



Ministry  
of Justice

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

Mr Matthew Shepherdson  
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*Dear Matthew*

**HMP WANDSWORTH: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 JUNE 2016 – 31 MAY 2017**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 May. 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 improvements in recruitment and retention, but note your concerns that inadequate staffing levels are still having a detrimental impact, particularly in relation to violence, exacerbated by drug availability. In November the Ministry of Justice announced a £100m investment to increase prison officer numbers by 2,500. HMP Wandsworth will be getting a share of the 2500 additional staff being resourced. At the end of March 2017, the Prison Officer Recruitment and Retention Programme 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.

The Government is fully committed to making prisons safe and transforming the culture in prisons. A Prison Safety programme has been established to support establishments in the delivery of safer prisons, and is responsible for implementing the reforms set out in the White Paper with new security measures to tackle drones, phones and drugs. Prison officers are some of our finest public servants and the challenges faced by everyone working in prisons is not underestimated. HMPPS will continue to support staff to help them maintain safe and secure prisons. The increase in staff will provide the capacity for prison officers to play a dedicated officer role and build constructive relationships with prisoners, reduce levels of frustration and, ultimately, reduce levels of violence.

Violence in prison is crime and any prisoner who commits an act of violence can expect to have action taken against them, which may include a loss of privileges or additional days in prison, awarded through internal disciplinary procedures or referral to the police. Independent Adjudicators may already impose

consecutive additional days on prisoners who assault staff and there are clear guidelines in place to help make sure that this happens. HMPPS are working closely with the Police and CPS to ensure that offenders face swift justice and that courts have full evidence of the harm caused, in order to impose the strongest possible punishment.

HMPPS takes seriously the ongoing challenges that psychoactive substances and other illicit drugs pose to establishments and continues to implement a range of supply and demand reduction measures to address both the availability and use of such harmful substances. This is based on a multi-agency approach working closely with health partners and law enforcement agencies.

Prisons have at their disposal a range of security measures to reduce drugs being smuggled into prisons including physical searching, the use of x-ray machines, CCTV surveillance cameras, intelligence-led searches and drug detection dogs. HMPPS has also introduced new intelligence units which are working with establishments and law enforcement partners to develop intelligence on individuals and organised crime groups linked to the supply of drugs in prisons. To deter and disrupt the use of dangerous drugs, HMPPS are the first jurisdiction in the world to have developed a drug test for psychoactive substances which as of September 2016 was available in all prisons. HMPPS continues to work with the contracted laboratory to analyse data to ensure testing for the most commonly misused substances takes place.

Following the introduction of the Psychoactive Substances Act (PSA) in May 2016, there have been a number of successful convictions for possession in a custodial setting, including punishments of 14 months imprisonment. In addition to the PSA, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 was amended in December 2016 to make all third generation synthetic cannabinoids (a group of psychoactive substances commonly found in prisons) a Class B drug. The amendment to the Act provides another powerful tool to charge those found in possession of psychoactive substances and carries a heftier maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment.

Drug treatment also has a very important role to play in tackling the problem. Substance misuse services are commissioned through NHS England to provide a range of services. Alongside these treatments, HMPPS is working closely with health partners to provide information, guidance and support to prisoners, visitors and staff on the impact and damaging consequences of drugs.

I fully understand your concerns about delays in transferring severely mentally ill prisoners to secure hospitals. NHS England has introduced a new care model for forensic mental health services in South and North London. This new care model is expected to evaluate the bed usage verses demand across the catchment area including the demand from the secure establishments in the South. The Health in the Justice System team is working with the South London model to drive streamlining of the assessment and transfer process. NHS England will work with all providers in secure settings to ensure incremental increases to the transfer within 14 days target during 2017-18 and will monitor this on an on-going basis.

I was pleased to read that the Board has been encouraged by the strong leadership at the prison and the commitment of senior staff. Despite the challenges faced by staff it was encouraging to receive your comments that most staff take a highly professional approach to their work and that incidents were well handled.

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. HM Prison and Probation Service (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 Wandsworth.



**SAM GYIMAH MP**

## HMP WANDSWORTH: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2016 – 31 MAY 2017

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Healthcare and Mental Health**

##### *Facilities*

Following on from the last IMB report, the Ministry of Justice has announced a decision to fund a new replacement healthcare centre that is expected to meet the healthcare needs at HMP Wandsworth. In addition, improvements to facilities are being made to healthcare areas on D and E wings. St Georges NHS Foundation Trust (FT) continues to work with all partners and stakeholders to ensure the new healthcare unit is fit for purpose and patients can access their appointments within a good clinical space.

Infection control continues to be problematic on account of unresolved issues with the standard of cleaning as a result of insufficient resource. This has been formally escalated by HMP Wandsworth to Carillion for resolution.

