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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Humber
4 Sands Lane
Everthorpe, Brough
HU15 2JZ

MoJ Ref: SUB 88489

17 June 2021

Dear ██████,

**HMP HUMBER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY 2020 – 31 DECEMBER 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 December 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 had been a death in custody; every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I welcome the Board's comments that HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has successfully managed the unique set of challenges posed by the pandemic. Turning to the Board's concerns, HMPPS are working very closely with public health authorities in order to maintain services in custody and in the community and to ensure their approach is based on the best scientific advice available. HMPPS has reacted swiftly and decisively and the measures put in place have undoubtedly saved lives. However, it is acknowledged that the methods used to reduce contact in custodial establishments continues to impact on the wellbeing of staff and the people in custody, and the ability to deliver rehabilitative interventions. The National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services will continue to be used to structure and expand regimes and gradually increase wing activity and family contact, which is not only important for well-being, is considered to help prevent reoffending. Recovery will be conducted on a phased approach, whilst implementing some positive learning from the pandemic.

I note the Board's comments about the impact of the National Framework on local decision making. My officials have informed me that HMPPS Covid-19 Gold Commander has contacted the Governor to discuss this matter further. I can also assure you that HMPPS throughout the challenging period of the pandemic has been mindful of the need to ensure governors can proceed with regime decisions, according to local circumstances. The Board will be pleased to hear that HMPPS is now re-opening the Stage 2 Gateway for sites currently delivering Stage 3 regimes. The agency has built on the learning gained from the regime progression process and will utilise existing governance structures to ensure that this can be done in a timely and efficient manner, with the level of additional work for establishments kept to a minimum, and bureaucracy minimised as much as possible. Responsibility for Stage 2 progression will move to Prison Group Directors with Executive Director oversight.

I acknowledge the Board's longstanding issue about the loss of property belonging to people in prison, as identified by your Board, most issues result from a person having too much property, over and above the volumetric control limit. It is the responsibility of sending prisons to transport excess property on to the receiving prison. Property bag identification numbers will be entered on to a digital platform steering away

from the Person Escort Record (paper document) which should enable better tracking of property in transit.

Nationally, the development of the new property framework project was initially paused due to Covid -19, a meeting with IMB representatives took place in August 2020. The feedback received from those members was considered alongside the comments received from other stakeholders, and comments from subsequent operational engagement. The draft framework has now been circulated to internal and external stakeholders, including the IMB Secretariat and the IMB representatives previously consulted, and the comments received are being considered. The framework will be published later this year, which will provide greater direction and standardisation on a national basis and designed with procedural justice at its core. It strengthens guidance on known problem areas such as volumetric control and seeks to ensure prisoners' property is managed efficiently, effectively, consistently and with care and respect. While digital improvements to property processes are being explored, the nature of this work means that any digital changes are likely to be longer-term and as such will not be part of the forthcoming framework.

At HMP Humber every effort is being made to ensure that cell clearances are conducted during the night period so these checks can be completed in a controlled manner. Staff are encouraged to evidence these checks with the property card present (through the aid of a Body Worn Video camera), particularly where there are large amounts of property. The recording of property remains a persistent issue, and staff have been reminded to write legibly so that items can be clearly identified. Unfortunately, the timeliness of property delivery during transfer or in another establishment or location is an ongoing challenge for the prison and this is often subject to the availability of the courier or resources at the prison to organise the delivery. Staff are mindful that the volumetric control limit needs to be communicated better at the point of transfer.

Turning to some positive comments captured in your report, it was encouraging to receive your observations that the prison has been extremely well managed within the circumstances and constraints of the pandemic. I applaud the leadership of the Governor and her staff for their efforts to mitigate the threat of the coronavirus. Likewise, it was pleasing to note that through this ongoing Covid-19 crisis prisoner transfers carried on and appropriately managed, the standing of the 'Humber Pilot' initiative, the innovative support work provided by the Chaplaincy team and some welcomed gestures to support family ties.

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 Humber.

Yours sincerely,

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

ALEX CHALK MP