



Ministry
of Justice

Sam Gyimah MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Justice

Mrs Sarah Crossland
Coordinator/Acting Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP & YOI Doncaster
Off North Bridge Road
Marshgate, Doncaster
DN5 8UX

3 September 2017

Dear Sarah,

**HMP & YOI DONCASTER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 OCTOBER 2015 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 September 2016. I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the Board for completing a report despite all the disruptions you faced. Every member of the Board should be commended for their commitment and resilience and especially your work as interim Coordinator and the dual-board members who kindly came to the aid of the HMP & YOI Doncaster IMB. I am most grateful to the Board, Secretariat and National Council.

I agree that the Care and Separation Unit (CSU) should not be used to house severely mentally ill prisoners for any extended period of time. The National Health Service England (NHSE) continues to work with partners across the criminal justice system to improve services for offenders with mental health difficulties and accepts at times there is pressure on some categories of secure beds in certain parts of the country.

NHSE are currently undertaking a service review across all medium and low secure services to help ensure high quality care is available when needed. The pressures experienced within the prison estate is being considered as part of the review as well as other issues including the capacity required, levels of security, gender, service types and geographical location. A key principle of the review is for secure beds to be part of a pathway of care and where relevant this includes prisons.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and NHSE continue to work in partnership to expedite transfers wherever possible and support the prisons in developing enhanced care packages for the most challenging and/or unwell cases where appropriate. I appreciate your comments that the staff in the CSU at HMP & YOI Doncaster work extremely hard and are dedicated in the caring of prisoners on their unit.

Locally, NHSE Health and Justice are in the process of completing a 'deep dive' review of mental health services within HMP & YOI Doncaster which examines compliance to the service specification and the relevant NICE guidance and quality standards.

I am pleased the Mental Health team now provide a seven day service and that funding has now been secured and plans approved for the introduction of twelve new cells at HMP & YOI Doncaster specially designed to better support vulnerable prisoners. Eleven of these cells will be based on the main residential house blocks to accommodate any prisoners that are mentally unwell and/or at higher risk. More specifically, five of the twelve cells will be anti-ligature (safer cells) with one of which will be based in the segregation unit.

Additionally, five constant observation cells and two care suites on the 'early days' wings will be introduced for main stream population along with any newly identified vulnerable prisoner population.

These measures should hopefully alleviate the pressures and provide better care for mentally unwell and vulnerable prisoners, and it was very encouraging to receive your comments about the hard work, care, and dedication of the staff in the Care and Separation Unit and of the overall Safer Custody Team.

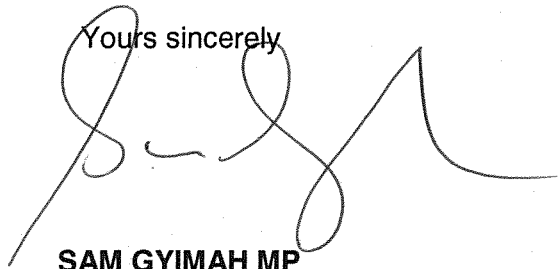
I note your concerns regarding the severity of the violence within HMP & YOI Doncaster, notably inter-prisoner violence and attacks on staff and your associated observations. I am extremely pleased then that a wing based incentives and rewards scheme alongside the newly introduced Social Responsibility Unit has contributed to a significant reduction in violence of over thirty percent.

I am encouraged, although acknowledge there is still more to be done, that the prison has delivered a considerable amount of change and that there has been a significant drop in prisoner applications to the Board. Despite the Board's concerns about the overall healthcare provision, which are addressed in the annex to this letter, it is also encouraging to read of the good engagement between nurses and prisoners and that on-site paramedics have proved valuable.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Director will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. 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 & YOI Doncaster.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Gyimah', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

SAM GYIMAH MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Healthcare

NHSE are aware of the challenges and issues within HMP & YOI Doncaster in relation to the delivery of healthcare and are working in partnership with both the current and incoming provider to ensure healthcare services meet the needs of the prisoners.

Prescriptions

Although robust systems are in place for newly arrived prisoners, validations of a prisoner's prescribed medications cannot always be completed on arrival due to the time of receipt. The issue of internal transfers not arriving with sufficient in possession medication is being addressed nationally via the contract management process. Unfortunately, should any items need to be ordered, this can lead to a slight delay.

Supervision of medication

A new model of delivery has been introduced on the residential house blocks with specific Prison Custody Officers directly responsible for the supervision of prisoners when receiving medication. This is robustly managed via an accountability log and increased managerial oversight.

Older prisoners

As the number of prisoners aged over 65 years is less than 2% at HMP & YOI Doncaster there are currently no plans to introduce a specialist older persons unit however, a palliative care suite is planned for all ages of prisoners. The new healthcare provider, Care UK, who are due to take over the contract in September have been praised for their palliative care provision at HMP Wakefield.

Unescorted prisoners

A revised staffing model is now in place which ensures sufficient and targeted resources are provided to ensure uniformed staff escort prisoners throughout the site. Staff will also be reminded that it is their responsibility to escort prisoners and that members of the Board should not be asked.