##### *In-patient mental healthcare provision*

St Georges NHS FT agrees that the Addison Unit requires refurbishment, however, given all the other demands in place for refurbishment as part of the move to a reception prison, this is not on the a list of areas to be refurbished. As a busy local prison, HMP Wandsworth, does have a high demand for the in-patient unit due to the increasing complexity of prisoners' needs and the high turnover of prisoners. However, there are no immediate plans to increase the bed capacity but to work more successfully to provide support on the wings, offer de-escalation and also faster transfer to reduce bed-blocking.

#### **Maintenance**

HMPPS remains committed to working in partnership with Carillion in an effort to address the performance issues that have been identified. Both the Regional Estate Manager (REM) and Service Delivery Manager (SDM) continue to work closely with the site based teams as well as the Carillion senior management team to develop resolution based action plans which will contribute to driving performance improvements specifically with regard to improving the time taken to undertaking repairs across the establishment.

HMPPS recognise that Carillion is still experiencing some difficulties at HMP Wandsworth. However, with the support of the HMPPS National Service Management Team, Carillion is working towards addressing those well documented problems in an effort to meet with their contractual obligations.

The level of damage sustained within the accommodation on Addison Unit is almost without precedence. Both the REM and SDM inspected a number of cells that had been damaged over the course of a particularly difficult few days on the unit. They reported back that they had not seen such a level of destruction during their many combined years working for the Prison Service. It is against this background that Carillion continue to struggle in repairing cells which need to have their whole infrastructure replaced often having to utilise specialist materials and component parts.

There have been a number of issues which have contributed towards the problems associated with the installation and remedial work applicable to catering equipment within the main kitchen. The SDM has worked closely with both the Carillion Cluster Manager as well as their commercial manager to identify the underlying problems and where applicable take steps to effectively address the problems. HMPPS

believes that in adopting this collaborative approach it will be able to ensure continuous improvement going forward.

### **Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) Performance**

HMPPS notes the Board's concerns around the overall performance of London CRC and its contractors, including staffing levels and the effect this has on helping provide adequate resettlement services. Unfortunately, delays with getting prospective employees through the security clearance process towards the end of 2016 led to Penrose and St Mungo's operating with skeletal staffing levels. During this delay, some candidates inevitably found alternative employment. However, the target full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing levels for both Penrose and St Mungo's have now been met and are in place. Additionally, volunteers have been recruited and trained to support the St Mungo's workers at HMP Wandsworth which, along with the increase in FTE staff, significantly expands the support that prisoners can expect with their accommodation needs.

Basic Custody Screening Tool 2 completion rates are also expected to increase at HMP Wandsworth and these have already improved from 75% in March 2017 to 93% in June 2017, which illustrates the impact of the increased staffing levels over recent months. Alongside this, London CRC has also appointed a Director of Custody, Contracts and Interventions, who will hold the Tier 2 providers to account to provide even greater support in the delivery of Through the Gate (TTG) services.

Nationally, you may be aware that the department conducted an internal review of the probation system. Minister Gyimah's written statement to Parliament on 19 July 2017 set out the action HMPPS have taken as a result of the review, and the further work it is now doing. HMPPS 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. HMPPS recognise, though, the concerns that have been identified about aspects of probation services, and further work is taking place to consider the improvements that can be made to the delivery of rehabilitative services.

### **Dog Team**

It is acknowledged that there were some cover issues earlier in the year when one of the two search dog handlers based at HMP Wandsworth reverted back to their previous role. This had a knock on effect on the London and Thames Valley (LTV) search dog complement as this, along with age/medical retirements and transfers to HMP Berwyn took the staffing level down to 50% of the proposed regional search team.

In the circumstances, the LTV regional team had to adopt a proposal for a regional intelligence led model earlier than originally anticipated in order to ensure that all prisons had an element of cover. To clarify, this model works on information received from local security departments; regional intelligence unit; London Prisons Anti-Corruption and the most up to date stability assessment reports. It allows the deployment of dog handlers from across the region into establishments based on intelligence. Following this principle (of targeted, intelligence based searching) search dogs were provided to HMP Wandsworth on one occasion and resulted in the recovery of 15 smart phones and a very large quantity of Cannabis and Spice. In addition, the LTV search team have conducted three large scale staff and targeted cell searches.

It is still the intention that HMP Wandsworth will become a hub for the regional search and will have a team of one custodial manager and four dog handlers based there. This level of staffing is in recognition of the issues faced by HMP Wandsworth and will ensure that they will have search dog cover far in excess of the agreed service level agreement (drawn up by the regional lead and agreed with the Governor). It should be noted that recruitment of the regional handlers has not been easy, but the campaigns have now concluded and the training of the newly selected handlers commenced in August.