



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Winchester
Romsey Road
Winchester
Hampshire
SO22 5DF

MoJ ref: SUB10117

16 November 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP WINCHESTER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JUNE 2021 – 31 MAY 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 May 2022. I am very much aware of the amount of effort that goes into producing annual reports and thank you for providing a comprehensive picture of HMP Winchester over the reporting year. I was saddened to hear there were five deaths in custody during the reporting period, two of which were apparently self-inflicted. As you are aware the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) carry out independent investigations into deaths in custody and I would like to assure the Board my officials take recommendations from the PPO very seriously.

I address below the specific points you have raised for my attention:

I understand the Board's concerns around staff recruitment and retention. Efforts to recruit prison officers is ongoing, however, this is against a position of much higher staff turnover. To aid recruitment, HMP Winchester was included in the Advance into Justice campaign earlier this year which sought to fast-track veterans and serving armed forces personnel into a second career as a prison officer. Since April 2022, HMP Winchester has been offering new prison officers and operational support recruits an incentivised travel to work scheme and continues to offer a local market supplement of £2,000. The prison was also included in the national prison officer first posting relocation scheme, providing first-time prison officer applicants the chance to start a rewarding career and gain valuable experience working at one of our larger prisons compared to smaller local sites.

The exit interview survey process allows for monthly analysis of data and insights, ensuring appropriate strategies and action plans are in place to respond. A Retention Oversight Process has also been established which focusses on the sites that have the biggest attrition risks, enabling local and national interventions to take place. The recently announced pay award reflects a significant investment to uplift and reform the prison pay structure. The 2022/23 pay award has delivered an increase in base pay of at least 4% for all staff between bands 2 to 11, alongside further targeted pay rises for our lowest paid staff of up to £3,000.

HMP Winchester has made good progress in reducing prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, self-harming, and staff assaults in comparison to recent years, however, we recognise there is more work to do. Some of this work includes, but is not limited to: a new local safety strategy including data analysis to inform meaningful action; bespoke plans for violent individuals supported by a designated case manager; support for newly arrived prisoners to prevent debt and bullying that drives violence; and improved staff training to better equip them to manage violence.

In April 2022 HMP Winchester recorded the lowest number of incidents of self-harm in over three years. The prison has analysed the reasons for self-harming and steps have been taken to address the causes. This included the revision of the razor blade policy which is having a positive impact. The management have also increased the number of trained Listeners. This, together with the good working relationship with the Samaritans, are having a positive effect in reducing violence and self-harming.

I appreciate it was another difficult reporting period. It was encouraging to receive your comments about the largely fair and humane treatment of prisoners, including those who are vulnerable, despite the many challenges faced. I was further encouraged to note the prison's countermeasures against substance misuse, the restructuring of financial incentives that led to an increased take-up of education, and the introduction of gym equipment on the exercise yards allowing for better physical and mental wellbeing of prisoners. The prison, and particularly the Diversity and Inclusion team, can be proud to have arranged the concerts performed by Emmanuel Jal, as can the prisoner that won a platinum award in the Koestler Arts competition.

I have noted the Board referenced other areas for development that were not formally raised as issues of concern, and I would like to thank you for drawing my attention to these matters. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to these matters, together with other issues raised for HMPPS in your report, are set out in the attached annex. Local issues of concern will be addressed by the Governor who will continue to keep you aware of progress as work continues. NHS England have also advised my officials that they would be willing to investigate any disability matters and the Board would be welcome to raise any issues directly with NHS England.

The Justice Secretary 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 Winchester.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Damian Hinds', is positioned above the printed name.

Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Overcrowding

HMPPS acknowledges the Board's ongoing concerns and recognises that accommodating two prisoners in a cell designed for one is never desirable but continues to be necessary across the estate in order to accommodate all those committed to custody by the courts. Annually published figures show that crowding across the prison estate reduced from 22.5% of the population to 20.6% between 2018/19 and 2021/22. At HMP Winchester the average number of prisoners living in crowded conditions reduced by approximately 130 in the same period.

HMPPS continues to deliver the Government's pledge to invest £3.8 billion over the next three years to deliver 20,000 new, uncrowded prison places. There may also be options in future to further reduce crowding levels, for example targeted reductions of the least suitable prison places (including crowded places), but this is subject to estate capacity and projected population figures. As it is very difficult to predict how these national trends will play out at a local level, the proportion of prisoners held in crowded cells at HMP Winchester will ultimately depend on regional population levels and demand. In the meantime, HMPPS has recently published a revised framework for the certification of prisoner accommodation from which the useable operational capacity of the estate is derived. HMPPS establishments will be expected to hold as many prisoners as they can safely accommodate, however that number should be determined by local operational managers responsible for managing the prison and not by a central process or by wider supply and demand issues.

CCTV

Seven High-Definition Camera units have been replaced, several of which have had a wiring upgrade to Fibre Optic Cabling, and new control equipment has been installed in the Main Control room. The prison entrance CCTV has also been upgraded to Enhanced Gate Security level. Project managers are currently undertaking site surveys for further enhancement of cameras and associated equipment for completion by March 2023. For the longer term, a £1.1 million project to replace the CCTV site-wide at HMP Winchester has received financial approval and is proposed to be included in the programme of major capital maintenance works for the financial year 2023/24.

Prison Regime

All new arrivals at HMP Winchester receive a five-day induction programme before moving to the main location. At the main location, prisoners have the opportunity to engage in work, exercise/gym, education, chaplaincy, and the normal wing regime should they wish to do so.

Living Conditions

Investment has been made to the boiler systems on the site and this includes major works undertaken to the main plant room that supply accommodation areas. Last year, the two main boilers supplying B and C wings were replaced and the project is progressing to replace the boilers in the Hearn Unit.

Major improvements in controlling cell temperatures were made during last winter and none were found to be below 19-degrees celcius. All the cell windows on A, C and D wings have been replaced and B wing will follow shortly to help stabilise temperatures. The new cell windows have improved warmth, ingress of light, are safer and more secure, and prevent litter from being thrown out of the windows. Retrospective

fitting of air handling or air conditioning systems to control temperatures is often not a viable option due to the age, design and construction of the buildings, and the prison was provided with as many portable fans as possible during the record high temperatures this year.

Shower recesses on A, B and D wings were replaced and have individual cubicles for privacy and decency. Each wing has had its own independent hot water supplies fitted within the roof spaces, making them more efficient and addressing the water supply issues. Fire Safety systems have also been replaced during the course of the past eighteen months. Additionally, there is a £100 thousand project to replace the main lift in Healthcare to ensure prisoners with mobility problems have access to services. This is due for delivery by the end of the current financial year.

Canteen Provision and Debt

Prisoners at HMP Winchester are now allowed an initial canteen order which they can then repay once all their finances are sorted. The prison has introduced a new induction programme, part of which is an offer to newly arrived prisoners of an advance to ensure their basic needs are met and avoid debt.