



Ministry
of Justice

Sam Gyimah MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Justice

Mr David Smethurst
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Wakefield, 5 Love Lane
Wakefield, West Yorkshire
WF2 9AG

5^K November 2017

Dear David,

**HMP WAKEFIELD: 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, particularly as the Board was short of members during the reporting period.

I was pleased to read of the positive staff prisoner relationships described in the report and the sense of fairness evident across a range of interactions between staff and prisoners. I understand that the MQPL (measuring the quality of prison life) survey completed by Professor Alison Lieblich and her team from the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge University has since confirmed exceptional results in this regard.

I understand the Board's concerns about the need to develop provision for the increasing number of older prisoners held at HMP Wakefield. The Governor and his senior management team are committed to working to make sure that the care, support and living conditions at the prison enable a standard of care that is equivalent to that received in the community. A dedicated senior manager has been appointed at the prison to lead on an 'Older Prisoners' Wellbeing Project'. This project will drive the development of local provision through partnership and joint working with a range of stakeholders including health and social care commissioners, and the healthcare provider at the prison. I also understand that the Board have also been invited to be involved with the project which has also been successful in securing additional funding. Relationships are also being developed with community based support and health provision agencies that work with older people in the community.

I am also pleased to read the Board have acknowledged the high standard of the end of life care in HMP Wakefield, and that staff have been awarded the Macmillan Quality Environment Mark and a Butler Trust Certificate.

With regard to the Board's observations in relation to the prison workshops, I recognise the importance of prisoners being able to access meaningful and purposeful activity in support of their rehabilitative journey. The acquisition of knowledge and the habit of work are invaluable in maintaining a sense of hope in those serving long sentences and in promoting readiness for eventual release.

Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) through ONE3ONE Solutions and Public Sector Prison Industries (PSPI) centrally, continue to work hard to support this aim, including replicating initiatives that provide real employment opportunities for offenders on release.

Governors now have greater authority and accountability for managing their workshops, and locally at HMP Wakefield, the Head of Learning and Skills works in partnership with the Industries Manager to provide recognised qualifications in the workshops that complements the overall education offer and are suitably chosen in regard of the capability and capacity of the majority of the prison population. HMP Wakefield remain committed be working proactively in partnership with ONE3ONE Solutions and Public Sector Prison Industries (PSPI), and independently in securing appropriate activity for the workshops and in optimising the relevance and value of the training opportunities provided. The underlying intention is to provide the most expansive and engaging regime possible and to create a sense by prisoners that their experience of work has as close an equivalence as is possible to an external work experience.

The shortage of Instructional Officers both nationally and at HMP Wakefield, is recognised. It is the case that HMPPS is in competition with other employers to attract suitable candidates and some roles, such as Instructional Officers can be more difficult to fill than others. PSPI have therefore taken steps to provide additional support to frontline colleagues by undertaking a national data gateway exercise to identify sectors with the greatest recruitment need and pilot a sector specific recruitment campaign.

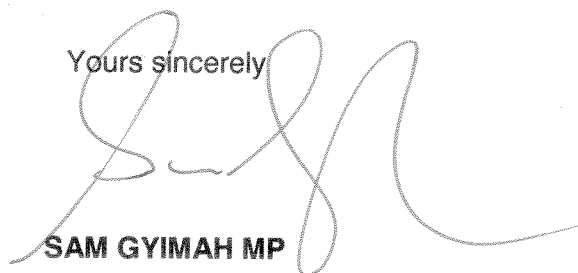
The requirement to complete CTC clearance does serve to delay the take up of employment by new recruits but as you will appreciate is a very necessary aspect in making sure that inappropriate staff are not employed in the prison. The prison works very closely with the Shared Service Centre to expedite the process as efficiently as is possible and it unfortunately will always be the case that the period of notice required from staff that are leaving will always see completion of recruitment activity lag behind. Staff already working at the prison in other capacities have also been encouraged to apply for instructional officer roles where external recruitment has proved unsuccessful and whereas this approach has required additional investment in training, the prison have reported that improved retention rates have resulted.

I am pleased the Board have recognised HMP Wakefield is a calm and well regulated prison community and commend staff on their efforts and continued good work to achieve the improvements recognised by the Board.

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 Wakefield.

Yours sincerely



SAM GYIMAH MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Personal Officer Scheme

The Governor and the Senior Management Team recognise the value of meaningful and informed relationships between prisoners and staff, and that the role of Personal Officers is crucial to that aim. Throughout the reporting cycle there has been significant improvements in prisoner and staff engagement strategy which was captured by the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life survey. A revised system was launched late in the year that maintained the primary Personal Officer role but incorporated them within a team of six who would be mutually supportive in providing the prisoner with secondary points of contact when their primary Personal Officer was not available. This team concept has given the Personal Officer Scheme a new impetus and credibility with the few prisoners who had commented on the previous systems vulnerability. The task of ensuring that all Personal Officers embrace their responsibility to efficiently and effectively support prisoners throughout their sentence will continue, however there is significant evidence to show that predominantly prisoners do now feel supported.

Maintenance Contract

Maintenance Provider (Amey)

Service Credits have been imposed where Amey has failed to meet Key Performance Indicators and regular performance review meetings are also undertaken. HMPPS are now engaged in a National 'Contract Reset' programme to improve delivery and align the Facilities Management Contract to the needs of the prison establishments and organisation.

Repairs to Prison Equipment

Requests for repairs to prison equipment or infrastructure are where possible attended to by Amey, however delays can occur if the task requires specialist input or attendance the work is tasked to an external provider of services, who may not have the necessary approval to enter a High Security Establishment. Service Delivery Managers (SDM) support Governors to work in partnership with providers and ensure that the delivery of service meets the needs of the establishment.

Lift Repairs (B Wing)

The business case for the replacement of the lift on B Wing has been approved and an order now placed with the Contractor.

Building Repairs

Various bids have been submitted to address a number of issues at this establishment and will remain live until funds are allocated. Bids of course are submitted on the basis that they are reviewed nationally against other competing pressures in the service. In cases where there is an urgent imminent need, such as in the interest of addressing a dangerous risk to safety, then emergency action can be applied for to address this. In the meantime, reactive repairs will be used to address individual issues and ensure the facilities are safe, secure and decent