



██████████
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Usk and HMP/YOI Prescoed
47 Maryport Street
Usk
Monmouthshire
NP15 1XP

MoJ Ref: SUB 83004

9 November 2020

Dear ████████,

**HMP USK and HMP/YOI PRESCOED: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 March 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. I understand this has been an extremely difficult period with sadly the loss of a young prison officer to Covid-19. I appreciate the hard work and professionalism of everyone at the prison whilst having to come to terms with the loss of a colleague and friend.

I am pleased to hear that the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model is working well at HMP Usk but acknowledge the Board's concern about the postponement of the model at HMP/YOI Prescoed. The OMiC Project Board has recently agreed for HMP/YOI Prescoed to act as an early adopter prison and will run a dual model, this will entail Welsh prisoners being case managed under OMiC procedures until the model goes live in March 2021. HMP/YOI Prescoed has completed key implementation steps and are therefore in a position to provide valuable feedback on lessons learned, which will assist in the implementation of the model to the rest of the Open Estate. However, these plans will be subject to a further potential pause, should the current Covid-19 infection outbreak situation worsen.

HMP/YOI Prescoed is unique in that it accommodates both adult sex offenders and non-sex offending adults/young adults. To provide some background on the issue of men convicted of sexual offences who are granted Category D status but have to reside at HMP Usk for up to approximately three months before they are moved to HMP/YOI Prescoed, this is not a local policy decision. Following an enquiry into the abscond of two sex offenders in July 2006, a Ministerial Directive was issued requiring all sex offenders to spend a period of time in HMP Usk before being moved to HMP/YOI Prescoed. The purpose of this is to provide the necessary risk assessment and minimisation planning prior to progression into HMP/YOI Prescoed. The assessment process has previously identified prisoners that are not suitable for progression into HMP/YOI Prescoed in which case the matter is either referred to the Parole Board for further consideration, or alternative arrangements are made for the prisoner to be transferred to another open prison or recategorised. There are no imminent plans to overturn this Directive, however, the Executive Director of HMPPS Wales and the Public Protection Group intends to carry out a review of this in due course.

I note that there were no local issues of concern raised in your report for the Governor's attention. HMPPS comments in response to the two issues raised for their attention are set out in the attached annex.

Turning to some positives captured in your report, it was encouraging to hear that both prisons provide a humane environment, with low levels of violence and bullying, and most prisoners reported that they felt safe. It was also reassuring to hear that a very high percentage of prisoners rated staff as being excellent/good in the 2018/19 Learner Pulse Survey. Your comments on the art exhibition held for older prisoners at HMP Usk and the promotion of meaningful events such as the Black History Month are noted and welcomed.

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 Usk and HMP/YOI Prescoed.

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 USK AND HMP/YOI PRESKOED: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020**

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Transfer of Prisoner Records

All prisoners transferred to HMP/YOI Preskoed are accompanied by paper records containing their personal information. HMPPS Central team is working at making certain elements of a prisoner's record electronic. It is very rare that there will be significant missing records and where any issues arise, staff liaise directly with the sending establishment to resolve any issues.

Refurbishment of Lester Unit

A bid is submitted each financial year for an upgrade/renovation to the Lester Unit to ensure it is maintained to a satisfactory standard and fit for purpose. The corridor areas on the unit were decorated at the beginning of 2020 and the sanitisation facilities, including installation of privacy shower screens and changing areas will be completed by the end of this financial year.

An Estates Investment Proposal to replace the unit was submitted to the Ministry of Justice Estates in August 2018 but unfortunately this was declined. Upgrade/renovation works to the unit will continue where funding allows and, until such a time a strategy to replace the unit is approved.