



██████████
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Dartmoor
Princetown
Yelverton,
Devon
PL20 6RR

MoJ Ref: SUB 084279

23 December 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP DARTMOOR: 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 you were short of Board members. I was saddened to hear there were three deaths in custody including one that took place in hospital. Every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

It is disappointing that uncertainties around HMP Dartmoor's closure have impacted significantly on the prison, particularly around morale. I would like to reassure the Board that the process for prison closures has been developed over the last ten years during which 20 establishments have been successfully closed. Continuity and support are provided by the Custodial Capacity project sponsors, experienced senior operational managers and from the local management team in delivering the closure project. Lessons learned events on prison closures are held to capture any additional learning, and this is incorporated into the ongoing development of the Project Sponsor team. HMP Dartmoor's closure was announced in 2013 and it remains HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) plan to close the prison in 2023. HMPPS continues to engage with the Duchy of Cornwall about HMP Dartmoor's future.

In terms of staff and prisoner wellbeing, the Governor has provided assurance that staff are encouraged to make use of the gymnasium during their break and are supported by a proactive Staff Care and Welfare team. Staff feel assured that they can openly discuss any personal issues with managers in confidence and they are supportive to their needs. NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I), and HMP Dartmoor's Healthcare team are involved in leading activity to address some issues particularly around how prisoners have been impacted by Covid-19 and evolving mental health needs.

I note the Board's ongoing concern about the delays in transferring prisoners with severe mental ill health out of HMP Dartmoor to a secure hospital. I would like to reassure you that we are determined to improve the secure hospital transfer process, to ensure delays are reduced and avoid prisons being used inappropriately. The Secretary of State (SoS) for Justice is committed to working with the SoS for Health and Social Care (and with health partners) to articulate a coherent picture of how healthcare is delivered throughout the criminal justice pathway.

We are also continuing to work in close collaboration with health partners to make sure that, where appropriate, vulnerable offenders are diverted away from custody and, where possible, from the criminal justice system altogether. This includes Health and Justice partners working together through the Community Sentence Treatment Requirement Programme, who ensure greater use is made of mental health, alcohol and drug treatment requirements as part of community sentences. The Government is also committed to reforming the Mental Health Act (MHA) and we are working closely with the Department for Health and Social Care to respond to the recommendations of the independent review, chaired by Professor Sir Simon Wessely, which includes recommendations about improving the secure transfer process. A White Paper will be published in the coming months.

Additionally, NHSE&I will continue to monitor the time taken from referral to transfer and provide support where needed, for example, ensuring there is effective liaison with specialised commissioning. New performance metrics are being developed by NHSE&I via a strategic reporting tool to monitor those being assessed under the MHA and tracking assessment and transfer waiting periods. This will further support regional Commissioners to identify exceptional cases within prisons and act where necessary.

The Prison Transfer and Remission Guidance 2011 has now been refreshed and is awaiting publication, as the planned date for publication was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The amended guidance should help in this area. Alongside this work, the new mental health service specifications have been published for low and medium-secure hospitals. The NHS led Provider Collaboratives service for adult medium and low secure care gives local ownership to providers for the whole pathway. This includes the interface with the criminal justice system, and resources for their own populations, enabling them to make commissioning decisions to improve and integrate services. In terms of high secure care, a strategic commissioning plan will be developed by April 2021. This will describe the clinical model, pathways and capacity required for implementation during 2021/22.

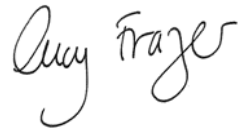
Locally, at HMP Dartmoor the number of transfers to mental health inpatient facilities remains low. Staff at the prison will always try to use the Care and Separation Unit (CSU) as the last resort in accommodating those who are assessed as requiring enhanced supervision. As identified by the Board, CSU staff always provide a level of professionalism and care towards the prisoners held in the unit. The recommissioning of healthcare services has commenced for HMP Dartmoor and the new contract will start in April 2022 until the prison closes. Mental health provision, and associated evidence-based pathway development is to feature heavily.

Turning to some positives captured in your report, it was encouraging to receive your comments that HMP Dartmoor is generally a safe prison and staff work hard to ensure prisoners are treated fairly and humanely. I note the efforts being made to address drugs entering through the prison. Your comments about the Purple Visits (video), faith and pastoral care and the healthy eating project were pleasing to note. Likewise, I was also pleased to hear about the good work of the Safety and Intervention team in supporting the most vulnerable prisoners, a debt advisory committee established to manage the welfare of prisoners and, the steps being taken to develop equality and diversity.

