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HMP/YOI Downview
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10 October 2017

**HMP/YOI DOWNVIEW: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MAY 2016 – 30 APRIL 2017**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 April 2017. I want to assure you that we take these reports very seriously and I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your helpful observations, particularly as the Board went through a period of change this year with the recruitment of new members shortly after the prison re-opened.

The decision to close HMP/YOI Holloway and re-open HMP/YOI Downview was made in accordance with HM Prison and Probation Service's (HMPPS) aim to modernise the prison estate to provide the best rehabilitative regimes, and hold women in environments that better meet their gender-specific needs to support rehabilitation. It was perceived that HMP/YOI Holloway provided a poor physical environment and HMP/YOI Downview would offer better conditions, including single cells, more outside space and good facilities for visits and for children visiting their mothers.

The re-opening of HMP/YOI Downview presented a significant challenge, particularly as this coincided with the work to close HMP/YOI Holloway. I accept that the progress to develop HMP/YOI Downview's regime was too slow, being hampered in particular by staffing shortages. One of the difficulties faced by the prison was that a significant number of its new workforce were employed at HMP/YOI Holloway and could not be released until the population in that prison had been decanted (or at the very least considerably reduced to facilitate a lower staffing level). At the same time, it was necessary for HMP/YOI Downview to open in order to accommodate many of the sentenced women from HMP/YOI Holloway before a satisfactory regime was in place.

The relocation, installation and commissioning of plant, equipment and services from HMP/YOI Holloway to HMP/YOI Downview was not a straight forward process and presented unique challenges and some commercial issues arising from simultaneously closing Holloway and opening Downview. HMPPS utilised the Facilities Management provider to undertake the work, the first time HMPPS had ever adopted such an approach.

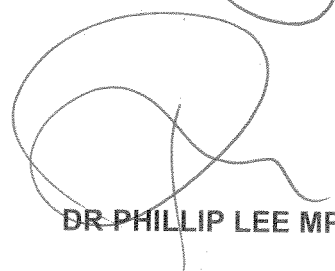
I hope to assure you that HMPPS will take in to account the Board's feedback and embark on the lessons learned so that future prison opening / closure programmes run as efficiently and successful as possible. Women's Estate Senior Operational Manager meetings are now being held monthly, attended by representatives from the entire female estate. A Governor has been appointed to address the lack of appropriate clothing and equipment within the female estate.

I am pleased to report that progress has been made at HMP/YOI Downview to deliver a stable regime and education delivery has improved steadily, with exciting opportunities being created for women to undertake accredited learning in catering and hair and beauty, within newly converted facilities. However, there are some areas yet to be fully developed such as the education curriculum, horticulture and amenities training, gym based courses, drug recovery courses, Thinking Skills Programme (TSP), industrial cleaning and waste management training and jewellery production. With the exception of TSP (estimated to commence at the beginning of the last quarter of 2017-18) and a Food Production Unit (in conjunction with the Clink restaurant charity) which will employ up to 25 women, the rest are anticipated to be operational by the end of this year.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that women are being given greater independence and responsibility for managing their appointments and that offender management and resettlement planning are well coordinated. I acknowledge the Governor's aim for all women to be in education or employment and his determination to make release on temporary licence a genuine living and working experience for eligible women. Your positive feedback about the healthcare provision and the staff member who won a Safer Custody, Security and Care award, are appreciated.

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/YOI Downview.

Yours sincerely

DR PHILLIP LEE MP

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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 at HMP/YOI Downview, staff's knowledge and experience in reception procedures has been addressed through 'on-the-job' training. The number of property related complaints have reduced and no recent complaints have been received relating to volumetric control limits. Staff will continue to make efforts to contact sending establishments to resolve complaints as quickly as possible.

Family Visits

There is a balance to be struck between allocating women to HMP/YOI Downview; holding them closer to home in order to maintain family ties; and delivering effective rehabilitation. Every woman's individual circumstances needs to be taken into account before allocation to an establishment; whether to HMP/YOI Downview or to another establishment to meet their rehabilitation requirements. HMPPS remains committed to making the most effective use of the estate to support prisoners' needs, including by seeking to hold prisoners in the most appropriate security conditions, in prisons that are able to meet the need presented by their individual case and while seeking to maintain family ties.

HMPPS's proposed introduction of five small Community Prisons for Women (CPWs) will focus on preparing women for release, in a similar way to resettlement prisons and we are identifying areas with the strongest demand. It is intended that these CPWs will meet the objectives of holding such women in accessible locations close to their homes where they can be given the support services they need to help them address what are often multiple and complex needs. No decisions have yet been made on the locations of the CPWs.

Teaching Recruitment

Vacancies have now been filled and the security vetting process is underway. Supply staff will be used where necessary. Pay for Outer London will be reviewed for HMP/YOI Downview.

Specialist Cleaning

HMPPS recognises that the level of cleaning within healthcare has not been undertaken in compliance with the prescribed standards and has been intermittent in its delivery. The Service Delivery Manager has implemented an enhanced weekly check to include an observation walk with the Site Manager to identify any deficiencies and ensure remedial action is taken. Carillion has been given permission to recruit additional specialist cleaning resources. However, so far this is proving very challenging for Carillion and remains an ongoing issue. The Governor will keep you updated on the progress.