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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP/YOI Stanford Hill  
Church Road  
Eastchurch  
ME12 4AA

MoJ Ref: ADR 081507

9 October 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP/YOI STANFORD HILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 APRIL 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 March 2020. I met the Governor and staff when I visited HMP/YOI Stanford Hill on 29 January 2020 and was pleased to be able to discuss some of these themes in more detail with them. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations.

I understand your concerns about the lack of kitchen facilities and the condition of C wing are limiting the prisons potential. I am pleased to be able to advise the Board that HMP/YOI Stanford Hill has been included in the national estate expansion programme. This will increase the prison's operational capacity by 160 places with two new accommodation units and a new kitchen as part of the necessary ancillary work to support this increase. The accommodation project is planned to commence in 2021 and the kitchen will be built in 2022, which will result in HMP/YOI Stanford Hill no longer being reliant on HMP Swaleside to provide meals.

As recognised by the Board most of the fabric of the prison is well-kept and in a good condition for its age and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) plans to continue to invest in the completion of high quality shower room refurbishments to maintain decency. However, it's recognised that C wing as a temporary building is potentially nearing the end of its life and therefore appropriate that HMPPS carries out a review on its likely longevity. In the meantime, while there are no plans for any major refurbishments of C wing, HMPPS will be replacing the boilers in advance of the winter and will undertake planned and reactive repairs as necessary to keep the unit operational. In addition, the facilities management provider, Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL) were due to repaint the external building following completion of external repairs over a year ago. However, recognised issues regarding the uneven ground around C wing have stalled this work and this will continue to be monitored. GFSL does continue to tackle the vermin issue and has increased the baiting regime via its contract with Rentokil over a three month period which will be reviewed to determine its success in tackling this issue.

Regarding the concern about a horticultural qualification for garden workers and the oversight of this area by GFSL, it should be noted that the delivery of horticulture is not in the scope of the facilities management contract. However, GFSL, prison management, the Health and Safety Advisor and the Finance Business Partner meet monthly to discuss facilities management issues and repairs.

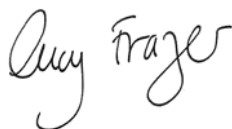
The GFSL Site Manager has considered the feasibility of his staff providing a national vocational qualification (NVQ) for prisoners working in the grounds but this has not progressed due to cost. Other softer skills are being explored though such as training to use motorised equipment which it is hoped will allow prisoners to learn whilst continuing to keep the prison grounds tidy which the Board acknowledge in its report.

Turning to some of the positives, it was reassuring to receive your comments that the prison is well run and is providing a safe environment where prisoners are treated respectfully. I was encouraged to note that prisoners are well represented in work to tackle inequalities and are beginning to recognise their achievements, as well as having improved levels of satisfaction in the healthcare provision despite Covid-19. I was pleased to read about the emphasis on resettlement and reducing reoffending and the recognition given to the prison's excellent record with employers and preparations for release. I understand amongst other things the prison is proud of achieving its highest ever level of 85 prisoners in paid employment prior to Covid-19, and I welcome the efforts of staff locally to provide and encourage prisoners to use these and other opportunities to help them reintegrate in to society after release.

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/YOI Standford Hill.

Yours sincerely

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

**LUCY FRAZER QC MP**

## Annex

### HMP/YOI STANFORD HILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020

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

##### **Internet Room**

HMP/YOI Stanford Hill has not previously sought to introduce internet facilities due to potential concerns on grounds of security. It should be noted that prisoners do not have access to the internet other than for educational or resettlement purposes and only then under strict supervision. However, during the Covid-19 outbreak approval was given for prisoners to use their personal mobile phones, most of which also have internet access, in visits to maintain contact with their family as visits were suspended temporarily. Whilst the use of mobile phones in prisons has previously been prohibited their use has been successful without any identified breaches to security at HMP/YOI Stanford Hill, therefore the Governor will be giving further consideration to the use of the internet at the prison and will submit a business case during 2020 for these facilities.

##### **Prisoners' Property**

It is unfortunate and regrettable that prisoners' property continues to be an issue. The development of the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework involved a large project undertaken in summer 2019. Following the conclusion of the project, HMPPS has worked closely with stakeholders to consult on proposed changes to the policy. Discussions ahead of consultation with IMB members began with the IMB Secretariat in late February 2020, who proposed meetings take place with Board members in April. In light of the pressures placed on Boards by Covid-19, HMPPS agreed with the IMB Secretariat to pause this consultation until August and September. This work is now moving forward again and the feedback received from IMB members at these meetings will then be considered alongside the comments received earlier this year from other stakeholders, with the intention that the revised draft policy framework will be circulated for wider consultation at the end of 2020.

The new Prisoner Escort and Custody Service 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. In addition to this, HMPPS is looking at what more can be done to encourage prisoners to send out or dispose of excess items to reduce the amount of property that cannot transfer with them. Steps are also being taken 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.

It should be noted that all prisoners, irrespective of the local incentive level, can have access to the permitted items listed under Part 1 of the National Facilities List set out in Annex C of the Incentives Policy Framework which went live in prisons on 13 January 2020. Governors can then choose to make additional items available from Part 2 of the list to those on the Standard and Enhanced levels or any additional levels introduced locally above Enhanced. Allowing prisons to determine locally what incentive level prisoners must be on to have access to these additional items provides them with the flexibility to tailor incentives to their local needs and challenges. Should a prisoner be subsequently transferred to another prison where items which they have earned are not permitted, the Incentives Policy Framework and Prison Service Instruction 12/2011 - Prisoners' Property makes it clear that the prisoner would normally be allowed to retain these items unless it is considered a risk to good order, discipline, security, safety or would exceed volumetric control limits.