



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Official

Rt Hon the Lord Foster of Bath
Chair of the Justice and Home Affairs Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

15 August 2025

Dear Lord Foster,

URGENT NOTIFICATION – HMP PENTONVILLE

As you are aware, Charlie Taylor, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, issued an Urgent Notification (UN) at HMP Pentonville on 18 July 2025.

The Chief Inspector has raised several serious concerns including a failure to maintain basic standards, poor living conditions, limited time out of cell, and inadequate care for new prisoners and those at risk of self harm. Many prisoners said they felt unsafe at the time of the inspection and findings identified by both internal and Prisons and Probation Ombudsman investigations following deaths in custody have not been addressed. These findings are unacceptable, and the Lord Chancellor and I will continue to work closely with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to improve standards and ensure the safety of staff and prisoners.

Since the UN was invoked, senior officials from HMPPS have begun addressing the most urgent concerns raised by the inspectorate. More information on the actions we have taken, or plan to take, is detailed in the Lord Chancellor's response letter and action plan which have been published on the UN page of the GOV.UK, and I have enclosed copies with this letter. We will publish the full action plan, addressing all concerns raised by the inspectorate during this inspection, within three months and this will be available on the report page of HMIP's website.

I personally assure you that we are doing all we can to support HMP Pentonville to improve. The Lord Chancellor and I will closely monitor the progress made at the prison and will maintain this focus until we are satisfied that there is sustained improvement.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at:
ps.JamesTimpson@justice.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending