



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Action Plan: HMP & YOI Deerbolt

Action Plan Submitted: 28 April 2025

A Response to the HMIP Inspection: 3 - 19 December 2024

Report Published: 24 March 2025

INTRODUCTION

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and HM Inspectorate of Probation for England and Wales are independent inspectorates which provide scrutiny of the conditions for, and treatment of prisoners and offenders. They report their findings for prisons, Young Offender Institutions, and effectiveness of the work of probation, and youth offending services across England and Wales to Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). In response to the report HMPPS / MoJ are required to draft a robust and timely action plan to address the priority and key concerns. Action plans provide specific steps and actions to address the priority and key concerns, that are clear, outcome focussed, measurable, achievable, and relevant with the owner and timescale of each step clearly identified. Action plans are sent to HMIP and published on the GOV.UK website. Progress against the implementation and delivery of the action plans will also be monitored and reported on.



ACTION PLAN: HMIP REPORT

ESTABLISHMENT: HMP & YOI Deerbolt

1. Rec No	2. Concerns	3. Response Action Taken/Planned	4. Responsible Owner	5. Target Date
	Priority concerns			
1	Illicit drugs were too easily available and the rate of positive random drug tests was high, but leaders had not put in place a coordinated or effective drug strategy.	<p>A Drug Strategy will be implemented to support a co-ordinated outcome focused delivery model for recovery.</p> <p>A second Incentivised Substance Free Living Unit (ISFL) has been opened at the prison to provide further support for prisoners who wish to live drug free.</p> <p>The Drug Strategy meeting now takes place monthly in conjunction with the Security meeting to enable cohesive working between the departments. These meetings will also provide the forum to measure increased performance and effective practice.</p> <p>Gate security will be improved with the introduction of additional security measures.</p> <p>Suspicion drug testing will be implemented at HMP & YOI Deerbolt.</p> <p>Mouth swab drug testing has also been introduced on the ISFL.</p> <p>There is now increased searching of all external areas before prisoners attend activities.</p> <p>Upskilling activities will take place by training staff locally to undertake searches, reducing the reliance on external teams and empowering staff in the prison to act on suspicious activity.</p> <p>Bite sized focused training has been introduced led by subject matter experts including lived experienced talks to prisoners and focused recovery sessions.</p>	<p>The Governor</p>	<p>May 2025</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>October 2025</p> <p>June 2025</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>January 2026</p> <p>Completed</p>



		<p>The Local Security Strategy, as well as other national procedures, are now publicised on the prisons local intranet page providing increased accessibility and staff awareness.</p> <p>A scoping exercise will be completed over the use of supportive adjudications in the case of substance misuse.</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>September 2025</p>
2	<p>The over-restrictive regime, inexperienced staff and absence of managers on the wings meant that working relationships between staff and prisoners on the residential units were often poor.</p>	<p>A staff re-profiling exercise will be completed to improve prisoners' access to activities and domestic periods.</p> <p>An improved regime will be implemented to provide a less restrictive core day, enabling greater access to rehabilitative opportunities, work, and purposeful activity for prisoners.</p> <p>The prison has commenced recruitment to fill manager vacancies to provide increased leadership and visibility on residential units.</p> <p>HMP & YOI Deerbolt have been supplied, on an interim basis, with an increase in staffing to provide additional support. This will be reviewed via Operational Resourcing and Stability Panels.</p> <p>The New Colleague Mentor Scheme is now utilised to support new staff at the establishment. This provides on the job support, training and mentoring in all areas of their roles, improving capability and confidence in the workforce.</p> <p>Upskilling activities are now being provided to include the correct application of people processes, how to hold difficult conversations and how to write quality Occupational Health referrals. There is also increased governance around absence management.</p> <p>All staff will be trained in Being Trauma Informed, this will equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to understand and respond to the effects of trauma and form part of ongoing career development at the prison.</p> <p>Four full staff training days will be delivered throughout the year to provide focussed time on continued professional development.</p>	<p>The Governor</p>	<p>September 2025</p> <p>October 2025</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Commenced and ongoing</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>July 2026</p> <p>April 2026</p>



