



HM Prison & Probation Service

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Charlie Taylor,
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Dear Charlie,

HMIP report on an independent review of progress at HMP Rochester 2nd - 4th June 2025

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMP Rochester, whereby you followed up nine priority/key concerns and four Ofsted themes from your most recent inspection in August 2024.

I am encouraged to note that you have seen good/reasonable progress being made across six priority/key concerns and two Ofsted themes, and note the following:

- A significant reduction in self-harm and violence since the last inspection, supported by more effective analysis and understanding of the underlying causes.
- Improved living conditions including cleaner cells and communal areas, and a significant reduction in vermin.
- The introduction of both an enrichment programme and a prison-wide reading strategy, with a strong focus on raising awareness amongst staff and the prisoner population.

In respect of the three priority/key concerns and two Ofsted themes where you found no meaningful/insufficient progress, I can confirm that the IRP findings have been carefully considered, and steps will be taken to address them as appropriate. These will include the following:

- The Equalities Advisor, working alongside the Governor and supported by the Regional Equalities Lead, will help to develop a new Equalities Strategy. This will focus on listening to and understanding prisoners' concerns through regular forums and data analysis to identify and address any unfair outcomes.

- There will be greater operational governance of healthcare delivery monitored through the local delivery board, with improved oversight of how medicines are administered.
- The focus on tackling the illicit economy and reducing drug use continues. A new Drug Strategy and Action Plan has been implemented to set clear priorities and ensure that the relaunched Incentivised Substance-Free Living (ISFL) wing runs effectively.

The Governor, with the support of the Prison Group Director, will continue to progress the full action plan covering all the original priority/key concerns.

I remain committed to ensuring continued progress against the HMP Rochester agreed action plan and I can assure you that through my operational assurance function and the support of Performance and 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.

Sara Robinson

Area Executive Director – South East & Eastern Region

CC: Michelle Jarman-Howe, Interim Director General Operations, HMPPS
James Lucas, Prison Group Director, Kent, Surrey & Sussex