



Ministry
of Justice

Sam Gyimah MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Justice

Mr Paul Mills
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Stocken
Stocken Hall Road
Rutland
LE15 7RD

20th October 2017

Dear Paul,

**HMP STOCKEN: 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 am grateful to you and your colleagues for all the hard work that has been put into this report, particularly as you have been short of members during the reporting period.

I am grateful to the Board for recognising the Offender Management Unit's (OMUs) efforts to tackle the backlog of Offender Assessment System (OASys) reports, but appreciate more needs to be done across the estate to address the levels of incomplete reports. The new Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model addresses the issues which prisons currently face around completing OASys reports. The new model will move the resource for OASys report completion into the training/resettlement estate and away from local/reception prisons. The model also removes the dual Offender Supervisor/Supervising Officer role and Offender Supervisors are replaced by Offender Managers, who will be based in the prison. These Prison Offender Manager posts will be held by a combination of band 4 prison staff, both operational and non-operational, and Probation Officers.

The roll out of the new model has commenced within the 10 pathfinder sites and HMP Berwyn. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is currently working through the roll out schedule into the wider estate, but the new model will be in place in all closed prisons by September 2019. In the meantime HMPPS continues to review the OASys backlog and the prioritisation criteria remains in force, which ensures the highest priority cases are completed in full, with a reduced assessment for those lower risk cases.

I understand the Board's concern about delays in facilitating the movement of prisoners around the estate. Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) along with HMPPS Population Management have agreed levels of resources to meet inter prison transfer (IPT) service requirements and this capacity currently meets demand. It is the responsibility of establishments to ensure that transfer drafts are filled and meet the criteria of the receiving establishments. The escort contractors respond to IPT requirements via population management and, as such, the numbers transferred can be affected by operational reasons at the sending/receiving establishments or new priorities due to localised population pressures. PECS constantly monitor and challenge all aspects of the escort contractors' performance, including IPT cancellations/vehicle availability, and meet with them regularly to review operational issues.

The contract also has the provision for singleton moves. The negotiation of moves has to take place between both the sending and receiving establishments, however, the acceptance by the receiving establishment does not necessarily mean the transfer will or can take place due to the availability of bed spaces or long waiting lists at the receiving prison. Where spaces and population demands permit, priority is given to singleton moves for individuals who have further court appearances and agreed segregation moves between establishments.

I appreciate your concern about staffing levels and retention. In November 2016 the Ministry of Justice announced a £100m investment to increase prison officer numbers by 2,500. HMP Stocken will be getting a share of these additional resources. At the end of March 2017, the Prison Officer Recruitment and Retention Programme also delivered a net increase of 515 full-time equivalent prison officers compared with the previous quarter, which is the highest quarterly increase since 2010. As part of the Prison Officer Retention Strategy, all establishments will be given access to an attrition dashboard, toolkit, guidance and e-learning. The aim of this is to support local action, to tackle attrition, reducing voluntary resignations, with a 'self-service approach' and establishments will be given the chance to opt in.

Staffing levels for operational grades at HMP Stocken are currently good with a high retention rate. There are currently 121 Band 3 prison officers against a target of 120, with a further eight recruits in training and seven recruits awaiting start dates. However, Band 2 Operational Support Grades (OSGs) prove more challenging to recruit. Immediate OSG shortfalls are covered through agency workers providing temporary cover. Seven permanent candidates are awaiting start dates and further vacancies are currently being advertised.

HMP Stocken has some challenges ahead in resourcing the new wing that is due to open in autumn 2018 and delivering the new offender management model. However, attraction campaigns are encouraging a steady stream of applicants and the recruitment rates are being monitored.

