



Ministry  
of Justice

**Sam Gyimah MP**  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary  
of State for Justice

Mr Mike Austin  
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
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14 September 2017

Dear Mike

**HMP HUMBER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 JANUARY 2016 – 31 DECEMBER 2016**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 December 2016. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for all the hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations, particularly as you have been short of Board members during the reporting period.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that despite the many challenges faced by the prison, the senior management team places a real focus on safer custody. However, I recognise your concerns about the high levels of assaults, serious incidents, self-harm and deaths in custody, and wish to provide assurance that the Government is fully committed to making prisons safe. A Prison Safety programme has been established to support establishments in the delivery of safer prisons. This will include increased staffing to provide the capacity for prison officers to play a dedicated officer role and build constructive relationships with prisoners, reducing levels of frustration and, ultimately, reducing levels of violence.

HMPPS is working closely with the Police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to ensure that offenders face swift justice and that courts have full evidence of the harm caused, in order to impose the strongest possible punishment. HMPPS has also rolled out over 5,500 body-worn cameras across the prison estate, alongside training for staff on how to improve their interactions with prisoners which will contribute to making our prisons safe and effective.

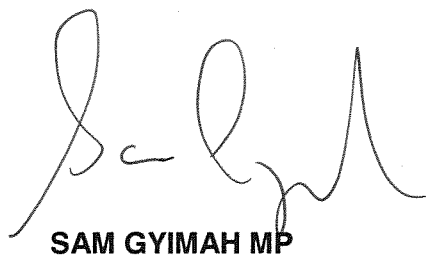
The implementation of a new and improved regime for all prisoners at HMP Humber has provided more constructive activity and contributed significantly to safety. The safer custody team has been developed with increased staffing to specifically address safer custody and violence reduction, and an extensive programme of safer custody training for all staff is underway. I also welcome the introduction of the safer prison workshop noted in your report, which helps men experiencing prison for the first time to understand and cope with the difficulties they could face while in prison. These, along with other initiatives, have ensured a greater focus on improving safer custody work across the prison.

A large scale recruitment programme has also resulted in HMP Humber being fully staff which has increased the amount of time staff have to work with the men in their care. HMP Humber has also developed its strategies for addressing Psychoactive Substances (PS) which has assisted with violence reduction work including staff and prisoner awareness events, an increased focus in rehabilitative services, increased physical security and operations with Humberside Police.

I was pleased to read about the continued success of the Humber Pilot Project which provides peer-to-peer support, advice and guidance to prisoners and helps them to progress and navigate their journey inside prison positively. I am grateful to the Board for highlighting the high success rates in education and vocational training, and for complimenting the ground staff and gardening team for the standard of the gardens, which give a sense of pride to all those living and working at HMP Humber.

As you have raised no issues for my attention, it remains for me to thank you and your Board for your work. 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. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to your specific areas of concern and the issues raised in the report's executive summary about staffing and the availability of drugs and mobile phones 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 Humber.



**SAM GYIMAH MP**

## HMP HUMBER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2016 – 31 DECEMBER 2016

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Maintenance Budget**

Governors are invited to submit bids for capital projects each year and are then allocated funds against the bids they were successful in bidding. Firm quotes for the work are then obtained. If the funds are for work that is to be delivered through the Facilities Management provider then the details of the project and costs are submitted to the HMPPS Change Board where it is financially assessed and approved. If the work is low value (under £10k) this work is fast tracked and acted upon immediately and the Change Board process acts in retrospect.

Some of the functions of the Change Board include ensuring that no work is allowed to be instructed upon without sufficient funds being available both to pay for the work itself, as well as the ongoing maintenance associated with it year on year; that the correct approvals have been obtained; the proposed work does not breach any wider organisational priorities; and agreement is obtained from the regional contract management team that the work is both feasible and does not breach any compliance issues. It also has a purpose to maintain an account of the value of ad hoc works being allocated to the contractors during the contract period.

#### **Education**

Further to the recommendations from Unlocking Potential; a review of education in prisons, undertaken by Dame Sally Coates, the White Paper on Prison Safety and Reform (November 2016) makes a commitment to assess prisoners education needs on entry to custody and to create a personalised learning plan as part of their sentence plan. Officials are working to develop a digital solution whereby the plan can be easily transferred between establishments to minimise the disruption to a learning programme.

#### **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.

#### **Staffing**

The new Governor has placed considerable focus on addressing staffing issues. Workforce planning has addressed the staff shortages and levels of sickness have reduced. A range of Listen to Improve events have been undertaken with staff, and the feedback from staff and visitors is that staff morale has significantly improved.

As a part of the Government's commitment to improved safety and the implementation of offender management in prisons, HMP Humber will be receiving additional officers during the course of 2017 and 2018. This will take numbers well above the existing benchmark staffing levels.

## **Psychoactive Substances (PS) and Drugs**

HMPPS takes seriously the ongoing challenges that PS and other illicit drugs pose to our establishments and continues to implement a range of supply and demand reduction measures to address both the availability and use of such harmful substances. This is based on a multi-agency approach working closely with health partners and law enforcement agencies.

Prisons have at their disposal a range of security measures to reduce drugs being smuggled into prisons including physical searching, the use of x-ray machines, CCTV surveillance cameras, intelligence-led searches and drug detection dogs. New intelligence units have been introduced in HMPPS 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 are 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 continues to work with our contracted laboratory to analyse data to ensure testing takes place 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.

Drug treatment also has a very important role to play in tackling the problem. Substance misuse services are commissioned through NHS England to provide a range of services. Alongside these treatments, HMPPS is working closely with health partners to provide information, guidance and support to prisoners, visitors and staff on the impact and damaging consequences of drugs.

## **Mobile Phones**

HMPPS is undertaking a programme of work to tackle the threat posed by mobile phones and a £2m investment has seen every prison across the estate fitted out with hand-held mobile phone detectors and portable detection poles to step up the detection of illegal phones. HMPPS has also awarded a contract for a fixed denial solution, which will be installed in prisons facing the greatest threat of mobile phones. Additionally, HMPPS are due to shortly commence a procurement exercise for updated portable blockers, which will be placed on the procurement catalogue for prisons to purchase from local budgets.

On 3 August, the Telecommunications Restriction Orders Regulations 2016 came into force. Since the introduction of the legislation, more than 150 illicit devices have been disconnected.