



HM Prison & Probation Service

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12th May 2023

Dear Charlie,

Thank you for HMI Prisons' Thematic review of Weekends in prison, which was published on 5th April 2023, I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to you on behalf of the agency.

Several challenges are ahead of us to provide a fuller regime, especially at the weekends as mentioned in your report. We are committed to making significant improvements to recruiting and retaining staff in our prisons, which is fundamental in achieving our goals.

As highlighted in Minister Hinds' response to Category C Training and Resettlement Prisons letter, HMPPS has developed a new National Regime Model for prisons. This has formally launched in April 2023. Prisons are required to develop a vision of the regime they aspire to deliver following a nationally prescribed design process. This vision must contain mandated regime elements. The vision will become a local target for prisons to work towards and they will review their progress quarterly. A new vision will be set at the start of each reporting year to drive continuous improvement. A new local regime lead will assume responsibility for overseeing this annual design and delivery cycle. These staff will receive a new national training programme to become subject matter experts in regime.

In April I wrote to Governors, Prison Group Directors, and Executive Directors directing launching this requirement for prisons to build a local regime vision. These will be agreed by Prison Group Directors in June 2023. This creates a single roadmap that takes us from capturing what we currently deliver and exposing the inhibitors which we did in February, to deliver the best possible regimes from the beginning of 2023/24, and then taking our first national step towards the future Regime Model.

As we seek to address current workforce pressures, we also remain committed to improving the regime offering across the entire estate to increase prisoner opportunities for purposeful activity. The impact of reduced staffing on regime delivery varies by establishment, dependent on function, local infrastructure, staffing levels and work profiles. HMPPS have recruitment and retention activity underway for all sites with a current or future need to ensure we can deliver the fullest possible regime across the estate, including at weekends. HMPPS remain committed to there being an additional 5,000 additional Prison Officers in private and public prisons by the mid-2020s and introducing a retention framework which will support governors to identify and tackle local issues and enable targeted national support. Among a number of recruitment initiatives, in January 2022, 'Advance into Justice' was launched – a MoJ fast track scheme which supports Armed Forces veterans into Prison Officer roles.

The Prison Service recognises that pay and reward are a key driver of staff attrition, which in turn affects the ability for prisons to deliver a full regime. Therefore, action to ensure prisons are sufficiently resourced is a priority. The Pay Award for 2022/23 was announced in July 2022 and delivered a pay rise of at least 4% to base pay for all prison staff between Operational Support Grade and Governors (Bands 2-11). All operational staff also received a 3 percentage point increase to their unsocial hours allowance, taking it 20%. Early indications of the impact of the pay award from exit interview data are that since July 2022, pay and reward has become less likely to be the main reason for leaving.

The Prison Service faces significant challenges with retaining Band 3-5 Prison Officers – including those in the first three years of service. This is affecting the capacity for prisons to deliver purposeful regimes at sites with the most acute resourcing pressures. To increase retention rates for new Prison Officers, New Colleague Mentors (NCMs) have been introduced to support the wellbeing of new colleagues in establishments across the estate. NCMs provide them with a welcoming and supportive onboarding, induction, and early career journey experience. Over 150 NCMs have been funded and recruited. Overwhelming qualitative feedback has demonstrated the success of the NCM roles, with quantitative data presenting early indications of an improving retention picture, with NCMs as a contributing factor.

HMPPS recognises that improving the experiences for prisoners will require several key areas of work that the agency is committed to and remains critically important to ensure the safe, decent and purposeful operation of the prison estate. As a result of the above actions and action plan below, we believe improvements to prisoner life and regimes, including weekend regimes will be achieved.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Copple". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

PHIL COPPLE
Director General Operations



Action Plan Submitted: 12th May 2023

A Response to: Thematic review – Weekends in prison

Report Published: 5th April 2023

INTRODUCTION

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and HM Inspectorate of Probation for England and Wales are independent inspectorates which provide scrutiny of the conditions for, and treatment of prisoners and offenders. They report their findings for prisons, Young Offender Institutions, and effectiveness of the work of probation, and youth offending services across England and Wales to Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). In response to the report HMPPS / MoJ are required to draft a robust and timely action plan to address the priority and key concerns. Action plans provide specific steps and actions to address the priority and key concerns, that are clear, outcome focussed, measurable, achievable, and relevant with the owner and timescale of each step clearly identified. Action plans are sent to HMIP and published on the GOV.UK website. Progress against the implementation and delivery of the action plans will also be monitored and reported on.

