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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Isis
Western Way
London
SE28 0NZ

MoJ ref: ADR 79709

6 July 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP/YOI ISIS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY 2019 - 31 DECEMBER 2019**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 December 2019. I was pleased to meet the Governor and staff when I visited HMP/YOI Isis in September 2019, and 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 fully understand the Board's concerns about mental health of prisoners. We have a responsibility to ensure those in prison receive appropriate care in the right setting and at the right time. It is acknowledged that prisoners suffering from a mental health disorder to an extent that warrants detention under the Mental Health Act should be transferred to hospital. We are determined to improve the transfer process, ensure delays are reduced and avoid prison being used inappropriately. I would like to reassure you that the Secretary of State for Justice is committed to working with the Secretary of State for Health (with health partners) to articulate a coherent picture of how healthcare is delivered throughout the criminal justice pathway. Government resources and priorities are currently being directed to the response to the Covid-19 crisis, but we remain committed to continuing bilateral discussions on this topic when it is appropriate to do so.

We are also continuing to work in close collaboration with health partners to make sure that vulnerable offenders are diverted away from custody and, where possible, from the criminal justice system altogether. This includes Health and Justice partners working together through the Community Sentence Treatment Requirement Programme, to ensure greater use is made of mental health, alcohol and drug treatment requirements as part of community sentences. In addition, revised guidance on the transfer and remission to hospital from prison, to improve the support offered to vulnerable prisoners, will be published later in the year. This will promote timely access to appropriate treatment under the Mental Health Act and should reduce unnecessary delays to treatment. This Government is also committed to legislate to reform the Mental Health Act and is working on producing a White Paper in the coming months.

Furthermore, the Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) Pathway jointly commissioned by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and NHS England and NHS Improvement, through this appropriate people are able to access specialist help via several OPD Pathway services. Through the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model, Prison Offender Managers (POMs) have access to psychologically informed advice to help manage those screened into the OPD Pathway who by definition must have complex interpersonal problems.

I note the Board's longstanding concern about prisoners' property. I understand it is unfortunate and regrettable that the new Prisoners' Property policy framework is still not published. Officials tell me the framework is informed by a project involving stakeholders across HMPPS and the escort services. The project involved visiting 14 prisons, consultation with staff and prisoners, and engagement with external stakeholders such as the IMB Secretariat and Prisons and Probation Ombudsman. Its purpose was to support the policy review and identify areas where immediate and more long-term changes may be required to improve operational practice. The project is now concluded and I understand HMPPS officials are 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 late February 2020, and, in light of the pressures placed on Boards by Covid-19, HMPPS agreed with the IMB Secretariat to push consultation with Boards back until August. The feedback received from IMB members will then be considered alongside the comments received earlier this year from other stakeholders, with the intention that the revised draft policy framework will be circulated for wider consultation at the end of 2020.

Still, I am pleased that, when the Prisoner Escort and Custody Service 4 Generation contract starts in August, a new fleet of vehicles will allow for an additional half box of consumable items to be carried for each prisoner. In addition to this, HMPPS is looking at what more can be done to encourage prisoners to send out or dispose of excess items to reduce the amount of property that cannot transfer with them. Steps are also being taken to ensure there is a consistent approach when prison staff forward on any excess items to prisoners at their new establishment after a transfer has taken place.

With regard to complaints about lost property, an escalation process has been agreed by Deputy Governors within the London region. This new process will be overseen by the group Operation Manager who will address matters with the relevant establishment.

Turning to some positives captured in your report, it was encouraging to hear that there has been a substantial reduction in drug related incidents, as well as improved facilities for families in visits and equality work across the prison. I also understand that the Prison Group Director would like to thank the Board for their continued commitment to HMP/YOI Isis.

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, particularly about the new regime plan, 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 Isis.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Frazer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LUCY FRAZER QC MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Workforce Planning

Workforce planning has been devolved to Governors who now have greater responsibility for determining the number of prison officers required to deliver services within their allocated budget. Hardworking prison officers play a crucial role in keeping prisons safe and transforming offenders' lives, and ultimately making sure the public is protected.

HMPPS recognises the need to recruit and retain staff to keep prisons secure. Since October 2016 more than 4,700 additional prison officers have been recruited and staffing levels are now at their highest since 2012. Whilst this is a great achievement for the prison estate, it is recognised this does not necessarily mean it has been a success for HMP/YOI Isis, as there is a lot more to do. The Board will be familiar with HMP/YOI Isis' location (on the same site as HMP Belmarsh). HMP Belmarsh is a more high-profile establishment and can therefore be more attractive to new recruits, and with HMP Thamesmead also located on the same site makes recruitment a lot more competitive and often quite difficult to achieve target hires. Feedback from exit interviews tell us that officers do not leave because they do not like working at HMP/YOI Isis, it is because they gain other employment. Decisions to leave are often motivated by pay and travel.

HMPPS continues to review practices and do all it can to recruit the right people with the right skills through increased advertising and market facing supplements. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Resourcing, Marketing and Attraction team continues to tailor attraction and communications to address different employment markets and seeks to attract a more diverse candidate pool.

