



██████████
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Hewell
Hewell Lane
Redditch
Worcestershire
B97 6QS

MoJ Ref: SUB85410

24 February 2021

Dear ██████████,

**HMP HEWELL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 OCTOBER 2019 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 September 2020. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as I note it has been another difficult year for the Board in terms of membership. I was saddened to hear there were five deaths in custody; every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I note the Board's continued concerns about prisoners serving indeterminate sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) and acknowledge there is more to do. Whilst the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act abolished the IPP sentence in December 2012; abolition was not applied retrospectively. This was due to Government's decision, at the time, who were of the view that it would not be right or appropriate to retrospectively alter sentences that had been lawfully imposed prior to their abolition. More so in IPP cases because such sentences were imposed with risk management issues in mind. Furthermore, these prisoners cannot be simply mass released as many of them are still assessed as posing a high risk of committing further violent or sexual offences and have a complex set of risks and needs. As I am sure the Board will appreciate, this must be addressed before the Parole Board can consider release and conclude that the risk to the public is capable of being safely managed in the community under supervision of the Probation Service.

I hope to reassure the Board that HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is committed to doing all it can to support prisoners' progression and efforts to reduce their risk. The latest published figures at the end of December 2020 show the unreleased IPP population standing at 1,849, which is itself a reduction from 1,969 at the end of June 2020. HMPPS and the Parole Board continues to regularly review the joint IPP Action Plan, which essentially aims to deliver the support IPP prisoners need in order to demonstrate that they can be safely released. Through this Action Plan, HMPPS are prioritising post-tariff prisoners in accessing rehabilitative interventions, delivering Psychology Services-led reviews, and operating enhanced case management for those prisoners with a complex set of risks and needs. Likewise, Progression Regimes dedicated to support those struggling to achieve release via the usual routes.

I acknowledge that the Board remains concerned about prisoners with severe mental health/behavioural disorders and the transfer time to an appropriate setting. A Reforming the Mental Health Act white paper was published on 13 January 2021, which builds on recommendations made by Professor Sir Simon Wessely's Independent Review in 2018. The white paper committed 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. Regionally, a multiagency approach has been adopted across the Midlands region with Health and Justice Commissioners, prison healthcare providers, secure unit providers and case managers getting together on a fortnightly basis to discuss patients and escalating cases where there are concerns or delays.

As HMP Hewell's Inpatient unit is temporarily, rather than permanently, closed; a pilot 'Inpatient project' is underway to determine whether an alternative model of delivery can deliver the same, if not better, patient outcomes. This entails exploring alternative ways of delivering primary care and mental health services without the use of an inpatient facility by adopting an outreach (wing based) approach.

Alongside the alternative delivery models, a HMPPS Step-Up-Step-Down model has also been developed which will enhance and work alongside the wing-based model. The Well-Being unit (House Block 4) and the Oak unit (formerly the Inpatients unit) will be used for this model and aims to provide a prison wide strategy in supporting prisoners in an appropriate environment struggling with poor mental health and behavioural challenges (including learning disability and substance misuse). The model also aims to provide custodial staff with the skills and knowledge to assist men appropriately and supportively. The Oak unit, including the Well-Being unit, will provide a therapeutic environment for HMP Hewell's most complex men who cannot manage on normal location (lessening the time located on the Segregation unit) with a more bespoke, tailored service to enable stability. Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, group work and therapeutic activities have not yet begun, and this model remains under development at this point in time.

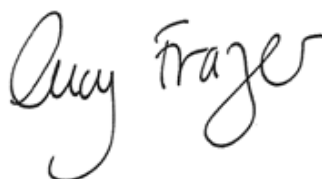
HMP Hewell has also been selected to run as pilot site for a new prison healthcare / secure care 'Reach In, Reach Out' project which is anticipated to commence shortly and will run for a minimum of 12 months. The overall aims are to provide proactive acute support and interventions in a prison setting for those assessed or accepted for a secure unit place and to provide a patient pathway coordinated function. In terms of outcomes, it is hoped this will demonstrate earlier initiation of support and treatment that may either de-escalate an acute episode of mental ill health or shorten the length of time a secure bed is required. Furthermore, improved confidence in the management of acute mental ill health, strengthening staff working relationships and understanding and timely admission / remission to hospital.