I am grateful to the Board for highlighting the good practice HMP Stocken undertakes of searching prisoners, which you request should be standard practice across the estate. All prisons are required to have a Local Searching Strategy in place which is agreed by the Governor and the Director of Prison Group; this sets out the type and frequency of searching to be conducted for prisoners, visitors and staff and all prison areas. The strategy must comply with nationally agreed minimum requirements and contain additional arrangements that address specific locally identified risks. This approach recognises that prisons all have different security risks to manage depending on a variety of factors. These include the security category of the prison and the prisoners it holds, the location and physical layout of the prison and the flow of prisoners in and out of the prison either for work, to court or on escort to hospital. Prison Service Instruction 07/2016 - Searching of the Person, contains guidance and instruction for prisons on searching and the minimum requirements.

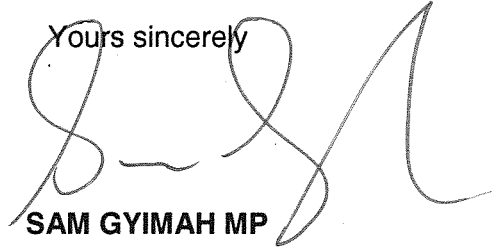
I also understand your concern that there is no national limit on the amount of monies a prisoner may receive from family and friends. Monies received is placed in a prisoner's private cash account and transactions between this account and their spends account are restricted to a nationally set allowance dependent upon the prisoner's Incentive and Earned Privilege (IEP) status, which results in spending being closely monitored and managed. A process for electronic cash payments has been introduced nationally, which enables family and friends to send monies in to the prison electronically which reduces the administrative burden on prisons and provides greater means for tracking monies.

I was reassured to read that you consider prisoners are treated fairly and humanely, and that they are being encouraged to turn their lives around. I was pleased read that a Board member was able to conduct a night visit and experience first-hand the procedures that are in place in the running of the establishment during the night. I am glad that this was a useful and valuable experience.

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 Stocken.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Gyimah', written over the typed name.

SAM GYIMAH MP

HMP STOCKEN: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 30 May 2016 – 1 APRIL 2017

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Resettlement

HMP Stocken as a long term sentenced category C training establishment has a limited number of releases, many of which are 'immediate releases' as mandated by the Parole Board. HMP Stocken released 105 men in total in the reporting period, with 49 reaching their compulsory release date and 54 being released immediately by the Parole Board. Two further prisoners were granted Home Detention Curfew.

The OMU endeavours to move all prisoners back to their home area within the last 12 months of their sentence. This enables the men to work in partnership with their local Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) to prepare for release. However, due to capacity this can be problematic when attempting to return men back to London and the South East. Where it is not possible to return prisoners the prison receives outreach support from Derbyshire Leicestershire, Lincoln and Rutland CRC. In addition to the CRC provision, HMP Stocken is also well supported by the National Careers Service and the Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT). LAT is a particularly valuable resource in that it supports prisoners in integrating back in to family life as well as gaining employment, opening bank accounts, getting identity documents to assist them in finding housing, and offering a wide range of personal development courses.

Work Places

The vision for prisons set out in the 'Prison Safety and Reform' White Paper, published in November 2016, included HMPPS's plans for education and employment. Offenders must be working, learning and reforming, so when they leave prison they can be useful members of society. HMPPS, through ONE3ONE Solutions and Public Sector Prison Industries (PSPI) centrally, will continue to work hard to support this aim, including replicating initiatives that provide real employment opportunities for offenders on release. As part of the new arrangements, governors will also have greater authority and accountability for managing their workshops.

A recent visit by PSPI commended HMP Stocken on their workshops provision and prisoner work ethic. Plans are in place to open a motorcycle repair workshop which is anticipated to provide a further 25 additional full-time activity spaces and to expand the work on the Ministry of Defence camouflage netting contract in workshops 6 and 7. Collaboration is also currently underway with PSPI to examine how the new 160 place workshop due to open in 2018 could be best utilised supporting the internal market.

CCTV System

HMP Stocken has been allocated funding to improve the current CCTV system; this work will be carried out in 2017/18. As part of the new build wing a full review of the current CCTV provision will take place to make sure that current systems are operating effectively and that new systems put in place are interoperable.