



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Cardiff
Knox Road
Cardiff
CF24 0UG

MoJ ref: SUB123152

2 June 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP CARDIFF: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2023 – 31 AUGUST 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Cardiff. I have read your report carefully and offer my thanks to you and your colleagues for your continued dedication and the hard work that has been put into providing your helpful observations, particularly as you have been operating with fewer board members than your recommended complement.

I was deeply saddened to read of the death of a prisoner during this reporting year, which I understand was apparently self-inflicted. Such events are very tragic and I would like to reassure the Board and the bereaved that all deaths in custody are treated extremely seriously, and recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are always acted upon. I welcome the Board's recognition of the support offered to the family and have also noted the prisons' efforts in the ongoing reduction in reported deaths in the last two years.

I fully understand the Board's concerns about overcrowding and the impact this has had at HMP Cardiff. The Board can be assured that accommodation is only shared where it has been assessed by a Prison Group Director to be of adequate size and condition and meeting certain standards to ensure prisoners are accommodated safely. On 12 July 2024, the Lord Chancellor announced a package of measures aimed at addressing prison capacity issues and preventing the collapse of the criminal justice system. Further, on 11 December 2024, we set out our long-term plan for prison capacity through the publication of the 10-year Prison Capacity Strategy. This sets out our plans to deliver 20,000 additional prison places and create a resilient prison estate that includes the construction of four new prisons as well as expansion and refurbishment of the existing prison estate. Whilst this does not address the immediate crowding and cell sharing issues at HMP Cardiff, the strategy underlines our commitment to improving the overall estate and future direction.

Turning to the positives within your report, I was reassured to read that the Governor and senior management team were visible, and positive staff-prisoner relationships underpinned the respectful culture. I was pleased to note that time out of cell to engage in purposeful activity was delivered more consistently than at comparable prisons, and there are several initiatives to promote links between employers and prisoners – a body of work I am very passionate about. It was also encouraging to read about the established links with charities and the work of the Supporting Families and Invisible Walls team. I also welcome that the prison received an overall positive inspection by HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of progress as work continues. HM Prison and Probation Service (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 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 Cardiff.

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

Heating and Water Systems

Traditionally, the annual servicing of the heating systems is due in September/October. This has now been moved to July/August to allow the servicing of the heating boiler and any potential remedial works time to be completed before the late autumn/winter season begins, helping to reduce and mitigate the risk. This year there have only been issues with the timers and trying to keep all wings balanced.

There has been extensive discussion and work done around this issue. Capital funding bids have been submitted for extra water tanks and proposals to fit pumps and a direct feed. This will also be captured on the Forward Maintenance Register for consideration for investment in future years. 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.

The heating and water system is raised weekly at the facilities management (Amey) meeting to ensure consistency in following up any failures in the system that may have been highlighted.

Disabled Accessibility and In-Cell Screens

Disability Accessibility

There are plans to convert a cell on F2 landing to a reduced mobility cell in the next financial year including full in-cell sanitation with shower facilities. This will be a double cell, providing support also in the form of a cell mate for anyone with reduced mobility. There is a disability cell already on F2 landing that provides access to the chapel, education, the servery and the treatment room. Ramped access and non-stepped access have also been installed where possible.

In-Cell Screens

Toilet facilities are being upgraded as part of the rolling cell refurbishment programme including the fixed low-level screens and the installation of new curtained screening.

Key Work Delivery

On 24 January 2024, the Director General of Operations at HMPPS, Phil Copple, wrote to Area Executive Directors, Prison Group Directors and Governors setting out the HMPPS operational priorities for 2024/25 and the related core expectations. One of these priorities was to increase the quantity and quality of regimes, including key work. To support this, a new regime and business planning process has been introduced.

Key work is one of the core priorities for HMPPS in 2025/26. The expectation will be that key work delivery will increase in this cycle of Regime Planning aligned to each establishments' Regime Management Plan. Additional elements have been added to the Regime Planning Template to enable delivery. At HMP Cardiff, new profiles are due to be implemented on 1 April 2025. The national target is now focussed on quality of key work, which HMP Cardiff has scored a green rating.

Mental Health Prisoners in the Care and Separation Unit (CSU)

HMPPS is committed to improving mental health outcomes for people in contact with the criminal justice system, to ensure that offenders with acute mental health needs receive timely support, in the most

appropriate setting. We recognise that vulnerable people in prison who meet the threshold for detention under the Mental Health Act and require a transfer to hospital continue to experience delays in accessing the specialist care and treatment they need.

