



Ministry
of Justice

Alex Chalk MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Justice

██████████
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Onley
Rugby
Warwickshire
CV23 8AP

Moj ref: SUB 90257

19 August 2021

Dear ██████████,

**HMP ONLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MARCH 2020 – 28 FEBRUARY 2021**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 28 February 2021. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as I note you were short of Board members during the reporting year.

I acknowledge the Board's comments about capacity shortages in the open prison estate. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) recognises this concern which has been impacted by the closure of several accommodation blocks no longer meeting the statutory fire safety standards. This has been managed in the open estate by replacing some of these places, particularly in the South, with existing temporary accommodation (as part of Covid-19 contingency measures), and in other sites, with new temporary accommodation. As part of the ongoing long-term programme to deliver 18,000 additional prison places, HMPPS is currently assessing which sites may be suitable for expansion of the open estate. In terms of recategorisation, progressive transfers of prisoners, as stated in the response to the Board dated 3 June 2020, these are subject to space in the appropriate part of the prison estate becoming available and the speed of transfers reflects this constraint. Locally at HMP Onley, staff have continued to work closely with HMPPS Population Management Team throughout the pandemic to transfer men to open conditions.

Turning to some positives captured in your report, it was encouraging to hear that at HMP Onley prisoners are treated with respect and care and there are well-executed reception and induction processes in place. I was pleased to note the Board's praise of the Governor and staff for their efforts in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and I am grateful for all their hard work during this difficult time. 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 Onley.

Yours sincerely,

ALEX CHALK MP

HMP ONLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MARCH 2020 – 28 FEBRUARY 2021

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Intervention Courses

The types of accredited programmes and amount delivered are continuously kept under review taking into consideration of the population demand both nationally and locally. As the Board are aware, there are two accredited programmes which specifically target partner related violence; these are Building Better Relationships (BBR) and Kaizen-Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). HMPPS is working to identify priority individuals to access such programmes and targeting delivery to prisoners who are due to be released or have a parole hearing during 2021 (to aid sentence progression).

Delivery of community based accredited programmes are being undertaken through a Prioritisation Framework (PF). On release, individuals will be able to access accredited programmes in the community, if they are assessed as suitable in accordance with the PF.

Staff at HMP Onley manage intervention course requirements by conducting a regular needs analysis and provide courses most suitable. If an individual's sentence plan indicates a need for a course not delivered at HMP Onley, a move to a suitable prison is facilitated as soon as practicable.

Refurbishment of Windows

The Governor has made a conscious effort over the past three years to replace many of the perspex window panels.

A Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Estates investment proposal bid has been approved to replace the windows that are in a poor state of repair and are not to a modern standard. This is now awaiting funding allocation and will be then added to the MoJ projects programme of work. Meanwhile, staff will continue to complete repairs as they are reported onsite via Planet FM.

Recruitment and Retention of Prison Officers

Very little new recruitment took place during the pandemic and the move to the 15-month Custody and Detention apprenticeship was also paused. It has taken time to recover from this. HMP Onley is currently classified as being one of the 'very difficult' to recruit to prisons, with job applications received in lower volumes than those seen in 2019.

Work around improving the prison officer staffing level position at HMP Onley continues. The MoJ Resourcing Team will discuss the recruitment challenges with the Governor and explore collaborative ways to successfully reach out to candidates. To help boost application volumes to the required level, HMP Onley is one of 14 prisons to receive intensive marketing and attraction support. The Custody and Detention apprenticeship is now being rolled out in phases which involves much more practical skills development in the classroom and then more learning in the workplace.

Although the London pay allowance is in recognition of the generally higher cost of living in or commuting into London which are not generally applicable to national locations including HMP Onley. Over the Board's reporting period the prison experienced retention rates that were better than the cited average. This along with the excellent Prison Officer Entry Level Training Mentoring Team and Apprentice Coach

led to a more experienced staff group which correlated with reduced violence levels. It is noted that with the reopening of the economy and as new prisons open or expand within close vicinity to HMP Onley, staff retention will be monitored closely.

Like the Board, HMPPS wants prison officers to stay and progress their careers. Induction processes have been improved to ease transition into the job, provide care and support for staff and offer additional training. These measures are part of ongoing work directly with Governors to address local issues and ensure experienced staff and new recruits remain in the service.

Additionally, work to develop clear career paths and professionalise the service continues, and this should provide development and promotion opportunities for experienced staff. This will aid motivation and offer greater reliance across the system, with new staff being supported and mentored, longer direct contact time with prisoners through key work and with extra staff greater confidence in working in a safe, decent and secure environment.