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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Ranby
Retford
Nottinghamshire
DN22 8EU

MoJ Ref: SUB 82854

28 October 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP RANBY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2019 – 23 MARCH 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 23 March 2020. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you continued to be short of the full complement of Board members during the reporting year.

I appreciate the Board's ongoing concerns around prisoners with mental health problems being located in the segregation unit. Further to my response in January, such cases are escalated through the health provider and commissioners at the earliest opportunity but unfortunately the process to find a bed is not as quick as we would want and remains a challenge. The placing of a prisoner into segregation is in response to their presenting behaviours and the risks they pose to the safety, security and stability of the establishment, in accordance with Prison Service Order 1700 (*Segregation*). Where clinicians agree that the prisoner requires admission to a secure hospital, the establishment will work with providers and service commissioners to source a bed at the earliest opportunity. Due to various reasons, including capacity, there can be occasions where the timeliness of a transfer is longer than all parties would like.

In the East Midlands, NHS England has launched a new provider collaborative called IMPACT designed to provide a more streamlined service. Work has been undertaken to implement a process to track and follow up closely those patients on the transfer list and NHS England East Midlands now also facilitate fortnightly calls with all case managers to review individuals awaiting transfer. As the Board will understand, the speed of transfers to specialist mental health units is subject to capacity of secure hospital placements/beds across the country. I would like to assure the Board that the establishment remains committed to facilitating transfers at the earliest opportunity.

Regarding the use of single cells for two prisoners, I understand the Board's continued concerns however the wider problem of crowding in prisons is a longstanding issue that will not be easily addressed. Whilst the average number of prisoners held in crowded conditions across the estate has fallen slightly in recent years, we recognise the ongoing concerns raised by the Board and others across the estate regarding this issue. Although regrettable, there are currently no plans to reduce the number of prisoners held at HMP Ranby. As mentioned in January, the Government's announcement of up to £2.5 billion investment in new prison construction to create up to 10,000 prison places will in due course reduce crowding across the estate.

Our plan for reducing prison crowding is to replace prisons that are operating over their certified normal accommodation levels with new accommodation that is safe, decent, and uncrowded. The first steps in this direction have already been taken with the opening of 2,100 uncrowded prison places at HMP/YOI Berwyn, 206 uncrowded places in a houseblock at HMP Stocken, and a commitment to construct modern, decent, uncrowded prisons at the former HMP Wellingborough and HMP Glen Parva sites, due to open in 2021 and 2023 respectively. A new prison will also be built at the site of HMP Full Sutton alongside the existing establishment.

Releasing prisoners with no fixed abode is not ideal under any circumstances and the prison tries to secure suitable accommodation on release in all instances. This can be very challenging at times as HMP Ranby holds prisoners from all over the country. Overcoming this challenge is something that Ministry of Justice cannot do in isolation and we are working together with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Welsh Government and Other Government Departments to address this issue.

The current Covid-19 emergency has focused attention on the significant challenge in this area and the importance of regional partnership working in addressing accommodation needs for those leaving prison. As part of its Covid-19 response, HMPPS set up seven Homelessness Prevention Taskforces (HPTs) to work with local authorities and other partners to find accommodation for offenders released from prison. The taskforces are still active and HMPPS is keen to utilise the learning gathered during the current Covid-19 emergency to help develop longer-term improvements, including as an aspect of the probation reform programme. Regarding releases on Home Detention Curfew (HDC), it remains the case that accommodation must be approved, therefore prisoners with no fixed abode cannot be released on HDC nor if the address is deemed inappropriate.

Turning to prisoners serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP), HMPPS remains committed to doing all it can to support their progression and efforts to reduce their risk to the point where the independent Parole Board determines that they may be safely released. A range of work to improve the management and progression of people serving IPP sentences has been underway for some time. This is evident in the decreasing number of unreleased prisoners serving IPP sentences in recent years and the latest published figures show the figure standing at 1,969 at the end of June 2020, a reduction from 2,134 as at the end of December 2019. This is good progress considering this population of prisoners was at its highest in 2012 with over 6,000 cases.

We have also invested in the commissioning of four specialist Progression Regimes across the country, providing 385 places in the prison estate, which offers prisoners serving IPP sentences that are struggling to progress an environment in which they may work to understand and address their risks with dedicated support from staff. 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 population, and therefore the current release rate may not be sustainable. As I am sure the Board will appreciate, many of these prisoners are still assessed to pose 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 release. This is not a simple task but HMPPS will continue to work with these individuals with a multi-disciplinary approach to offer them opportunities to reduce their identified risks.

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.

Although many of the Board's concerns are repeated issues, I was encouraged to hear that the Board believes that generally the prisoners are treated fairly and with humanity, and that the Board considers the prison to be reasonably safe. I was reassured to note that the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork system is operating very well, and the revised incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme showed a marked improvement in the process. I was also pleased to note that the Equalities staff have been recognised again for their good work despite not having had a regular officer in the department.

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 Ranby.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Frazer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'F'.

LUCY FRAZER QC MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners Property

It is unfortunate and regrettable that prisoners' property continues to be an issue in many parts of the estate. The Governor is aware of these concerns, including the requirements for cell clearances, and has implemented local systems to minimise the impact on prisoners.

Nationally 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, 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. Discussions ahead of consultation with IMB members began with the IMB Secretariat in late February 2020, however in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, HMPPS agreed with the IMB Secretariat to pause this consultation. This work is now moving forward again and a meeting with IMB members took place in August. Consultation with operational colleagues is also expected to resume soon. It is hoped that the revised draft policy framework will be circulated for wider consultation at the end of 2020 subject to any further impact from Covid-19.

Prisoner Returns from Category D Establishments

The Prison Group Director (PGD) acknowledges and recognises that there are some concerns within the prison group in respect of prisoners returning from open conditions. The PGD has raised this issue with the Governor and emphasised the need for HMP Ranby to ensure all appropriate paperwork follows a prisoner's return to closed conditions and that this is linked to any subsequent adjudication.

Prisoners have access to the complaints procedures which affords them the opportunity to challenge any decision that impacts on them.