



Mr Tony Holdsworth
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Frankland
Brasside
Durham
DH1 5YD

20 July 2017

Dear Tony,

**HMP FRANKLAND: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 DECEMBER 2015 – 30 NOVEMBER 2016**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 November 2016. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for all the hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations, particularly as you have been short of Board members during the reporting period.

It was encouraging to receive your positive comments that HMP Frankland continues to be a safe, decent and secure establishment, where senior management are committed to the equal treatment of all prisoners, providing them with equal access to regimes and facilities. I was pleased to read that bullying and victimisation are taken seriously and dealt with robustly. I was particularly encouraged to read about the Enterprise Scheme which provides work opportunities for prisoners and the work of the offender management unit which continues to help prisoners progress through their sentence.

I acknowledge the Board's continued concerns about the vetting process for applicants including for prospective Board members, prison and healthcare staff. The new approach to pre-appointment vetting is a significant change as the procedure is now virtually paperless. The aim was to release staff resources in prisons and across HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in processing vetting applications, whilst making the experience easier for applicants. It is recognised that the new system does not provide the facility for hard copy papers to be sent manually to the Government shared services provider, SSCL, for processing and the impact of this is being monitored.

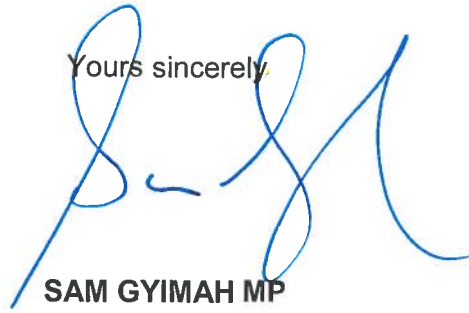
As with all newly implemented systems, there have been teething problems, but improvements have been seen with documentation now being returned faster and with fewer errors. This has meant that the time taken to process the front end of pre-appointment checks has seen a marked improvement.

I wish to assure the Board that options are being looked into for applicants with limited computer skills, such as a prison vetting contact point who could help those applicants who are struggling to upload the relevant documents. Your suggestion that Governing Governors have discretion to allow limited or temporary access to new Board members prior to full clearance has been forwarded to the IMB Secretariat who will respond to you directly.

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 estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Frankland.

Yours sincerely,



SAM GYIMAH MP

HMP FRANKLAND: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 DECEMBER 2016 – 30 NOVEMBER 2016

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Healthcare and Mental Health

GP provision

The prison run ten sessions per week; this includes six GP sessions and four advanced nurse practitioner (ANP) sessions. The number of sessions is sufficient to meet the demands of the prison population. During the last six months cancellation of sessions due to staff sickness have been kept to a minimum; where this has occurred the provider, Spectrum, has put contingency plans in place and offered and provided additional sessions to support this. The GP and ANP start their clinics on time and in the last six there have only been four occasions where the GP has been unable to see all patients; this was due to urgent patients presenting as unwell and taking priority.

A health and well-being process mapping event has commenced at HMP Frankland which will ensure processes and clinical pathways are fit for purpose and meet the needs for the patient journey. This will also identify the appropriate skills and competencies needed and whether there are any gaps in training and development.

Nursing staff

It is recognised that there is a shortage of nurses with prison experience and this problem is not unique to HMP Frankland. Efforts are being made to attract newly qualified nurses and students into this area and work is ongoing with local universities.

Location of prisoners in the inpatient unit

There are occasions where a risk assessment identifies that a particular prisoner would be most appropriately located in the health care centre. Where this is the case the risk assessments are reviewed regularly to ensure that prisoners are located appropriately.

Mental health beds

NHS England is aware of the national difficulties regarding mental health beds and has raised concerns in regional and national forums. Access to high secure beds is particularly difficult. Work is taking place with regional bed commissioners to ensure that patients have access to beds as soon as possible. In the interim, NHS England works hard to ensure that patient care is maintained within the prison environment whilst awaiting a bed, ensuring regular contact and risk assessment to aid safe management.

The team manager for mental health services at HMP Frankland has escalated the concerns about the prisoner referred to in your report and continues to chase up the required bed space. The Governor will be able to keep you informed of any developments.

Rehabilitative Culture

Both the Governor and Director of the Long-Term and High Security Estate are grateful to the Board for recognising the rehabilitative culture at HMP Frankland and for suggesting that prison staff wear or display a symbol to show their engagement in the rehabilitative culture. As prison officers are uniformed grades, the clothing they wear is prescriptive and does not include articles such as the tie pins or badges

referred to in your report. The aim is for all staff to embrace the rehabilitative culture and be champions of this initiative.

Intercom System

A business case will be submitted to seek funding to upgrade the intercom system in the management and progression unit. In the interim, meetings will be held in alternative accommodation, subject to a risk assessment and with due regard to safety and security. Remedial work has been undertaken to improve the current communication system, with a blockage in the intercom pipe being removed.

Laundry Service

Concerns about the laundry service had previously been raised with the Governor of HMP Holme House and an improvement in service resulted. Recently further issues have been experienced and these will be escalated appropriately to secure a resolution.

Employment and Training Portfolio

As a result of the Board's recommendation, the prison will request that an up-to-date report is provided by the education provider on all sentence plans where the prisoner concerned has undertaken educational activity within the assessment period.