The Mental Health Bill was introduced to Parliament on 6 November 2024. The Bill sets out vital reforms to support people with severe mental illness in the criminal justice system, with the aim of speeding up access to specialist inpatient care and ensuring that offenders with severe mental health needs are able to access appropriate and timely support in the most appropriate setting. The reforms introduce a new statutory time limit of 28-days for the transfer of patients with a mental disorder from prison and other places of detention to hospital. This time limit together with operational improvements, aims to reduce unnecessary delays and deliver swifter access to treatment.

HMP Cardiff now has a Neurodiversity post within the Learning and Skills Department working with prisoners with mental health issues. The Governor will be highlighting through the current/ongoing health needs assessment the lack of mental health provision at the prison and will be using the Partnership Board meetings to highlight the support needed within the prison for prisoners with mental health needs.

‘Here 2 Help’ Peers and Emotional Resilience Training for Prisoners

The Here 2 Help peer supporters and the emotional resilience training for new prisoners that were introduced at HMP Cardiff were part of the ‘Settling Into Prison’ project that the national Safety Team has been supporting at six reception prisons across England and Wales. This was always intended to be a fixed-term pilot project to test the viability of these interventions and their effectiveness in improving safety outcomes, and there is no funding for it to continue beyond March 2025. The interim evaluation of the project reported on the difficulties in implementation experienced in some of the other prisons, but was broadly positive about its impact, and particularly the peer support element.

The final report is expected this summer, after which we will share the resources developed during the project, and the learning from it, across the prison estate. Whilst March 2025 marks the end of the project in its current form, this does not necessarily mean that the work at HMP Cardiff will come to an end, and possible options for continuing to offer the peer support service are currently being considered by the Governor.

Local Ethnic Recruitment

HMPPS is committed to achieving a target of 15.8% of all staff recruited being from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Background. As at 30 June 2024, 14.7% of HMPPS staff who declared their ethnicity were from an ethnic minority background. On the same date, 12.7% of all Public Sector prisons staff, 24.0% of all Youth Custody Service staff, 13.2% of HQ and Frontline Support staff, and 18.1% of Probation Service staff were from an ethnic minority background. Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2024, 39.6% of Prison Officer applicants and 34.9% of Operational Support Grade (OSG) applicants were from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared to 34.8% of all HMPPS candidates.

HMPPS regularly reviews and evaluates candidate performance during the Prison Officer recruitment process for fairness and efficacy and no adverse impact has been found against any group participating in the Prison Officer recruitment process at any stage of the recruitment process, including ethnic minority candidates. We continue to recruit Prison Officers and OSGs, tailoring our marketing and attraction to increase diversity of applications. HMPPS is targeting prisons and probation regions where there is disparity between the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic workforce population and the regional working population through using an enhanced recruitment approach. This includes engaging with the wider diverse community to increase knowledge of careers within HMPPS, designing and facilitating recruitment attraction events through digital platforms and allocating a “buddy” for candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds to support them through the recruitment process.

More broadly, specific Inclusive recruitment guidance is available for vacancy managers to support them in embedding all elements inclusion through each step of their recruitment campaigns. Furthermore, a MoJ Diverse Interview Panel Guidance has been published to support vacancy managers to ensure an inclusive sifting and interview process. To increase understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and the impact it has on recruitment, all MoJ People Functions staff are currently being offered Inclusive Recruitment workshops, with live case studies and a separate one-day training session on “Making Fair and Effective Decisions in Recruitment.”

Healthcare Provision

Health Needs Analysis

The health needs assessment commenced on 6 January 2025 and is a 14-week process.

Mental Health Weekend Cover

The whole workforce model will be reviewed in conjunction with the health needs analysis report.

Prescription Complaints

The Head of Healthcare will continue to monitor applications for medications and prescriptions. The theme within the requests is around men requesting medication that they have not been prescribed in the community. Therefore, when the team are undertaking medication reconciliation, they are unable to do this accurately. The GPs will need to review them for a new prescription. The GPs have taken the pragmatic approach that what the men are prescribed in the community, will continue in HMP Cardiff including medication for mental health conditions.

Mental Health Triaging Policy

The newly introduced practice of triaging only those individuals who ask to see mental health during their reception or secondary health screening process will be kept under review. We would like to reassure the Board that all men get asked about their mental health on primary and secondary screening. Also, there is a very low threshold for any member of staff to refer to the mental health team for a review.