A Resourcing Recovery Project has been set up to co-ordinate and manage the recovery of recruitment activity across HMPPS operational roles. The team is working with business areas to analyse the current and future workforce planning needs to predict the future position. With the closure of all Assessment Recruitment Centres and the impact of social-distancing on our face-to-face interviews for key frontline roles across HMPPS, a review of current selection tools is being carried out.

In addition, former prison officers and probation staff have been invited to return to the service temporarily and applications are being processed to support us through these unprecedented times. HMPPS want 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 offering additional training. These measures are part of the work that is directly being carried out with Governors to address local issues and ensure experienced staff and new recruits remain in the service.

Work to develop clear career paths and professionalise the service is being looked at 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 workers and through extra staff greater confidence in working in a safe, decent and secure environment. HMPPS will continue to recruit officers to ensure safe and decent prisons.

Regime

HMP/YOI Isis' full operational staffing complement after the OMiC uplift should enable full-time work and education for 75% of prisoners at each session (two per day, assuming sufficient education and industries staff), evening association until 7pm, full association throughout the weekend, full delivery of key work, six sessions of visits per week, official visits, religious services, health clinics, access to the gym and reception being open Monday to Thursday. This regime would also provide the prisoners with access to showers, phones and time in the open air.

Searching Prisoners on Transfer

To provide some background, searching for and removing prohibited items helps HMPPS ensure the safety of prisoners generally, but can also be fundamentally important in ensuring the well-being of the person being searched, including those who are vulnerable or have a history of self-harm for whom being left with weapons or drugs undermines their own safety.

Prison Service Instruction 2016-07 'Searching of the Person' states that on transferring to another prison and other discharges (apart from on final discharge and discharge for Release on Temporary Licence) all male prisoners must be full-searched by officers at the sending prison. The policy framework is currently under review and the conducting of searches on transfer will be reiterated within this framework.

Prisoner Transfers

HMPPS shares the Board's views about the important role open prisons play in testing and enhancing rehabilitation, particularly those who have spent many years in closed conditions. HMPPS acknowledges the importance of effective management of transfers to open prisons to ensure individuals are held in prisons that match their security category and associated level of risk to the public. As a result, in September 2019 it was announced that HMP Haverigg would change its function to an open prison in early 2020. HMP Haverigg is now able to hold up to 458 category D men. This has provided some much-needed extra capacity in the adult male open estate, including for men convicted of sexual offences.

As part of reconfiguration, HMP Woodhill re-rolled in the Autumn 2019 to a category B training prison and HMP Manchester started its transition in February 2020 to a category B training prison (both retaining a small category A function). Following these initial prison changes, this has created 1,300 plus additional category B training places.

Recognising the current operational situation within prisons, and the pressure Covid-19 presents for our key internal/external partners and stakeholder organisations, reconfiguration planning and implementation activity for the new offender flows has slowed down for prisons in Lots 2 to 5, since April 2020.

Any moves into category B from prisons like HMP/YOI Isis have to be approved by the Long Term High Security Estate (LTHSE) directorate before a transfer can take place. LTHSE manage such transfers through an internal tracker system and primarily process referrals for men sentenced to twenty years imprisonment or more to help get the right allocation needs. The Observation, Classification and Allocation Team who are located in the Offender Management Unit routinely deal with such referrals to the LTHSE. No referrals from HMP/YOI Isis have been received to date and to the best of LTHSEs knowledge have not been made aware of any delays.

Offender Assessment System (OASys) Reports

OMiC Phase 2, case management, went live on 1 October 2019. From this date offender management tasks have been completed in line with the OMiC model, as set out in Excellence and Quality in Processes (EQIP). One of the key tasks is the 'start custody OASys'. For prisoners who have less than 10 months left to serve at sentence, the Community Offender Manager (COM) will be responsible for the completion of this assessment. For prisoners who have more than 10 months left to serve and are in

scope for a full OASys assessment, the POM will be responsible for completing this assessment within 10 weeks from the sentence date.

OMiC is aligned with reconfiguration and the work to change and improve offender flows. Training and resettlement prisons are expected to complete OASys for prisoners with more than 10 months left to serve that are transferred to them.

The current practice for undertaking OASys reviews in line with significant events will continue. Resource will be allocated to POMs and COMs, to undertake OASys significant event reviews and sentence plan meetings when a significant event occurs while they are responsible for an individual's case management. A significant event or change in circumstance(s) would trigger a review of the assessment if information impacted upon the risk management and/or sentence plan.

HMP/YOI Isis reduced the OASys backlog during 2019. Previously, the backlog was static at around 200 each month, and in May 2020 was at 109.

Food Budget

The food budget allocated to public sector prisons in England and Wales is based on a cost per prisoner per day. With Governors increased responsibilities they now have the ultimate decision on how much is spent daily per prisoner. The budget allocated was changed in 2014 and equated to £2.02 per prisoner. A more realistic budget based on 1% increase per year would be £2.15. With the ongoing extension of the food supply contract, the budget is to be looked at as part of the process, however, the decision will rest with each governing governor to decide how much is allocated.

In 2018/19 and 2019/20, HMP/YOI Isis's food budget was set at £522,622 which for the population of 628 prisoners this equates to £2.28 per prisoner.