




Ministry  
of Justice

**Sam Gyimah MP**  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary  
of State for Justice

Mrs Val Meachin  
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP & YOI Stoke Heath  
Warrant Road  
Market Drayton  
Shropshire TF9 2JL

  
24 October 2017

Dear Val,

**HMP & YOI STOKE HEATH 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. 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 despite membership increasing.

I understand your concerns that the facilities management (FM) contract is causing inefficiency and delays, and note your request that this is reviewed. Although the contract runs for five years from the 1 June 2015 with an option to extend, this is currently undergoing a national review through a 'Contract Reset' programme with an aim to improve delivery and align it to better meet the needs of HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). The review is split into a number of work streams and an invitation to sit on these work streams has been offered to key stakeholders including governors, regional estate managers, the current FM providers and commercial management. This is a major piece of work with the project team required to report back to the Final Approval Board in time for implementation in October 2017.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are one of the primary performance drivers that when not achieved result in financial penalties being incurred by the FM providers. Financial deductions have been applied due to validated complaints and regular KPI failure at HMP & YOI Stoke Heath each month this year, with the exception of May 2017. However, this has not proved effective enough across the estate, which is why HMPPS is now also engaging in the national Contract Reset process.

The Service Delivery Manager will continue to meet weekly with the Amey Site Manager to review and address performance issues at the prison, and meets monthly with the Governor and Amey Site Manager to discuss this and a number of other issues including projects performance, outstanding issues and the establishment's development proposals.

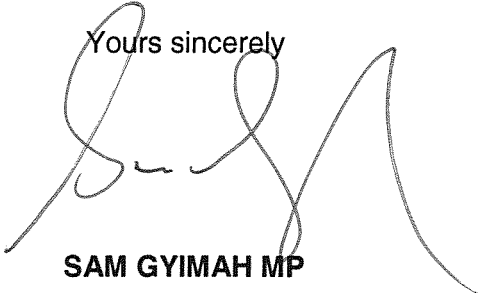
I was reassured to read that you consider prisoners at HMP & YOI Stoke Heath are treated fairly, humanely and are prepared well for release. It is encouraging that there is a range of vocational training available which are aligned to work based qualifications to increase employment opportunities on release. I was pleased to read about the introduction of a smoke free wing in preparation for the prison becoming smoke free.

I am also grateful to the Board for recognising the work of the security team, for their pro-active approach in reducing the amount of illicit items entering HMP & YOI Stoke Heath and their work with the Police; this has resulted in a number of warnings and arrests, and those charged having been successfully prosecuted. It is also pleasing that the Board highlights the achievements of the healthcare staff.

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 Stoke Heath.

Yours sincerely

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

**SAM GYIMAH MP**

## HMP & YOI STOKE HEATH: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MAY 2016 – 30 APRIL 2017

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Offender Assessment System (OASys)**

Further to last year's response, the new Offender Management in Custody 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 National Probation Service (NPS) Probation Officers. Roll out of the new model has commenced within the 10 pathfinder sites and HMP Berwyn. HMPPS is currently working through the roll out schedule into the wider estate, but the model will be in place in all closed prisons by March 2019.

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. Locally at HMP & YOI Stoke Heath the backlog of OASys has been proactively maintained over the last 12 month period and completions are prioritised based on a set criteria.

#### **Resettlement Service Contract**

As set out to Parliament on 19 July 2017, HMPPS know there is more to do to improve probation services. Further work is being undertaken to improve these services and make sure the ambitious reforms are protecting the public and reducing reoffending. As outlined in the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper, governors will have greater opportunities to determine their prison regimes and the providers of services and interventions to meet the needs of their cohort of offenders.

The White Paper sets out a number of performance measures to reflect prison's new purposeful regime; to protect the public and to help reform and rehabilitate offenders. Measures introduced so far are included in prison performance agreements with specific standards set for every prison to take account of each prison's specific situation. These measures, agreed with Governors, allow us to monitor what prisons are doing to help support rehabilitation and help prevent a return to crime. This includes the recording of employment and accommodation at the start and end of the sentence and at the end of the licence supervision period for any offender.

