



Dr David Skins
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
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Dear David

**HMP LANCASTER FARMS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2016 – 31 JANUARY 2017**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 January 2017. As always, I am grateful to you and your colleagues for all the hard work that has been put into this report, particularly as you have been short of members during the reporting period.

It was also pleasing to receive your comments that you consider HMP Lancaster Farms to be a well-managed prison where prisoners are treated fairly and humanely. I was greatly encouraged to read that in the Board's view security at the prison is good and that a high proportion of prisoners report feeling safe which is a major concern of mine at the present time as you will be aware. It was reassuring to read that assessment, care in custody and teamwork documents are well-managed and that prisoners with mental health problems receive a high standard of care from mental health professionals and prison staff.

I am grateful to the Board for recognising the work of the staff in the care and separation unit who form good relationships with the prisoners in their care, some of whom are the most vulnerable and volatile prisoners in the establishment. It was also pleasing to read that the introduction of the new core day was generally well received and that prisoners are being provided with a number of good quality opportunities for purposeful activity.

As you have raised no issues for my attention it remains for me to thank you and your Board for your support. 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 estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Lancaster Farms. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank both you and Mr Forrest for rotating the role as Chair of the Board during the reporting period.

Yours sincerely

SAM GYIMAH MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Equality Action Team (EAT) Meetings

The EAT terms of reference was reviewed in January 2017 and now includes a consideration of reports from the protected characteristic sub groups, all of which have prisoner representatives and are chaired by the Head of Safer Custody and Equalities. The core EAT membership has also been revised to ensure improved attendance at EAT meetings and this includes key function responsibility leads and prisoner stakeholder representation. Meetings are held quarterly and chaired by the Deputy Governor. The EAT is scheduled within the meetings structure to avoid any unnecessary cancellations.

Education

Length of teaching sessions

Further to last year's response, classroom refreshment breaks were introduced in June 2017. Previously students were expected to engage in learning from 8:30 am until 12:00 noon and from 1:30 pm to 5:00 pm. The refreshment break, approximately 1¼ hours after the start of the morning and afternoon sessions now enables both the teachers and prisoners a short period of relaxation before engaging back into learning. Under Governor Empowerment, the incentives and earned privileges scheme will be further reviewed to look at incentives for learning progression and positive custodial behaviour. Alternative delivery models for functional skills will also be considered in line with the current educational contract arrangements, as well as under the additional services Governors are able to purchase based on population needs.

Cancelled Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) classes

The education provider, Novus, has reduced the supernumerary cover for teachers over the last year. The Governor is in discussions with Novus to review these arrangements and explore opportunities for providing increased cover during staff absences. The number of cancelled classes are subject to monthly monitoring and are reviewed as part of the new OLASS performance monitoring group meetings chaired by the Governor on a monthly basis.

Educational needs for older and disabled prisoners

Educational needs for older and disabled prisoners will be monitored under the monthly OLASS performance meetings chaired by the Governor. Non-OLASS activity for older and disabled prisoners will be subject to further consideration under the self-assessment report process. A reading and study group for older prisoners has been taking place in the library and older prisoners are represented on the equalities older prisoner forum monitored by the EAT.

Purposeful Activity

Increase in purposeful activity and improved employer links

The MoJ set out its vision for prisons in the 'Prison Safety and Reform' White Paper, published in November 2016; this included plans for education and employment. Offenders must be working, learning and reforming, so when they leave prison they can be useful members of society. HMPPS, through ONE3ONE Solutions and Public Sector Prison Industries, will continue to work hard to support this aim by replicating and building on initiatives like the call-centre project that has been operating at HMP Lancaster Farms for some time and provides real employment opportunities for offenders on release. As part of the new arrangements, governors have greater authority and accountability for managing their workshops.

