



Ministry
of Justice

Charlie Taylor
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
3rd Floor, 10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU

The Right Honourable
Shabana Mahmood MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary
of State for Justice

MoJ ref: ADR126393

7 August 2025

Dear Charlie,

URGENT NOTIFICATION – HMP PENTONVILLE

Thank you for your letter outlining the concerns raised following the full inspection of HMP Pentonville, published on 18 July, and invoking the Urgent Notification process. I am pleased to provide this response within the 28-day timeframe, in accordance with the established protocol between the Ministry of Justice and HM Inspectorate of Prisons

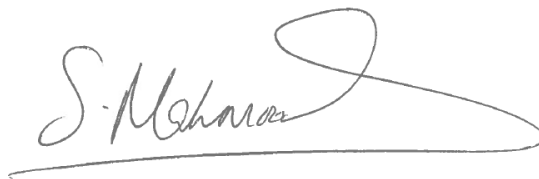
You have raised significant concerns including a failure to maintain basic standards in the prison, inadequate first night and early days processes, and inaccurate calculation of sentences. Many prisoners reported feeling unsafe and victimised, with staff failing to challenge poor behaviour. Support for prisoners at high risk of self-harm and oversight for those subject to constant supervision was deficient. Prisoners are also spending too long in their cells with insufficient activity spaces not being allocated effectively.

In immediate response, we have already implemented improvements to cleanliness and decency, made key appointments and are providing increased oversight and support to address capability gaps and enhance prisoners' experience. This Government is committed to driving much needed improvement in response to your findings. To this end, I have enclosed the initial action plan for HMP Pentonville which will be published alongside this letter. The action plan focuses on tackling the most pressing issues including leadership, staff capability, decency standards, safety and addressing the backlog in sentence calculations.

I am deeply concerned that you found the majority of issues from your last inspection had not been addressed. I assure you that I will be closely monitoring the situation at HMP Pentonville and that bolstered supervision and support will be provided to deliver sustained improvements.

I would like to thank you and your team for your thorough scrutiny of our prisons, and I look forward to receiving your full inspection report in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Mahmood', with a long, sweeping horizontal line underneath.

RT HON SHABANA MAHMOOD MP

LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE