



## HM Prison & Probation Service

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25<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Dear Charlie,

### **HMIP report on an independent review of progress at HMP Belmarsh 11-13 April 2022**

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMP Belmarsh, whereby you followed up ten key recommendations and three Ofsted themes from your most recent inspection that took place 26 July – 6 August 2021.

I am encouraged to note that you have seen good or reasonable progress being made across 8 recommendations and Ofsted themes', and note the following:

- **Safety**

Initiatives had been developed as part of the strategy, which appeared to be having some early impact in reducing violence with recorded violence being lower in the six months when compared to the same period before the last inspection. In particular, the conflict resolution team interview every prisoner on arrival to ensure that suitable actions were being taken to reduce risk of violence. Each new arrival is seen by a Listener during the induction process and there are now 30 trained Listeners prison wide.

- **Use of Force**

A well-attended weekly use of force scrutiny meeting had been introduced three months previously and data was now being used well to inform progress; for example, there was more targeted scrutiny of recordings of Use of Force involving Black and Minority Ethnic and younger offenders because of the disproportionate representation in the figures. Video footage and paperwork were now being scrutinised by managers and where concerns had been picked up, appropriate action had been taken.

- **Education and Work**

Managers have prioritised the reintroduction of education, skills and work appropriately to meet prisoners' needs, increasing the numbers in classrooms, and focussing on relevant qualifications to reflect the outcomes of prisoners' initial assessments. A small number of prisoners have recently benefitted from short, accredited courses such as barista and first aid and some prisoners had gained accredited qualifications.

In respect of the three key areas and Ofsted themes where you found insufficient or no meaningful progress I can confirm:

- **Resettlement**

It is recognised there is a national contract concern around prisoners being able to access resettlement advice and support to prepare them for release. The Governor is working with the regional probation lead to develop a solution for unsentenced or short sentenced prisoners.

- **Public Protection**

A review of the staff resource is being carried out to ensure that appropriate staffing levels are in place for all public protection monitoring calls to be listened to promptly.

- **Education and Work**

HMP Belmarsh will re-introduce employability booklets in the workshops, that will enable activities staff to record progress and development. The booklet links together education, industries, keyworkers and people in prison and will include self-assessments, review records and target setting to enable and assist in developing necessary skills.

I remain committed to ensuring continued progress against HMP Belmarsh's agreed Action Plan and I can assure you that through my operational assurance functions and the support of OSAG we continue to closely monitor progress.

Whilst I acknowledge that there is still much work to be carried out at the prison, I am encouraged that progress is being made and that our monitoring of the prison is in line with your findings.

**Richard Vince**  
Executive Director

CC: Private Office  
Phil Copple, Director General Prisons