



Mr Paul Miller
Chair of the Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Bullingdon
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13 November 2017

Dear Paul,

**HMP BULLINGDON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 AUGUST 2016 – 30 JUNE 2017**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 June 2017. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for all the hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations.

Firstly I would like to express my sympathy in respect of the two deaths at HMP Bullingdon this reporting year. You also refer to previous deaths in custody and I want to assure you that we take the findings from the Prison and Probation Ombudsman very seriously, particularly to ensure lessons are learnt and that recommendations are acted on.

I recognise your concerns about the recruitment and retention of staff and wish to assure you that as an immediate step we are investing £100m to increase the number of prison officers by 2500 to deliver new ways of working in public sector prisons. An extra 2,500 frontline officers will help drive forward our reforms to reduce violence, improve standards and increase the staff to prisoner ratio. HMP Bullingdon will be getting a share of the 2,500 additional staff. We are also working with governors to help them retain their experienced staff.

Early this year we launched a new localised recruitment process for 30 of the most difficult to recruit establishments that has been specifically designed to speed up the process of recruitment and place prison governors in charge of the process. HMP Bullingdon is one of these establishments. This new recruitment process should reduce the average length of time it takes to recruit a prison officer from 118 days to an estimated 70 days.

I note the Board's ongoing concerns about the facilities management contractor, Carillion. There is currently a joint review with contractors to reset the contract with the aim of improving service and processes. Various pilots of new process and delivery models are taking place with a view of getting to a more effective and responsive service. The asset investment process is managed separately to these contracts but the improved asset information that should arise from the contract reset will help to better inform the investment process and forward maintenance planning.

I understand the Board's concerns about the provision for older and vulnerable prisoners. The safety and welfare of people within our custody is our top priority and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) works closely with the NHS and local government partners to provide services for all those with care and support needs.

HMPPS is committed to ensuring that all prisoners are supported and prisons will make adjustments to ensure the needs of disabled prisoners are met. Prison staff responsible for the care and management of older prisoners work to ensure that the daily needs of this group are met and that adjustments for age-related difficulties are provided as necessary. Through provision of grant funding, a publication called the 'Good Practice Guide' produced by Recoop (Resettlement and care for older ex-offenders and prisoners) has recently been distributed to all prisons and approved premises to support staff in meeting the needs of older offenders.

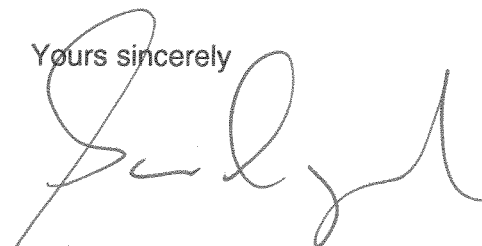
The Government set out its ambition for a reformed prison estate in the November 2016 Prison Safety and Reform White Paper. This provides an opportunity to ensure that new-build facilities enhance HMPPS's treatment of older and disabled prisoners by providing modern facilities and services which better meet their needs (e.g. more adapted accommodation for elderly prisoners). HMPPS continue to follow equalities legislation which ensures reasonable adaptation to meet their needs and will work with the Department of Communities and Local Government to explore how any issues highlighted by family impact assessments can be addressed for this group of offenders.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that despite the challenges faced by HMP Bullingdon, the prison manages to run a less restricted regime than might be expected, and it's largely predictable regime contributes to the fair treatment of most prisoners. I was also pleased to read about initiatives such as the ceremony celebrating the achievements of prisoners on educational courses and other activities, to which family members are invited, and the development of a violence reduction representative scheme.

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 Bullingdon.

Yours sincerely

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

SAM GYIMAH MP

HMP BULLINGDON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 AUGUST 2016 – 30 JUNE 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. Work on producing a new prisoners' property framework was delayed so that it could take 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 is feeding into the prisoners' property review. HMPPS now expects to publish the new framework early next year.

Locally HMP Bullingdon is looking to increase staff resources for a number of tasks, including cell clearance procedures. This will allow staff more time to process property carefully. Local reminders have also been issued to staff about the importance of locking cells when prisoners are moved.

Suicide and Self-harm Training

HMP Bullingdon will monitor this training on a weekly basis and report its figures to the regional safer custody lead. As resources increase, more staff will be prioritised for training.

Segregation / Care and Separation Unit

Wherever possible, prisoners are housed in the Segregation / Care and Separation Unit for as short a time as possible. However, some prisoners may be particularly difficult to progress out of segregation or to transfer. Individual plans have now been introduced for each prisoner held in the unit and a new functional head has been tasked with looking at shortening the length of stay in the unit where appropriate.

Cell Occupancy

The occupancy of prison cells on a crowded and un-crowded basis is determined by establishments and certified by their respective Prison Group Director. This remains the case. That said, one of the central pillars of the Prison Safety and Reform Programme is modernisation of our prison estate and by investing in the creation of new prisons this will enable us to reduce crowding. The new prisons that we will build will be designed with this firmly in mind. They will create the physical conditions for Governors to achieve better outcomes and prisoners to change their lives.