Locally at HMP & YOI Stoke Heath, the reducing reoffending meeting monitors work and outcomes across the seven pathways. Individual bi-monthly performance and quality review meetings take place with all resettlement partners and the Head of Reducing Re-offending and Head of Learning and Skills will be monitoring progress and reviewing performance data.

#### *Accommodation*

HMPPS is committed to ensuring that offenders' housing and support needs are addressed and barriers removed. We are working closely with other Government departments to ensure that the accommodation needs of offenders, who often lead chaotic lives, are fully addressed and supported, as offenders with accommodation problems have been found to be more likely to re-offend.

### *Measuring effectiveness*

Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) are collecting data on employment outcomes, to support performance measures, which will be available to governors during 2017-18. In terms of re-offending rates, interim re-offending data for CRCs and NPS areas was published on 27 October 2016. This was to provide CRCs and NPS areas with an early indication of how they are performing. This data did not cover a full 12-month period which is required to enable an assessment of whether an offender has been reconvicted after committing a further offence. Consequently it does not demonstrate whether CRCs are meeting their Payment by Results targets. However, final data that does so will be available in the autumn this year.

### **Transfers**

HMPPS acknowledges the importance of effective management of transfers in order to ensure prisoners address their offending behaviour requirements, as set out in their sentence plans, and that there is a continuity of offender management throughout the custodial period.

The transfer of prisoners around the prison estate is a matter for both sending and receiving prisons to agree locally. This is because those decisions must be in light of the specific needs and circumstances of the prisoner, and on the precise environments and programmes offered by the prisons involved. There are complex and wide-ranging issues involved in allocating prisoners; including closeness to home, time left to serve, categorisation and, as highlighted above, offending behaviour requirements. HMPPS also need to ensure the estate is being used as effectively as possible, particularly in ensuring local prisons have enough spare capacity to serve the courts.

### **Universal Credit**

Access to external services such as Universal Credit requires considerable investment and development so that it may be done safely and securely. The Digital Prison Programme intends to provide access to such services as part of their roll out and development planning. It is intended that all prisons, including HMP & YOI Stoke Heath, will go through a process of digitisation over the next few years.

Although it is not currently technically possible for prisoners to make an advance claim for Universal Credit, all have the opportunity to see a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) work coach approximately five weeks before release. The DWP prison work coach at HMP & YOI Stoke Heath offers advice and guidance on benefits, including Universal Credit, to all prisoner pre-release via a one-to-one interview. Where the prisoner is being released to a Universal Credit full service area, the work coach can make an appointment at the relevant Job Centre on the day of release and once the claim is completed, an advance of benefits can be received within hours. Universal Credit is currently being rolled out across Local Authorities in the Midlands region.

### **Prisoners with Mental Health Issues**

NHS England is aware that there is pressure on some categories of secure beds in certain parts of the country, which is why a service review across all medium and low secure services commenced in June 2016 to help ensure high quality care is available when needed. The pressure being experienced within prisons is being considered as part of the review and new service specifications have been developed, including greater clarity in relation to accessing assessment services and forensic outreach and liaison services.

Optimum service modelling work has also taken place for prison mental health services which concluded in June 2017 and five new service model prototypes are being considered for piloting in 2017/18. The learning from this modelling is also being embedded in the review of the mental health service specification for prisons. In relation to high secure services, a review of the clinical model and specification has also recently commenced, including a focus on access assessment services.

NHS England has also commissioned a health needs assessment specifically to look at mental health and substance use, which will provide a number of recommendations including information as to the presenting needs and complexities of patients and types of intervention needed for patients at HMP & YOI Stoke Heath.

The learning from all of the above work streams will be included in the review of the current Prison Transfer and Remission Guidance published by the Department of Health in 2011. It is anticipated that revised timescales for transfer from prison to hospital will be developed by the autumn to enable the current guidance to be reviewed by the end of the year.