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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Wormwood Scrubs
Du Cane Road
London
W12 0AE

MoJ ref: SUB 085054

10 February 2021

Dear ██████████,

**HMP/YOI WORMWOOD SCRUBS: 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, particularly as you continued to be short of Board members during the reporting year and the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on your level of monitoring.

I understand the Board's concern about cancelled hospital appointments. It is recognised that prisoners often have complex health and care needs and generally experience poorer physical health than the general population. To improve health outcomes and tackle the root causes of offending, it is essential we take a whole system approach to health and social care provision for people in the criminal justice system. The Secretary of State for Justice is committed to working with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and health partners to articulate a coherent picture of how healthcare is delivered throughout the criminal justice pathway.

Communication and the relationship between HMP/YOI Wormwood Scrubs and the healthcare management teams have improved considerably. Local Health Delivery Board meetings analyse performance measures. This includes the attendance rate at external appointments and a breakdown of the reasons appointments have been cancelled such as cancellation by the prison, the hospital rescheduling or the prisoner declining. There are an agreed number of hospital escorts per week in order to meet the needs of the prison's population and this is kept under review by healthcare commissioners. The prison has also shown flexibility in facilitating additional escorts for prisoners with acute needs and long-term treatment plans. Hospital escorts have also been given greater priority since the revision of the prison's regime management plan. The healthcare administrators work closely with hospitals to ensure prisoners who miss appointments are not pushed to the back of the waiting list. A lead GP has been appointed who is liaising with the prison to better understand and prioritise crucial hospital appointments. These are now reviewed on a weekly basis with a clinical decision made of who needs to attend hospital the following week, as well as any urgent patients needing to be sent directly to A&E by ambulance following assessment. All patients who refuse hospital appointments are re-booked in line with the relevant hospital trust's policy and are spoken to by the healthcare team about the clinical risks of non-attendance.

Turning to the Board's request to mandate the use of Body Worn Video Cameras (BWVC), the current policy Prison Service Instruction 04/2017 - National Security Framework: Security Management - Body Worn Video Cameras is being reviewed. The review includes whether to mandate the wearing of BWVCs and is being considered as part of a larger piece of work to invest in the next generation of BWVCs, which will increase the availability, increase how they are used and improve the technology. A new policy Framework is anticipated for later in 2021. HMP/YOI Wormwood Scrubs continues to strive towards increasing the number of BWVCs being drawn by operational staff. The location to draw and return BWVCs has been moved to make these more accessible to staff and the number of BWVCs being drawn is monitored to ensure progress is maintained. A communications campaign has also been used around their usage, with signs displayed in prominent areas, as well as Notices to Staff issued and wing managers providing reminders to staff at daily briefings.

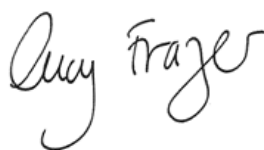
I also recognise the Board's request that funding continues to be available to enhance safety. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is continuing to provide all staff with the tools and training they need to help them reduce violence, through the Safety Strategy that is in place at a national, regional and local level. A new Prison Performance Support Programme (PPSP) was also established (replacing Special Measures) to assist our most challenged prisons, including HMP/YOI Wormwood Scrubs, with the programme building on the learning from the 10 Prison Project. Whilst PPSP paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it will continue to provide prisons with tailored packages of support to help governors and their staff build the capability they need to improve safety and decency for all who work and live in them. Locally the prison has been liaising with the London Mayor's Office of Police and Crime (MOPAC) throughout the Prison Pathfinder programme and an evaluation process will be undertaken with a view to continuing the most successful elements of the violence reduction initiatives that have been supported should MOPAC funding be available for the next financial year.

Despite, your concerns, it was encouraging to receive your comments about the efforts to improve safety and the progress in reducing the levels of violence and self-harm. I was reassured to see that the prison environment has been enhanced by recent refurbishments. I was pleased to read about the recognition given to the prison for responding well to the challenges of the pandemic and I am grateful to everyone for their hard work during this difficult time. It was also pleasing to read about the prison's efforts to continue to encourage family contact, particularly for those prisoners with children. However, I was saddened to hear there were two deaths in custody during the reporting year; every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

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 the property policy review raised in your report is 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 Wormwood Scrubs.

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

Prisoners' Property

Further to the response to last year's report sent to the Board on 3 June 2020, HMPPS has been working closely with stakeholders to consult on proposed changes to the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework. In light of the pressures placed on Boards by Covid-19, HMPPS agreed with the IMB Secretariat to pause the consultation. A meeting with IMB representatives took place in August 2020 and the feedback received from IMB members is being considered alongside other contributions. 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. That work is now progressing well and it is anticipated that the draft policy framework will be circulated for wider consultation shortly.

The Prisoner Escort and Custody Services 4 Generation contract also began during August 2020 with a new fleet of vehicles which allow for an additional half box of consumable items to the limit of 7.5kg to be carried for each prisoner on top of the existing agreed volumetric limits. As previously advised, HMPPS is also taking steps to ensure there is a consistent approach when prison staff forward on any excess items to prisoners at their new establishment after a transfer has taken place. While digital improvements are being explored, the nature of that work means that any digital changes are likely to take longer to develop. In the meantime, it is encouraging that locally HMP/YOI Wormwood Scrubs has improved the handling of property within the prison ensuring prisoners' property is effectively managed and has seen a significant reduction in complaints.