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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Lancaster Farms
Stone Row Head
Off Quernmore Road
Lancaster
LA1 3QZ

MoJ Ref: SUB 83564

27 November 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP LANCASTER FARMS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2019 – 31 JANUARY 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 January 2020. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as I note three Board members resigned during the reporting year. I also note sadly there were two deaths in custody; every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prison and Probation Ombudsman seriously.

I share the Board's concerns about the increasing number of self-harm incidents. We know that mental health can be a risk factor for self-harm. We are determined to address the high levels of self-harm seen across the prison estate and are taking a number of steps in order to do this. I hope to reassure the Board that NHS England and NHS Improvement, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the health provider at HMP Lancaster Farms are working in partnership to specifically address issues relating to high levels of self-harm amongst a small cohort of prisoners held at HMP Lancaster Farms. As the Board is aware, these men present a high level of complexity and challenge, some of which are being addressed by the mental health team and some requiring a more prison-wide approach.

A focussed task and finish group has been set up to consider potential innovations and practices to support staff in caring for these individuals, based on a wider North Region approach to improve the safety of men and women in custody. All action planning at the prison is based on robust data which identifies the specific challenges involved with the individuals concerned. A number of potential projects are planned which involve all aspects of service delivery, including trauma-informed approaches and enhanced staff support and development.

Staff are also being trained in key areas such as mental health. Over 25,000 new and existing prison staff (including those who work for other bodies) have now completed at least one module of the suicide and self-harm prevention training which consists of six modules. To encourage better mental wellbeing, HMPPS has produced a Wellbeing Plan (a prisoner-owned self-help tool) with input from mental health charity, Mind, and prisoner focus groups. The tool can be used by prisoners to manage triggers, help with coping mechanism strategies, as well as taking actions to help improve mood and tips on looking after themselves during difficult times. This tool also encourages meaningful ideas such as in-cell activities and exercises on mindfulness. Additionally, having an effective Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) case management allows prison staff to work with people at risk, understand underlying causes of their self-harm behaviour and put in place actions so that long-term, positive changes can be made. This includes where prisoners may be facing difficulties managing their mental health. As part of HMPPS work to reduce self-harm, the agency made changes to the ACCT process, however, full roll out has been

paused due to Covid-19 but will reconvene in due course. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, HMPPS acted quickly to ensure that prisoners could maintain family contact despite the exceptional circumstances, as it is recognised that family contact provides a crucial lifeline for prisoners.

I note the Board's concerns about the shortage of trained Listeners at HMP Lancaster Farms and little or no access to the Samaritans during the evenings and at night. HMPPS is committed to its partnership with the Samaritans and during the pandemic has worked hard to maintain the Listener scheme and provide additional access to telephones to enable prisoners to contact the Samaritans phone service. Locally, there are currently six active Listeners and there is a waiting list of applications to be assessed for suitability. The Samaritans are providing distance refresher training to the Listeners. The prison Safety Officer role provides additional support to the Listeners by checking in with them each week during these unprecedented times.

I acknowledge the Board's comments on the monitoring of resettlement. HMP Lancaster Farms resettlement partners report to the Reducing Reoffending forum on a monthly and quarterly basis. The Governor welcomes the Board's attendance at this forum. Your Board will also be able to find data on accommodation and employment circumstances for offenders on the first night of release from custody and six weeks post-release for the period up to March 2020 at www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-performance-quarterly-update-to-march-2020. This will move to an annual cycle, with the next edition reporting full-year outcomes for 2020/21 in July 2021. Employment and accommodation metrics became official prison performance metrics from October 2019.

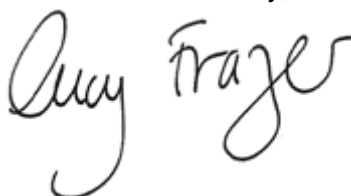
Additionally, HMPPS has implemented an enhanced Through the Gate (TTG) service for prisoners to aid the provision of resettlement. An additional £22 million per annum has been invested into resettlement prisons for the remainder of the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) contracts to ensure this service is delivered and it provides specific, tailored interventions to help prisoners resettle successfully in the community. It is vital for the CRCs to work in partnership with local agencies, in and out of the prison, to achieve this.

Turning to some positive comments captured in your report, it was encouraging to hear again that the Board considers HMP Lancaster Farms to be a well-managed prison and prisoners are treated fairly and humanely. Like the Board, I welcome the Employment Hub, 'The Insider' newsletter, generated by prisoners in the library and the Learning Together project. I am pleased the Board has recognised the success of the wing cleanliness initiative, accreditation as a City and Guilds centre and the good practice observed at segregation reviews.

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 Lancaster Farms.

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 LANCASTER FARMS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2019 – 31 JANUARY 2020

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Segregation Transfers

As the Board has identified, HMP Lancaster Farms made some positive developments in the second half of the reporting year concerning segregation issues. These include reducing the occupancy within the Care and Separation Unit and the continued rollout of the Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan.

