



Ms Jean Davies
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP & YOI Parc, Heol Hopcyn John
Bridgend, South Wales
CF35 6AP

28 August 2017

Dear Jean,

**HMP & YOI PARC: 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. As always, I am grateful to you and your colleagues for all the hard work that has been put into this report, particularly as the Board has been short of members during the reporting period.

I note that you have raised no issues for my attention, however, your summary highlights a number of issues that must be addressed. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to the issues raised in your report's Executive Summary are set out in the attached annex.

It was reassuring to receive your comments that overall HMP & YOI Parc is a well-managed establishment and that safety is of paramount importance and is taken seriously by the Director, managers and staff. I am grateful to the Board for highlighting the work undertaken to reduce violence and the dedicated safer custody unit which provides a calmer atmosphere for some of the most vulnerable prisoners.

I was also encouraged to note that the provision of purposeful activity has improved during the year, with on average 77% of prisoners engaged in education, training or employment. The increase in the number of learners achieving qualifications is also a welcome development. I was pleased to read about the many achievements taking place, including the continued success at the annual Koestler Awards and the innovative work taking place in the family unit which is setting a positive example in other prisons both nationally and internationally. The Centre for Social Justice Charity Award that was won by the Invisible Walls Wales project is another great achievement for all those involved.

I was sorry to read about the problems you have faced recruiting new Board members and your request to see the recruitment process streamlined has been forwarded to the IMB Secretariat who will be responding to you directly on this matter. 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 Parc.

Yours sincerely



SAM GYIMAH MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Violence on the Young Persons' Unit

In recent years and with the welcome reduction in the number of young people in custody, a large proportion of secure provisions within the youth estate have been decommissioned. This has created the challenge of managing highly complex groups of children and young people in a smaller number of establishments which has created hotspots of young people who are presenting complex risks and needs.

The Prison Director acknowledges that there were issues with increased staff absence on the unit last year, some of which were linked to injuries sustained on duty. A comprehensive review of violence reduction for the unit is underway and an action plan will be produced and taken forward. A senior member of the Young Persons' Unit will attend the weekly violence reduction meeting which is chaired by the Director. All incidents of violence and use of Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint are analysed at this weekly meeting.

A staff training programme has also been delivered, providing staff with additional skills in de-escalation and behaviour management strategies. Staff have received training in the Trauma Recovery Model which provides staff with skills for managing and dealing with childhood adverse experiences and Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint.

Mental Health Provision

Further to last year's response, the Prison Health Partnership Board for HMP & YOI Parc is undertaking a comprehensive health needs assessment of the prison population, including mental health provision. This will inform the required commissioning, resourcing and prioritisation of future services there.

To support the overall improvement and delivery of mental health services across Wales, the Welsh Government's, Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2016-19, includes actions to ensure timely access to appropriate mental health services for people in contact with the criminal justice system. This includes key stakeholder and partner agencies working collaboratively to improve both diversion from criminal justice services, when appropriate, and access to services that can support Mental Health Treatment Requirements, as part of a community order for offenders with a mental health problem.

Contraband

Psychoactive substances and drugs

HMPPS takes seriously the ongoing challenges that psychoactive substances and other illicit drugs pose and is continuing to implement a range of supply and demand reduction measures to address both the availability and use of such harmful substances. HMPPS has introduced new intelligence units which are working with establishments and law enforcement partners to develop intelligence on individuals and organised crime groups linked to the supply of drugs in prisons. To deter and disrupt the use of dangerous drugs, HMPPS is the first jurisdiction in the world to have developed a drug test for psychoactive substances which, as of September 2016, was available in all prisons. HMPPS continue to work with its contracted laboratory to analyse data to ensure it is testing for the most commonly misused substances.

Following the introduction of the Psychoactive Substances Act (PSA) in May 2016, there have been a number of successful convictions for possession in a custodial setting, including punishments of 14 months imprisonment. In addition to the PSA, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 was amended in December 2016 to make all third generation synthetic cannabinoids (a group of psychoactive substances commonly found in prisons) a Class B drug. The amendment to the Act provides another powerful tool to charge those found in possession of psychoactive substances and carries a heftier maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment.

HMP & YOI Parc continues to make every effort to combat the supply of drugs and other illicit materials into the prison; these include the installation of overt cameras both internally and externally and additional searching of staff and visitors entering the prison.

Drones

HMPPS remains vigilant to all incidents involving drones and take the threat they pose to prison security very seriously. HMPPS is working closely with prison staff and law enforcement agencies to pursue and prosecute those involved in drone activity over our prisons. New legislation has been introduced to further strengthen powers, making it illegal to land a drone in prison or to use a drone to drop in contraband and there have been successful prosecutions due to intelligence led operations. Anyone found using a drone in an attempt to get contraband into prisons can be punished with a sentence of up to two years.

