



Ministry  
of Justice

**Sam Gyimah MP**  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary  
of State for Justice

Miss Margaret McKinney  
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Liverpool  
68 Hornby Road,  
Liverpool  
L9 3DF

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017

Dear Margaret,

**HMP LIVERPOOL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR  
1 JANUARY 2016 – 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 as you continue to be short of Board members.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that the management and staff at HMP Liverpool have risen to the challenges faced, providing a high standard of professional care for prisoners and have demonstrated continuous improvement and modernisation. Your appreciation of the efficiency, hard work and support from the clerk to the Board and staff working in the business hub is also welcomed.

I was pleased to read, following concerns you raised last year, that the control and restraint team now have additional kit and optician waiting times have reduced. I am also pleased HMP Liverpool has now secured additional sport equipment from the closure of HMP Kennet, enabling the prison to provide an enhanced cardiovascular suite in one of the unused workshops.

I share your concerns that there are sometimes delays in transferring prisoners to secure hospital beds. It is recognised that nationally there is a shortage of secure mental health beds and my officials and I are continuing to press for progress to be made towards more timely transfer. There are a large number of independent sector providers in the North West who have a national catchment which limits availability to admit patients locally. A national mental health service review is under way to address bed numbers across the country that will allow services to be provided closer to home. However, this is not an immediate solution and, in the meantime, NHS England (NHSE) continues to work closely with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and health providers to ensure those with the highest clinical priority are transferred in a timely manner as possible. Specialised commissioning are aware of the pressure this places on prisons and is committed to working together to support the patient pathway in and out of prison.

With regards to your suggestion that there is a gap in services provided at HMP Liverpool, services are commissioned to deliver dependant on clinical need and there is currently no evidence of unmet need within the establishment. Commissioners will continue to work with the health provider and HMPPS to ensure relevant services are available. Prisons should be places of safety and reform. We recognise that we need to strengthen the frontline to overhaul prison safety and rehabilitate prisoners in order to reduce reoffending. HMP Liverpool is one of ten prisons that will be first to introduce dedicated officers for prisoners.

Between the end of September 2016 and the end of March 2017 HMP Liverpool's total full time equivalent staff in post number of band 3-5 prison officers increased from 242 to 280, an increase of 38. 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 levels of violence. The provision of one-to-one support from a dedicated key worker is at the heart of our prison reforms, along with 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.

I am pleased that officer numbers at HMP Liverpool have increased with some staff transferring in following the closure of HMP Kennet. The establishment has worked hard to plan and recruit to fill all vacancies and, as of 31 March 2017, had achieved their staff in post requirements and are now in a position where the vacancy levels are minimal. As a result, there is a reduction in re-deployment levels, enabling the regime to improve and allow staff to address incomplete sentence plans and Basic Custody Screening Tools.

I share your concerns around the issues and consequences of psychoactive substances (PS), bullying and mobile phones in our prisons. Preventing the use of PS in prisons is complex and we have adopted a range of measures to help address the issue. New laws (the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016) have been in place since May 2016, making it a criminal offence to supply and possess PS in prisons and we have developed an innovative testing regime for such drugs which is available across the prison estate. Body scanners are also being trialled to detect internally concealed contraband on prisoners. Drone incursions are on the increase nationally and HMPPS is looking at how to combat this threat, working closely with establishments and law enforcement agencies to pursue and prosecute those involved in drone activity.

The impact of drugs, and in particular PS, on the behaviour and mental health of prisoners is a serious concern. As a response to violence levels, over 3,400 body-worn cameras will be provided across the prison estate, alongside training to improve staff interactions with prisoners and a range of new measures employed to tackle the issue of drugs. There is a new national substance misuse specification being produced that will incorporate how services should be set up in each type of prison depending on local need. New clinical guidelines for substance misuse have been published to ensure provision is based upon the best available evidence base, treatment effectiveness and safety.

Locally, HMP Liverpool continues to manage robustly the threat of drugs and is working closely with Lifeline (an organisation involved with drug abuse, alcohol abuse, drug addiction and related disorders) to make both prisoners and staff aware of the dangers of PS. Staff now make referrals to Lifeline through the adjudication process for prisoners involved in substance taking. A robust closed visits policy has been introduced for anyone involved in drugs and the prison is working with the drug strategy team to help reduce the impact of drugs.

Mobile phone hardware detection portable poles have recently been distributed across every prison in England and Wales and can detect phones even when switched off or internally concealed. HMPPS has also awarded a contract for a fixed blocking solution to be installed in prisons facing the greatest threat of mobile phones and will be conducting a procurement exercise in the coming months for updated portable blockers. You may already be aware the Telecommunications Restriction Orders Regulations 2016 came into force on 3 August 2016. This power allows HMPPS and other law enforcement agencies to apply for a court order to compel Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to blacklist and disconnect illicit mobile phones and SIM cards identified as being used in prisons. Over 150 devices have been disconnected through this power since the regulations came into force. Furthermore, MNOs are engaged in developing plans to assist by developing new technological solutions to deny mobile signals in prisons.

