



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 Elmley  
16-18 February 2026**

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

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

- Inspectors recognised the impact of strengthened leadership grip, improved partnership working with the police and tangible physical security improvements, including the replacement of cell windows. The reduction in the MDT positivity rate compared with the previous inspection is a positive indicator of progress, alongside improved intelligence-led approaches to disrupting the illicit economy.
- Good progress was identified in improving the physical condition of accommodation, with significant numbers of cells refurbished, prisoner-led teams actively improving living environments, and ongoing investment in shower facilities. Inspectors also noted the existence of a clear plan to address the poorest accommodation.
- While challenges remain, inspectors found reasonable progress in improving consultation mechanisms. Prisoner forums and regular meetings chaired by the Governor are well attended, and records demonstrate that prisoner concerns are being captured and acted upon.

In respect of the concerns and Ofsted themes where you found no/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:

- While mitigations such as first night support plans are in place, it is recognised that outcomes for prisoners during their early days in custody remain inconsistent. Further work is underway to strengthen joint working with court services, increase the effective use of video links, and

ensure that late-arriving prisoners receive appropriate support and assessment as early as possible.

- Inspectors highlighted the ongoing impact of staffing shortfalls on regime delivery, staff–prisoner relationships, assaults and use of force. Focused action is being taken to stabilise staffing, improve consistency of deployment and increase the frequency and impact of key work so that it contributes more effectively to safety and relationships.
- Leaders accept that levels of staff assaults and use of force have not reduced sufficiently. Additional scrutiny, learning and assurance arrangements are being strengthened to better understand causation, improve practice and address the concerns raised, including the perceptions of prisoners from ethnic minority and Muslim backgrounds.
- While the backlog of reviews has reduced, inspectors rightly identified that the quality and relevance of personal learning plans remain inconsistent. Leaders are taking action with education providers to improve the quality of goal setting, ensure plans better reflect prisoners' aspirations and needs, and embed more consistent review arrangements.

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

**Sara Robinson**  
**Interim Area Executive Director South East & Eastern**

Cc:  
Michelle Jarman-Howe, Interim Director General of Operations HMPPS