Turning to some positive points captured in your report, it was encouraging to receive your comments about the marked improvement in staff morale during the Covid-19 lockdown that coincided with changes in Governor. Likewise, I was pleased to hear that HMP Hewell's response to the virus was managed well and the prison continued to make improvements to cleanliness. I am grateful to the Board for maintaining links with the team at HMP Hewell during a difficult and unprecedented time.

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 Hewell.

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

HMP HEWELL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 OCTOBER 2019 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Local Prisons

HMPPS is reconfiguring the adult male estate into three clear functions Reception, Training and Resettlement, supported by new offender flows. A 2023 vision of the adult male prison estate has been modelled to support the realignment of the estate and ensure the supply of the right type of places to better meet future need. This 2023 vision identifies HMP Hewell as having a 50/50 split of reception and resettlement men. This vision will be achieved slowly overtime, through the new offender flows implemented on 28 September 2020 and as HMPPS recovers from the impact of Covid-19.

The Reconfiguration project monitors population changes the latest information identifies 84% of the population at HMP Hewell is correct as of December 2020 (50/50 cohort split). This has been consistent across the second half of 2020. However, there will always be a small percentage of prisoners who appear in the wrong place due to them awaiting transfer.

All reception prisons have a resettlement function, the primary objective of which is preparing men for release and resettlement into the community through building, maintaining or improving family and community ties and providing access to local community services. The reception cohort comprises men who are: on remand, convicted un-sentenced, fixed term recalls, non-criminal, who have 28 days or less time left to serve at the point of transfer, or newly sentenced awaiting onward allocation (within first 14 calendar days of sentence) and immigration detainees prisoners. HMP Hewell's resettlement cohort holds Category C men who have more than 28 days but equal to or less than 16 months' left to serve.

HMP Hewell resettles men into the following Contract Package Areas (CPA):

- Staffordshire and West Midlands
- West Mercia and Warwickshire

As the Board are aware, the primary function of a reception prison is to serve the courts and to categorise, allocate and transfer men onward to appropriate prisons to meet their needs. To support this function Reconfiguration extended on the original provision of six Prison to Court Video Link rooms by creating a new Video Conferencing Centre comprising of 16 video rooms, which opened on 11 January 2020. In addition, four official visits rooms have had video conferencing equipment installed. These rooms are primarily aimed at ensuring that offenders can maintain access to official visits with Criminal Justice System professionals as part of case progression and so that parole hearings can be held remotely. However, this is not explicitly intended to facilitate additional court sitting hours.

Access and accommodation for those with physical disabilities

Outlined below are some of the key elements being considered for the existing estate: -

- Improvements on design that will better accommodate prisoners including bedrooms suitable for those with reduced mobility, level access across the prison site and provision of lifts in all buildings to ensure areas accessible.
- Four disabled-access cells per houseblock and three low-mobility cells per floor so that prisoners unable to use stairs are not bound to the ground floor and can integrate easily with other prisoners. This includes purpose-designed accessible enlarged bedrooms, with dedicated shower rooms with space for carers assistance.

- The new house-block design will include spaces suitable for regime activities that meet the needs of prisoners with disabilities.
- The finishes will include colour and signage based on health guidance relating to dementia to aid wayfinding and orientation and for those with reduced cognition or visual impairments.
- The design of standard rooms allows for adaptation to accommodate ambulant mobility issues such as arthritis if required. This requires installing additional grab points in locations such as in toilets and shower areas. The design performance specification has allowed for a wall construction that has the necessary strength to support such grab bars.
- Adjustable furniture in bedrooms and kitchenette areas to accommodate wheelchair use.
- Surface finishes will provide visual contrast to aid wayfinding / identifying objects for those with visual impairments.
- The acoustic specification of internal surfaces will be considered to enable audible information to be clearly heard by those with hearing difficulties.

Locally, HMP Hewell has held constructive disability forums and actions developed. A 'You said, We did' document has been supplied to all attendees to update them on progress. HMP Hewell envisages locating wheelchair users on House Block 6 as there is a lift to enable through access to regime activities, including exercise and other areas of the establishment. The Listeners suite is wider enough to fit a hospital size bed and as reported by the Board was used for one particular prisoner. Unfortunately, the door to the suite is not wide enough for a standard size wheelchair. In acknowledgement of this, six slim-line wheelchairs will be purchased. The stair lift linking the ground floor and first floors was repaired last year. However, following the closure of the Inpatients unit the lift out is out of operation but will be back in use once the new unit opens.

Education Provision

From April 2019, prison Governors took control of their education budget, determined the curriculum on offer, how it is structured / organised, and selected the education provider. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, a formal Lot wide improvement notice process began due to the performance of Novus. The Notice to Improve for Lot 15 was formally communicated in May 2020, with the provider producing an improvement action plan. Monthly and quarterly education performance meetings have continued to take place alongside Improvement Notice meetings, with scrutiny of performance and the use of central data management systems to inform discussions. Providers are held to account against contractual service levels, with any performance below the required level challenged and contractual levers applied.

HMP Hewell has an establishment specific action plan in place, which is reviewed both locally and regionally. Weekly meetings are held with the provider to discuss progress and action points are scrutinised in detail. In addition, monthly meetings are chaired by the Prison Group Director with attendance from the Contract Management team and Commercial, where there are further reviews of progress against the action plan.

Since Covid-19 restrictions, HMPPS has worked closely with all Prison Education Framework (PEF) and Dynamic Purchasing System providers to support prisons. This has allowed for some learning to continue via the provision of in cell activity and learning packs. To further maintain education delivery, all PEF providers have submitted revised curriculum plans, in consultation with each prison establishment to ensure delivery of services during this difficult time. As restrictions ease, the National Contract team will support establishments to ensure learners still receive support where possible. HMP Hewell has been granted permission for Novus staff to have access to the wings and work is underway for this to begin, which will see an increase in engagement and support provided. Some exams have been scheduled that staff will invigilate, providing the men with an opportunity to reach identified goals despite the current restrictions in place.

The Education manager is keen to ensure that the team produces more effective outcomes from the in-cell engagement they are doing during Covid-19 and once recovery allows, to increase activities to include face – face engagement.

Work with Novus is also underway to increase the focus on engagement during the newly introduced 14 day induction period to ensure that individual needs are effectively identified and a clear and sequenced plan for every individual is produced prior to allocation to appropriate activity. The prisoner will be at the centre of this process, and provision will be informed by an up to date needs analysis to ensure suitable opportunities are made available in order to meet the needs of the population.

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) Report

There was a delay in both the PPO investigation into the death on 14 June 2018 and scheduling the inquest hearing due to the investigation conducted by the police. The inquest is now going ahead, and the PPO's investigation will be concluded afterwards.

Equalities

Progress around equality has been achieved since September 2020 through a strategic oversight of equality work and a Head of Equalities appointed. Alongside this, HMP Hewell has launched the Equalities, Diversity, Inclusion Charter which demonstrates its approach and commitment in creating community cohesion, ensuring everyone feels respected and valued.

A series of 'Let's Talk' staff events were recently held these included discussions on Race Engagement, How to become an Ally and Respectful Conversations, which have created better understanding and awareness. An Equalities calendar has been developed which includes key dates and events for all protected characteristics (PC).

To support PC leads in their role, a job description setting out the purpose along with meeting terms of reference (ToR) has been provided to each lead. The ToR sets out the required meeting frequency and details what should be covered during the meetings they conduct. PC meetings are attended by staff and prisoner representatives and the Head of Equalities present at least 20% of the time. Clear actions points are drawn up and minutes are shared at the now monthly Equalities meeting. This meeting continues to be developed and reviewed to ensure any form of discrimination is addressed and changes made to ensure there is a trend focus approach and effective monitoring of needs. An IMB representative gave some positive feedback at the meeting held in December 2020, which is promising.