



HM Prison &
Probation Service

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Dear Charlie,

**HMIP Report on an Independent Review of Progress at HMP Leeds
23 – 25 March 2026**

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress (IRP) report at HMP Leeds, in which you followed up on **nine** priority/key concerns and **three** Ofsted themes identified during your most recent inspection in July 2025.

I am encouraged to note that you have observed good or reasonable progress being made across **four** priority/key concerns, and significant or reasonable progress in relation to the **three** Ofsted themes. In particular, I note the following:

- HMP Leeds has improved both the experience for new arrivals and access to early support. Induction arrangements are now more consistent and better assured, with improved time out of cell and clearer information provided from the point of reception.
- Support for remand and recall prisoners has improved significantly, including better access to information, greater consistency of contact and continuity of support. Looking ahead, plans for a dedicated recall wing will further improve stability.
- Staff visibility has increased, engagement is more consistent, and expectations around respectful behaviour are clearer, leading to more positive and meaningful daily interactions. Overall, this reflects a more confident staff group and a calmer, more stable culture.
- Healthcare staffing has been strengthened, improving stability and resilience across health services. All approved posts have now been recruited to, and the re-award of the healthcare contract has provided greater continuity, and a stronger skill mix to meet the needs of a complex population.

- The revised curriculum offer is more flexible and relevant, with unitised, roll-on roll-off courses and a wider range of vocational and wellbeing-focused opportunities. This approach is improving engagement and attendance, while providing prisoners with more meaningful, transferable learning during their time in custody.
- Induction arrangements are now clearer and more consistent, with improved messaging, peer involvement and strengthened oversight supporting better understanding and engagement. These improvements are contributing to more informed choices, improved attendance and a stronger foundation for participation in education and work.
- Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) support has progressed, identification and assessment have improved, with clearer support plans in place and better coordination between education, workshops and residential staff. These changes are improving staff confidence, consistency of support and access to learning and activity, helping SEND prisoners to engage more effectively and achieve better outcomes.

In respect of the **five** priority/key concerns where no meaningful or insufficient progress was identified, I can confirm that the IRP findings have been carefully considered, and steps will be taken to address the issues they identify. These will include the following:

- HMP Leeds will maintain a strong and sustained focus on reducing self-harm and preventing suicide, informed by the key themes identified through recent reviews, learning and assurance activity. Priorities will continue to be identification of risk, particularly during early days in custody, alongside consistent and caring frontline practice, good-quality Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) management and effective information sharing.
- Focus will be increased on those prisoners who are not currently engaged in work or education. This includes increasing activity spaces, widening the range of opportunities available and using partnerships such as DHL and Recycling Lives to create additional, meaningful work-based activity.
- We will continue to reduce the availability of drugs at HMP Leeds by building on the early success of the Incentivised Substance Free Living unit and maintaining a strong focus on both supply and demand. This includes strengthened security intelligence, targeted disruption activity and improved information sharing, alongside enhanced gate security to reduce the risk of drugs entering the prison.
- We will continue to work alongside local authorities, National Health Service partners and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to ensure acutely unwell patients are identified early and transferred promptly to appropriate hospital settings. This includes maintaining strong multi-agency escalation processes, clear clinical decision-making and senior oversight to reduce delay and risk. Our focus remains on ensuring patients receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

- We will work closely with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the MoJ to manage the impact of overcrowding and improve living conditions at HMP Leeds. This includes exploring opportunities through the reconfiguration programme to bring additional single cells back into use where appropriate.

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

I remain committed to ensuring continued progress against the agreed HMP Leeds action plan. I can assure you that through my operational assurance functions and with the support of the Performance, Assurance and Risk Group, we continue to monitor progress closely.

Whilst I acknowledge that further work remains to be carried out at HMP Leeds, I am encouraged that progress is being made and that our monitoring of the prison is in line with your findings.

Kind Regards,

Helen Judge

Area Executive Director – North East, Yorkshire and the Humber

Cc: James McEwen, Director General Chief Executive Officer, HMPPS,
Michelle Jarman-Howe, Interim Director General of Operations, HMPPS,
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