ACTION PLAN: Thematic Review – Weekends in prison

1. Concerns No	2. Concern	3. Response Action Taken/Planned	4. Responsible Owner	5. Target Date
1	<p>Around 60% of prisoners have less than two hours out of cell each day at weekends.</p> <p>This means they are locked up for longer than on weekdays and that the situation is worse than before the pandemic. This is likely to have a detrimental impact on their mental health and well-being.</p>	<p>HMPPS recognise that time out of cell is a critical part of regime. A Workforce delivery project has been commissioned to refresh the current staffing model for prisons. Early analysis recognises the need for changes in the way resources are managed to address weekend staffing pressures, but also acknowledges constraints with the number of staff available and the volume of work. There are however a number of areas of exploration which will support some gains in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of risk management for specific cohorts (e.g., Womens estate), to provide opportunity to offer efficient regime • Seeking opportunities to increase headcount by increasing the weekday work profile and consequently having more staff available to cover weekends • Providing greater clarity to Governors on the outcomes required from their staff resources to drive up performance balanced against local risk assessment • Ensuring that we understand resilience of staffing profiles as they change from prison to prison and taking steps to level up delivery across the estate • Development of tools and guidance to support governors in the efficient deployment of existing staffing to maximise opportunity for regime delivery. <p>The initial refresh of the staffing model is aimed for completion by the end 2023-24 financial year, it will then be subject to further analysis and operational impact assessment prior to decision making and implementation.</p>	Workforce Delivery Project - Transforming Delivery Directorate	<p>Commence May – Oct 23 (Women Estate)</p> <p>Commence June 2023</p> <p>2023-24 FY (Outputs shared with Prisons May 2024)</p> <p>2022-25 FY (New baseline model April 2023)</p> <p>2023-24 FY (Proof of concept complete pilots planned from June 2023, full roll out by April 2024)</p>

		<p>The National Regime Model (NRM) has created a new national structure for regime design and delivery which will improve the regime experience and outcomes for prisoners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new national process for regime design • New national regime standards that all prisoners must receive, e.g. time in the open air – these will be reviewed and published annually • A new tiered regime that must be designed at each prison and signed off the by the Prison Group Director (PGD) • A new Local Regime Lead in every prison management team by September 2023 • New quarterly reviews of progress towards the local design using the HMIP Self-Assessment Report (SAR) template <p>This model is now being implemented, and every prison is creating their tiered regime for 2023/4.</p> <p>A new purposeful activity measure introduced for 23/24 will record the percentage of prisoners receiving a minimum of four sessions of tier 1 or 2 activity per week, including weekends. This measures engagement and progress the prison has made in achieving its own vision. The new measure will capture all activity types now covered by a new, broader definition of purposeful activity. This will hold prisons to account for their delivery of the regime plan they have set locally.</p> <p>The Health & Social Care Team worked with NHSE, healthcare providers and the Royal College of GPs Secure Environments Group to deliver self-care materials directly to prisoners via Launchpad and the Virtual Campus. The self-care project aims to support and empower people to better look after their own health, whether self-treatable conditions, long term conditions or lifestyle choices to ensure better physical health and well-being. Each month new</p>	<p>Head of Future Regime Design</p> <p>Head of Future Regime Design</p> <p>Head of Health & Social Care Team</p>	<p>April 2024</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>September 2023</p> <p>January 2024</p> <p>Commenced 2022</p>
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<p>2</p>	<p>Most prisoners weren’t unlocked for long enough at weekends to complete essential domestic tasks, such as showering, cleaning their cell, making phone calls, and submitting applications.</p>	<p>Time out of cell is included in the National Regime Model as a foundation to the local regime model that must be consistently achieved. In the new regime design process that all prisons must follow, each prison must build a model that delivers the foundation first, then build their tier 1 and 2 activities onto this. All regimes must therefore safeguard the foundational elements first, including time out of cell for essential domestic tasks including showering, submitting applications, cleaning cells and time in the open air.</p> <p>Prison Group Directors will be responsible for monitoring the delivery of the new regime model in their prisons and ensuring that sufficient time is provided for prisoners to complete essential domestic tasks, such as showers, cell cleaning, time in the open air, at weekends.</p> <p>HMPPS will continue to monitor regime delivery in prisons on a weekly basis through the Regime Management Plan (RMP) reported figures. Where a prison is identified as unable to meet the basic regime requirements, including weekends. Governors can submit a business case for tactical resourcing support through Operational Resource and Stability Panel (ORSP)</p>	<p>Head of Future Regime Design</p> <p>National Resource Management</p>	<p>April 2024</p>

		<p>HMPPS will complete the deployment of in-cell phones in the closed prison estate by the end of March 2024. This will mean that prisoners will be able to make calls at a time of their choosing and from the privacy of their cells through the weekends.</p> <p>Launchpad is a platform which provides prisoners with secure access to a content hub (information, entertainment and diversionary content) and some transactional services (including applications) via a laptop in their cells. Providing access to this self-service platform increases prisoner agency and allows for the efficient and effective management of their affairs, initial rollout is as follows:</p> <p>Embed the use of Launchpad in the phase two prisons (Cookham Wood, Werrington, Feltham, Wetherby, Styal, New Hall, Berwyn, Wayland, Garth, Erlestoke, Stoke Heath, Swaleside, The Mount, Ranby and Lindholme)</p> <p>Deliver Launchpad to four new prisons (Woodhill, Chelmsford, Bullingdon and Cardiff). Continue to assess the benefits of Launchpad in order to secure future funding for further roll out across more prisons.</p>	<p>Head of Innovation & Business Change</p>	<p>March 2024</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>End of FY 2024/25</p>
3	<p>Where time unlocked included a period of association at weekends, prisoners were left with little to do.</p> <p>There was little opportunity to socialise with peers, recreational equipment (such as pool tables) was broken or out of use, and there were few enrichment activities such as gardening, music or games.</p>	<p>The new National Regime Model includes tier 2 activities – these are structured enrichment activities that operate alongside traditional activities. Every prison is now required to design a tier 2 offer, this will include creating structured on wing activities (SOWA) within periods of association.</p> <p>As part of ongoing decency inspections, prisons will ensure that recreational equipment on residential units are in working condition by reporting and arranging for broken or out of use equipment to be repaired/replaced, subject to funding being available.</p>	<p>Head of Future Regime Design</p> <p>Prison Executive Directors</p>	<p>April 2024</p> <p>December 2023</p>
4	<p>Opportunities for prisoners to engage in constructive activities – for exercise and to help them develop skills in preparation for release – were very limited if they existed at all.</p>	<p>The new National Regime Model has created a requirement for each prison to create a tiered regime that it commits to deliver. This includes models for weekend regimes and an inventory of all activities delivered on weekends, this will include gym and library</p>	<p>Head of Future Regime Design</p>	<p>April 2024</p>

	<p>Access to the gym was inconsistent and libraries were closed at weekends.</p>	<p>access. Though prisons are inhibited from delivering their tiered regimes by staffing pressures, each tiered regime model design will include these mandatory elements to ensure there is a plan for progression that can be implemented promptly as pressures ease.</p> <p>HMPPS have taken the difficult decision to delay the restarting of staff fitness testing for a further nine months to enable Physical Education Officers (PEOs) to remain in prisons to support regime delivery. Prisons can also apply for support through ORSP if they have shortfalls of PEOs. The Tactical Resourcing Team are currently conducting an exercise to review the staffing position of PEOs across all prisons to enable detached duty to support prisons with significant shortfalls in their Physical Education (PE) staffing group.</p> <p>PE services are working in conjunction with Learning & Development (L&D) on a pilot for the London region supporting any existing officers moving over to become PEOs. To encourage new officers and PEOs, PE services have been supporting recruitment roadshows at Lilleshall (organised by Insights). There's also a HMPPS Showcase event in Newbold Revel in September.</p> <p>Education Group will liaise with library providers in partnership with Commercial & Contract Management Directorate to review the provision of library services at the weekends.</p> <p>In the interim, prisons will be encouraged to discuss with their library service providers to ensure books and/or other materials are readily available for the prisoners on the wings during library closures.</p>	<p>Deputy Director Prisons</p> <p>PE Services, L&D and MOJ Resourcing</p> <p>Prison Education Services</p> <p>Prison Executive Directors</p>	<p>June 2023</p> <p>October 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p> <p>July 2023</p>
5	<p>At weekends, time in the open air for prisoners was not guaranteed, which was detrimental to their well-being.</p>	<p>HMPPS recognise that time in the open air is a critical part of regime. This was already a statutory requirement but has now also been included in the National Regime Model as a foundation to the local regime model that must be consistently achieved. In the new regime design process that all prisons must follow, they must build a model that delivers the foundation first, then build their tier 1 and 2 activities onto this. All regimes must therefore safeguard the foundational elements first, this includes time out of cell and time in the open air.</p>	<p>Head of Future Regime Design</p>	<p>April 2024</p>

		<p>In the immediate term, the national Resource Management Support team, offer bespoke support and advise to establishment to utilise current staff as efficiently as possible, in order to be able to maximise the regime. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using Subject Matter Experts to upskill staff in the effective management of resources.• Support and guidance with regards to developing alternative working patterns, including 9-day fortnight• Assistance with re-profiling activity, including adjustment of core days to provide more time out of cells.	National Resource Management	Completed
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