HMPPS also continue to explore innovative methods to tackle the threat posed by drones to prisons, including technology to detect and block drones, the increased use of physical security and working with drone manufacturers. A vulnerability assessment toolkit is also being developed that will help prisons to identify, assess and manage the risks that drone incursions bring.

Personal Officers

HMP & YOI Parc will be undertaking a further review of the personal officer system during 2017-18 which will involve the transition and alignment to the new HMPPS model for the keyworker. All staff will receive training which will include raising the awareness of the keyworker role, Five Minute Intervention training and bespoke keyworker training. Staff have been identified and booked to attend Train the Trainer in the coming months. Data is also being collected each month at entry and exit from the prison to establish the level of awareness and satisfaction with the current scheme.

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.

Systems are in place at HMP & YOI Parc to make sure that prisoners' property is cleared when a prisoner is moved to the Phoenix Unit or between houseblocks. The expectation is that cells will be cleared within 24 hours. Single cells are also locked immediately after vacation and are cleared as soon as is practically possible after vacation. However, it becomes more problematic to seal a shared cell without impinging on the regime of the other occupant. Cell clearances are completed by two officers and copies of cell clearance forms are collated and scanned onto a local database for future reference. Systems are reviewed every time a property claim is made to establish if there has been a breakdown in processes.

Whenever the Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) Contractor is required to undertake the transfer of prisoners it is required to transport prisoner's property along with them. The amount of property that will be taken is governed by Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 12/2011 and PSI 72/2011 which is measured against two volumetric sized boxes and a single outsized item or bag which, must not weigh over 15kg. In addition to this, the escort contractor will take legal documentation. It remains the

responsibility of the sending establishment to make arrangements for excess property to be forwarded. If property is mislaid or lost and where it is assumed that the PECS Contractor is accountable, a complaints procedure is followed. Complaints and procedures are an agenda at the joint Contract Operations Meeting between PECS and their Contractor and are monitored at each meeting to ensure a satisfactory conclusion is achieved. There were 390 transfers into HMP & YOI Parc and 216 transfers out between July 2016 and June 2017. The contractor has received one complaint regarding the transfer of property into HMP & YOI Parc during this period.

A review of the Prisoners' Property instruction is currently taking place alongside a national cost reduction project which 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 and a revised instruction is expected to be issued during 2017.

Smoking Ban

The project to protect prisoners and staff from the effects of second hand smoke and to ban smoking in all prisons in England and Wales is continuing. From the early adopter prisons that included HMP & YOI Parc, HMPPS has made sure that the utmost is done to learn the lessons throughout implementation and beyond, so that constant improvements can be made moving forward and for those prisons that have already gone live. The process of implementation itself contained a number of checks to ensure that all issues of safety, security and support were fully taken into account and that prisons only go live once HMPPS is absolutely certain that it is safe to do so. In addition HMPPS is working closely with staff in prisons and with intelligence colleagues to monitor the impacts and effects of the tobacco ban including all the changes to prisoner behaviours.

Up to now it is hard to be sure that there is discernable and significant connection between the smoking ban and levels of self-harm and violence. If this becomes clearer as the national rollout continues appropriate measures will be taken as necessary.

Staffing

A revised recruitment strategy is now in place and there has been an increased number of applicants during 2017. Each new starter is allocated a mentor to support them during their training and throughout their probation period. Whilst sickness rates have also been high during 2017 current levels show an improving picture and a full range of support services are available for staff to assist in their recovery and return to work. The improving sickness levels together with additional recruitment and training has allowed for more operational staff to be available to minimise disruption to the prison's regime. The priority is to provide a full and uninterrupted regime with curtailment as a last resort.

Court Transfers

The objective of minimising the time prisoners spend waiting in court cells is reflected in the PECS contract, with the contractors fully aware of their obligations to escort prisoners from court at the earliest opportunity. The current contract established the use of escort vehicles with a separation capability, which results in more efficient scheduling, with a reduction in prisoner waiting times. However, reducing waiting times further for young people is dependent upon the assistance of other stakeholders, notably HM Courts & Tribunals Service, the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Services and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) Placement Team. It is critical that youth cases are listed as a priority, that YOT Services predict the likelihood of custody and expedite their risk assessments and other documents and that the YJB also have effective mechanisms to place young people as soon as they are notified from court.

The contractors are fully aware of the risks posed by late arrivals and every effort is made to ensure their vehicles arrive within the latest reception time. The latest reception time at HMP & YOI Parc is 8:30 pm, Monday to Friday, and the contractor has to arrive 30 minutes before this time or they will incur liquidated

damages. PECS continue to monitor all aspects of the contractor's performance and on occasions where it fails to meet the agreed levels this will be raised with the contractor for improvement.