



Mr Brian Drury
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Leyhill
Wotton-under-Edge
Gloucestershire
GL12 8BT

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18 August 2017

Dear Brian

**HMP LEYHILL: 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. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for all the hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations. I apologise for the delay in replying.

It was encouraging to receive your positive comments that despite the extreme complexity and needs of the prison population at HMP Leyhill, the prison has maintained a safe and decent environment to live and work in and that you have noticed a sense of community within the prison.

I am pleased that pastoral care continues to be one of the strengths of HMP Leyhill and to hear post-release employment has successfully been achieved as well as 100% examination pass rates in vocational courses. I welcome the rejuvenation recycling development and it was promising to read that the new tests for synthetic substances and their use in mandatory drug testing are proving valuable. Your positive comments about the standard and service being provided in many areas of the prison are appreciated and valued. I was also pleased to read of the continuing positive impact of the Lobster Pot Day Centre building capacity through dedicated work with older prisoners, and the staff who care for them.

I note your assessment that HMP Leyhill is a very good establishment which has the potential to be excellent, and am pleased to read of the work being undertaken to address your concerns including those about indeterminate sentenced prisoners beyond tariff and the impact this has on their wellbeing and mental health.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) remains committed to doing all it can to continue to aid and improve imprisonment for public protection (IPP) prisoners' progress towards reducing their identified risks and their safe release. Those who engage appropriately and take advantage of these opportunities continue to secure release.

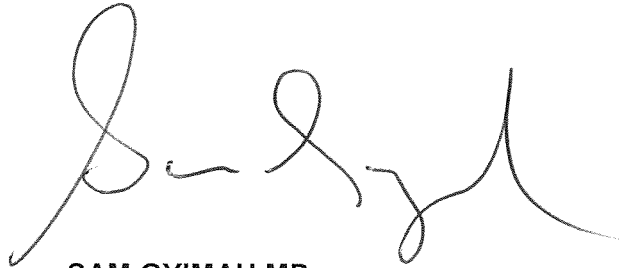
HMPPS recently completed a pilot on a new approach to casework, to augment and enhance existing case progression activity specifically for IPP prisoners. This has facilitated closer working with the Parole Board for the more complex cases, to ensure that parole hearings happen on time and with good quality, current risk assessments and reports. HMPPS is now embedding the lessons of the pilot into all its

casework processes. HMPPS and the Parole Board are working closely on a joint IPP action plan, which focuses on improving the progression of these prisoners through sentence.

The ongoing work to improve progression opportunities for IPPs is continuing to achieve results, with 576 IPP releases in 2016; the highest number of annual releases since the sentence was introduced in 2005.

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 Leyhill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Gyimah', written in a cursive style.

SAM GYIMAH MP

HMP LEYHILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2016 – 31 JANUARY 2017

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners' Property

HMPPS understands the importance of property to prisoners and strives to ensure it is managed as effectively and efficiently as possible. It is in the interests of both prisoners and staff that property is dealt with promptly, fairly and with attention to detail. A review of the Prisoners' Property policy is currently taking place alongside a national project to reduce HMPPS annual litigation expenditure. A national cost reduction project began in early 2017, with work streams focusing on improving the handling of claims and preventing the causes of litigation. This work will feed into the prisoners' property review. HMPPS expect to issue a revised policy during 2017.

Locally, HMP Leyhill is reviewing its room clearance policy which should result in a more streamlined process with less chances for property to be lost.

Lobster Pot Day Centre

A programme of resettlement provision has been developed at HMP Leyhill to reflect the specific needs of the older population and a procurement process will be run for the ongoing delivery of the provision which will be reviewed annually.

HMPPS remains committed to ensuring the needs of the older prisoner group are met appropriately and will continue to look to improve services to ensure that they are accessible to all and suited to the prison community. HMPPS has been working with Resettlement and Care for Older Ex-offenders and Prisoners (RECOOP) for a number of years and has recently endorsed a series of good practice guides produced by RECOOP.

Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL)

HMP Leyhill is working to improve engagement with external employers by providing opportunities to work, learn and build family ties. The number of work placements available has increased during the reporting year and further improvements are anticipated in the coming year. An employer engagement strategy targeting suitable employment will be developed this year.

