 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP FORD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 NOVEMBER 2023 – 31 OCTOBER 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Ford. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations, especially as you operated with a reduced complement throughout the reporting period. I noted that you ended the year with fewer members than at the start and I hope the recruitment position improves in the current period.

I understand the Board's concerns about expansion plans and refurbishments at HMP Ford. A planning application for the expansion plans has been submitted for seven new houseblocks, delivering 420 additional places along with supporting ancillaries (property storage, offender management unit, healthcare unit, multi-faith unit and car parking for 80 spaces). The details of the planning application can be found on the Arun District Council website.

I would like to assure the Board that we remain committed to continuing the prison build programmes and to invest in prison maintenance so that existing places remain in use and are safe. HMPPS is continually reviewing the investment required across the estate, for both the current and next Spending Review periods. 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.

The Board will appreciate there are budgetary pressures and whilst all requests from the establishment will be considered, 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. HMP Ford's faults with fire doors will be addressed in all living areas during the course of the year, and a full refurbishment of A-wing is now complete. A boiler replacement project for the gate house and visits block is currently in progress and due for completion before the end of April 2025.

I appreciate your concerns around post-release and resettlement evaluation systems. The current commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) contracts have service levels in place which are monitored closely by regional HMPPS Contract Management Teams who work with CRS suppliers to address any performance and/or service delivery concerns. The service levels were developed as measures which were evidence-based as likely to contribute to effective services. Service-user progression is currently monitored through CRS provider action plans, their attendance and completion.

As part of the design of the future CRS contracts, to enhance the evaluation of service user progression, HMPPS is developing a distance travelled tool, which service users will complete at the start and end of their involvement with CRS. This tool will enable them to report the progress they have made. HMPPS will involve service users in its design and validation and are seeking input from academics to ensure the reliability and validity of the tool. This tool is intended to benefit service users by providing an opportunity to identify and celebrate progress and to assist delivery partners and HMPPS to better understand the impact and effectiveness of the services.

Turning to progress and other positives helpfully captured in your report, it was encouraging to read that the culture at HMP Ford is one of support, respect, fairness and humanity. I was also pleased to read about the improved induction process, the increased security and searching regime providing a safer environment for prisoners and staff and the prison's commitment to improving diversity and inclusion. I would also like to recognise and commend the healthcare department, together with the mental health and substance misuse teams, for providing an excellent integrated service at the prison. Your comments about the advances made in the delivery of education and work opportunities were pleasing to note.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HMPPS comments in response to the issue raised in relation to in-cell telephony is set out in the attached annex.

The Lord Chancellor and I appreciate the invaluable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are extremely grateful for your continued hard work and dedication on behalf of HMP Ford.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

In-Cell Telephony

There are no current plans to install in-cell phones at HMP Ford. However, there is a pilot in another open prison to look at the potential on pin locked mobile phones. There is also currently a pilot on the use of prisoners' own mobile phones for those who have access to them on release on temporary licence.