The workshop conversion programme contract is scheduled to commence shortly at HMP Lancaster Farms. The conversion programme will take approximately eight months to complete and will see the old gymnasium converted into two new large vocational training classroom workshops, and the waste management unit relocated to the current horticulture mechanics area. These changes will lead to additional workshop capacity activity places and work has already been identified for the new workshops at the end of the conversion programme.

The coffee shop initiative is being developed now that a side room in the catering workshop has been identified as a bistro type area. This will allow prisoners to be trained as baristas, whilst food will be served from the catering workshop adjacent.

The Recycling Lives and Intelling workshop projects are providing good employer links and are both offering employment opportunities for men on release. The Amey employment pathway and the North West employment passport also provide employment opportunities. An employment open engagement event is planned and a number of North West employers will be invited to develop further employment pathways for prisoners.

Improved attendance

A steering group chaired by the Head of Reducing Reoffending has been established to monitor activity attendance and develop strategies to ensure prisoners attend their allocated activity areas, and remain in activity. The steering group will also focus on disruption to activities caused by prisoners being sent back or seeking reasons to return to wings, due to poor behaviour, lack of motivation, or other purposes. Call rates and activity efficiency rates will be a priority area under the prison's performance improvement programme for this year.

Disruption to purposeful activity

A weekly planning meeting now considers staffing resource requirements to ensure full delivery of the regime and attendance at activity for prisoners. The meeting also considers the flexibility of the Governor to utilise resources including Payment Plus (additional hour's arrangements) under Empowerment arrangements. This should minimise the number of operational closures due to staff resource issues. Planned security operations, such as full searches, will continue to be part of the prison's contraband reduction strategy, and inevitably will lead to some unplanned disruption as the prison aims to tackle the challenges of illicit contraband trafficking. Other than managing incidents which may require resources to be redeployed, resulting in some disruption to activity, the only planned arrangements for activity closure will be around training days, or any works related closures during the workshop conversion programme. Operational closures will be monitored during the monthly OLASS monitoring performance group meetings chaired by the Governor.

Healthcare

Medication storing and dispensing facilities

Alterations to the healthcare centre are scheduled to take place during the year. The proposed alterations will provide sufficient storage for medication in the healthcare centre with additional security measures, such as a security gate.

Medications are currently dispensed from the healthcare centre, with the exception of substance misuse service medication being dispensed from the substance misuse support recovery unit (Coniston 2). A scoping exercise will be commissioned, to look at options for dispensing some medications on other residential units.

Contract tendering

The tendering process is now complete and the first contract review took place with commissioners in June 2017. Commissioners were aware of issues that had arisen during the transitional phase to the new providers and every effort was made to reduce the disruption to services provided to prisoners and to staff throughout the procurement process. Incumbent provider staff were communicated with regularly once the legal timeframe commenced which allowed the new provider to engage with them.

Medical prescriber

Discussions have already taken place between the healthcare manager and the Medical Director of Spectrum (the new provider) around having medical support on Friday afternoons. A rota will be established and will include GP and substance misuse medical sessions. Currently there is the availability for one GP on most Fridays, and plans for GP availability every Friday with effect from 31 August 2017.

Social Care

Social care provision was previously provided via Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust and was delivered in accordance with community thresholds. The newly awarded contract to Spectrum CiC is for an integrated health and social care provision. The new healthcare provider is meeting the needs of prisoners assessed to have social care needs. A local process is in place to procure social care support following assessment by the healthcare provider and this has resulted in social care provision on a needs basis for some prisoners. Prisoners are also identified to support any prisoners with social care needs subject to support and training from the healthcare provider.

The hours spent by healthcare staff is being monitored and the service will be remunerated on a quarterly basis to reflect the healthcare resource invested in social care needs. It is anticipated these monies can be used to purchase a social care post in the future if, as expected, the demand for social care increases with the refurbishment of specifically designed cellular accommodation. The Governor also attends the Lancashire Prisons' Safeguarding Board in which social care provision remains a priority.

