



Ministry  
of Justice

Rt Hon Edward Argar MP  
Minister of State for Justice

**Official**

Sir Bob Neill KC (Hon) MP  
Chair of the Justice Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

16<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**ANNUAL UPDATE 2024-2025 – PROGRESS MADE ON HIS MAJESTY’S INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS CONCERNS**

I am writing to the Committee regarding the annual update on progress made in implementing His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) recommendations. As you know, following your 2018 inquiry on HMP Liverpool, the then Minister of Prisons, Rory Stewart, committed to provide the Committee annual updates. Over the past six years, the estate has undergone numerous changes and we have worked to ensure that your committee has been fully updated on the progress we have made.

Given the challenges currently facing the system, we have updated you at regular intervals throughout the past year. In particular we have:

- Contributed both oral evidence (in April 2023) and written evidence (May 2023) to your inquiry into the prison operational workforce;
- Given oral evidence (February 2024) to your inquiry into future prison population and estate capacity;
- Attended two oral evidence sessions in relation to recent Urgent Notification sites (in October and December 2023);
- Written to the committee in respect of the specific action plans relating to the sites that have been subject to Urgent Notifications since April 2023 (YOI Cookham Wood, HMP Bristol, HMP Woodhill and HMP Bedford);
- Written to the committee regarding young offenders being transferred from HMYOI Cookham Wood and the site being repurposed as an adult prison (March 2024);
- Written to committee following the publication of HMIP’s annual report (July 2023) and we will update the committee again this summer following HMIP’s next publication.

Given the comprehensive nature of this engagement I do not have any further specific updates to provide to the Committee at this stage. Indeed, it may well be the case that going forward it is more useful for the Committee to replicate the approach we have taken this year of regular, timely and targeted engagement on specific issues as they arise and, if so, I would welcome that development. However, should any broader thematic issues arise through future HMIP inspections where it appears useful to provide a written annual update to the committee I will, of course, be happy to do so.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and the Committee for the robust and valuable scrutiny that you have provided.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Argar', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**RT HON EDWARD ARGAR MP**