



Ministry
of Justice

Sam Gyimah MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Justice

Dr Michael Day
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Standford Hill,
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11 September 2017

Dear Michael,

**HMP/YOI STANDFORD HILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2016 – 31 MARCH 2017**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 March 2017. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for all the hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations.

I understand the Board's comments about the need for improved kitchen and catering facilities in HMP/YOI Standford Hill and note an improvement bid has been submitted to provide a drop-in kitchen in the prison which is currently in the early stages of consideration. Plans are also being developed to provide self-catering arrangements in some of the accommodation. I am pleased that since the arrival of the new Catering Manager at HMP Swaleside, the food quality for HMP/YOI Standford Hill has improved and is now considered well prepared, served, reasonably varied and sufficient in quantity.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that despite some cutbacks HMP/YOI Standford Hill, continues to be a safe and well managed prison. I am pleased the Board have recognised prisoners receive fair treatment, are not subject to discrimination and that there are rarely any incidents of bullying or violence.

I am pleased to read the Board have recognised the effective contribution from the Working Out Scheme (WOS) and the Offender Management Unit (OMU) which have both positively impacted on the running of HMP/YOI Standford Hill in ensuring rehabilitation and achieving successful resettlement.

Although you have not raised any specific issues for HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to respond to, concerns about illicit substances and external probation are addressed in the enclosed 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 Standford Hill.

Yours sincerely

SAM GYIMAH MP

HMP/YOI STANDFORD HILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2016 – 31 MARCH 2017

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Illicit Substances

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) acknowledges the ongoing challenges that psychoactive substances and other illicit drugs pose to establishments and continues to implement a range of supply and demand reduction measures to address both the availability and use of such harmful substances, based on a multi-agency approach.

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. The introduction of new intelligence units 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, a drug test for psychoactive substances has been developed which is available in all prisons.

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 maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment.

Substance Misuse services are commissioned through NHS England to provide a range of services for drug treatment. 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.

At HMP/YOI Standford Hill the Governor has reviewed the local Drug Strategy and introduced additional drug testing for all new prisoners and those progressing through the Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) programme, who present a heightened potential risk. There are also staff and prisoner focus groups carried out to utilise the prison community in support of the anti-drugs campaign.

External Probation

The volume of cases managed by the National Probation Service is higher than originally envisaged and this has unfortunately caused significant pressures in certain parts of the country. This is being addressed by recruiting and training over 1,000 additional probation professionals.

Work is also ongoing to improve London Community Rehabilitation Company's offender management service. A new 'custody cohort' is being created, with the team currently dealing with approximately 500 cases whilst the offenders are still in prison. The team is currently being piloted in South-West London, and will be evaluated with the intention of rolling it out more widely. Once released, offenders will be managed by a community based Responsible Officer and the custody team aim to ensure a smooth handover to community colleagues. They will act as a point of contact for offenders in prison, and work

closely with the tier two Through the Gate providers, to enhance outcomes for those in custody. A new senior manager for the custody cohort has recently been appointed and is in the process of recruiting staff to undertake this work. It is envisaged this will allow a greater degree of accountability and lead to an improved service.