



# HM Prison & Probation Service

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**His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service**  
**Long Term & High Security Estate**  
**Executive Director**  
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5 June 2026

Dear Charlie,

## **HMIP report on an independent review of progress at HMP Wakefield 27<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMP Wakefield, whereby you followed up eight priority/key concerns and four Ofsted themes from your most recent inspection in June/July 2025.

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

- The improved uptake of prisoners accessing time in the open air following the introduction of single wing exercise sessions has improved feelings of safety on the exercise yard, as well as the increased length of time now available for prisoners in the open air.
- The significant reduction in the number of prisoners who were self-isolating, as well as the progress made by prisoners who had previously self-isolated and were more willing to engage in the regime; some of whom are now working. The new self-isolation policy which now includes multi-agency reviews and reintegration planning is strengthening safeguards in place for this vulnerable cohort.
- Improvements made to the process of allocating prisoners into education, training and work and the associated prisoner pay structure to encourage more prisoners to attend their activities. Where infrastructure presents a concern, leaders had tried to maintain activity spaces by moving workshops into alternative areas within the education department.
- The introduction of a part time regime and change to local movement processes has resulted in prompter attendance and fewer disruptions in learning and the workplace.

In respect of the six 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:

- There has been sustained progress in improving safety outcomes. Prisoner-on-prisoner violence has decreased by 68% and, over the past four months, Wakefield has recorded the lowest rate of such incidents across the Category A estate. While this improvement is encouraging, it is recognised that there is a need to maintain momentum. To support further reductions in violence, leaders are actively exploring funding opportunities to increase the number of exercise yards, which will improve access to purposeful activity and reduce pressure points within the regime.

- It is acknowledged that the establishment requires significant long-term investment. In the interim, the focus will be on maintaining decency standards by ensuring areas are kept clean and that repairs within the control of the establishment are addressed promptly. Both the prison and Prison Group Director team will continue to work closely with the Ministry of Justice to progress wider infrastructure improvements through established workstreams.
- Healthcare delivery has been challenged by staffing constraints and the need to prioritise safe regime delivery. In response, evening healthcare clinics are being introduced to increase accessibility and reduce unmet demand. Alongside this, we are taking active steps to reduce non-effective staff and drive recruitment of new Prison Officers to improve regime stability and support healthcare delivery.
- Practical steps to improve healthcare environments are being taken. New flooring is due to be installed in the coming weeks, and further funding bids have been submitted to ensure facilities meet infection prevention and control standards.
- Leaders have recognised that time out of cell requires improvement. Following a full regime review, we are planning to expand activity provision and maximise the use of existing resources. Additionally, our proposal to increase exercise yard capacity will provide further opportunities for prisoners to spend more time out of cell while also contributing to improved safety.
- To address concerns regarding the curriculum, leaders will undertake a full review of workshop provision. This includes working with the Ministry of Justice to refurbish disused workshops and enhance staff qualifications, enabling a broader and more effective education offer.
- The reading strategy will be reviewed in line with the introduction of a new library provider, ensuring greater alignment between education and library services. A key focus will be increasing prisoners' physical attendance at the library, positioning this as a central pillar of our rehabilitative approach.

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 Wakefield agreed action plan and I can assure you that through regular visits and my assurance functions 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 noticeable progress has been achieved in the prison since the decisive action to change the population earlier in the year.

Yours sincerely,

**Ed Cornmell**

**Executive Director, Long Term & High Security Estate**