



HM Prison & Probation Service

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Charlie Taylor,
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
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22nd July 2024

Dear Charlie,

HMIP report on an independent review of progress at HMP High Down - 3rd – 5th June 2024

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMP **High Down** whereby you followed up 9 key recommendations and 3 Ofsted themes from your most recent inspection in June 2024.

I am encouraged to note that you have seen good and reasonable progress being made across some of the recommendations and Ofsted themes and note the following.

- That the prison now has systems in place to ensure Mental Health Act referrals, assessments and transfers occurred in a timely fashion, with escalation processes used in the event of a delay or increased risk.
- That High Down had made very good progress in developing their understanding of the illicit economy, The Prison recognises the impact this has on the stability and safety and had made this a priority.
- Better progression opportunities were beginning to develop, such as the incentivised substance free living and the psychologically informed planned environment units, which would help prisoners to engage constructively and give the prison a clearer identity.
- Improved and good supervision of the administration of medicines
- Prison managers had improved their oversight of the quality of education, skills, and work.

In respect of the three 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;

- The work to increase the number of Prisoners Convicted of Sexual Offences located at High Down has now been completed and we anticipate that this change in the population profile will contribute to a decrease of violent incidents and continue the early signs of a reduction in violence which was noted by HMIP.

- We will continue to ensure that the oversight of challenge, support and intervention plans remains consistent, and we will ensure they are robustly reviewed to provide assurance that they include appropriate targets, sufficiently address poor behaviour and support victims.
- We are currently awaiting the outcome from HMPPS Academies bids and attendance at Activities is our top priority for the second half of the year. We are confident that once embedded, the new allocation via Pathways (courses grouped together) will improve attendance.
- Delivery of Horizon, a moderate-intensity accredited programme for men convicted of sexual offences, commenced for the first time at High Down at the end of June 2024. A needs analysis will be completed to provide an updated assessment of requirements to meet the needs of the new population.
- We acknowledge the concerns regarding the number of probation officer vacancies and will continue to be creative in finding ways to mitigate this.
- We will engage with the Regional Safety Team to support quality assurance work of ACCT documents to ensure they are completed to the required high standard. This will include a focus on ensuring care plans are co-designed in collaboration with all involved in case management.

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 High Down's agreed Action Plan and I can assure you that through my operational assurance functions and the support of Performance, Assurance and Risk (PAR) Group 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.

Kind Regards
Sarah

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