



HM Prison &
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15 September 2026

Dear Charlie,

**HMIP Report on an Independent Review of Progress at HMP Leicester
10 – 12 August 2026**

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress (IRP) report at HMP Leicester, in which you followed up on **eight** key/priority concerns and **four** Ofsted themes identified during your most recent inspection during July 2026.

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

- Since the previous inspection, the new Governor has brought fresh impetus, clearer priorities and stronger focus. Functional improvement plans are helping managers and staff understand what needs to improve, track progress and focus on the main priorities. There is also evidence of improved staff stability and capability with a full complement of prison officers, improved retention and a more experienced workforce. This has helped create greater consistency and confidence across the establishment, alongside investment in staff wellbeing and communication. Daily briefings are more useful and focused on risk, monthly bulletins communicate safety priorities, and staff spoke positively about the direction of the prison.
- Overall violence has reduced by 18%, with the most significant improvement being that assaults on staff have halved. Leaders have introduced a more proactive approach to identifying and managing risk. This includes better use of data, clearer violence reduction and early days strategies, improved

oversight of debt and high-risk cohorts, and stronger daily communication with staff about safety priorities. Monthly bulletins had become more focused and useful, helping staff understand current risks and expectations.

- Activity spaces had increased and attendance had improved, meaning more prisoners were engaged in activity during the core day. Roll checks showed that 22% of prisoners were locked up during the core day, compared with 30% at the last inspection, indicating a meaningful improvement in time out of cell. Ofsted also found reasonable progress across all four education, skills and work themes. Leaders had refocused the curriculum to better suit HMP Leicester's short-stay and remand population, with more creative approaches to engagement such as the Feel-Good Friday initiative. Functional skills pass rates for prisoners who completed English and Maths courses were high.

In respect of the **two** priority/key concerns where no 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 identified. These will include the following:

- Cell improvement activity will continue with the rolling improvement plan and upcoming refurbishment project which is currently at the survey stage with works expected to commence in late 2026, including floor replacement and painting. The worst accommodation will be prioritised and tracked.
- Cell capacity and condition are reviewed daily, to ensure minimum acceptable standards are maintained while major improvement works are pending, and any cells where heat, ventilation, damaged flooring or lack of privacy creates unacceptable conditions will be escalated to the maintenance provider.
- Every prisoner awaiting transfer to a specialist mental health bed will be tracked from day one, with cases escalated by day 14 if the 28-day target is at risk. The Prison Group Director and prison will agree and monitor interim care plans with health partners until a transfer is completed.

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 Leicester 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 there is further work to do at HMP Leicester, I am encouraged that progress is being made and that our monitoring of the prison is in line with your findings.

Kind Regards,

Sarah Chand

Area Executive Director – Midlands

Cc: James McEwen, Director General Chief Executive Officer, HMPPS,
Michelle Jarman-Howe, Interim Director General of Prisons, HMPPS,
Russ Truman, Acting Prison Group Director, East Midlands