



Ministry
of Justice

Lucy Frazer QC MP
Minister of State for Justice

██████████
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Holme House
Holme House Road
Stockton on Tees
TS18 2QU

MoJ ref: ADR80699

30 August 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP HOLME HOUSE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2019**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 December 2019. 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 understand the Board's continued concerns about the maintenance of the prison and the request for funding to improve the environment. Despite the previous delays I understand progress is being made in delivering new boilers and pipework to HMP Holme House. Whilst the initial scope of the heating upgrade project did not include new boilers for all accommodation areas as some were originally assessed as satisfactory, it became apparent these had deteriorated after the project began in May 2019. An independent condition survey that was completed in early 2020, led to approval by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for all boilers to accommodation areas to be included in the replacement project. The programme is now expected to conclude in early 2021. Whilst the project is ongoing, a number of temporary boilers are being installed to ensure house blocks are adequately heated and have hot water.

Capital funding from the MoJ has also been approved in the region of £900,000 for shower replacements and £600,000 for replacement flooring at HMP Holme House, but there is no confirmed date when works will begin. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Prison Maintenance Group (PMG) has already made some improvements to the shower facilities at the prison with four recess areas refurbished on house blocks 4 and 5 in 2018-19, and a further four recesses refurbished across house blocks 1 to 4 during 2019-20. The latter four are to the Wandsworth specification, which is an improved standard that is expected to last longer and are more robust to withstand vandalism. A further two shower recesses are currently being refurbished to the same specification, which will result in a total of 12 of the 36 shower recesses having been replaced so far. Over the last two financial years PMG has also funded reactive flooring works for health and safety critical repairs to the value of £99,900 and the facility management (FM) provider, Amey, has carried out over 300 repairs during the same period to remedy issues with flooring damage which were within their remit to resolve under the FM contract. In addition, routine reactive repairs and scheduled planned maintenance inspections continue to be monitored by a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) process. These are discussed at a monthly performance meeting with the provider which is chaired by the Governor. Any KPI failures to either reactive or scheduled planned maintenance results in contractually agreed payment deduction penalties from the fixed monthly payment to the FM provider.

It is recognised that there have been issues with the ordering of privacy screens as deliveries remain unfulfilled despite regular orders. In July 2020, in partnership with the FM provider, the Clean, Rehabilitative, Enabling and Decent (CRED) has been providing a project managed programme to improve the living conditions within the prison. This is beginning on house block 3 with the refurbishment of cellular accommodation to a consistent standard and including privacy screens where these are required. Monthly decency walks of residential areas are also taking place as part of performance meetings with residential managers, and weekly decency checks are now in place to report faults in cells and any missing furniture. This includes a new cell compact with a checklist of items that should be in the cell and is conducted every time a cell move takes place.

It is acknowledged that delays were experienced with the national food waste collection service due to contractual discussions and agreement for the service specification. However, an initial pilot programme has now been completed and following discussion with the Governor at June's Estates meeting it has been agreed for the full roll out of the food waste collection service to all accommodation areas at HMP Holme House. Amey has now instructed their sub-contractor to mobilise this service.

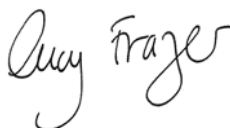
Turning to the Board's concern about local funding applications handled by the prison, quotations are sought for approved local works and these requests are usually returned from the provider within the required 28-day contractual deadline. However, more recently some project sub-contractors have experienced significant labour resource difficulties during Covid-19 which is resulting in delays in commencing and completing a number of these locally funded schemes. The funding must be accounted for with allocation to projects HMP Holme House deem necessary and essential dependent upon several factors. The segregation washer and dryer are on the project list as priorities going forward and work has been sanctioned on the healthcare waiting rooms, with the main waiting room work having already been completed.

Despite your concerns, it was encouraging to receive your comments that the atmosphere within the prison has become calmer and the environment is more pleasant and clean following recent improvements. It was reassuring to read attendance at work and education has continued to improve and the introduction of the Offender Management in Custody model and Keyworkers is providing prisoners with better support. I was pleased to note that the mental health team manager won the national Cavell Star Nursing Award and the therapeutic community and Drug Recovery Programme are continuing to support the positive work to create a whole prison approach to tackle drugs. It was also pleasing to read about the efforts to enhance the family atmosphere during visits and the positive impact this is having for both prisoners and visitors.

I note you have raised a local issue 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 Holme House.

Yours sincerely



LUCY FRAZER QC MP