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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Kirkham  
Freckleton Road  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR4 2RN

MoJ Ref: ADR 78920

12 June 2020

Dear ██████,

**HMP KIRKHAM: 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 am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you continued to be short of Board members during the reporting year.

I note the Board's repeated concerns regarding the categorisation of prisoners and the suitability of some for category D establishments. Further to last year's response, my officials assure me that pre-transfer checks now take place at HMP Kirkham prior to receiving prisoners and additional support is being introduced for new arrivals during their first six weeks at HMP Kirkham. The Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model is due to be introduced into open prisons later this year (subject to Covid-19 disruptions), and Offender Management Unit (OMU) teams are being up-skilled to Prison Offender Managers roles where required. OMU staff have also been briefed on the maturity screening tool which will enable offender supervisors to identify risks and interventions for those who have lower levels of maturity on arrival at HMP Kirkham.

On a separate note, as referenced in your report, the Abscond Reduction Strategy was introduced at HMP Kirkham in January 2020. Absconds continue to be reviewed and investigated, and any relevant issues are drawn to the attention of the allocating prison where appropriate. As you may be aware, the Governor has also introduced a 'near-miss system' whereby the management of prisons that transfer prisoners to HMP Kirkham, who then attempt to abscond, are alerted and notified so as to enable lessons to be learned. The Strategy also takes into account learning from investigations of abscond cases. Moreover, the Governor and Senior Management Team at HMP Kirkham meet all new prisoners within two weeks of arrival, to set out the opportunities and expectations at HMP Kirkham, and the consequences of absconding. In conjunction with this, an accommodation review has been completed and there are now plans to relocate the first night/arrivals living accommodation to two units in the main prison compound to help new arrivals settle in better and to reduce the risk of absconding. Since the introduction of the Strategy, my officials advise me that there has been a successful reduction in the number of absconds in the first three months of this year. I hope it is also of some reassurance that the Strategy addresses the primary reasons for absconds identified in your report.

Although many of the issues raised in the Board's report are repeated concerns, it was encouraging to receive your comments about the impact of the new Governor, who has provided clear leadership to staff and prisoners alike and progressed the findings of the 2018 HM Inspectorate of Prisons report. I was

further encouraged to note the improved vetting and approvals process for prisoners wanting to work out in the community, an improved induction process, the 'Kirkham Council' that has become a real voice for prisoners and is now prisoner-led, and the success of the horticultural team at the Southport Flower Show winning the Gold Award in August 2019.

Other matters raised in the report for the attention HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) are addressed in the attached annex and I appreciate that many are repeated concerns. Issues of concern in your report addressed to the Governor will be responded to locally and he will continue to keep you apprised 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 Kirkham.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lucy Frazer". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

**LUCY FRAZER QC MP**

## HMP KIRKHAM: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2019 – 31 DECEMBER 2019

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Illicit Items Detection and Deterrent**

Further to last year's response, and the publication of our National Prison Drugs Strategy in April 2019, to help ensure prisons both nationally and locally maintain focus on this important issue HMPPS is currently reviewing and assessing the quality of all prison drugs strategies across the estate to provide targeted support where required and further improve their effectiveness. HMP Kirkham's drugs strategy provides good detail regarding how it will tackle supply, demand and recovery, with appropriate monitoring arrangements to ensure it meets these targets. The prison also has an impressive section dedicated to identifying emerging threats and trends at the site which provides a promising level of confidence in the prison's state of awareness.

Some of the measures taken by HMP Kirkham include increased partnership working with the police [REDACTED].

Intelligence-led searches have taken place involving dedicated search team resources and this will continue. All men returning from overnight family ties are now searched on arrival back at HMP Kirkham. The Governor is also continuing to develop a health and well-being strategy with prisoners and staff to promote a healthy and safe custodial living environment as part of the rehabilitative culture work for HMP Kirkham.

#### **Receptions Wing**

It has been established that a high proportion of the prisoners that absconded did so in the early period of their custody at HMP Kirkham, often when located in the admissions wing which is situated near the entrance of the prison.

An accommodation review has been conducted and will be used to re-visit options for relocating the living accommodation to inside the prison for new arrivals and utilising the living accommodation for other men, such as those working outside the prison. This work was paused due to the cancellation of the fire alarm replacement programme. The fire alarm replacement programme is, however, scheduled to commence shortly, and options for relocating the receptions wing will be revisited during those works subject to concluding COVID-19 related competing requirements.

#### **Fire Alarm System**

Subject to changes in the current operational climate (COVID-19/Population Capacity) the contract for the replacement fire system is scheduled to commence in July 2020. This work involves significant funding, is expected to take up to two years, and includes the replacement of the fire alarm system and other elements of fire safety too.

Until the works are completed, the Governor will employ mitigating control measures if the fire alarm system fails. The system is now tested daily, and any failures are reported with immediate effect to take mitigating action. Where failure has occurred, communications have been sent detailing any interim arrangements to be followed until repairs have been effective.

#### **Increased Drug Use**

As recognised by the Board, the Governor has taken a hard line on prisoners found to be involved in trafficking and trading illicit and prohibited items. During the reporting year, a risk-based residential unit

Mandatory Drug Test programme was introduced. Prisoners are advised regularly that continued misuse of drugs whilst in open prison conditions will lead to a return to a closed prison. Following any evidence of communal substance misuse activity, all prisoners on the billet will be spoken to by a manager and advised of consequences of unacceptable behaviour at HMP Kirkham. The Governor is looking to take further steps around additional searching and returning more prisoners to closed conditions to further combat substance misuse in the prison if it is required.

### **CCTV**

HMPPS can confirm that funding has been allocated to improve CCTV and lighting to support security related work to deter intruders, contraband throw-overs and absconds. This work is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020, subject to COVID-19 disruptions. Additional CCTV cameras have also been purchased to supplement stock levels on site to improve maintenance repair times. Internal lighting has been improved, and some additional standalone CCTV has now been installed at HMP Kirkham.

To supplement CCTV coverage, HMP Kirkham has been working closely with the police and is utilising their resources to deter breaches of security [REDACTED]. This work is ongoing with the local and regional police force.

### **Telephone Call Costs**

The call tariffs that have been set for the PIN phones provided for prisoners' use are commensurate with those that are used for fixed line telephony within private homes, with calls made at weekends attracting a lower charge than those made during the core week and calls to mobile phones attracting a much higher premium.

During these unprecedented times, and in order to accommodate the COVID-19 related removal of prisons visits, HMPPS has negotiated a temporary significant percentage decrease in the call charges associated with PIN phones to ensure that users are able to maximise the benefits associated with the £5 per week, per user, investment that HMPPS is making.

### **Overall Funding Delays**

As confirmed above, the Ministry of Justice Estates team have allocated funding for the 2020/21 financial year to undertake fire safety and CCTV improvement works at HMP Kirkham. In respect of smaller capital projects, and outside of the typical maintenance and painting regime, the Governor will continue to seek accommodation enhancements through the additional works request process, and the Service Delivery Manager will continue to support the Governor in making informed decisions on refurbishment work.

Whilst the fire alarm replacement works takes place, there are plans to paint and refurbish the living accommodation. Where repairs or replacements are identified they will be carried out on an individual basis. A number of boilers have been identified as requiring replacement, however, that cannot be completed during the current financial year.