Offender Management Unit (OMU)

A Performance Management System will be introduced in the OMU which will track the work of all offender supervisors and the OMU hubs. This system will be reviewed at the weekly prison performance meetings and the monthly senior management team performance meetings, as well as within functional bilateral meetings.

Offender supervisors will meet all prisoners within three weeks of arrival and on a quarterly basis to confirm sentence planning arrangements and offender supervisor points of contact. An OMU booklet is now given to all prisoners on arrival, providing information about the OMU, the offender supervisor details and sentence planning targets. Other useful information about the prison is also contained in the booklet.

HMP Lancaster Farms will be developing a strategy for the new Offender Management in custody model; the case management part of the model will be rolled out from March 2018. The new Offender Management arrangements will also be included in the rehabilitative culture strategy.

Extremism

HMP Lancaster Farms holds monthly pathfinder meetings involving the security department, probation and the North West extremism lead. This meeting monitors all prisoners identified for signs of extremism including any potential intolerance towards the Muslim population. Weekly security intelligence meetings have also been introduced to review significant key intelligence and to consider any planned security measures required. The Governor and his staff will continue to work closely with their regional counter terrorist teams to spot signs of extremism and act accordingly. Permanent funding is now available for

Prison Prevent Leads and a new Extremism Awareness training package is being delivered across the estate.

Exercise areas

The painting of murals has been commissioned for the care and separation unit (CSU) walls facing each exercise yard, and shrubs and garden plants will be placed in this area. One of the CSU exercise yards will also have some physical exercise activity equipment installed. All exercise yards across other residential areas will have physical exercise equipment installed this financial year.

Vulnerable prisoners

Prisoners who opt to self-isolate or feel they are unable to reside on normal location are interviewed by a safer custody officer and a re-integration plan is created for them. The re-integration process is reviewed by a Governor on a weekly or fortnightly basis as part of the Good Order or Discipline reviews and the IMB are invited to attend. There are plans to schedule these reviews in a more predictable way to ensure appropriate stakeholders are able to attend.

Meals Eaten in Cells

Under the revised core day a greater period of time is available to prisoners during the evening period (Monday to Thursday) to undertake domestics and eat their hot meal out of cell. However, the core day also introduced a one hour lunchtime lock-up period. Packed lunches or a cold lunch alternative are normally provided prior to this period, which inevitably results in prisoners eating lunch in their cells. Options to enable prisoners to eat their lunch out of cell will be considered in line with a new core day and staffing profile, but there are no plans to make any further adaptations to cells.

Release Plans for Prisoners from Other Areas

All offenders are now entitled to targeted support before and when they leave prison to help them reintegrate into society. The Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) working in prisons should work with the offender's home CRC and their local partners to help them find accommodation, which may be provided by the local authority or private landlords.

HMPPS has been carrying out a comprehensive review of the probation system, including 'Through the Gate' services to improve outcomes for offenders and communities, while making sure public protection remains a top priority. The review is considering all aspects of the probation system, and HMPPS will set out its intentions in further detail in due course.

Family Engagement with the Rehabilitation Process

A family engagement strategy has been produced and a new visitors' centre and family services contract will come into effect in August 2017. Families are currently involved in specific work with prisoners around interventions such as substance misuse, offending behaviour programmes and safer custody matters. A family pathways offending behaviour programme is now provided by the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT), including one-to-one interventions with prisoners. Family days also take place on a quarterly basis.

Gym Staffing

The physical education (PE) team is now up to full complement with eight PE instructors (PEIs). This increased complement of staff will enable greater provision of qualifications during the year. A member of the PE team will be trained and accredited as a NVQ assessor this year. This will result in a higher level of qualifications being provided in the gym.

Listeners

Plans are in place to increase the number of prison officers on duty at night under the new Governor Empowerment arrangements. This will support night staffing levels and enable greater opportunities for the utilisation of Listeners. Whilst there are no current plans to train Listeners in first aid, all Listeners will be given some emergency aid awareness information during the year.