



Ministry  
of Justice

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

Mrs Frances Ridge  
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
The Drive, Swinfen  
Lichfield, Staffordshire  
WS14 9QS

29<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Dear Frances,

**HMP & YOI SWINFEN HALL: 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 capturing your helpful observations.

I note the Board's concerns about the process of transferring to resettlement prisons and acknowledge that improvement is still required in this area. Wherever possible, HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) remains committed to releasing prisoners from a resettlement prison but where this is not possible it should not interfere with an offender's right to access resettlement services. The contracts with Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC's) provide for such services even where a prisoner has not been transferred to a designated resettlement prison prior to release. HMPPS have streamlined the process by which the National Probation Service (NPS) is able to purchase resettlement services for the offenders they manage in those prisons. The NPS, CRC's, and prisons are working together to improve the services available.

Furthermore, the Board may be aware that the department conducted an internal review of the probation system. My written statement to Parliament on 19 July 2017 set out the action we have taken as a result of the review and the further work we are now doing. We have agreed changes to CRC contracts to reflect more accurately the fixed costs of delivering services to offenders, and this will enable providers to focus on the delivery of core operational services. We recognise, though, the concerns that have been identified about aspects of probation services, and we are doing further work to consider improvements we can make to the delivery of rehabilitative services.

In respect of Governors taking control of local recruitment strategies to better reflect the ethnic makeup of the prisoner population, the Prison Officer Recruitment and Retention program has recently launched an Inclusion and Diversity Strategy with the aim of improving the diversity of newly recruited prison officers. This strategy will span all aspects of the prison officer recruitment process from marketing through to selection. HMPPS have increased the number of visual images of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff in attraction products. Whilst the attraction strategy remains centralised in order to maintain a consistent and professionalised message, HMPPS have introduced the use of microsites, which provide Governors and their prisons the opportunity to update the main website with a bespoke profile of their establishment and a platform to promote inclusivity and diversity. Currently there are 30 sites which are operating a localised recruitment process, so Governors and staff are able to carry out local outreach activity and therefore engage directly with a diverse range of audiences in their local area.

I note the Board's concerns about prison's receiving sufficient resources. Safety is of paramount importance and the Government is fully committed to making prisons safe. Our Prison Safety programme is responsible for implementing the reforms set out in the White Paper with 2,500 extra prisons officers and new security measures to tackle drones, phones, and drugs. The increase in staff will provide the capacity for prison officers to play a dedicated officer role and build constructive relationships with prisoners which will reduce levels of frustration and ultimately reduce levels of violence. Likewise, purposeful activity helps prisoners in numerous ways and the Board's observations together with the Chief Inspectorate's 2016 Report is noted. Consequently the prison has sourced a wooden fence panel construction contract employing 12 prisoners with an envisaged expansion of products employing up to 20 prisoners. The prisoner qualification opportunities have also been significantly expanded with HMP /YOI Swinfen Hall now offering catering, fork-lift truck driving, and tiling & plastering with all workshop space being utilised.

Regarding mental health provision, the current healthcare provider is drafting a Standard Operating Procedure for access to specialist mental health advice during out of hours which is due to be ratified by December 2017. Additionally NHS England are in the process of completing a Clinical Quality Visit at the prison where they aim to address the concerns raised within the IMB annual report. An action plan will be developed for areas of development, and managed as part of the contract process.

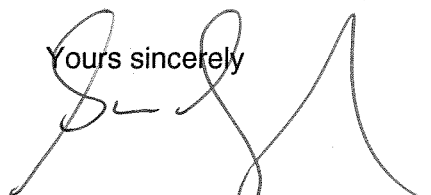
NHS England has also commissioned a health needs assessment specifically to look at mental health (including therapeutic services) and substance use, which will provide a number of recommendations including information as to the required staffing levels and types of intervention needed for patients at HMP & YOI Swinfen Hall. On the issue of refurbishment, I am sorry that information and assurances provided in the response to your 2015 annual report have not yet being realised. I am pleased however that the £5.37 million refurbishment of A, B & C wings is due to commence early next year along with plans to expand and upgrade CCTV, improve the reception area and continue with the programme of window replacement.

Despite the concerns raised, it was nevertheless encouraging to receive your comments about the updating of the Reception area, the staff and regime of the Care & Separation Unit, and also your endorsement of the praise contained in the Chief Inspectorate's Report of 2016. I am also grateful for the Board's recognition of the projects on D and E wings that engaged prisoners in improving their environment including prisoners choosing colour schemes, painting doors, and having new wing furniture. The reduced waiting times for dentistry, physiotherapy, and opticians is also welcomed and I note the Board's informal survey where some prisoners stated they felt the care provided at the prison was better than that received in the community. I also note the Board's acknowledgement of the more settled education provision.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex. Issues of local concern raised in your report will be addressed by the Governor who will continue to appraise you 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 & YOI Swinfen Hall.

Yours sincerely



**SAM GYIMAH MP**

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

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Unacceptable Behaviour to Secure a Transfer**

Prisoners who present a risk to good order and safety within a prison establishment may be segregated in order to manage the risks their behaviour presents, but this will be for the shortest time necessary and staff make every effort to support the prisoner's safe return to normal location within the same prison. If that cannot be achieved then a transfer to an alternative prison may be the only viable option. HMPPS is currently reviewing the way prisoners are categorised and moved around the estate and how this might be more appropriately managed. Part of this work will be to look at the type of behaviour that tends to prompt a transfer to another establishment, including where this involves the prisoner's re-categorisation.

HMP & YOI Swinfen Hall are aware some prisoners' believe an act of serious indiscipline is the means to a transfer elsewhere in the estate. The prison have taken robust and resilient action to quash such beliefs and such incidents are now decreasing.

#### **Contracting Arrangements**

##### *Laundry facilities*

I and J wing laundry facilities have undergone a refurbishment which has doubled the capacity of washers and dryers to each wing. HMPPS have also requested quotes to further improve the laundry facilities on D and E wings.

##### *Transport arrangements*

The transport contractors are tasked with collection and delivery of Inter-Prison Transfers (IPT) out of HMYOI Swinfen Hall as required through the HMPPS population management booking system. The contractors, along with HMPPS population management, have agreed levels of court escort resources to meet Inter prison service requirements and this capacity currently meets HMPPS demands. Cancellations may occur due to operational reasons at the sending/receiving establishments or new priorities due to localised population pressures. Prison Escort and Contract Services (PECS) constantly monitor and challenge all aspects of the escort contractors' performance, including IPT cancellations, conducting regular meetings to review operational issues. No scheduled IPTs from HMP & YOI Swinfen Hall have been cancelled this year and PECS have received only one complaint since July 2016, regarding the provision of overnight accommodation for five prisoners as part of an IPT transfer from HMP & YOI Swinfen Hall to HMP Isle of Wight.

##### *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.