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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Hindley
Gibson Street
Bickershaw
Hindley
WN2 5TH

MoJ ref: ADR81064

3 September 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP/YOI HINDLEY: 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 very short of Board members. I was pleased to read of the successful advertisement campaign to recruit a more diverse pool of Board members.

In response to the Board's question about considering a better coordinated approach to improve the release of prisoners from custody into the community, I would like to reassure the Board that it remains a priority for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to ensure that offenders find somewhere safe and secure to live on their release from prison. My officials are working across Government to access those levers to this that are not directly within their control.

As part of the Rough Sleeping Strategy published by the Government in 2018, the MoJ and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, have invested approximately £6.4 million in a pilot scheme operating since August 2019 to help ex-offenders secure suitable accommodation from three prisons, namely HMPs Pentonville, Bristol and Leeds. The pilot focused on male prisoners sentenced to 36 months or less and identified as having a risk of homelessness. Just over 300 prisoners enrolled onto the pilot, which concluded in July 2020. Subject to evaluation, lessons learned from the pilot will be used to inform future provision of accommodation for offenders.

In addition, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has recently published its operational national Accommodation Framework that sets out the agency's responsibilities, its partners' responsibilities (including local authorities) and provides a framework for how to build on success and working together with partners to ensure that offenders can access and maintain settled accommodation.

In light of Covid-19 pandemic, the MoJ secured funding to support the provision of accommodation for individuals released from prison at risk of homelessness during this unprecedented period. A probation review is also underway, which will inform future improvements to resettlement support, public protection and oversight throughout the sentence. The MoJ will utilise the learning gathered from the homelessness pilot scheme to help develop longer-term improvements.

Furthermore, under a full staffing complement, the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model aims to increase the support that prisoners receive whilst in custody, to reduce harm, re-offending and increase safety. For the majority of long-term National Probation Service cases, the prison offender manager

(POM) will be responsible for working with a prisoner during the core custodial period (which replaces the previous model –offender supervisor in the prison and an offender manager in the community).

Whilst a community offender manager (COM) does not work with the prisoner throughout the custodial sentence, resource has been built into the OMiC model so that prison and community OMs can liaise effectively and have dedicated time to perform tasks. As part of the handover process the COM will be expected to build a working relationship with the prisoner and custodial staff, complete any necessary referrals such as parole assessments. COM's also have access to EQUIP (Excellence and Quality in Processes) system, which provides clear process guidance and timescales for completion of tasks. I note that the Through the Gate team have been integrated into the Offender Management unit function at HMP/YOI Hindley, which has greatly improved communication.

Regionally, a number of areas have been identified for development across Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire Prison Group, although the work on objective delivery has been paused as a result of Covid-19. This work includes reviewing the prisoner's journey across all the prisons, with a specific need for a stability cohort at HMP/YOI Hindley that addresses the high turnover of prisoners and reoccurring loss of peer support roles.

Locally, the prison has revised its drug strategy and over the course of next year will be looking at ways of increasing access to peer mentors. By using people's lived experience of drug addiction to support a prisoner's drug recovery journey and considering setting up an incentivised Substance Free Living unit. As noted by the Board, HMP/YOI Hindley's activity spaces is an area of concern, work will continue throughout 2020/21 to make progress which will include a new workshop, creating a new Functional Skills lead and a gym cohort to maximise functional skills spaces and also developing links to additional education provision.

Turning to some positives captured in your report, it was encouraging to hear feedback on the new Resettlement Hub and some outstanding work by individual mental health and learning disabilities staff to secure appropriate therapeutic placements for some very complex prisoners. I am pleased to note prisoners are gaining employment on release through companies such as Osco Homes, and the Hindley Hairport facility provides recognised training opportunities and qualifications in barbering.

It was also encouraging to see that HMP/YOI Hindley has improved work on Diversity and Inclusion by ensuring prison-wide responsibility, the new centralised induction procedure includes an equalities form and the prison now has a designated induction wing for Category C prisoners.

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 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 Hindley.

Yours sincerely



LUCY FRAZER QC MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

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Violence Levels

At the end of December 2019 assaults across the prison estate fell for the third consecutive quarter. However, HMPPS must continue its work to reduce this further. To tackle the illicit economy which fuels prison violence, £100 million is being invested to bolster prison security, clamp down on weapons, drugs and mobile phones.

HMPPS has slowly introduced PAVA, a synthetic pepper spray, to the adult male estate to help protect staff and prisoners from incidents where there is serious violence, or an imminent / perceived risk of serious violence. Staff will receive specialist training before being allowed to carry the spray. As well as this, prison officers are being supplied with body worn cameras and rigid-bar handcuffs to help them carry out their job more safely. However, the full roll out of these tools are subject to delay due to Covid-19.

Incentives Scheme

A review of the incentives scheme was paused at HMP/YOI Hindley due to Covid-19. However, once re-established there will be an increased focus on encouraging and recognising positive behaviours by offering additional/innovative incentives for those men who abstain from violence. Although still in its infancy, the early indications from the men (prior to Covid-19 restrictions) was that it was having a positive impact on addressing poor behaviour.

Keyword

Although a small amount of keyword has been taking place with the most vulnerable/complex men, once Covid-19 restrictions ease this will allow better access to keyworkers and staff and prisoners will begin to rebuild better relationships. Evidence has shown where keyword delivery is established to good levels within prisons there are noticeable positives in terms of self-harm and violence levels.

Self-Isolators

The number of self-isolators at HMP/YOI Hindley varied across the reporting year. The safety team regularly conduct interviews with this cohort and explore reasons for self-isolating, some of whom have a repeated history of isolating. Staff make a conscious effort to ensure they have access to the regime and regular contact with wing staff, keyworkers and the safety team. However, as observed by the Board, some prisoners have remained in isolation. These individuals are supported throughout their custodial sentence. A questionnaire has been developed by the safety team to establish suitable work methods for isolators and to address emerging trends. This interview questionnaire will be implemented when restrictions to the regime are lifted and the prison moves towards a steady recovery phase post Covid-19.