



██████████
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Lincoln
Greetwell Road
Lincoln
LN2 4BD

Moj ref: SUB 90185

16 August 2021

Dear ██████████,

**HMP/YOI LINCOLN: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2020 – 31 JANUARY 2021**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 January 2021. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, particularly as you continued to be short of Board members during the reporting year and the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on your ability to gather information. I'm aware that the Secretary of State and Karl McCartney MP for Lincoln met the Governor and staff when visiting HMP/YOI Lincoln on 9 July 2021 and was able to discuss some of these themes in more detail. I was also saddened to hear that there were seven deaths in custody; every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I understand the Board's concern about the time it can take for maintenance work to be completed. Despite the best efforts of the prison's facilities management, the Covid-19 pandemic has created challenges. A small number of repairs have been delayed but those that are urgent are prioritised alongside statutory and mandatory maintenance. The issues experienced in the kitchens were addressed in a timely manner and there remains a strong commitment to continue to improve. The project to update the standard of the Care and Separation Unit has also been approved and is due to commence this financial year which will address the Board's concern with the ceiling. In addition, whilst it is acknowledged that disabled access is a challenge due to the age and design of HMP/YOI Lincoln, reasonable adjustments continue to be made for prisoners where they are needed. Should a situation occur where reasonable adjustments could not be made, more suitable accommodation in a different prison would be sought immediately.

Further to my predecessor's response last year regarding accommodation on release, funding during the pandemic provided an emergency scheme to support individuals at risk of homelessness with up to 56 nights in accommodation. The scheme ran between 18 May and 31 August 2020 and was reintroduced on 22 October 2020 until 9 April 2021 because of further public health and public protection considerations. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has retained the Homeless Prevention Teams as a permanent feature to develop relationships with local authorities and other strategic partners in order to embed and expand housing options for prison leavers. In addition, building on the learning from the emergency scheme more than £20 million is being invested to support prison leavers at risk of homelessness which will provide up to 12 weeks of transitional accommodation whilst long-term settled

accommodation is found. The service is initially launching in five regions and will support around 3,000 individuals in the first year.

HMPPS also has a duty to refer individuals who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to Local Housing Authorities, who hold statutory responsibility for housing. To strengthen the actions to be taken by prisons and probation staff under the new unified probation model, HMPPS implemented 'The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017: Duty to Refer (England only)' policy framework on 1 July 2021. It is anticipated that this will ensure more prisoners receive statutory accommodation support at an earlier stage. Community probation practitioner's also now have responsibility for pre-release planning earlier in the process enabling more time to plan for an individual's needs such as accommodation. In addition, the broader homeless support to prisoners leaving HMP/YOI Lincoln through the RS+ project funded directly from the prison's budget is having a positive impact alongside the other measures, reducing the number of prisoners released into the community without accommodation.

Turning to the Board's concern about prisoners serving indeterminate sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP), I wish to reassure you that HMPPS remains committed to doing all it can to support their progression and allow them to demonstrate their risk has reduced to the point where the independent Parole Board determines that they may be safely released. However, as the number of IPP prisoners continues to decrease the proportion of those that remain in prison who have committed more serious offences and whose cases are complex grows. These prisoners are still assessed to pose a high risk of committing further violent or sexual offences and have a complex set of risks and needs which is why some have spent a significant number of years in custody after completing their tariff. HMPPS continues to work with these individuals and the latest published national figures at the end of June 2021 show the unreleased IPP population standing at 1,722, which is a reduction from 1,969 at the end of June 2020. This demonstrates that opportunities remain available to IPP prisoners to progress, despite the pandemic. To continue the progress already made, consultancy/case file reviews have been expanded to include all short tariff prisoners irrespective of previous parole hearing outcome. This is in addition to those that have failed to make any progress after two or more post-tariff parole hearings. These reviews reinvigorate cases that are not progressing and identify appropriate individual progression pathways where necessary. Progression Regimes at four sites also provide dedicated support to those prisoners struggling to achieve release via the usual routes and HMP/YOI Lincoln is continuing to work closely with the prisoners in its care to support their progression to eventual release.

I welcome the Board's view that those prisoners that can be treated in prison are well managed by the mental health team at HMP/YOI Lincoln. However, where a prisoner has a severe mental health need that cannot be treated in prison and warrants detention under the Mental Health Act, they should be transferred to a secure hospital and it is recognised that across the country this can take too long. A White Paper titled, Reforming the Mental Health Act, was published on 13 January 2021 providing a commitment to introduce a statutory time limit of 28 days for transfers to mental health hospitals from custody. In addition, NHS England and Improvement (NHSE&I) published new good practice guidance on 10 June 2021 which sets out the timeframe for completing the assessment, transfer and remission of individuals detained under the Mental Health Act in more detail -

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/guidance-for-the-transfer-and-remission-of-adult-prisoners-and-immigration-removal-centre-detainees-under-the-mental-health-act-1983/>

Due to positive Covid-19 cases, throughout 2020 and the early part of 2021 there have been delays in admission to secure mental health hospitals which NHSE&I are continuing to address as part of the Restoration and Recovery of services across the healthcare sector. NHS England Health and Justice (Midlands) Governance team and Commissioners have also developed a Delayed Hospital Transfers Clinical Case review to proactively manage reductions in the waiting times for patients across the Midlands region and to ensure the most vulnerable and high-risk patients are being supported. Locally,

healthcare at HMP/YOI Lincoln has a strong relationship with regional psychological services. Whilst it is recognised that Offender Personality Disorder pathway treatment services are not available at HMP/YOI Lincoln they are available elsewhere in the prison estate and remain an option for anyone who meets the entry requirement. As part of the Offender Management in Custody model all Offender Managers have access to psychological consultancy which can assist with determining if prisoners should be referred into treatment services, as well as helping in both sentence planning and behavioural management.

Despite your concerns, it was reassuring to receive your comments that the prison is well run, safe and delivers a humane regime. I was encouraged to read about the reduction in violence, self-harm and illicit drug use, as well as the continued efforts to improve the environment and cleanliness of the prison. It was pleasing to note that prisoners have maintained good relationships with staff who are supportive and treat them fairly and with respect. I was also reassured by your comments recognising the efforts of everyone to keep the prison running throughout the pandemic and particularly at the peak when many staff had either tested positive for Covid-19, were isolating or shielding. I understand the Governor is proud of the response by staff and partner agencies and I too am grateful for their continued hard work and professionalism during these difficult times.

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.

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/YOI Lincoln.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Chalk'.

ALEX CHALK MP