



Ministry
of Justice

Dr Phillip Lee MP
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22 December 2017

Dr Anne Finlayson

**HMYOI COOKHAM WOOD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 AUGUST 2016 – 31 JULY 2017**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 July 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 this reporting period.

I fully appreciate and recognise your continued concerns around the impact of insufficient staff to maintain a full routine in HMYOI Cookham Wood. As part of our response to the Review of the Youth Justice White Paper by Charlie Taylor, the Government committed to increasing frontline staff by 20% within public sector Young Offender Institutions, and the Prison Officer Recruitment and Retention Programme was established to support the recruitment drive required to meet this target. The programme is also focussing on ways to reduce attrition levels, particularly amongst the group of leavers who voluntarily resign. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) have recently launched a Retention Framework and Action Plan, designed to support prisons in identifying drivers of attrition and put in place targeted local interventions. This is currently being piloted at a number of establishments across the estate, and all outcomes will be reviewed with the aim to optimise effectiveness and embed across the wider estate.

Cedar House has been re-launched as an Enhanced Resettlement Unit to allow the young people improved access to services and activities that will aid re-integration into the community, enabling the opportunity not to re-offend. This change has in turn released additional resources to the Progression Landing, allowing better access to services, interventions and education for the offenders.

One of HMYOI Cookham Wood's highest priorities is to improve safety and reduce the risk of serious incidents, violence and self-harm in custody. The prison is committed to ensuring that every young person has access to meaningful interventions and activities including education and physical activities, which will sit alongside effective behaviour management. The prison has also introduced a more flexible approach to staff deployment that allows for more delivery during the core day, but does reduce some evening activity.

NHS England (NHSE) is committed to provide a suitable placement for all young people held in a Young Offenders Institution (YOI) who are found to have severe mental health need and meet the criteria for transfer under the Mental Health Act 1983. Secure beds are commissioned by local NHSE mental health teams, and allocated on a need related basis as a national resource. Most transfers are on time, however

there are occasions when transfers are delayed or are not accepted following assessment under the Mental Health Act. This this is often due to a complex presentation of high risk and high harm which requires a bespoke multi agency response to the individual young offender's needs.

NHSE is due to publish guidance on the transfer from the Children and Young People's Secure Estate and the recently developed Children and Young People's Indicators of Performance will enable commissioners to continue to look at performance in this area and address issues contributing to reducing transfer timescales.

National provision within the Youth Custodial Estate for those with complex needs includes resources and work planned through custody reforms. The Keppel Unit at HMP Wetherby is a purpose built unit for young people who present with complex needs, including mental health issues and there are also new and existing initiatives through the Custody Reform Programme which include small Enhanced Support Units, Enhanced Support Teams and Secure Stairs (a clinically led programme to improve assessment and care).

Locally, the overall provision and range of interventions offered for young people with mental health difficulties is good. I do however accept it is difficult at times to access within a custodial or health setting a full range of interventions to those young offenders with mental health difficulties requiring a greater degree of assistance. HMYOI Cookham Wood will continue to work with these young offenders to deliver the best achievable outcomes within the current provision.

It is pleasing to note that whilst there have been concerns raised, the Board recognises staff at HMYOI Cookham Wood treat the young people with care and compassion and have a sympathetic understanding of their needs.

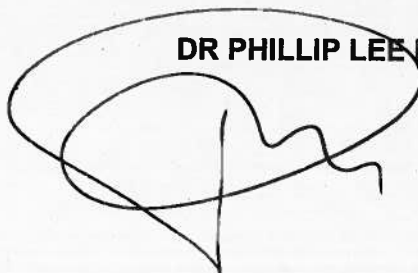
I am pleased to read the Board consider the quality and range of the educational provision at HMYOI Cookham Wood is very good and that there has been a significant overall improvement in education achievements. Your positive comments around the development of the conflict resolution team making valuable contribution to reducing violence, and the increased involvement and encouragement of peer support volunteers across the prison are also appreciated.

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 HMYOI Cookham Wood.

Yours sincerely

DR PHILLIP LEE MP



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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Estates Management

All issues raised regarding the timeliness and efficiency of repairs as part of the maintenance contract are now being addressed.

The provider, Carillion has now provided quotes for resin flooring and walls for the Segregation Unit, which are currently being reviewed, a decorator attends from HMP Elmley for three days per week and further consideration is being given to the provision of a prisoner painting party from HMP Standford Hill.

The remedial flooring works in kitchen have been completed and discussions taken place between Carillion and their supply chain about the length of time taken to deal with minor repairs to catering equipment, and progress on this will continue to be monitored.

Proposed remedial action plans to address drainage issues across the site will be presented to National Service Management Team for approval and the significant delays in HMYOI Cookham Wood receiving replacement glazing installed, is being addressed by Carillion's glazing specialist,

Carillion have given assurance to HMPPS that the fire alarm is fully functional at all times, with a rigorous inspection protocol in place to guarantee the functionality.