



Mrs Barbara Buckle  
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
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10 July 2017

Dear Barbara

**HMP & YOI HOLME HOUSE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR  
1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2016**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 December 2016. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for all the hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations, especially where you have been short of Board members. I am sorry for the delay in you receiving a reply.

It was encouraging to receive your comments about the openness, accessibility and support by management and staff throughout the period of change at HMP & YOI Holme House. I am pleased the Governor and Executive Governor have already taken steps to resolve some issues of concern and that there have been a number of positive achievements during 2016.

I am pleased to see steps are being taken to improve the condition of prisoner cells and to read of the improvements in purposeful activity including the development of better links with local employers and businesses and the plans for in-cell technology. I was also impressed to read about prisoner employment and educational outcomes with prisoners being placed in employment and being enrolled on vocational qualifications linked to their area of work, as well as the excellent work by the Safer Custody Team and the awards won by the Through the Gate and Mental Health teams. I was encouraged by the quality of the resettlement work delivered by the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) Through the Gate team, that prisoners viewed their contact with the CRC team as positive and the accommodation outcomes achieved for prisoners on release.

As you have raised no issues for my attention, it remains for me to thank you and your Board for your support. I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of progress. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Justice Secretary and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the prison estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP & YOI Holme House.

Yours sincerely

  
**SAM GYIMAH MP**

## HMP & YOI HOLME HOUSE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2016

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **External Contract Management**

The Prison Reform agenda will empower Governors by giving them the tools and resources they need to drive forward reform. We will set out clearly what we require of Governors and will hold them to account for delivery. Governors will be given the freedom to determine how they deliver their regimes as we believe that they know what works best for their cohort of prisoners.

#### Healthcare.

The Healthcare contract is due to be retendered during 2017/18 and the Governor, as a co-commissioner with NHS England, has had input into the contract management of existing contracts and also into the development of the service specifications for the forthcoming procurement. Healthcare commissioners have previously met with Holme House IMB representatives and have attended the regional meeting of the IMB Chairs. Commissioners have indicated that they are willing to attend future meetings to provide updates on the work of the Health and Justice commissioning team.

#### Facilities Management

Action has been taken by the National Service Management Team (NSMT) to review contract management arrangements and appropriate processes have been put in place to improve how contractors at HMP & YOI Holme House are managed. Action improvement plans, which are closely managed, have been put in place for the main stores and kitchen with services now being delivered to acceptable standards.

A project programme was agreed with the contractors and delivery is now progressing within agreed timescales. Following a full compliance audit conducted in February 2017, NSMT are working closely with Amey to address the issues identified. Regular contract compliance meetings between the prison and Amey continue as well as a local project weekly monitoring meeting to ensure all on-going projects are on track.

Should the Board have any further concerns, the Regional Estate Manager, NSMT is available to discuss these improvements or any other outstanding issues.

#### **Staffing Levels**

We recognise that we need to strengthen the frontline to overhaul prison safety, and rehabilitate prisoners in order to reduce reoffending. In the Prison Safety and Reform White paper published last November, we announced a £100 million investment to increase prison officer numbers by 2,500. This increase in staff will provide the capacity for prison officers to play a dedicated officer role responsible for the support and supervision of a small number of prisoners, build constructive relationships, defuse tensions, reduce levels of frustration and, ultimately, reduce the level of violence. This one-to-one support from a dedicated key worker is at the heart of our prison reforms making sure that offenders get the help they need to stop taking drugs, get the education and skills needed to find work and quit crime for good.

The disruption, brought by the transfer into HMP & YOI Holme House of prisoners following incidents at other prisons and staff shortages, which has led to low staff morale is acknowledged. We are taking measures to ensure all our staff feel safe and positive and are currently recruiting more prison officers to fill additional posts funded by the Government.

HMP & YOI Holme House have already received some additional funds through the violence reduction project, which has also allowed the prison to increase the safer prisons team to lead on safer prison policy. Additional funding to become a Drug Recovery Prison and also funding as part of the roll out of the new key worker role in all prisons, will also result in additional prison officers arriving during the next year and will allow HMP & YOI Holme House to develop a dedicated search team to tackle drugs inside the prison. Improvements in staffing levels will help to ensure that staff do not then need to be deployed elsewhere within the prison.

The re-role of HMP Durham and HMP & YOI Holme House has also presented an opportunity to remodel a number of healthcare services and additional funding been secured to implement new staffing models. In addition an increase in officer escort provision has helped greatly with getting prisoners to appointments in a timelier manner.

### **Transfers to Secure Mental Health Units**

It is recognised that nationally there is a shortage of secure mental health beds and we are continuing to press for progress to be made towards more timely transfer. Cumbria and the North East Health and Justice Commissioners have, along with key stakeholders, developed a proposal for a new model of care to improve the assessment, care and treatment options for those prisoners presenting with serious mental illness within HMP Durham. The proposal also considers how access to short term local secure mental health beds can be improved within clearly managed and audited pathways. This work is being managed via a steering group at which the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Durham are represented. This proposal will, where required, allow for prisoners to be moved from HMP & YOI Holme House into HMP Durham as a part of this pathway of care.

Locally, the Governor chairs the local delivery board which monitors healthcare performance and delivery. Additionally a weekly update from Spectrum (GP services) provides detail on the delivery of services and any waiting lists in place and any action to address these waiting times.