3	<p>Patients faced unacceptable barriers to receiving health care: there were too few health staff; clinics were often cancelled; patients were not escorted to appointments, including those outside at hospital; and they received medicines late. The problems were compounded by a high number of medical emergencies caused by substance misuse, a shortage of prison officers and regime restrictions.</p>	<p>Recruitment campaigns have taken place for health staff, some positions have already been filled, with the rest currently going through the clearance process. As an interim measure, to ensure continuity of services the provider has employed an agency nurse to backfill any gaps. Vacancies will continue to be monitored via the local delivery board and meetings between the senior management team of the provider and the Governor.</p> <p>The prison will work with health leaders to improve the governance process of the monthly local delivery board, ensuring improved sharing of performance data, monitoring of concerns, and addressing enablement are prioritised.</p> <p>Healthcare will review in possession medication and utilise in cell medication lockers to store medication safely to reduce the number of patients receiving medication from on duty nurses.</p> <p>The storage of in cell medication in lockers is planned and will be rolled out, it will form part of a long-term strategy on the provision.</p> <p>A free-flow system will be introduced at the establishment to improve timeliness and access to activities and health care appointments.</p> <p>A Drug Strategy will be implemented to support a co-ordinated outcome focused delivery model for recovery.</p> <p>A defensible decisions log when hospital appointments have been cancelled, is now documented to improve oversight.</p> <p>The prisoner shop list will be reviewed to enable access to some over the counter medications which do not require prescriptions or monitoring.</p>	<p>Spectrum Community Health CIC</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>Spectrum Community Health CIC</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>June 2025</p> <p>July 2025</p> <p>July 2025</p> <p>March 2026</p> <p>May 2025</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>June 2025</p>
4	<p>The unreliable regime was a huge source of frustration for prisoners. Many prisoners were locked up during the working day, which was especially unacceptable for a Category C training prison, and</p>	<p>The prison is recruiting into all available vacancies and redeploying colleagues back into appropriately graded roles to support a less restrictive regime.</p>	<p>The Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p>



	<p>prisoners struggled to get to places such as health care or activities on time or at all.</p>	<p>A staff re-profiling exercise will be completed to improve prisoners' access to activities and domestic periods.</p> <p>An improved regime will be implemented to provide a less restrictive core day, enabling greater access to rehabilitative opportunities, work, and purposeful activity for prisoners.</p> <p>A free-flow system will be introduced at the establishment to improve timeliness and access to activities and health care appointments.</p> <p>The Regime Management Plan meeting has been improved with an increase in frequency, greater attendance and a mandatory list of core participants introduced. This has helped address inconsistencies in the delivery of the regime.</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>September 2025</p> <p>October 2025</p> <p>March 2026</p> <p>Completed</p>
5	<p>The curriculum for education, skills and work (ESW) was not sufficiently broad to meet the needs of the prison population and did not enable prisoners to develop the knowledge and skills they needed to prepare for release. In addition, attendance was too low in ESW and prisoners too often arrived late.</p>	<p>A needs analysis has been completed, this identified there were significant employment opportunities in the construction industry for prisoners being released from HMP & YOI Deerbolt.</p> <p>As a result of the needs analysis findings, further vocational courses are being introduced to meet the needs of the prison population.</p> <p>A careers event with a construction firm took place in February 2025, a further one is planned for July 2025 and will become a regular feature in the calendar for HMP & YOI Deerbolt.</p> <p>An employment advisory board has been introduced to improve opportunities for prisoners on release from the prison. This involves external partners and is chaired by a senior manager at the prison.</p> <p>A free-flow system will be introduced at the establishment to improve timeliness and attendance to activities and health care appointments.</p> <p>Attendance data is monitored daily by senior leaders. Recent improvements to the rest in cell policy will improve attendance at activities.</p> <p>To increase attendance at work and education, partner agencies will be encouraged to schedule appointments outside of times where prisoners are attending activities. This will be monitored via the weekly Attendance Meeting.</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>October 2026</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>March 2026</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>June 2025</p>



		<p>An Incentives Policy Framework review will be completed to reward and incentivise positive conduct as well as challenge non-attendance to activities. Following a short consultation, all Supervising Officers and Custodial Managers will be updated on the revised framework.</p>	The Governor	July 2025
		<p>An incentives process is in place for monthly attendance champions, and success is recognised in a monthly recognition event for prisoners.</p>	The Governor	Completed
	Key concerns			
6	Levels of violence and force were high and governance of use of force was not sufficiently robust.	<p>A full review of use of force assurance has been completed by the Operational Resilience and Response Unit (ORRU) to improve practices and provide better oversight. Recommendations have been made aimed at supporting staff in managing behaviour as part of an overall behaviour management approach.</p>	The Governor	July 2025
		<p>Weekly Use of Force Assurance and Development meetings will commence to ensure incidents are reviewed and learning points are shared in a timely manner.</p>	The Governor	May 2025
		<p>All Use of Force is now triaged daily by the Duty Governor and any immediate concerns raised directly with the Deputy Governor for appropriate action.</p>	The Governor	Completed
		<p>A safety awareness day has taken place to help understand the drivers of violence, including debt and substance misuse. The improved use of Challenge, Support and Intervention Plans (CSIP) and Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) were also covered to provide upskilling.</p>	The Governor	Completed
		<p>The National Safety team will provide support and upskilling to strengthen local capability in the use of the Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan (CSIP). This will include the quality assurance process to drive an improvement in the management of prisoners at risk to others.</p>	The Governor	March 2026
		<p>A review of the adjudication process will take place to ensure effective working and to build confidence in the process.</p>	The Governor	October 2025



		The Segregation Monitoring and Review Group (SMARG) and Adjudication Standardised Meetings will take place monthly to improve governance at the prison.	The Governor	May 2025
7	Expectations of prisoners were set at too low a level and the controlled regime did not provide enough opportunities for prisoners to demonstrate progression or earn trust.	<p>The prison is recruiting into all available vacancies and redeploying colleagues back into appropriately graded roles to support a less restrictive regime.</p> <p>The prison will complete a re-profiling exercise on the work currently undertaken at HMP & YOI Deerbolt to improve the distribution of staff to key areas.</p> <p>An improved regime will be implemented to provide a less restrictive core day, enabling greater access to rehabilitative opportunities, work, and purposeful activity for prisoners.</p> <p>An Incentives Policy Framework review will be completed to reward and incentivise positive conduct as well as challenge acts of poor behaviour. Following a short consultation, all Supervising Officers and Custodial Managers will be updated on the revised framework.</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>September 2025</p> <p>October 2025</p> <p>July 2025</p>
8	The rate of self-harm was higher than other similar prisons and mechanisms to provide support, such as ACCT case management and the Listeners scheme, were not being used effectively.	<p>The National Safety team will provide support to strengthen local capability in Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) quality assurance to drive an improvement in the support offered for prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm.</p> <p>A Case manager system has been introduced to improve the quality of ACCT documents and to ensure care plans are specific to prisoners' needs. Feedback to colleagues to improve performance is now evidenced and monitored, the increased accountability has improved oversight of the process.</p> <p>Additional staff will be identified to train as ACCT assessors, spanning all grades in the prison. This will effectively distribute skills and knowledge to all areas and drive up overall outcomes.</p> <p>A safety awareness day has taken place to help understand the drivers of violence, including debt and substance misuse. The improved use of Challenge, Support and Intervention Plans (CSIP) and Assessment, Care</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>March 2026</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>April 2026</p> <p>Completed</p>



		<p>in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) were also covered to provide upskilling.</p> <p>A Listeners' rota is now in place and there is increased accessibility to the scheme to improve its effectiveness.</p> <p>Battery operated shavers have been introduced at the prison removing prisoners access to razor blades.</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
9	<p>The promotion of fair treatment and inclusion was weak. Leaders had limited insight into the experiences of minority groups and could not be confident that they were treated fairly.</p>	<p>To improve oversight and to ensure a whole prison approach to the promotion of fair treatment and inclusion, senior leaders now have ownership of individual protective characteristics.</p> <p>The Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Committee meeting now takes place monthly, this will provide better outcomes for prisoners through improved use of data from all areas of the prison as well as enhancing governance.</p> <p>A needs analysis will be completed to better understand the demographics of prisoners at the establishment.</p> <p>Prisoner forums have been reinstated for all protected characteristic groups, governance is now provided to ensure actions that arise from the forums are completed in a timely manner to improve prisoners' experiences.</p> <p>Peer mentors will be recruited to promote peer led pro-social modelling and effective communications with all groups held at the prison.</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>November 2025</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>August 2025</p>
10	<p>Clinical governance of health services was weak. Clinical incidents were not always recorded, health care complaints were not confidential, and patients did not know how to submit a complaint</p>	<p>The prison will work with health leaders to improve the governance process of the monthly local delivery board, ensuring improved sharing of performance data, monitoring of concerns, and addressing enablement are prioritised.</p> <p>A revised health care complaints process has now been introduced at the prison.</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>June 2025</p> <p>Completed</p>



