



Ministry  
of Justice

**Alex Chalk MP**  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary  
of State for Justice

██████████  
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP/YOI Hindley  
Gibson Street  
Bickershaw  
Hindley  
WN2 5TH

**MoJ Ref:** SUB 87669

17 May 2021

Dear ██████████,

**HMP/YOI HINDLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 JANUARY 2020 – 31 DECEMBER 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 December 2020. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations particularly as Covid-19 impacted on your ability to gather information. I was, however, pleased to note that the prison maintained open and honest communications with the Board to support its monitoring throughout the pandemic.

I understand the Board's concerns about the cramped conditions in the prison's four older wings. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) acknowledges that A to D wings, which were part of the previous borstal accommodation, are old and not of a modern prison design. The newer accommodation, E and F wings which were built in the 1990s are much more suitable for the prison's population. Whilst it is recognised that the single cells on A to D wings are not large in size, there are 18 double rooms on these wings certificated as large enough for two adults to share. Due to the size of these double cells and some prisoners wishing to share there are no plans to make these single occupancy. Reducing the prison's certified normal accommodation levels would also result in overcrowding having to increase elsewhere in the prison estate.

HMP/YOI Hindley continues to do everything possible to ensure the environment is clean and decent and various initiatives have been introduced to improve the accommodation areas. These include daily decency and living conditions checks, as well as painting parties to quickly tackle any graffiti. Increased cleaners and cleaning regimes have also been put in place with the biosecurity team working throughout the periods of national lockdown. In addition, the prison's cell champions and room ready workers were identified by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) in its scrutiny visit report published in January 2021 as positive practice. I note the Board has recognised the recent efforts by the prison to improve conditions during the reporting year and HMIP has also acknowledged in its report that the physical condition of the residential areas have improved, as had the standard of the decor and equipment. The Board will also be pleased to note that fire safety improvement works and the refurbishment of J wing are currently out to tender.

Despite your concerns it was encouraging to receive your comments that the regime changes and the efforts of staff have minimised the transmission risk of Covid-19. I was also reassured to read that incidents of violence and self-harm have reduced and that the good communication between staff and people in prison ensures there is fair, decent and respectful treatment. It is pleasing that these have all

contributed to a safe environment and I am grateful to all staff for their continued hard work and professionalism during the pandemic. I was also encouraged to note that the health and wellbeing needs of prisoners are being met with 24-hour nursing presence and an established mental health service continuing throughout the pandemic.

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 window replacement issue raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

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/YOI Hindley.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Chalk'.

**ALEX CHALK MP**

## HMP/YOI HINDLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2020 – 31 DECEMBER 2020

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### Window Replacement

An Estates Improvement Proposal (EIP) was submitted in August 2018 for full replacement of cell windows throughout HMP/YOI Hindley to the new Ministry of Justice (MoJ) specification. This window specification is of a ligature-resistant design [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The EIP was approved and remains within the MoJ Property pipeline, but due to a large number of projects prioritised ahead of the window replacement there is no confirmed date yet as to when these works will be able to be scheduled. It is estimated that the projects currently within the pipeline may cost in the region of £1 billion in total across the estate.

It is recognised that the backlog of maintenance within the prison estate remains a concern and this is why £156 million was committed during the financial year 2020/21 to address the most immediate issues. The recent spending review settlement also provides a total of £315 million in capital funding in 2021/22 which will allow HMPPS to invest further in improving the condition of the existing prison estate. HMPPS is also continuing to build on relationships with Facilities Management providers to drive improvements to the existing contracts and services and remains committed to further reducing the maintenance backlog. However, the ability to do this is dependent on agreeing higher funding with HM Treasury.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The prison has also upgraded CCTV, introduced perimeter patrolling by dog handlers, drone patrols during night state, and mobile anti dash fencing to make the recovery of illicit items more difficult. Staff also continue to undertake weekly accommodation fabric checks which includes the window grilles, and should damage be discovered the cell is taken out of use until repaired. These measures have already had an impact as the prison has seen a reduction in the number of throw overs. In addition, as well as bins and daily opportunities provided to all people in prison to clean their cells to minimise litter being thrown from windows, outside areas are also being cleared daily and anyone witnessed discarding rubbish are managed through the Incentives and Adjudications processes.