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 Dartmoor.

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

Annex

HMP DARTMOOR: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 OCTOBER 2019 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2020 HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Lack of Investment

All certified accommodation is single cell occupancy and well furnished. Substantial funding has been made over the past years to tank/ waterproof cells effected from damp. Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL) have looked at various options to minimise water ingress including repointing external walls which has proven reasonably successful.

Since August 2020 a 'cells out of use' monitoring document has been implemented nationally to enable HMPPS Prison Maintenance Group (PMG) staff to closely monitor and ensure repairs are completed in a timely manner. As outlined in the response to the Board in May 2020, regular managerial checks are undertaken to ensure decency levels are maintained consistently across the site. Prison staff work closely with GFSL and undertake regular tripartite meetings to discuss any issues, projects and concerns.

In terms of development, the Ministry of Justice Estates Directorate are funding the replacement of the main gate roof, C Wing's roof and adjoining corridor, which should help minimise the significant ingress of water coming through during bad weather. The cleaning of drain gullies across the establishment has commenced in earnest to facilitate the removal of surface water which again should reduce the risk of flooding.

The two main laundry boilers have recently been serviced and are in working order. New washer driers have also been fitted in several areas. Clean clothing and bedding are well provisioned and wing laundries, although small, are maintained to a decent standard. Well established contingency plans are in place to manage mechanical breakdowns i.e. help from other establishments. The Governor is hopeful that in the near future some upgrades to the laundry machinery and other services in this area may take place (subject to sufficient funding).

In addition to this, HMPPS PMG has funded work identified from a laundry survey completed by the National Laundry Manager and the Regional Estates Manager for the Kent area. The work from the survey findings is anticipated to be delivered by March 2021, which should improve service reliability. However, it is possible that Covid-19 disruptions may impact on this and other planned work.

Substance Misuse

A revised drug strategy has been produced and quality assured by the national Drug Strategy Team (DST). Noted actions developed from this strategy have been about improving staff learning on searching, display of staff and visitor notices and re-introduction of drug strategy meetings with wider involvement from other functions across the prison. The regional drug lead has been in regular contact with the national DST and has requested a visit in 2021 from their Diagnostic Team. The DST hopes to facilitate the visit once Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted.

HMP Dartmoor's Security team and the Police Intelligence team will continue to work closely together to disseminate intelligence strands and plan effective drug interventions. The Governor will notify the Board of any new security developments that may occur over the next reporting period.

Resettlement Services

As mentioned in the response to the Board in May 2020, an additional £22 million per annum has been invested over the remaining life of the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) contracts to enhance the Through the Gate (TTG) service. Since this response, the National Probation Service has improved commissioning rates and set minimum levels of funding for their commissioning of TTG services from CRCs for those people leaving non-resettlement prisons.

If any delay is identified in assessing a prisoner's resettlement needs prior to release, a robust system is now in place to remind Community Offender Managers to commission such services. Some adjustments have been made to processes whilst staff observe the current Exceptional Delivery Model for TTG services, to take into account reduced access to prisons, prisoner contact and revised safe systems of work during this pandemic.

As the Board is already aware, by 2023 reconfiguration will increase the number of training and resettlement places in the adult male estate. The combination of reconfiguration and new prisons will create much needed category B and C training places and ensure there are sufficient resettlement places to enable the vast majority of prisoners, including men convicted of sexual offences (MCOSO), to be released from a resettlement prison, closer to home. It is recognised that moving prisoners into the resettlement estate will give them a greater opportunity to rebuild or reinforce their relationships with friends and family prior to release.

Although the flows support the movement of all men, regardless of type of offence, the way MCOSOs move through the system is largely dependent on new resettlement capacity coming on line, beginning with the opening of HMP Five Wells in 2022, the Category C adult resettlement prison in Wellingborough.

The impact of the pandemic continues to be a challenge to the movement of prisoners around the estate. In particular, this has impacted on moves between training and resettlement prisons, as there is a building operational pressure within reception prisons to maintain enough space to service the courts. HMPPS hopes as the situation with the pandemic eases over the coming year, prisoner transfers and progression to resettlement prisons will improve.