Segregation should not be seen by prisoners as a gateway to gaining a transfer to another establishment. Except for routine allocations, those prisoners moving from segregation to other establishments should be the exception rather than the norm. The aim must be to return the prisoner to their normal wing or unit and wing staff work with segregation staff to achieve this.

Whilst being held in segregation it may become necessary to arrange the transfer of a prisoner to another establishment. A prisoner may be transferred out of segregation to another establishment for several reasons, such as, presenting a danger to another prisoner or to staff. Transfers may be arranged and executed between the two establishments concerned. Prison Service Order 1700 – *Segregation*, details the arrangements needed to authorise a transfer of a prisoner from segregation. Category A prisoners, life sentence prisoners and young persons may only be transferred upon the authority of the relevant Headquarters group. In the rare event of a segregation to segregation move this must be authorised by the Governing Governor or Director in a contracted prison. A Pre-Transfer of Information Form must be completed by the sending establishment in all cases of prisoners being transferred from a Segregation Unit.

If it does become necessary to move a prisoner from segregation to another establishment the aim must be to manage the prisoner on normal location in the receiving establishment. If in exceptional circumstances the behaviour of a prisoner means that attempting to manage him/her on normal location following transfer would present greater risk to safety and order, the decision to place in segregation must be taken by the Duty Governor/Duty Director with a case review taking place within 24 hours.

Where there is a clear need and requirement for a transfer of a prisoner who has been held in segregation this is facilitated at HMP Lancaster Farms. However, the Governor is mindful that this does not encourage a culture where inappropriate behaviour secures an automatic transfer to another establishment.

In terms of the policy, at this present time HMPPS will not be carrying out a comprehensive review of the processes.

Prisoners' Property

It is disappointing that the new Prisoners' Property policy framework has not been published. The project involving 14 prisons has been concluded and HMPPS is working closely with stakeholders to consult on proposed changes to the policy. However, in light of the pressures placed on Boards by Covid-19, HMPPS agreed with the IMB Secretariat to push consultation with Boards back until August 2020. The feedback received from those members will be considered alongside the comments received earlier this year from other stakeholders, and comments from the operational engagement which is now taking place. There has been a slight delay in HMPPS being able to circulate a revised draft policy framework because of the need to ensure sufficient operational engagement. We anticipate the draft framework will be circulated for wider consultation at the beginning of 2021.

Locally, where available HMP Lancaster Farms deploys a driver to collect property situated at other establishments.

Double Occupancy Cells

The position set out in the response to the Board in January 2020 has not changed. Under the plans for the prison estate, additional capacity will be provided through the purpose built new prisons and the creation of house-blocks to manage the projected population increase and transform the estate. Due to the population pressures across the prison estate it has not been possible to decommission double cells at HMP Lancaster Farms. A new cell toilet screening product has been purchased and the fitting has commenced.

Work / Employment Placements

Following implementation of the new Annual Delivery Plan (ADP), HMP Lancaster Farms is now able to provide activity places to all eligible prisoners. The ADP provides work places which embrace a diverse range of opportunities including industries work places, education and vocational training workshops, kitchen, orderlies, blue bands, mentors, cleaners, induction, gymnasium, rail track, dry lining, substance misuse and offending behaviour programmes. Enrichment is embedded within industries work and includes continuous professional development.

Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL)

The position set out in January 2020 response to the remains the same. Whether prisons provide ROTL is a local decision based on the Governor's assessment of whether they can do so safely and securely. HMP Lancaster Farms will continue to use the current policy and suitable prisoners will be encouraged to make applications for ROTL where suitable. Where an application for ROTL is refused it will automatically be reviewed by the Deputy Governor.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Provision

ICT provision is available within all NOVUS learning areas which includes classrooms and vocational training workshops. An ICT refresh is planned to improve access to all areas which are already equipped. The Employment Hub continues to be developed and will include ICT provision to enable online job searching, benefit applications and scope for virtual interviews to be completed.

The Virtual Campus has been live across the prison estate since 2008. It can be used by learners to tap into e-learning materials such as:

- A CV builder
- Online courses
- A digital individual learning plan
- Rehabilitation resources
- Pre-approved websites to aid learning

As well as learning aids, people in prison can search and apply for live jobs within their relocation area at the appropriate time in their sentence.

The development of HMPPS Virtual Campus (VC2) is a secure portal that provides a rehabilitation and virtual learning environment for prisoners, HMPPS staff and other partner organisations both within prison and TTG. It aims to mirror the learning opportunities available within mainstream education, providing access to a wide range of software and websites dedicated to digital learning.

Career Coach is available that allows access to VC2, and enables people in prison to take careers assessments, recommending employment based on the qualifications and skills that they hold or are aspiring to achieve. These benefits can be accessed regardless of which prison a learner is transferred to, and when they leave custody, their work will be accessible through a Virtual Campus Community Access portal.

A Virtual Campus is available to all at HMP Lancaster Farms, and installation work has already commenced for VC2.

