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**HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
CHARLIE TAYLOR**

10 October 2024

Andy Slaughter MP
Chair, Justice Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr. Slaughter,

Urgent Notification: HMP Manchester

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

HMP Manchester was not safe enough. The prison's own data showed it to be amongst the most violent of all adult men's prisons in England and Wales, with the highest rate of serious assaults. Since the last inspection, there had been six self-inflicted deaths and a further three deaths with suspected links to drug abuse. There had been a steep rise in the rate of self-harm, which was among the highest for adult men's prisons.

Illegal drug use was driving much of the instability in the prison: the number of weapons and other illicit items found in recent months were amongst the highest of all prisons holding adult men and the proportion of prisoners testing positive for drug use was very high at 39%. Further fuelling the demand for drugs, men spent far too long locked in their cells with nothing to do. Inspectors found only 19% of prisoners had left their wing to attend purposeful activity, a concern in a jail whose stated purpose is as a training prison. Although not overcrowded, living conditions were squalid.

Many officers were new to their roles yet were assigned to work with very serious, sophisticated, and often aggressive offenders. Wings were chaotic, with inexperienced officers struggling to manage prisoners or to challenge poor or even criminal behaviour.

10/10/24

Urgent Notification

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 centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive style.

CHARLIE TAYLOR