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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Risley
Warrington Road
Risley
Warrington
Cheshire
WA3 6BP

MoJ Ref: SUB 85782

1 March 2021

Dear ██████████,

**HMP RISLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 March 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 note the Board's concerns about the process for dealing with foreign national offenders (FNOs). When a decision is made to detain a time served FNO, a dedicated Home Office team, the Detainee Escorting Population Management Unit (DEPMU), will conduct a careful and timely risk assessment of their suitability to transfer to the immigration removal estate. Decisions to allocate specific individuals, whether time-served FNOs or otherwise, will be based on the presence of one or more of the risk factors or criteria as set out in published detention guidance at Chapter 55 of the Home Office Enforcement Instructions and Guidance. Those individuals deemed suitable will be placed on a waiting list, operated by DEPMU, for transfer to an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) but will remain in prison accommodation pending that transfer. Transfers will take place as soon as reasonably and operationally practicable. When an individual is deemed unsuitable for a transfer to the immigration removal estate, their circumstances are regularly reviewed. Changes in circumstance can impact on this decision and individuals may, on re-assessment, then be considered suitable and accepted for transfer into an IRC.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that during the Board's reporting period, which finished prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the prison provided a safe environment and prisoners were treated fairly. I was pleased to read that investment in the establishment had resulted in staffing levels being improved, enabling prisoners to attend workshops and healthcare appointments, and that repairs to the education department roof were completed.

I was also encouraged to hear that steps have been taken to improve the management of transgender prisoners' issues and that significant work has been undertaken to set up and provide a wide range of activities for older prisoners.

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. HM Prison and Probation Service (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 Risley.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Frazer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'F'.

LUCY FRAZER QC MP

**HMP RISLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Transfers to Access Offender Behaviour Programmes (OBP)

Since the Board's report was written, HMP Risley has undergone a significant change in population. One wing has been rerolled to house Men Convicted of Sexual Offences (MCoSOs) which has doubled the MCoSO population, and the population of FNOs has increased significantly. At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, OBP delivery ceased nationally. However, recovery work recommenced in the Autumn in line with the Exceptional Delivery Model for OBPs and prisons began delivering as many OBP places as possible, within the constraints of safe systems of work and the availability of trained staff. A process was also put in place to identify high priority prisoners who require a transfer for an OBP treatment place. Following the recent national restrictions announced in January 2021 new OBPs will recommence when it is considered safe to do so.

HMP Risley is unable to select the prisoners that are transferred in and due to population pressures within local establishments it is not always possible to transfer men based on need. In response to this, HMP Risley continues to review the needs of the population and change interventions accordingly. There is ongoing work with Psychology to review OBPs for MCoSOs due to the increase in population. Those who are unable to achieve the appropriate intervention will be considered for transfer to another prison. Processes are in place to do this for the MCoSO population with nearby HMP Wymott.

Prisoners' Property

It is unfortunate that it has not yet been possible to publish the new Prisoners' Property policy framework. Having completed discovery work by visiting around 15 prisons HMPPS has been working closely with stakeholders to consult on proposed changes to the policy. Discussions ahead of consultation with IMB members began with the IMB Secretariat in February 2020, who proposed meetings take place with Board members in April that year. In light of the pressures placed on Boards by Covid-19, HMPPS agreed with the IMB Secretariat to pause this consultation. A meeting with IMB representatives took place in August 2020 and the feedback received from those members is being considered alongside other contributions. There has been a slight delay in HMPPS being able to circulate a revised draft policy framework because of the need to ensure sufficient operational engagement. That work is now progressing well and we anticipate the draft framework will be circulated for wider consultation shortly.

Locally at HMP Risley, prisoners are now provided with their property immediately post reception or within 24 hours, providing the property has arrived with them. The prison has a pop-up clothing store in Reception so if a prisoner arrives with little or no property they can be provided with clothes. The process for cell clearances has been reviewed and improved, and complaints are monitored via the weekly performance meeting.