



██████████  
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP/YOI Sudbury  
Ashbourne  
Derbyshire  
DE6 5HW

MoJ Ref: SUB 084302

23 December 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP/YOI SADBURY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 JUNE 2019 – 31 MAY 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 May 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 was saddened to hear there were two deaths in custody; every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I note the Board's request for a more robust policy on early release under licence given the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Guided by public health advice, we took swift and decisive action to implement a suite of measures to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. These measures were designed with the aim of maximising the safety of prisoners, staff and the public, whilst also maintaining the most important prison functions. In March 2020 we started to implement our compartmentalisation strategy across the estate to isolate the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals. In order to create the headroom needed to allow us to fully implement the strategy, we undertook a number of measures including the careful release of low-risk offenders under the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme. The scheme is currently suspended but remains available if we need it.

We also introduced a scheme to allow certain vulnerable offenders to be released on temporary licence to protect their health. They include pregnant women and those with babies, plus those defined by NHS guidelines as 'extremely vulnerable' to Covid-19, for example, those with specific cancers or serious respiratory conditions such as cystic fibrosis. This scheme remains in operation.

Turning to the Board's request for the permanent provision of more single-occupancy cells, in response to the pandemic, we have expanded the prison estate by introducing single-occupancy cells to 29 public prisons and two private prisons. We are working with Governors and Prison Group Directors to support the ongoing use of the units over the winter months while Covid-19 remains prevalent in the community. We are also exploring with prisons the possibility of including the units within the current operational capacity until more permanent prison places are opened.

Our new prisons being built at Wellingborough (named HMP Five Wells), Glen Parva and our four new prisons will include smaller houseblocks than previous new prison builds. Each houseblock will accommodate 60 prisoners each and cells will mainly be single occupancy (90%) which will help us deal with any future coronavirus like outbreaks. These will include a shower, digital technology and bar-less windows to give prisoners the ability and opportunity to take more responsibility for personal care. A number of cells in the prisons will be for designed double occupancy. There are benefits to some prisoners sharing cells for the positive impact it has on mental health and stress levels, in addition to many prisoners preferring to share a cell.

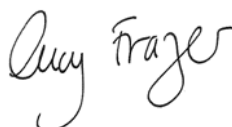
As acknowledged in the Board's report, HMP/YOI Sudbury has 80 cabins that have provided significantly more single room accommodation than previously. These units are likely to be on site for some time as they are being used as part of a permanent expansion programme that will see the demolition of a 40 bed unit and the construction of two 60 bed units. This programme is likely to last at least 18 months and a decision will then be made as to whether the cabins should remain or be reallocated.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that HMP/YOI Sudbury provides a safe environment for prisoners and that the Board has witnessed good collaborative working between staff. I was pleased to hear about the improvements that have been made throughout the prison, including the refit and redecoration of the dormitory kitchens and the provision of toasters and microwaves enabling prisoners to prepare hot food; I know this development will be greatly welcomed by the prisoners at HMP/YOI Sudbury.

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. HM Prison and Probation Service 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/YOI Sudbury.

Yours sincerely

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

**LUCY FRAZER QC MP**

## Annex

### HMP/YOI SUDBURY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2019 – 31 MAY 2020

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

##### **Probation Services**

Our priority is to manage transition to the new model in a way that protects continuity of service and minimises the change for staff and users wherever we can. We are minimising transition risk in two clear ways. Firstly, by seeking to transfer as much of the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) operations to the National Probation Service (NPS). At the point when CRC responsibilities are handed to the NPS in June 2021, many aspects of the way in which NPS and CRC staff do their jobs currently will stay the same. This will allow us to take on the CRC services and responsibilities intact at the point of handover and integrate over a longer period once the transfer of responsibilities is safely achieved, and services are in our control. This will ensure there is less pressure on day one of the new model.

Secondly, we are sequencing transition activity wherever possible in the months running-up to the contract-end date. Core activity such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT) migration will be phased to avoid a single 'big-bang' weekend. We have identified where CRCs use bespoke ICT systems for their work, to ensure that staff can still do their jobs as closely to the way they do today as possible, while using NPS systems.

With regard to resettlement, we will be retaining the good practice brought by CRCs to help service users return to the community. The majority of Through the Gate staff will transfer to the NPS to improve sentence management work. We will also be strengthening pre-release work over time by increasing the number of community probation practitioners involved in this work, including more contact with the service user prior to release.

We are committed to successful transition in June 2021, despite the additional pressures brought about by Covid-19.