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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Eastwood Park
Church Avenue, Falfield
Wotton-under-Edge
Gloucestershire,
GL12 8DB

MoJ Ref: SUB 86909

12 April 2021

Dear ██████████,

**HMP/YOI EASTWOOD PARK: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 NOVEMBER 2019 – 31 OCTOBER 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending October 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.

With regard to the project to install a new Offender Management Unit at HMP/YOI Eastwood Park, this should have started before March but due to unforeseen issues in the contract tendering this has been delayed. The project will, however, commence in the 2021/2022 financial year and the Governor will keep you updated on progress.

I fully understand that Board's concerns about the long-term segregation of ██████████ ██████████. Minister Frazer wrote to you on 17 February regarding the individual's circumstances and providing assurances that appropriate action has and continues to be taken to enable her complex needs to be met. I have received your further letter of 26 March on this matter and a response will be sent in due course. I also understand that the Board is receiving regular updates through attendance at the local multi-disciplinary meetings about the individual's circumstances.

In terms of adult secure Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) services, these are more specialised secure services and currently apply to males only as the number of females requiring this service is extremely small. Where a female patient requires this type of service, they would access a female adult secure service (relevant to the level of security they require based on the risk they present) and an appropriate package of care from a specialist team with expertise in ABI would be put in place to support the placement, taking into consideration individual, clinically assessed need. As with all adult secure services commissioned capacity will be kept under review taking into consideration demand, however, ongoing indicative numbers at this time would suggest that the approach described above would continue to be the favoured option due to the very low numbers of women who require adult secure ABI services.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons and HM Inspectorate of Probation, with support from HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, have been asked by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to conduct

an independent evidence review on neurodiversity in the criminal justice system (CJS). The review is part of MoJ's commitment that everyone who encounters the CJS is treated fairly, including people with neurodiverse conditions. The findings will help the MoJ to develop effective policy to improve awareness of neurodiversity in the CJS. There are four strands to the work: a call for evidence; a series of round-table events; consultation with practitioners; and feedback from those involved in the CJS. A report of the findings is due to be published in summer 2021.

Further to Minister Frazer's response of 29 May 2020 to the Board's last annual report up to £800,000 seed funding has been allocated for preparations to establish the first pilot Residential Women's Centre in Wales, subject to securing further funding. The Centre will offer an alternative to short prison sentences by providing safe accommodation for vulnerable women with complex needs who would otherwise receive short custodial sentences. No decisions have been made on the location in Wales, but HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) will work with the Welsh Government and delivery partners in Wales to ensure the location is appropriate.

Your report indicates that there are differences in sentencing practice based on postcode. Sentencing is a matter for our independent courts, but it is important to recognise that imprisonment rates in any given area will not just be a result of sentencing practice; account must be taken of factors such as differences in crime rates, types of crimes committed, police numbers and successful prosecutions. The Sentencing Council for England and Wales aims to promote greater transparency and consistency in sentencing, while maintaining the independence of the judiciary. The Council issues guidelines on sentencing, which the courts must follow unless it is in the interests of justice not to do so.

Despite the concerns raised in your report, it was encouraging to receive your comments that in general there is a positive relationship between staff and prisoners, and nearly all prisoners reported favourably on their first experiences at the prison. I was pleased to note that the Board's previous criticism that members were not notified of a prisoner's segregation has considerably improved during the reporting period and that accommodation areas were cleaner than in previous years. I was also pleased to read that prisoners from ethnic minorities were visited by the equality officer and encouraged to talk to staff about their concerns.

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/YOI Eastwood Park.

Yours sincerely,

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

ALEX CHALK MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

National Needs Assessment

The National Women's Prisons Health and Social Care Review (Women's Review) has been jointly commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) and HMPPS. Its purpose is to improve health and well-being outcomes for women in prison and upon their release, to reduce health inequalities and ensure equity of access to the full range of health and social care services across the Women's Estate. It will achieve this through a better understanding of the current ability of, and challenges faced by the Women's Estate and prison health and social care services in delivering high quality care, treatment and support of women in prison in England. One of the key lines of enquiry is to undertake a review of the needs analysis of all 12 women's prisons, identifying needs across the population to guide commissioning. The Health Review is due to formally report back in December 2021 but will also be taking certain recommendations forward prior to that date where there is the opportunity to do so.

Windows

Where windows have been identified as requiring replacement either due to damage or being at the end of their life cycle, these would either be dealt with on an individual basis using local Prison Maintenance Group funding, or if several windows are required, this would be submitted as a bid for funds. Whilst Prison Industries can provide replacement windows free of charge, funding is still required for the installation of the windows and this would be based on risk.

It is acknowledged that Prison Industries were requested to produce windows for HMP/YOI Eastwood Park. As it is not unusual for orders to take until the following financial year to be fulfilled, funding for installation is now sought once the product has been delivered. Maintenance funding is limited and must be based on risk. At the present time there are other works considered to be of a greater priority for the current available funding for the prison. The windows are therefore being held in storage at HMP Leyhill until funding becomes available for their installation. It is also recognised that a full fire door assessment needs to be undertaken to establish the extent of the work required. Whilst the local prison Health and Safety (H&S) Team has initially undertaken a survey, Gov Facility Services Ltd (GSFL) has recently appointed a member of staff who is qualified to assess fire doors and they will be working with the H&S Team to conclude this work.

Maintenance Bids

The general process for local funding allocation is for the Service Delivery Manager, in conjunction with the Regional Estates Manager and GFSL Site Manager, to discuss concerns on site which can be rectified with local project works under £150 thousand. This is based on risk, for example the loss of accommodation attributed to a leaking roof.