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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Long Lartin
South Littleton
Evesham
WR11 8TZ

MoJ ref: ADR 79704

6 July 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP LONG LARTIN: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2019 – 31 JANUARY 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report ending 31 January 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 share the Board's concerns about staffing and violence levels at the prison. Workforce planning has now been devolved to Governors who have greater responsibility for determining the number of prison officers required to deliver services within their allocated budget. Since October 2016 more than 4,700 additional prison officers have been recruited and staffing levels are now at their highest since 2012. I welcome the Board's positive comments on the improvements in the numbers of new officers who have joined HMP Long Lartin but acknowledge there is still more to do.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) continues to review practices, recruit the right people with the right skills through increased advertising, and seek to attract a more diverse candidate pool. A Resourcing Recovery Project has been set up to co-ordinate and manage recruitment activity across operational roles and to analyse the current and future workforce planning needs to predict the future position. In addition, former prison officers and probation staff have been invited to return to the service temporarily to provide support through these unprecedented times. We want prison officers to stay in the service and progress their career; as such induction processes have been improved to ease transition into the job, provide care and support to staff, and offer additional training. Work to develop clear career paths and professionalise the service is being considered which should provide development and promotion opportunities for experienced staff.

Turning to the causes of rising violence in prisons, I acknowledge that the loss of frontline and experienced staff is a critical factor and impacts a prison's ability to run consistent regimes. Additionally, the dramatic increase in psychoactive substances in prisons since 2013 has been a significant factor. As well as recruiting extra staff, HMPPS are addressing this by giving staff the tools and training to help them reduce violence. Likewise, a Safety Diagnostic Tool (SDT) rolled out across the prison estate last year, enables staff to view detailed information on safety issues from establishment level to individual level. The SDT is being used alongside the Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan for managing those who pose a raised risk of being violent. Emerging findings from evaluating key work so far suggest it is improving staff and prisoner perceptions about how safe they feel in prison.

Locally, the Governor has reported that since your report assaults on staff and prisoners and acts of self-harm have reduced, particularly during the second half of the year. As mentioned last year, Band 2 Operational Support Grades have been reprofiled with 18 posts now converted into 12 Band 3 prison officer positions. The Band 3 prison officer target staffing figure has risen from 240 to 276 placing HMP Long Lartin in a better position than 12 months ago. Still, due to Covid-19 restrictions, Prison Officer Entry Level Training (POELT) training had, until recently, been paused.

I thank the Board for reporting on the high number of prisoners held in segregation units for very long periods of time. Work continues at Executive Director, Prison Group Director and Governor level to facilitate reductions in segregation capacity/pressures. Staff at HMP Long Lartin have over the past six months visited a number of segregation units across the estate to share best practice and identify individuals who may be suitable to return to normal conditions. Work with high secure hospitals has led to strengthened relationships and improved outcomes for prisoners at HMP Long Lartin both in terms of admission to hospital and a coordinated approach to remissions to custody.

However, as I am sure the Board will understand, admission to hospital is largely dependent upon provision within health settings. We are determined to improve the transfer process, ensure delays are reduced and avoid prison being used inappropriately. 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 Covid-19, but we remain committed to continuing bilateral discussions on this topic when it is appropriate to do so.

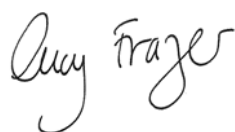
We are also continuing to work in close collaboration with health partners to make sure that vulnerable offenders are diverted away from custody and, where possible, from the criminal justice system altogether. This includes Health and Justice partners working together through the Community Sentence 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.

Lastly, I am sorry to hear your concerns regarding in cell sanitation and facilities management. An update is included in the attached annex, along with HMPPS comments in response to issues raised in your report marked for their attention. I note you have raised some other local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues.

Turning to some positives captured in your report, it was encouraging to hear your comment on the continuing success of the Perrie Blue wing enabling environment and praise given to staff throughout your report.

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 Long Lartin.

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

Cell Sanitation

The Nightsan system will be replaced and subject to contracts being awarded, the work will commence in 2021/2022. Survey work for the project is already under way with initial work anticipated to begin on site early 2021. The previous bid to demolish the units and build new ones was declined as it will not be possible to deliver for a number of years due to other competing priorities (the new prisons project and additional places programme). The drainage infrastructure at HMP Long Lartin does not currently have capability or capacity to add additional ablution areas on wings A-D.