		The new complaints process will be advertised throughout the prison to increase awareness.	The Governor	July 2025
		The Governor and Deputy Governor meet with healthcare providers on a quarterly basis to drive forward improvements and provide increased oversight.	The Governor	Completed
11	Too much teaching in vocational training was weak. Leaders and managers had not identified the weaknesses in the quality of teaching and had not taken effective actions to make improvements.	An effective and robust quality assurance programme will be designed and introduced to improve activities and the quality of teaching in vocational training workshops. This activity will include learner walks and deep dives.	The Governor	July 2025
		A programme of targeted upskilling activities for Instructional Officers has commenced to strengthen vocational training provision.	The Governor	July 2025
		The monthly Education Performance Meeting is now being chaired by the Governor to provide increased oversight.	The Governor	Completed
		The education provider will deliver Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions for all teaching staff identified from the quality assurance activities.	The Governor	February 2026
		Performance management discussions will be designed and introduced, completed by the local education manager, to improve the quality of teaching.	The Governor	September 2025
12	Leaders and managers had not implemented an enrichment curriculum that all prisoners could access. They had set up a range of useful activities on one residential wing but not on the remainder, so too few prisoners benefited from enrichment.	An Enrichment Strategy will be introduced to provide a roadmap for improved enrichment activity.	The Governor	July 2025
		The enrichment offer will be improved across the prison with residential managers implementing progressive regimes on the units.	The Governor	October 2025
		Enrichment projects have commenced in conjunction with external employers.	The Governor	Completed
		Other projects are also taking place within the local community including an art project with Bowes Museum and an enterprise link with a local clothing charity.	The Governor	Commenced and ongoing



		An enrichment database has been created to capture all enrichment activity from all stakeholders across the prison.	The Governor	Completed
13	Staff did not provide sufficiently helpful or timely ongoing careers guidance for prisoners to support them in their next steps.	<p>The Head of Education Skills & Work and Learning & Skills manager is reviewing the current provision alongside Careers, Information, Advice & Guidance (CIAG) workers and managers to ensure guidance is helpful and timely. This will form part of a future assurance process.</p> <p>All Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) will be reviewed and goals refreshed.</p> <p>The Learning & Skills manager will meet biweekly with the CIAG manager to provide improved governance of the provision. The Head of Education Skills & Work will provide further assurance via the monthly Quality Improvement Group meeting.</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>June 2025</p> <p>June 2025</p> <p>September 2025</p>
14	There was insufficient contact with the individual prisoner by their prison offender manager (POM). The introductory meeting was often several weeks late, and subsequent meetings were not frequent enough, especially with prison POMs.	<p>All prisoners will be seen by their Prison Offender Manager (POM) within two weeks of arriving at the prison, they will also have a documented sentence plan review with their POM annually. Contact time between POMs and prisoners will be monitored by the Head of Offender Manager Services (HOMS) to provide increased governance.</p> <p>Monthly supervision sessions are now completed by HOMS. POMs are required to provide an overview of their new cases and evidence of completed sentence plans.</p> <p>A POM drop-in clinic will be established to enable prisoners to raise specific questions directly with the POM team as well as improve accessibility.</p> <p>A POM development day has taken place to provide upskilling to staff.</p> <p>POM champions will be recruited from the prison officer group to help build resilience and provide appropriate training to improve signposting and information sharing.</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p> <p>The Governor</p>	<p>September 2025</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>June 2025</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>September 2025</p>
15	There was insufficient pre-release support to meet the need of the considerable number of prisoners being released from Deerbolt.	HMP & YOI Deerbolt have established a pre-release meeting with the support of partner agencies which takes place monthly. The prison is also actively sharing all information regarding a prisoner's progress in prison	The Governor	Completed



		with Community Offender Managers and the prisoner themself to support improved outcomes before release.		
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