You have raised that the quality of suicide and self-harm prevention procedures needs to improve. A suicide and self-harm reduction project is being delivered, led by an experienced prison Governor. Following a successful pilot, improved training on suicide and self-harm prevention is being rolled out across the prison estate. In addition, the new offender management model, which will provide a dedicated prison officer to every six prisoners, will help staff to detect those who may be at risk from other prisoners. It is envisaged this will support at risk prisoners to trust staff and to work on different coping strategies. HMPPS has also invested in specialist mental health training for prison officers and more funding allocated for prison safety. These improvements and reforms will benefit prisoners who are vulnerable, suffering from mental ill health or at risk of attempting suicide.

I note your concern about the closure of workshops. One3One Solutions continues to work hard to source more new work for prisoners across the estate. This includes working with local and national businesses as well as other Government departments. HMPPS has seen a number of successes in this respect and will continue to seek to identify appropriate opportunities to bring new work through this engagement. The overall aim is to provide employment for prisoners, enabling them to experience real work, 'on the job training', and life skills in the preparation for their release.

Following the publication of the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper last November, we have stripped out unnecessary rules and governance from our education contracts to allow governors more oversight and control of existing services. We will also be making prison governors fully responsible for the education delivered in their prisons so that they can buy the services they think are most appropriate. This means governors will be able to decide how to structure their education, who provides their learning delivery and how they will spend their budgets effectively.

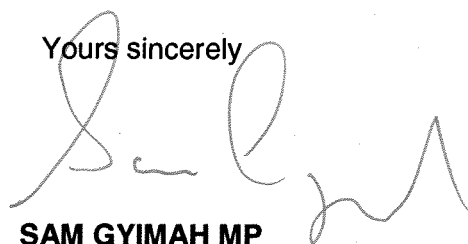
At HMP Liverpool, some classes have merged because of poor attendance. This has resulted in a loss of 25 full time equivalent spaces. However, with improvement in attendance figures it is hoped to have these classes reopened. Some changes have also been made to classroom locations to try and improve the classroom environment.

I am pleased to report that there are plans to develop some of the workshops at HMP Liverpool to provide further qualifications, including bike repairs and Level 2 bricklaying and workshops 7 and 8 are now being used for other purposes. The development of the greenhouse for a horticulture project in partnership with a social enterprise is also a welcome development.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HMPPS comments in response to the 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 estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Liverpool.

Yours sincerely



**SAM GYIMAH MP**

**HMP LIVERPOOL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR  
1 JANUARY 2016 – 31 DECEMBER 2016**

**HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report**

**Condition of Cells and Maintenance Work**

The poor condition of some cells is being taken seriously and despite some cells currently remaining off line, the rate of repair and bringing cells back into use is improving. HMPPS National Service Management Team (NSMT) have been working with Amey on an improvement plan to support the establishment in the reporting process and provide swift responses to repairs. Discussions are underway on window replacements and bids submitted to fund several projects including shower improvements, new heating systems and flooring replacement. It is also hoped the arrival of more staff on the wings will deter vandalism.

Amey have diverted staff from HMP Kennet to assist and are working above their target operating model to reduce the backlog of reactive maintenance tasks. These tasks will now be identified differently which should allow for the contractor to mobilise and sign off each job.

NSMT will continue to work with the contractors to improve their performance and regular meetings will take place with operations, the contractor and contract management teams. Amey are also required to provide action plans to address any failings which are closely monitored by NSMT and appropriate contractual levies are applied.

*Inpatient unit*

Amey have repaired some of the healthcare cells, are fitting new cell gates to support constant watches and have been working above their target operating model in an effort to reduce the backlog. If a patient is placed in one of these cells it is only for the minimum time required to keep the patient safe and this always follows a risk assessment process.

**Healthcare**

NHSE are working with both Lancashire Care Foundation Trust and HMPPS around issues accessing healthcare services, including trying to facilitate two daily GP clinics to meet demand. HMP Liverpool will continue to work to ensure all patients attend clinics and reduce the number not attending for appointments.

The canteen list at HMP Liverpool has been reviewed and paracetamol has been removed from the list.

**Officer Uniforms**

There have been a number of reasons which have prevented some new entrant officers receiving their uniforms upon arrival; new candidates not returning their form in sufficient time, stock availability of women's and less popular sizes and logistical difficulties between the national stores at Branston and individual establishments.

HMPPS and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Commercial uniform teams have held focus groups to help prison staff understand the ordering process and improve the management of issuing uniforms and, in addition to the normal supplier, MoJ Commercial have established additional arrangements for supply from contingency suppliers. Responsibility for ensuring a prison officer is fully equipped with uniform has been assigned to their mentor and the current uniform order form is being revised to make it more user friendly.