



HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS

3rd floor
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London E14 4PU

Tel: 020 3334 0353
E-mail: Amarpreet.Kaur @hmiprisons.gov.uk

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
CHARLIE TAYLOR

9 May 2024

Sir Robert Neill MP
Chair, Justice Committee
House of Commons
London
SW11 0AA

Dear Sir Robert,

Urgent Notification: HMP Wandsworth

HM Inspectorate of Prisons today published details about our decision to invoke the Urgent Notification process following our unannounced inspection of HMP Wandsworth earlier this month.

Despite a high-profile escape in September 2023, inspectors found significant weaknesses in many aspects of security. There had been 10 self-inflicted deaths since the last inspection, seven of which had occurred in the last 12 months. The rate of self-harm was high and rising and overall rates of violence, including serious assaults, had increased since the last inspection and were higher than most similar prisons. In our survey, 69% of prisoners said they had felt unsafe at the jail.

Wandsworth was badly overcrowded and had a transient population. Despite a full complement of officers, sickness, restricted duties, and training commitments meant that over a third could not be deployed to operational duties each day; this led to curtailed regimes, cross-deployment, and burnt-out staff. Crucially, inexperience across every grade of operational staff was preventing them from bringing about much needed change. Many simply did not understand their role and they lacked direction, training, and consistent support from leaders.

The Secretary of State for Justice has been informed and must reply within 28 days setting out a plan for improvement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charlie Taylor", is placed above the printed name.

CHARLIE TAYLOR

09/05/24

Urgent Notification