Facilities Management

Although Amey have previously had a high number of vacant posts at HMP Long Lartin and this led to them being unable deliver the full range of contracted work, there are now emerging signs of improvement in this area. HMPPS Prison Maintenance Group (PMG) are collaboratively working with Amey to ensure this continues and performance is sustained. Amey have appointed an experienced Site Manager in post for approximately two months and has already begun to address the previous issues such as backlogs / resourcing and is forming good working relationships with all stakeholders.

A new Supervisor started in June and a new Electrician is currently awaiting security clearance. Amey is also interviewing for a Plumber and a Multi Tradesman thus leaving two vacancies to be filled and prioritised.

Whilst this is a positive overview for the medium to long term, the Service Delivery Manager has initiated steps with support from the Regional Estates Manager and HMPPS PMG Commercial team to address short-term issues on site through a contractual escalation process. The outcome of these steps is to initiate Defect Correction processes whereby if the contractor is unable to resolve specified issues within a defined timescale, PMG will deliver the work itself and charge for incurred costs. Ground maintenance works will be undertaken as part of this process. This process will continue to be utilised to establish any further defect corrections to ensure reactive repairs are carried out and statutory and mandatory maintenance is completed within appropriate timescales.

Healthcare Staff Security Vetting

All individuals who work within HMPPS including healthcare staff, must pass an Enhanced Level clearance as a very minimum requirement and delays are not currently being faced at this stage of the process. There are certain roles that require additional National Security Vetting levels (NSV), such as Counter Terrorism Checks (CTC), and these are necessary for the Long Term and High Security Estate (LTHSE).

To provide some further clarity regarding the process of gaining clearance, Shared Services Centre Limited (SSCL) the provider undertakes HMPPS Enhanced Level checks and administers the NSV check (with the check itself undertaken by a third party United Kingdom Security Vetting-UKSV, who are the sole Government agency supplying the check).

NSV is a process that has no defined timescales and, although expectations are set that it typically takes approximately two months, applications can often take some significant time to complete. HMPPS cannot influence these checks to be done expeditiously. Furthermore, in light of Covid-19, UKSV have been operating at a reduced capacity and some delays may have been caused as a result. It is also no longer possible to undertake applicants' identity verification face-to-face. Skype/Zoom or similar video

conferencing are being considered to correspond with applicants and so that their physical identity can be verified.

Whilst admittedly frustrating, these checks are a necessary part of the process in ensuring the safety of the applicant, other staff and individuals in HMPPS care.

Prison Workshops and Activities

Activities

Managers made good use of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) budget, a peripatetic tutor role was introduced in July 2019 so that prisoners in the segregation unit, Healthcare and PIPE unit were able to access education. Evening Art classes were introduced in August 2019 providing further off wing activity and in March 2020 Wayout TV and Way2Learn educational channels were purchased through DPS, which will provide a range of learning and well-being activities for prisoners to complete in cell to help alleviate boredom.

Due to budgetary confinements the Information, Advice and Guidance position has not yet been filled through the DPS. However, prisoners still receive advice and guidance on progressing skills in custody, although at present this is somewhat limited.

Workshops

Workshop closures to manage stability, safety and security are often beyond the Governor's control. An underlying factor is the power supply into the prison not running at full capacity, which limits the type of workshops that can be provided as some require electrical machinery, for example Wood Mill and Textile workshops.

Prior to Covid-19 HMP Long Lartin were looking at alternatives to replace workshops five and nine as these are regarded as mundane workshops. A visit to HMP Frankland took place early March to view the upholstery workshop and if there was any potential for this at HMP Long Lartin. Due to the nature of the prison population and the additional security restrictions, this again presents challenges and limits opportunities.

Conversations have begun with Public Sector Prison Industries (PSPI) around an idea of having a waste management workshop. New Futures Network (NFN) colleagues are in regular contact with staff at HMP Long Lartin and are working with them to help utilise the existing workshop facilities and to explore and develop new opportunities for future work. This activity has been paused temporarily whilst prisons operate restricted regimes due to Covid-19. NFN national leads are also looking to establish a co-ordinated approach to attracting and enabling current and future work opportunities within prisons, including those in the LTHSE.

Updates to workshops (WS) are noted below:-

- WS4: Camo Netting – PSPI have assured orders for the next three years.
- WS7: Prison Information and Communication Technology Academy – is soon to become a Content Development Centre.
- WS8: Wood Work – the supply of in cell furniture stored at Branston outweighed demand. HMP Long Lartin have started to look at alternatives to make.
- WS10: Laundry Work – the idea of obtaining more laundry work has been discussed. However, there are number of prison laundries across the prison estate in a similar position and rules to be adhered to when seeking outside work. The Activities team will continue exploring other possible sources.