



██████████
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Doncaster
Off North Bridge Road
Marshgate,
Doncaster
DN5 8UX

MoJ Ref: ADR 78583

3 June 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP/YOI DONCASTER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 OCTOBER 2018 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 September 2019. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations. I was sorry to hear about the problems the Board has experienced as a result of being very short of members during the reporting year. My team have forwarded your concerns to the IMB Secretariat who will respond to you directly.

I fully understand your concerns about suitable accommodation on release. This Government recognises the challenge of securing accommodation for prisoners leaving custody and agrees it is vital that everyone leaving prison has somewhere safe and secure to live. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is working collaboratively with other government departments and interested parties to this end. Through the Rough Sleeping Strategy launched in August 2018, the Government has invested up to £6.4 million in a pilot in November 2018 to provide improved accommodation support for prisoners on release through a new partnership approach between prisons, probation providers and Local Authorities (LA) to plan, secure and sustain accommodation for prisoners on their release. Lessons from the pilots will be used to inform the future provision of accommodation for prisoners on release from custody. To note, under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, prison and probation providers have a Duty to Refer those individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness on release to the LA to provide support and a plan to avoid homelessness. HMPPS is committed to ensuring that this duty is carried out to meet this statutory responsibility.

I hope to provide the Board with some reassurance that an additional £22 million per annum has been invested in to the remaining life of the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) contracts to deliver an enhanced Through the Gate (TTG) resettlement service to those leaving prison to prepare them for release. However, at the present time resources and work priorities are currently being directed to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To manage this, we have put in place an Exceptional Delivery Model (EDM) for CRC services to cope with high levels of staff absences and adhere to the social distancing guidance. CRCs are currently operating under an approved EDM which focuses first on managing the risk posed to the public by our most complex and dangerous offenders.

Locally, the Director of HMP/YOI Doncaster has provided assurance that staff work closely with TTG service colleagues to support and provide timely accommodation interventions to lessen the chance of prisoners being discharged without arranged accommodation. I am pleased that unpublished figures from

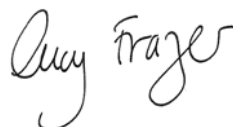
the HMPPS Performance Hub show that in September 2019, the last month covered by your report, the prison met the target of 79% of prisoners in accommodation on the first night of their release. In 2018 /19 the prison averaged around 70% in terms of achieving positive outcomes. Delivery is monitored and challenged with partners monthly to ensure more prisoners receive the support they need.

I was pleased to read that the Board has observed a commitment to improvement at HMP/YOI Doncaster and to hear your view that the strong leadership of the Director and his Senior Management Team has had positive outcomes in key areas. It was encouraging to receive your comments that prisoners are treated with decency and that staff are making efforts to maintain and improve the safety of the prisoners in their care. Key workers are also proving beneficial and the good quality work done by prisoners through printing and gardening is also recognised.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Director will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. 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/YOI Doncaster.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lucy Frazer".

LUCY FRAZER QC MP

HMP & YOI DONCASTER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 OCTOBER 2018 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Transferring Prisoners

It is not always the case that prisoners can be transferred out of HMP & YOI Doncaster in a timely manner as there is often complex and wide ranging issues involved in the allocation and transfer of prisoners. HMPPS is committed to ensuring that prisoners are located as close as possible to their resettlement communities and families. Closeness to home is one of the key factors considered when choosing where to place prisoners, particularly for those with short sentences or nearing release, where they need to rebuild family ties, secure housing and health services and look for employment. Prisoners are prioritised for release from a resettlement prison (which can be both a closed and open prison) allocated to their home CRC or probation area for release. In line with this, if a prisoner needs to resettle in a specific area HMPPS will ensure, as much as possible, that they are allocated to a prison in that area at the appropriate point in their sentence. However, due to a variety of factors, mainly wider population pressures, or where specific sentence planning needs can only be met at certain establishments, this is not always possible.

We are already delivering additional prison places through the new prisons at Wellingborough and Glen Parva, which brings the total additional places to 13,500. Building work progresses at pace for the new prison at Wellingborough, which is on schedule to open at the end of 2021. A new house block of 206 places opened in June 2019 at HMP Stocken.

Staffing

The monitoring of staffing levels at HMP & YOI Doncaster will be reviewed. The senior management team roles were recently reconfigured which included introducing a Head of People and Engagement role. The key role of this position will be to ensure the prison is doing all it can to support and care for staff, especially those who are new to the prison. In addition to this, the custodial offender managers have been assigned roles according to their level of experience and skill set. A similar exercise will be carried out for all prison custodial officers, which should improve staff activity and engagement.

Self-Harm

The general expectation is that staff working in prisons will learn from acts of self-harm, and will take on board the recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman reports following any death in custody. Detailed early learning and 'lessons learned' reports have been produced locally from 2019 and 2020 deaths in custody. Response times to cell call alarms are captured daily and reviewed weekly through robust governance processes. Any failures are addressed with staff members.

Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork

HMP & YOI Doncaster produced a comprehensive Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) Action Plan published in July 2019 to ensure ACCT processes within the prison are operated consistently to the standards required. This remains an active document and is subject to regular review. The Director will share this with the Board for information purposes.