



HM Prison & Probation Service

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04 November 2022

Dear Charlie,

HMIP report on an independent review of progress at HMP Rochester - 20-22 September 2022

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMP Rochester, whereby you followed up eight key recommendations and three Ofsted themes from your most recent inspection in October 2021.

I am encouraged to note that you have seen reasonable progress being made across two of the recommendations and Ofsted themes, and note the following;

- The revised first night and induction programme, with collaborative working between staff and peer workers to provide important information about HMP Rochester.
- The prison have worked hard to significantly increase activity spaces, which has increased on pre-pandemic levels.
- Prisoners are offered a broad curriculum with a range of qualifications available to them.

In respect of the nine key areas and Ofsted themes where you found insufficient or no meaningful progress, I can confirm that all the IRP findings have been carefully considered and steps will be taken to address them as appropriate. This will include the following;

- Further work will be undertaken to recruit prison officers and OSGs to HMP Rochester's target staffing figure, whilst also developing the retention strategy. Recruitment campaigns remain ongoing for both prison officers and OSGs. 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 the lowest paid staff of up to £3,000. HMP Rochester was included in the Advance into Justice campaign earlier in the year, which sought to fast-track veterans and serving armed forces personnel into a second career as a prison officer. To improve retention, exit interviews continue to be undertaken and local interventions are being put in place to tackle the

themes that are highlighted. These include wellbeing sessions, an updated local reward and recognition policy and a training needs analysis for operational staff.

- A full safety review, involving key partners, will be conducted by the end of January 2023 to identify emerging themes and trends to reduce violence and improve safety amongst prisoners at HMP Rochester. These outcomes will inform a revised safety strategy.
- The submission of funding bids to replace damaged flooring, new windows on B wing and toilet screens.
- Revision and improvement of the education induction, including the Information, Advice and Guidance provision. Training and support will be provided to improve the peer mentor offer and the new Prison Employment Lead will focus on improving the employability of prisoners on release from HMP Rochester.

The Governor, with the support of the Prison Group Director, will continue to progress the full Action Plan covering all the original recommendations.

I remain committed to ensuring continued progress against HMP Rochester 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.

Sarah Coccia

Executive Director – PSP South

CC: Private Office

Phil Cople, Director General of Operations

James Lucas, Prison Group Director - Kent, Surrey & Sussex