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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Leyhill  
Wotton-under-Edge  
Gloucestershire  
GL12 8BT

MoJ Ref: ADR 80133

11 August 2020

Dear ██████,

**HMP LEYHILL: 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.

I understand the Board's concerns about the delays in starting the ablutions refurbishment project on the residential units. Due to the volume of capital bids across the prison estate and changes in operational, financial and commercial factors, this has occasionally meant that funding for a specific project has been delayed and prioritised elsewhere. In this instance at HMP Leyhill, funding had to be withdrawn late in 2019 after the Board received the response to last year's report. However, I am pleased to advise the Board that the contract for the work has now been signed, a pre-start meeting has already taken place and contractors are expected to be on site to begin the work in the coming weeks.

I also recognise the Board's continued concerns about those that remain in prison serving indeterminate sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) remains committed to doing all it can to support the progression of IPP prisoners to help them reduce their risk to the point that the independent Parole Board determines that they may be safely released. The range of work to improve the management and progression of those serving IPP sentences has been underway for some time and is regularly reviewed; it continues to be delivered via the joint IPP Action Plan, developed in partnership with the Parole Board. This includes prioritising post-tariff prisoners to access rehabilitative interventions, including Psychology Service led reviews and enhanced case management for those prisoners with a complex set of risks and needs. Progression Regimes have also been developed at four prisons, HMPs Warren Hill, Buckley Hall, Humber and Erlestoke, which are dedicated to supporting indeterminate prisoners who are struggling to achieve release via the usual routes.

Across the custodial estate, the population of prisoners serving IPP sentences was at its peak in 2012 and numbered over 6,000. The latest published figures show the unreleased IPP population stood at 1,969 at the end of June 2020, which is itself a reduction from 2,134 at the end of December 2019 - demonstrating the improvement in opportunities available to IPP prisoners to progress in their sentence and an increasing number of releases in recent years. However, it is important to note that, as the unreleased IPP population continues to decrease, there is a growing proportion of the most complex and challenging cases remaining in the prison population. Many of these prisoners are still assessed as posing a high risk of committing further violent or sexual offences, and have a complex set of risks and

needs. These must be addressed before the Parole Board can consider their release and HMPPS will continue to work with these individuals to offer them the opportunities to reduce their identified risks.

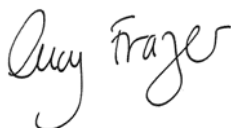
Turning to the Board's concern about the availability of Approved Premises, we remain committed to the expansion of the Approved Premises estate through the delivery of an additional 200 bed placements. Of these, 47 additional bed placements were due to be delivered by the end of the 2019/20 financial year, however, because of the impact of Covid-19 and additional building works required, only 35 have been delivered so far. The remaining 12 are due to be completed by the end of July 2020. These additional spaces will support the increasing number of offenders being referred into both the male and female Approved Premises estate who pose a significant risk of harm to the public. On a similar note, it is encouraging that, since HMP Leyhill's local review of Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) processes last year, opportunities have increased and complaints from prisoners have reduced.

Despite your concerns, it was reassuring to receive your comments that HMP Leyhill continues to be a prison with many strengths and has progressed further this year in emphasising a community approach. I was pleased to read that overall prisoners are treated fairly, humanely and are well prepared for release, with opportunities to work towards their resettlement at the earliest possible stage. The willingness of staff to join prisoners in leisure activities and the increase in creative arts and external motivational speakers was particularly encouraging. I was also pleased to note the improvements made for those with disabilities (such as the ramped access to Ash Unit), to hear that a focus group has been introduced to monitor race matters, and to hear that the visiting facilities are considered an outstanding feature to support prisoners to maintain family ties.

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 Leyhill.

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**

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**HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report**

**Night Staffing**

Fortunately, incidents during the night at HMP Leyhill are very rare, however, as previously indicated staffing numbers are kept under constant review based on risk. In addition, HMP Leyhill is currently being considered for a possible expansion and, should this be the case, a full review of all staffing, including night cover will be undertaken.

**Prisoners' Property**

It is unfortunate and regrettable that prisoners' property continues to be an issue. The development of the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework is being informed by a project which was undertaken in summer 2019, involving stakeholders across HMPPS and the escort services. The project involved visiting 14 prisons, consultation with staff and prisoners, and engagement with external stakeholders such as the Independent Monitoring Board Secretariat and Prisons and Probation Ombudsman. Its purpose was to support the policy review and identify areas where immediate and more long-term changes may be required to improve operational practice. Following the conclusion of the project, HMPPS has worked closely with stakeholders to consult on proposed changes to the policy. Discussions ahead of consultation with IMB members began with the IMB Secretariat in late February 2020, who proposed meetings take place with Board members in April. In light of the pressures placed on Boards by Covid-19, HMPPS agreed with the IMB Secretariat to pause this consultation. This work is now moving forward again and the IMB Secretariat have proposed that the meetings now take place between August and September 2020. The feedback received from IMB members at these meetings will then be considered alongside the comments received earlier this year from other stakeholders, with the intention that the revised draft policy framework will be circulated for wider consultation at the end of 2020.

The Prisoner Escort and Custody Service (PECS) take steps to transport all property which falls within the agreed volumetric limits with prisoners when they transfer between establishments. A new fleet of vehicles are being provided through the PECS 4 Generation contract which starts in August 2020. These new vehicles will be able to transfer an additional half box of consumable items for each prisoner e.g. products purchased in the prison shop. In addition to this, HMPPS is considering what more can be done to encourage prisoners to send out or dispose of excess items to reduce the amount of their property that cannot transfer with them. Steps are also being taken to ensure a consistent approach when prisons forward on any excess items to prisoners at their new establishments after transfers have taken place.