



Ministry
of Justice

Sam Gyimah MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Justice

Mrs Patricia Leggett
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Onley, Rugby
Warwickshire
CV23 8AP

3rd September 2017

Dear Patricia,

**HMP ONLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MARCH 2016 – 28 FEBRUARY 2017**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 28 February 2017. 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.

I am grateful to the Board for acknowledging the measures being taken to improve recruitment and retention, but understand the concern that initiatives need to be sustained to maintain safe and humane regimes. You will be aware that in November 2016 HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) announced a £100m investment to increase prison officer numbers by 2,500. HMP Onley will be getting a share of these additional staff to increase overall staff headcount, but exact numbers have yet to be determined for every prison. Additionally, as part of the Prison Officer Retention Strategy, all establishments will be given access to an attrition dashboard, toolkit, guidance and e-learning. The aim of these are to support local action to tackle attrition and reduce voluntary resignations.

HMP Onley is working to fill staff vacancies and has received a steady flow of new officers undergoing prison officer entry level training (POELT) over recent months. The introduction of a Band 4 mentor for new staff undergoing POELT has seen an immediate improvement in the performance of new staff, enabling them to feel supported and equipped in their new role. This in turn has had a positive impact on the safe and decent running of HMP Onley and has improved morale and staff retention rates.

Action is taking place locally to improve safety and decency. A new safety 360 programme has recently been implemented at HMP Onley focussing on a holistic approach to improving safety and decency. Positive changes are emerging with healthy trends developing in many areas around identifying and tackling key triggers and there has been a reduction in violence, incidents, open assessment, care in custody and teamwork documents, use of force and segregation. In addition, new local performance dashboards, providing real-time data, are significantly helping to improve decency and safety. There is no longer a backlog of outstanding intelligence reports, which has enabled a more proactive approach to security and safety, particularly around the demands, supply and use of illicit substances. Improved fortnightly communication with prisoners and changes to local governance frameworks is also helping to build a greater sense of community for all who live and work at HMP Onley.

I understand the Board's request for a review of the resources allocated to meal provision due to rising food prices and the impact this can have on special diets for medical or religious purposes.

The budget allocation from HMPPS for meal provision is set at £2.02 for this financial period and there are no plans at the present time to increase to budget allocation. However, responsibility for the local food budget, including type, range, quantity and commitments to religious festival and special diets, rests with the Governor. Service delivery guidance and recommendations are contained in Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 44/2010 - Catering Meals for Prisoners, which includes the need for prisons to implement the practical nutritional guidance tool, the Eatwell Guide, issued by Public Health England. This guide is used to define Government recommendations on eating a healthy and balanced diet. HMPPS views food nutrition as a balanced and varied provision over weeks, rather than on an individual meal basis, and encourage individuals to take some responsibility on what they select to eat. The Governor will keep you informed of what is being done to provide special diets for prisoners at HMP Onley.

It was pleasing to receive your comments that the positive relationships between staff and prisoners continues to contribute to the humane and safe treatment of prisoners. It was encouraging to note there is ongoing good practice in respect of diversity, with racist and homophobic incidents robustly challenged by officers. It was also pleasing to read that there is a well-established Listeners scheme which is valued by prisoners and I am also grateful to the Board for recognising the impressive range of training and employment opportunities available to prisoners.

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 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 Onley and the upheaval with the responsibility of Chair of the Board.

Yours sincerely



SAM GYIMAH MP

HMP ONLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MARCH 2016 – 28 FEBRUARY 2017

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Maintenance and Suppliers

Basic supplies

Early in the Board's reporting period Public Sector Prison Industries experienced reductions in stock levels for items of prisoner clothing stored at the National Distribution Centre (NDC) in Branston. A project to investigate the issue was instigated and over the last six months stock levels for clothing at HMP Onley have been at 97%.

A new contract for the provision of cleaning materials and shower wash was put in place in June 2016 with a new supplier. It is acknowledged that there were initial problems with the inventory and catalogue, and the implementation of the Single Operating Platform also had an adverse effect on some orders. These teething problems have now been resolved. There was also a brief period when the NDC in Branston was out of stock of toothbrushes due to supply chain difficulties. Whilst this impacted on a small number of establishments, the majority had their own stocks. Emergency stock for NDC in Branston was obtained as soon as possible.

Maintenance

The complexity of mobilising and operating the outsourced facilities management agreements coupled with a challenging prison environment has led to contractor performance falling below a minimum acceptable level. Where performance has fallen below a minimum acceptable level HMPPS has administered the performance mechanism in the contract which has included levying financial deductions. To deliver a demonstrable improvement in performance HMPPS is currently embarking upon a service improvement initiative to address systems and processes that currently prohibit the contract from operating successfully.

The Facilities Management provider and Contract Management Team have started a process of replacing, rather than repairing, the oldest most problematic washers and dryers. This year, five dryers and one washer have been replaced and, as faults are reported on machines, these will continue to be replaced.

Kitchen equipment

It is recognised that over the last 12 months there have been a number of problems with kitchen equipment, in particular with the steam ovens where parts have taken far too long to arrive impacting on the final repair. Some of the older kitchen equipment should be replaced as part of asset replacement and the HMPPS Regional Estates Manager will discuss this with the prison's Catering Manager with a view to replacing some of the older equipment in the prison.

It is acknowledged that the quality of service provided by Amey's sub-contractor has been inconsistent and this is being followed-up by the Regional Estates Manager who is managing this through his performance review meetings with Amey's Regional Facilities Manager.

Offender Assessment System (OASys) Reports

Further to last year's response, Initial Start of Custody Assessments should be completed within agreed timescales by local establishments, who are allocated those resources. HMPPS continues to review the

OASys backlog and the prioritisation criteria remains in force, which ensures the highest priority cases are completed in full, with a reduced assessment for those lower risk cases.

The delivery of offender management also has been revised and the new Offender Management (OM) model addresses the issues around completing OASys reports. The new model moves the resource for OASys report completion into the training/resettlement estate and away from local/reception prisons. Additionally, the model removes the dual offender supervisor/supervising officer role, and offender supervisors are replaced by offender managers, who will be based in the prison. Roll out of the new OM model has commenced within the 10 pathfinder sites and HMP Berwyn. HMPPS is currently working through the roll out schedule into the wider estate, but the new OM model will be in place in all closed prisons by March 2019.

Designation as a Complex Prison

Since HMP Onley was originally designated as a Standard Prison, a number of changes have been made to the population. Consideration will be given, via the Governor to the Prison Group Director, to make HMP Onley a complex prison with upgraded senior management posts.

Healthcare

Healthcare staff now record whether a prisoner did not attend an appointment, refused to attend or was unable to attend due to unforeseen operational factors. If the prisoner did not attend healthcare staff will re-book the appointment. If the prisoner fails to attend again, healthcare will follow this up with a visit to the wing for all vulnerable and high risk prisoners.

The report notes that the healthcare provider encourages staff to 'err on the side of caution' when responding to mental or physical health issues. This appears to be in relation to a prisoner in the Care and Separation Unit who was transferred to a secure hospital. Whilst the timescales for transfer to secure mental health facilities often appears slow, there was no delay in treatment of the individual.