



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
Dominic Raab MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of
State for Justice

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

Charlie Taylor
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MoJ ref: 101798

16 December 2022

Dear Charlie,

URGENT NOTIFICATION – HMP Exeter

Thank you for your letter of 18 November 2022, setting out your concerns following the full inspection at HMP Exeter. I am providing you with this response within 28 calendar days of the Urgent Notification as set out in the protocol.

The serious issues identified at HMP Exeter around high numbers of self-inflicted deaths, rates of self-harm, and failings in healthcare are completely unacceptable. As an immediate action there is ongoing support and oversight from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), who will continue to monitor progress well beyond this initial 28-day period until we are satisfied that there is sustained improvement.

I have set out below in more detail how the department is taking urgent action to address the concerns set out in your report and to prioritise the safety of staff and prisoners in HMP Exeter. I have also enclosed a copy of the action plan that I intend to publish alongside this letter for your consideration.

Self-inflicted deaths and self-harm prevention

Any self-inflicted death is one too many, and I deeply regret that there have been 22 deaths at Exeter since the last full inspection in 2018, 10 of which were self-inflicted. The rate of self-harm at Exeter has also been far too high, particularly in the last year.

The national safety team will work with the Head of Safety, Group Safety Lead, and psychology team to further understand the drivers of self-harm and will hold focus groups with targeted prisoners, partners and staff. This will allow us to identify actions to address the issues that are driving self-harm. There will also be a new safety officer who will be recruited for 12 months to support the Head of Safety.

The national safety team will also provide support to the prison safety team and this will include providing coaching to staff and further upskilling in risks and triggers for self-harm. There will also be funding for two safety floorwalkers by 31st December to improve assurance, governance, and quality of Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) processes.

Induction Processes

HMPPS will undertake a full review of the prison induction process and the recommendations from this review will be implemented to ensure all prisoners attend and complete induction. An induction lead will also be recruited for 12 months to support the Head of Safety in working with prisoners and key stakeholders. This will embed, drive and provide quality assurance (QA) of consistent delivery of Induction services to all receptions to HMP Exeter.

Failings in Healthcare

A new health provider will commence the delivery of health services at HMP Exeter from 1st December 2022 and a QA review will take place 3 months after the new provider has taken over delivery of health services.

A suspension of remission returns from mental health (MH) inpatient units to HMP Exeter has been imposed while a national review of the process is conducted. HMP Exeter will also form part of a pilot where mental health remissions return directly to the discharging prison. In addition to this, a review of medication administration will be completed by January 2023.

These will both support the delivery of healthcare and there will also be a rolling recruitment drive for health staff, and this includes a prison healthcare recruitment event that is planned for 25th January 2023 in Exeter.

Time out of Cell

I am committed to ensuring that prisoners should have the necessary and appropriate time out of cell to engage with a consistent daily programme of activities. HMP Exeter will be enhancing the activities offered to prisoners and this will involve education outreach including support from the charity, The Shannon Trust, who support improving literacy. In order to assure allocation and attendance to these activities, a regime manager will be recruited for 12 months to support this.

Prison Performance Support Programme

As an immediate action, Exeter will also be supported by the Prison Performance Support Programme (PPSP). PPSP offers tailored support to prisons facing numerous and complex challenges to performance. The support from PPSP will include continuing to build on the recent work of the HMPPS Prison Officer Confidence and Competence toolkit that develops the staffing skillset and resilience.

I will be monitoring the situation at Exeter very closely to ensure that there is sustained improvement. I would also like to thank you for the robust scrutiny of our prisons, and I look forward to receiving your full inspection report shortly.

Yours sincerely,



RT HON DOMINIC RAAB MP