



Ms Irene Peat
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Leicester
Welford Road
Leicester
LE2 7AJ

20 July 2017

Dear Irene,

**HMP LEICESTER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2016 – 31 JANUARY 2017**

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

It was encouraging to receive your assessment that HMP Leicester was a calmer and safer prison during the reporting year, with prisoners treated fairly and with respect. The reduction in overall violence, better management of safer custody and healthcare practices along with progress in tackling the supply of psychoactive substances, are all positive developments.

It was particularly pleasing to read of the Board's recognition of the new Governor's energy and enthusiasm in accelerating the programme of improvements already in progress and that, supported by a hard working senior management team, there is a renewed energy and readiness to adopt fresh ideas.

I appreciate the Board's continued concerns about delays in the transfer of prisoners to secure hospitals and note your suggestion for specialist units. Whilst the development of a Transition and Assessment unit may provide additional capacity within the system, this falls under the commissioning remit of NHS England Specialised Commissioning for both the accommodation and the services required to operate it. If developed, however, the transfer of prisoners to such accommodation would need to meet the statutory obligations for transfer under S47 and S48 of the Mental Health Act.

There are more immediate system improvements planned by NHS England Health and Justice, including process mapping and the development of a common approach and understanding of admission criteria and referral processes. This will ensure that the current approaches to providing access for prisoners to secure mental health beds are maximised.

HMP Leicester has been involved in NHS England's scoping exercise looking at the future provision of healthcare services in prisons. Trained Listeners are available to support prisoners at HMP Leicester, and prisoners are able to access a Samaritan telephone in times of need. Dedicated staff and partners at the prison will additionally continue to provide support and diversion, through regime activities, to those currently awaiting a transfer to a secure facility.

HMPPS comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex. I also note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report. The Governor will continue to keep you aware of developments as work continues.

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 Leicester.

Yours sincerely



SAM GYIMAH MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Accommodation

In November 2016, launching the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper, the then Secretary of State confirmed £1.3 billion is being invested to reform and modernise the prison estate to replace ageing and ineffective prisons with up to 10,000 modern prison places. This will involve closing old and inefficient prisons which do not support the aims of a redesigned estate and replacing them with modern facilities that support rehabilitation. As explained in the response to your last report, apart from the closures already announced, no other decisions have been made about the future of any prison in England and Wales.

A capital bid for the refurbishment of the showers at HMP Leicester has again been submitted and in the meantime routine maintenance, planned and reactive, has been completed. It is unfortunate some repairs have taken longer than envisaged. This has been raised with the contractors who are now making improvements to keep the showers in an acceptable state of repair and order.

HMP Leicester have engaged painting parties and the prison is now cleaner and in a better state of repair and décor.

Access to telephones and visits

The benchmark core day at HMP Leicester removed most evening regime activities including visits. To make the most of available provision, access to telephones and showers in the evening are provided to those prisoners who work full time.

The visits provision at HMP Leicester is currently considered sufficient to meet the needs of the population. The prison aim to provide additional visits space for children and partners on Bank Holidays and during school holidays and, in addition, from July a family-visit session will also be introduced on Monday afternoons.

Education

Education provision at HMP Leicester has improved with the introduction of sessions for vulnerable prisoners and the prison continues to perform well in their local prison comparator group for qualifications achieved. Delivery of education is monitored on a daily basis and attendance levels also continue to improve with the prison working imaginatively with those prisoners unwilling to attend.