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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Wayland
Griston,
Thetford
IP25 6RL

MoJ Ref: SUB85747

25 February 2021

Dear ██████,

**HMP WAYLAND: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JUNE 2019 – 31 MAY 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 May 2020. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you were short of Board members during the reporting year. I was saddened to hear there were two deaths in custody; every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I acknowledge the Board's concerns for frontline staff in prisons, in particular at HMP Wayland. There is no doubt that these hard-working prison officers play a crucial role in keeping prisons safe and transforming offenders' lives, and ultimately making sure the public is protected. We recognise the need to recruit and retain staff to keep prisons secure. Responsibility for workforce planning and decisions on the number and grade of staff has, since 2017, been delegated to Governors who determine the number of officers required to deliver services within their allocated budget.

Recruitment at HMP Wayland has been very difficult over the years due to the location of the prison and the competitive labour market in the surrounding area. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) will continue to tailor attraction and communications to address different employment markets, seeking to attract a more diverse candidate pool and applicants with relevant life skills. As the Board has identified, I agree the past year has proved particularly difficult due to the current pandemic and other staff related matters. Nationally, prison officer recruitment had to be paused for nearly six months. However, I am pleased that the Prison Officer Entry Level Training course has recently commenced for HMP Wayland's new officers.

I hope to reassure the Board that we want prison officers to stay and progress their careers; induction processes have been improved to ease transition into the job, provide care and support for new staff and offer additional training. These measures are part of ongoing direct work with Governors to address local issues in prisons and ensure experienced staff and new recruits remain in the service. Work to build clear career paths and professionalise the service is being developed and this should provide promotion and development opportunities for experienced staff. This will aid motivation and offer greater reliance across the system, with new staff being supported and mentored. This includes longer direct contact time with prisoners through their key worker thus building a rehabilitative culture.

HMPPS are prepared for continued staffing challenges and are driving forward recruitment campaigns and using many of the tried and tested, as well as additional, staffing interventions which will allow supply

of staff to establishments at short notice. In addition, targeted Incentivised Payment Plus and mutual aid across prisons ensures that establishments facing the greatest challenges get the most support. Retired and resigned former staff have also been invited to return on temporary contracts to support the agency through these unprecedented times.

Turning to the Board's ongoing concerns about HMP Wayland's accommodation provision, I am pleased prisoners were decanted from the temporary units (F and H) during October and November 2020, with plans to demolish and replace the units continuing to be developed. Significant expenditure has been committed in recent times to replace roof coverings and 150 in-cell shower floors to ensure that the remaining estimated life span of the New Build can be achieved. A considerable programme of electrical, fire safety infrastructure works along with installation of modern anti-barricade doors to cells doors on wings A-D and safer cell window upgrades are planned for 2021 onwards. However, it should be recognised that there are numerous competing pressures across the prison estate, but these improvements will provide safer and better accommodation equipment in many aspects.

I note the Board's continued concerns about prisoners serving indeterminate sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) and who are over their tariff period. HMPPS and the Parole Board continues to regularly review the joint IPP Action Plan, which essentially aims to deliver the support IPP prisoners need in order to demonstrate that they can be safely released. Unfortunately to prevent the spread of the virus, some aspects of the usual regime in prisons have necessarily been paused / restricted. This has meant that whilst most areas are continuing to deliver accredited programmes following most recent advice, it is anticipated there will be a reduction in capacity to maintain the current rate of delivery.

The latest published national figures at the end of December 2020 show the unreleased IPP population standing at 1,849, which is itself a reduction from 1,969 at the end of June 2020. This is good progress considering that the population of unreleased prisoners serving IPP sentences was, at its highest in 2012, over 6,000. We of course acknowledge that there is more to do. HMPPS remains committed to safely reducing these numbers further but these prisoners cannot be simply mass released as many of them are still assessed as posing a high risk of committing further violent or sexual offences and have a complex set of risks and needs. As I am sure the Board will appreciate, this must be addressed before the Parole Board can conclude that the risk to the public is capable of being safely managed in the community under supervision of the Probation Service.

Turning to some positives captured in your report, it was encouraging to hear that the prison has witnessed a reduction in violence levels and have tackled the backlog of outstanding offender assessment system reports. Likewise, I welcome the education delivery improvements outlined in your report.

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 Wayland.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Frazer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LUCY FRAZER QC MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners' Property

Further to our response to the Board dated 3 June 2020, in light of the pressures placed on Boards by Covid-19, HMPPS agreed with the IMB Secretariat to pause the consultation with IMB members. A meeting with IMB representatives took place in August 2020 and the feedback received from members is being considered alongside other contributors. There has been a slight delay in being able to circulate the revised draft policy framework because of the need to ensure sufficient operational engagement. That work is now progressing well and HMPPS anticipates that the draft framework will be circulated for wider consultation shortly.

The annual spending on property related litigation claims and locally awarded compensation is significantly less than the figures quoted by the Board. However, HMPPS is conscious of the vast amount of time spent by staff and IMB members dealing with property related issues across the prison estate. It would not be possible to quantify this in monetary terms though in the way suggested by the Board.

Locally, HMP Wayland has seen a reduction in the number of property complaints received in 2020 by 100 from the previous year. It is clear that due to a reduced number of transfers taking place this has contributed to this outcome.

Self-Isolating Prisoners

In September 2020 a snapshot of the number of isolated individuals across the prison estate took place to supplement current knowledge around the scale and drivers behind individuals isolating. This is the third snapshot that has been completed in the last two years. A further one is scheduled for March 2021, to help to continue to develop understanding and identify appropriate support for this cohort of prisoners.

Increasing staff skills and knowledge about isolated individuals aligns with the outcomes of the safety programme to reduce violence and self-harm levels. An updated staff guidance document on isolated prisoners was published in September 2020, which covered information about the specific challenges around Covid-19 presents to these individuals.

In addition to this, a self-assessment template to help support managers to ensure a viable strategy is in place for identifying, managing and supporting isolated individuals was developed and published in November 2020.

Pre Covid-19 isolating individuals were seen twice weekly by the Safer Prisons team and a questionnaire conducted to gauge and support any mental health concerns. HMP Wayland's staff continuously work with these individuals to encourage them to be part of the community and staff have seen a slight reduction in isolating individuals. It remains difficult to manage some individuals that feel too vulnerable to be in such a large complex prison, but equally are unable to move due to their nature of offending not meeting the transfer criteria.

Segregation Unit

In December 2020 construction of the new Care and Separation Unit commenced. A 52-week construction programme is underway and currently is scheduled for completion late end of 2021.

Future Prison Plans

HMPPS is committed to delivering on the Government's plans to provide 18,000 new prison places and realises it is important that these prison places are fit for purpose, safe, decent and secure and can effectively rehabilitate prisoners.

The new prisons programme is key to this and the new prison being built in Wellingborough (HMP Five Wells) will be a purpose-built Category C Resettlement prison. The new prison design being used here will also be implemented for HMP Glen Parva and at the other four new prisons to be built. A key new design feature will ensure that prisoners will be housed in much smaller communities of 60 men per floor. Each cell has its own toilet and shower and data access to allow in cell telephony and secure digital access to online services. Each floor has its own association areas, kitchenette and cardiovascular suite for prisoners, reducing the need to mix groups across other floors or houseblocks.

Each houseblock in the new design has medical cells, accessible cells and a large number of low mobility cells. All houseblocks are fully accessible with lift access and finishes known to aid way-finding and orientation for those with reduced cognition or visual impairments.

This allows operators far more flexibility in terms of housing prisoners, including elderly prisoners, leading to better rehabilitative outcomes.