



HM Prison & Probation Service

Charlie Taylor
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
3rd floor, 10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU

Sarah Chand
Area Executive Director, Midlands
HM Prison and Probation Service
HM Prison Service College
Newbold Revel
1-6 Our Lady's Building
Rugby
CV23 0TH
Email: AEDmidlands@justice.gov.uk

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Dear Charlie,

HMIP report on an Independent Review of Progress (IRP) at HMP Onley 6-8 January 2026

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMP Onley, whereby you followed up on five priority concerns and four Ofsted themes.

I am encouraged to note that you have seen good/reasonable progress being made across most of the concerns and Ofsted themes, and note the following;

- Improved oversight and management of the use of force, including the removal of backlogs, strengthened quality assurance, and greatly increased use of body-worn video cameras.
- Enhanced leadership within the Offender Management Unit, including closer managerial oversight, more effective analysis of performance and outcomes, and the introduction of wing surgeries to support consistent contact between prisoners and offender managers.
- Reasonable progress across key Ofsted themes, including increased activity spaces and reduced unemployment, a more effective allocations processes, a strengthened reading strategy, growing collaboration with employers and better use of workplace skills booklets.

In respect of the concerns where you found insufficient 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;

- Illicit drug use continues to drive debt, violence and self-harm at HMP Onley. While there have been improvements to window security, and CCTV and intelligence-led policing partnerships are underway, we recognise the need for a more pronounced reduction in drug-related harm. Work will continue to strengthen physical security, with night searching, and to embed the improved drug strategy governance now in place. We will also support recruitment and case-work capacity to reduce waiting times for substance misuse interventions.
- The introduction of Supervising Officers and wing-level forums shows promise, but levels of prisoner frustration remain high and confidence in the applications and complaints systems is still too low. Further work will focus on improving communication with prisoners with wing forums, with attendance encouraged by sharing feedback following meetings to demonstrate that effective change is taking place following forum engagement. The prison will also ensure that the applications tracking system functions as it is intended and strengthen the visibility and consistency of staff responses to day-to-day issues via the Supervising Officer role.
- Despite strengthened governance and successful recruitment, gaps remain in mental health psychological provision, including record-keeping quality and overall capacity to meet the population need. We will support the provider to complete recruitment, improve caseload management and ensure continuity of care. Oversight arrangements will be further embedded to ensure that clinical gaps are systematically addressed.
- The prison will ensure that personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are held appropriately so that staff are aware of these in the event of an emergency. Notices will be published to ensure that staff are aware of telephone interpretation services. Information on how to access equalities information will be added to the local prison officer resource guide.

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 Onley's agreed Action Plan and I can assure you that through my operational assurance functions and the support of the Performance, Assurance and Risk 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.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Chand
Area Executive Director, HMPPS Midlands

cc:

Michelle Jarman-Howe, Interim Director General of Operations, HMPPS
 Russ Truman, Acting Prison Group Director, East Midlands

