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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMYOI Werrington  
Ash Bank Road  
Werrington  
Stoke-On-Trent,  
Staffordshire  
ST9 0DX

MoJ Ref: SUB 084125

23 December 2020

Dear ██████,

**HMYOI WERRINGTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 AUGUST 2019 – 31 AUGUST 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 August 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 during the reporting year.

I acknowledge your comments about converting old, inadequate buildings into secure schools. I would like to reassure the Board that the Government is committed to trialling secure schools. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is working closely with Oasis Charitable Trust, the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to open in 2022 the first secure school in Medway Kent, Oasis Restore.

The Government is also committed to establishing smaller, therapeutic and more locally rooted youth establishments, that have higher staff to child ratios and are built and resourced to meet the needs of this complex and challenging cohort. I know that HMPPS is committed to making steps towards this ambition whilst also addressing the medium-term operational pressures. As I am sure the Board will appreciate, the scale and pace of this work is however dependent on the public spending amount allocated by HM Treasury.

Investment has also been made through education reform, this includes an improved gym facility at the establishment and addition to this, a gym activity pitch in the sports field. The Ministry of Justice is working towards a programme of work to deliver digital services; this will provide laptops for children to use in rooms to support their learning and they will have access to Virtual Campus 2 (VC2). VC2 is the latest version of the secure portal which provides a rehabilitation and virtual learning environment and aims to mirror the learning opportunities available within mainstream education. HMYOI Werrington is on the roll out list to receive this technology along with other establishments within the Youth Custody Service (YCS). Furthermore, HMYOI Werrington has introduced a new barbering workshop and a new bicycle workshop will be opened by the end of the financial year.

I would also like to address the Board's concern about the delays in transferring 18-year olds to the young adult estate. There can be delays arising from concerns around managing security plans for certain individuals.

The YCS is working directly with HMYOI Werrington to assist in transitioning young people to an appropriate prison when they turn eighteen. The Placements Team within the YCS has oversight of transition planning. This team works with all sites to enable the process to begin from the age of 17 years and six months, and to take place within one month of them turning 18. It is for sites locally to identify suitable future locations and where any difficulties are encountered with a transfer, HMYOI Werrington will make use of the Placements Team escalation process via the Prison Group Director for the YCS.

Work is ongoing in terms of clarifying, improving and streamlining transition arrangements, and this is supported by a newly formed transitions working group. Separate work is taking place to create a new transitions policy framework for transitioning 18-year olds from the Children and Young People Secure Estate, which will replace the current guidance document. The new framework will help formalise the current process and aid safe and timely transfers.

Turning to some positive comments captured in your report, it was encouraging to hear that the young people at HMYOI Werrington are treated fairly and humanely, and I am grateful to the Board for commending the leadership of the Governor. I was also encouraged by the positive developments around Equality and Diversity work and the overall handling of the pandemic in terms of engaging with the children through activity work and enabling family contact, which I consider were vital. I welcome the implementation of Secure Stairs, the new violence reduction strategy and the Restart dog training project. Your comments about the care provided to new arrivals, the physical improvement adjustments made to HMYOI Werrington and daily meetings held to discuss self-isolators, were pleasing to note.

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. I am sorry to hear of the problems experienced by the Board not being able to attract diverse members. I hope in the future you will be able to resolve this matter with the IMB Secretariat.

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 HMYOI Werrington.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lucy Frazer".

**LUCY FRAZER QC MP**