



**HM INSPECTORATE OF PRISONS**

3<sup>rd</sup> 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**

2 September 2024

Justice Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Justice Committee,

**Urgent Notification: HMP Rochester**

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

This is the fifth time we have inspected Rochester since 2013. At this most recent inspection, the jail attracted our lowest healthy prisons assessments in three of our four tests, respect, purposeful activity and preparation for release, with many of the recommendations from our previous 2021 inspection still to be addressed.

As a training and resettlement prison, Rochester's focus should be on getting men into education, work and training to increase their chances of employment on release as well as delivering work to reduce prisoners' risk of reoffending. Rochester was fundamentally failing in this, with our checks finding less than a third of the population engaged in education, work or training and a woeful provision of public protection work. The offender management unit was ineffective and critically short of trained probation staff to manage high risk prisoners. Illicit drug use was endemic at the jail. The rate of positive random mandatory drug tests (42%) was the third highest of all category C prisons and most of the accommodation remained very dilapidated with some of the worst conditions we have seen in recent years.

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'.

**CHARLIE TAYLOR**

02/09/24

*Urgent Notification*