There is a balance to be struck with the temporary release of prisoners and there have been substantial, necessary improvements in ROTL practice since 2013, including an improved focus on higher risk prisoners. The MoJ is still currently reviewing the ROTL policy and practice in order to offer greater governor discretion over how ROTL operates; to improve access for those who can be trusted to take it and will benefit from it within a robust risk assessment framework. MoJ will continue to work with practitioners to ensure that the quality of the current risk assessment and suitability processes is maintained. MoJ and HMPPS are carefully considering how they can improve access to purposeful ROTL without undermining public safety and confidence. This work is ongoing.

Access to Computers

With the exception of peer mentors who are given controlled access to computers to support the service they provide to prisoners and staff, the position regarding prisoners' access to the internet remains the same, with prisoners not authorised to use the internet whilst in custody. A new policy for IT use by prisoners is under consideration but public protection continues to be the priority with the clear security

risks associated with internet use by prisoners to abuse or harass victims weighed against any perceived advantages.

The virtual campus (VC) acts as a platform for information to be stored for prisoners to access and also to store CVs, course work and other resettlement information and prisoners will be able to have access to their saved information on release.

Creative Arts

Whilst participation in creative arts is undoubtedly beneficial in many ways, increasing self-esteem, self-expression and group activity engagement, these achievements and benefits can be hard to measure on sentence plans to demonstrate actions specific to reducing risk and supporting effective resettlement.

Boiler and Laundry Heating

MoJ Estates in conjunction with Commercial and Contract Management Directorate are addressing outstanding works on the boiler system. The contractor will rectify the issues once security clearance is obtained.

Laundry heating did not form part of the MoJ Boiler project, therefore as the current steam generation plant cannot be utilised HMPPS are considering other options including the costing of gas heaters.

Purposeful Activity

HMP Leyhill has continued to liaise directly with Public Sector Prison Industry laundry leads and prisons to increase laundry tonnage, increased the recycling function with plans to utilise (funds permitting) the old boiler house to widen the range of products recycled.

Following the smoking ban roll out, production in DHL has increased by almost 30% with the prison increasing the allocation by ten places and the prison have been working with HMPPS Retail Team to review the current premises and assess potential expansion and relocation of the MoJ National Distribution Centre Warehouse and Picking and Packing Store. If successful, this will create a further 15 or more purposeful employment places.

Approved Premises

HMPPS acknowledges that there may be a gap in provision within the approved premises (AP) estate and continues to analyse whether the existing AP estate has enough capacity, particularly in relation to elderly and disabled prisoners, but also to respond to emerging policy initiatives, for example, prison reform. Completion of the analysis and any business case for resources to increase capacity is due in October 2017. The Boards concerns particular to HMP Leyhill will be explored with the establishment.

Refurbishment and Repairs

Refurbishment

The kitchen floor has been refurbished but further damage has since occurred which is being addressed by the facilities management team. The Governor is currently awaiting a time frame from Carillion to undertake the remaining work.

The recess taken out of action following significant damage from a fire, this is now operational with further capital bids for refurbishment of all the recesses on A & B units submitted for consideration. Unfortunately the cost of fitting plugs in sinks is considered prohibitive, however the Governor is open to looking into alternative options.

Repairs

There have been issues with reactive maintenance in the region which Carillion's new Regional Account Director has been responding to and feedback has been positive about the improvements that have been made to the team and processes. Repairs are reported immediately and work is carried out subject to availability of parts which should help to minimise the time taken to receive a permanent fix. If staff within the prison continue to be concerned about the length of time taken for repairs to be completed such concerns are escalated to HMPPS Service Delivery Manager or by lodging an official complaint through the Carillion helpdesk.

Facilities for Disabled Prisoners

One capital bid for A wing (North Lower) recess was submitted and approved as part of a mobility/disability bid and HMP Leyhill is currently awaiting for the design team to visit. Two further bids have been funded to install a lift, ramp and electric door to comply with Equalities Act 2010 and upgrade of the residential unit recess to improve the shower areas, including the pipework, general decoration, installation of shower seats and the replacement and repair of windows.

A meeting is scheduled in the coming weeks to scope the work and ensure delivery within a reasonable timeframe.