



Ministry
of Justice

Sam Gyimah MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Justice

Mrs Mabel Brooks
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP North Sea Camp
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11 December 2017

Dear Mabel,

**HMP NORTH SEA CAMP: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MARCH 2016 – 28 FEBRUARY 2017**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 28 February 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 you were short of Board members during the reporting year.

It was disappointing to read that there continues to be a concern about the handling of prisoners' property between establishments, in particular when transferring from contracted out prisons. It is in the interests of both prisoners and staff that property is dealt with promptly, fairly and with attention to detail. As mentioned in my response to the Board last year, the work to produce a new prisoners' property framework was delayed. A national cost reduction project began in early this year, with work streams focusing on improving the handling of claims and preventing the causes of litigation. This work is feeding into the review on prisoners' property. HM Prison Probation Service (HMPPS) expects to publish the new framework in early 2018.

In terms of property capacity allowance, the requirement for transporting property is currently measured against two volumetric sized boxes and a single outsized item or bag which, must not weigh over 15kg. There have been a small number of instances where the Prison Escort Contract Services have been unable to transport the required tolerance of property. In recognition of this, GEOAmev has put in place a guidance document that identifies the restrictions around the property and bag requirement per prisoner, whilst also identifying the process for any property within the limits that cannot be transported on the day. HMPPS's Custodial Contracted Services team will contact the Governor of HMP North Sea Camp to establish the underlying issues concerning prisoners transferred in from contracted out prisons.

I am grateful to the Board for its continued monitoring of the dental provision at HMP North Sea Camp. The four day mobile dental service held in September 2017 significantly reduced the waiting list for dental treatment and the success of this initiative is being evaluated. NHS England (NHSE) has reached an agreement with HMPPS to fund four prison officers, ring-fenced to provide dedicated healthcare and dental escort provision. This will increase escort availability to facilitate dental appointments for prisoners in the community by three escorted appointments during the morning and three in the afternoon. NHSE and HMPPS will continue to monitor access to community healthcare services (including the capacity of local services to provide care to prisoners), during quarterly contract reviews and through the Local Delivery Board meetings.

I note your continued concern about the service provided by the facilities management provider, Amey. The embedding of the Total Facilities Management Contract has been a complex undertaking and there have been challenges along the way since the service commenced. There have been a number of changes which have improved performance and the overall level of service now being provided by Amey. There are currently 11 prisoners employed in maintenance work and this has increased over the last few months. The Service Delivery Manager (SDM) and Governor are satisfied there is no longer a backlog of work to be completed. The SDM and Site Manager (SM) are working progressively to ensure reactive and planned maintenance activities along with other facilities management services are satisfactorily delivered to the required standards. Another development, which has helped improve matters, is the appointment of a SM based at HMP North Sea Camp. The HMPPS National Service Management Team will continue to closely monitor the performance and quality of service being delivered, and will work with Amey to sustain delivery.

I note the Board's concern about delays to prisoner paperwork caused by a lack of offender managers. A new London Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) 'Custody Cohort' model is being developed which will provide a single point of contact with the CRC whilst a prisoner is in custody, and coordinate resettlement work as a prisoner approaches release, including release on temporary licence and Home Detention Curfew applications. The centralised team should ensure consistency, a greater degree of accountability and consequently a better service.

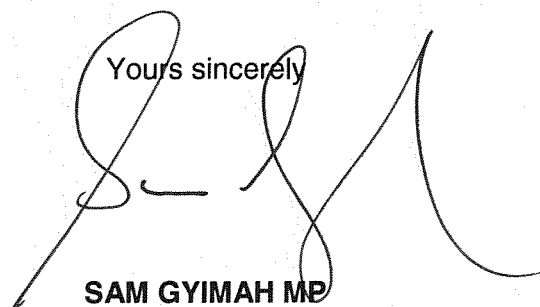
On a broader level, HMPPS has agreed changes to CRC contracts to reflect more accurately the fixed costs of delivering services to prisoners, and this will enable providers to focus on the delivery of core operational services. HMPPS recognises though, the concerns that have been identified about aspects of the probation services, and is doing further work to consider improvements to the delivery of those services, including specific work on improving resettlement planning processes.

Turning to the positive comments in your report, I welcome the Safer Custody team's daily drop-in service which provides a forum for prisoners to raise any concerns and I am pleased that HMP North Sea Camp continues to perform well in resettlement outcomes and education. It was also encouraging to read that the catering provision is of a high standard and prisoners who work on the prison farm can achieve high level vocational qualifications.

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 North Sea Camp.

Yours sincerely



SAM GYIMAH MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Canteen Pricing

The selling prices for items on the National Product List (NPL) will generally be set at the manufacturer's recommended retail price (RRP), as set out in Prison Service Instruction 23/2013 - Prison Retail. If circumstances allow, prices may be set lower, but not set higher than the RRP. Statutory price increases, for example due to duty or tax changes, will be made effective to prisoners at the same time as they impact the general public, or as close to this as is practically possible. Prices may be updated at any time in response to changes outside HMPPS control that impact the cost price or the RRP of the products on sale.

The Retail Operations Team (ROT) conduct basket checks across the retail equivalent sector (local / convenience stores). Earlier this year a comparison of the HMPPS prices was made against major grocery retailers. Your report notes that the cost of batteries on the NPL are considerably higher than Argos. A four pack of AAA Panasonic batteries are priced on the NPL at £1.49 and Duracell batteries are priced at £3.49. On 18 October 2017 the Argos online price for Panasonic batteries was £2.99 and Duracell was priced at £3.99. Whilst there may appear to be a perception that prices are unfairly high, and there are better offers available on the high street, the retail contract offers a competitively priced retail service, including a personalised 'pick and pack delivery service'.

The ROT engages regularly with prisoners through forums and take on board requests for products; over 600 product lines were recently available to prisoners, a positive and significant increase.

Dedicated Unit for Older Prisoners

HMP North Sea Camp, Commissioners and Healthcare Providers work collaboratively together to meet the needs of the prison population and will review recommendations, as appropriate, from a newly commissioned health needs analysis. There are no plans to introduce a dedicated unit for older prisoners as the challenges around facilitating such a unit would not provide a solution. Having very vulnerable people in one place, is not considered a sensible approach as it does not allow for buddies to be located nearby (which are critical to the support mechanism). Also, due to the large dispersed footprint of the establishment, there is no central location to services or accessing other departments.

HMP North Sea Camp works closely with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and, in terms of referring prisoners who fall under the social care criteria, are now adopting the same system approach as in the community. LCC provide carer support to those that need it and provide mobility aids.

HMPPS has been working alongside organisations such as RECOOP (Resettlement and care for older ex-offenders and prisoners) to develop detailed care plans to support ageing prisoners. All prisons have recently been provided with an information package about the support RECOOP can provide to prisoners. HMP North Sea Camp now provides age appropriate fitness classes.