



██████████
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Wakefield
5 Love Lane
Wakefield, West Yorkshire
WF2 9AG

MoJ Ref: SUB 86519

29 March 2021

Dear ██████,

**HMP WAKEFIELD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MAY 2019 – 30 APRIL 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 April 2020. 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 was saddened to hear there were a further eight deaths in custody; every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I am aware that your board member, ██████████ wrote to my predecessor in February regarding the impact of the pandemic for those in custody and the welfare of staff and Board members at HMP Wakefield. The Chief Operating Officer, Michelle Jarman-Howe responded on 9 March and I hope this provides reassurance of our commitment to individuals in our care as well as staff and Independent Monitoring Board members.

I acknowledge that the Board remains concerned about prisoners with severe mental health/behavioural disorders and the transfer time to an appropriate setting, and thank the Board for their continued work to support these prisoners. I am sorry if you feel your concerns are not being heard and can assure you Ministers do take your concerns very seriously. A white paper titled, Reforming the Mental Health Act, was published on 13 January 2021, which builds on recommendations made by Professor Sir Simon Wessely's Independent Review in 2018. The white paper provides a commitment to take forward the Review's recommendation to introduce a statutory time limit of 28 days for transfers to mental health hospitals when someone becomes unwell in custody, or experiences a relapse in an existing condition.

Although this issue currently remains a national problem, with continued delays in expediting transfers, particularly to high security hospitals, I am pleased the position has improved during 2020/21 in the Yorkshire and the Humber prisons. This improvement and reduction in delays has been achieved by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) through a more rigorous approach to monitoring and escalating delays and robustly addressing other barriers, such as disagreements of security requirements. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and NHSE&I continue to work together, along with providers of secure mental health to expedite transfers wherever possible and to ensure patients are remitted back to prison as soon as possible after they complete treatment. Further guidance has also been issued to ensure arrangements are not impacted adversely by Covid-19.

One of the major achievements of the Long Term and High Security Estate (LTHSE) is the Pathways to Progression (PTP) initiative. It was mentioned in the response to last year's annual report and *has* helped

to make hospital remissions more progressive and meaningful for men who are returned to prison from hospital, thereby improving the chances of a successful return to custody and reducing the likelihood of relapse and readmission. Considerable work has been undertaken with specialist NHS commissioners and hospital settings to align working practices, processes and pathways for men serving a custodial sentence who need a health setting. The PTP team also have very good working relationships with high security hospitals and some medium secure units to expedite urgent cases and streamline pathways between hospital and the LTHSE prisons, making admission timescales more efficient.

I acknowledge the difficult and dedicated work of those staff working with prisoners with mental ill health. To prepare and provide support for staff working in segregation units a two-week initial training package is run by the LTHSE which includes personality disorders, mental illness, trauma and staff wellbeing. Additionally, at HMP Wakefield supervision and training is provided by psychology services to segregation and close supervision centre operational staff working with prisoners with severe mental ill health, including access to a dedicated forensic psychology resource. This includes a bespoke training package on personality disorders and psychopathy and close working with staff to support their understanding of the complex needs of the men in the unit, as well as advice and guidance regarding their care and management. Psychologists also contribute to multi-disciplinary decisions about the day to day management of the unit and the men residing there.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that the Board generally considers HMP Wakefield to be a calm environment, despite its challenging prisoner mix and changing population profile and that the Board receives good quality information and administrative resources to undertake their duties. I am pleased that progress continues to be made with prisoner access to Assessment and Intervention Centre (AIC) programmes and also that two members of the education team were recognised in the 2019 Milton Keynes College awards for 'Alternative Learning System (ALS) Practitioner of the Year' and 'Partner of the Year'.

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 Wakefield.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Chalk'.

ALEX CHALK MP

HMP WAKEFIELD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MAY 2019 – 30 APRIL 2020

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners held on Prison Rule 45

The complex needs of some prisoners do continue to present a challenge and prolonged segregation of prisoners with severe mental ill health or personality disorder remains a serious concern. In Yorkshire and Humber improvements to how this cohort is managed and cared for includes robust implementation and monitoring of shared (healthcare and prison) care management strategies and commissioner oversight and intervention where segregation is prolonged.

Prisoners are only held within segregation units for long periods when absolutely necessary and one of the aims of the PTP initiative is to limit transfers between segregation units for operational emergencies and moves which are considered progressive and meaningful for the person concerned. All prisoners who meet the eligibility criteria for the Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) pathway are 'screened into' the pathway so that their Offender Manager can access psychological consultancy to help both understand the needs of the individual, and help plan what services may be needed. In the LTHSE there are several OPD pathways depending on the need identified ranging between: preparing the person to access treatment, treatment services themselves, and support services -Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPE) after treatment. Interventions are also available which focus on securing custodial stability so that the person can access mainstream interventions.

Close Supervision Centre Operating Manual

An updated copy of the CSC operating manual will be emailed to you shortly.

Working conditions for staff

There is no doubt that hard-working prison officers play a crucial role in keeping prisons safe and transforming offenders' lives, ultimately making sure the public is protected. This work is very much appreciated, and we recognise the need to retain motivated staff in a safe, decent and secure environment. As stated in the letter of 9 March from Michelle Jarman-Howe, Chief Operating Officer Prisons (COO), the safety and welling of staff during the Covid-19 pandemic is paramount.

Although financial constraints as a result of Covid-19 have prevented any improvement to staff facilities during the past year, HMP Wakefield have prioritised staff care team availability and ensured a care team member is available during the week, with any themes or issues fed back to the Deputy Governor. As a gesture of appreciation early in the pandemic, free Barista coffee was provided to staff, and the senior management team also cooked breakfast for the staff on two days. In addition, a series of events were held in November/December as part of staff wellbeing weeks.

With HMP Wakefield being of Victorian design, retrospective improvements to the ventilation are not straightforward, but where particular issues are identified, Prison Maintenance Group (PMG) will work to explore solutions and routes to address any identified work to improve the surroundings.

The rate of pay for prison officers is reviewed and determined annually through the independent Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) process. That pay remains competitive with comparable labour markets is a key consideration in terms of formulating both the government proposals to the PSPRB and the eventual recommendations of the Review Body. Starting pay for newly recruited Prison Officers at

HMP Wakefield is now (effective 1 April 2020) £24,118 for a 39-hour week, including 17% unsocial hours. This can rise over time, to £26,818.

New property framework

Following a pause in the development of the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework project, due to Covid-19, a meeting with IMB representatives took place in August 2020. The feedback received from those members was considered alongside the comments which we received from other stakeholders, and comments from subsequent operational engagement. We have shared the draft framework with some key stakeholders, including the IMB representatives we previously consulted, and this will be followed by wider consultation shortly.