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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Berwyn  
Bridge Road  
Wrexham Industrial Estate  
Wrexham  
North Wales  
LL13 9QE

MoJ Ref: SUB 082294

14 October 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP BERWYN: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 MARCH 2019 – 29 FEBRUARY 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 29 February 2020. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you remained short of members.

I note the Board's continued concerns about the lack of meeting/interview rooms at the prison. The staff Learning Centre should be established by the end of the year and will provide staff meeting room facilities and interview space for staff and managers. I am pleased HMP Berwyn during the Covid-19 lockdown period facilitated in-cell telephone conferencing to ensure essential interviews and meetings have taken place such as healthcare related, key work interactions and probation offender management conversations. Additionally, during the course of the year the residential house blocks were used to conduct meetings/interviews but these have had to be temporarily converted to accommodate family video calls. Room booking systems have improved through managerial oversight. Further details on future plans to maximise meeting and interview space are set out in the annex to this response.

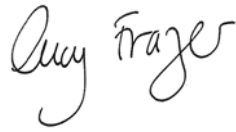
Whilst I acknowledge the Board's ongoing concern about the number of double cells, the position outlined in last year's response to the Board remains unchanged and there are currently no plans to change these arrangements. HMP Berwyn had a reduction to its operational capacity to 1801 with the onset of Covid-19 and enabled the Governor to introduce designated regimes for prisoners requiring isolation, shielding or reverse cohorting. The Governor will keep the Board informed of its direction in the coming months.

Despite your concerns, it was encouraging to receive your comments commending the Governor in continuing to achieve progress and improvement during times of uncertainty. It was reassuring to read that positive steps have been taken in the last year in the strategic management of Diversity and Inclusion matters and staff have worked hard to build positive relationships with the local community. I was also pleased to hear about the STEAM project initiative to help prisoners better manage emotional outbursts and the distraction activities introduced to alleviate frustration and boredom.

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 (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 Berwyn.

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 BERWYN: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MARCH 2019 – 29 FEBRUARY 2020

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

##### **Leadership**

The Governor, Nick Leader, remains committed to running the prison over the next three to five years to ensure there is stability and consistent leadership. He is keen to follow through on his plans in the coming years and has successfully developed a more experienced senior team who have committed to the longer-term development of HMP Berwyn.

##### **Specialist Communities**

The development of increased specialist regimes over the last twelve months have been provided to accommodate remand prisoners and introduce a separate vulnerable prisoner community. In addition, and as I am sure the Board will be aware, HMP Berwyn has a unit to support more challenging prisoners, a lifer community, a family pathways unit, a community to support veterans, a unit that supports those with mental health challenges and communities where enhanced facilities are provided. This is considered to be a good range of communities that supports some of the specialist needs of the prisoners at HMP Berwyn. The root of future developments will be to provide improved confidence and consistency in operational practice that should mean existing specialist units are used correctly, but the majority of men are managed in a consistent way that supports the operation of the regime and developing improved relationships with key workers.

##### **Maintenance**

A review took place this year to agree the strategy for addressing the paint defects and the heating system. It is anticipated that the heating system issues will be addressed by April 2021 and the repainting project is expected to be agreed through a contractual settlement. The Governor remains committed to keeping the Board updated on these issues as they progress.

##### **Healthcare**

###### *In-patient Units*

The decision not to have an in-patient facility at HMP Berwyn was decided at the construction project stage. There are no plans to build a unit at this time. HMP Berwyn has excellent community support provided through the healthcare contract. Prisoners who require that level of clinical intervention following a deterioration in their mental state are transferred to a secure hospital.

Likewise, there is an ongoing focus on improving health and social care in prisons in Wales through the Partnership Agreement for Prison Health. This has been developed collaboratively between the Health Boards, the Welsh Government, HMPPS and Public Health Wales. Specific work streams are being taken forward. These include developing standards for mental health services in prisons, a new substance misuse treatment framework and a work stream which will assess each of the prisons in Wales against Royal Pharmaceutical Society standards for medicines management. HMPPS is leading on a work stream on the role of the wider prison environment and taking a whole prison approach to improving the health and wellbeing of prisoners.

### *Do Not Attends (DNAs)*

DNAs are monitored monthly and reported via the healthcare performance report which is shared with the relevant prison staff including the senior management team. The total figure is broken down into DNA and CNA (could not attend). All DNAs are followed up through the help of peer mentors by ascertaining the reasons for non-attendance. Peer mentors promote using the 'cancel my appointment' tool effectively on the computers provided and using this to check for scheduled appointments to reduce the number of unused appointments.

CNAs make up 39% of failed appointments and are due to operational issues such as lockdown and not being able to get to appointments. Efforts are made for appointments to be re-booked.

Prior to Covid-19 to reduce the movement around the prison, the healthcare team were working in partnership with HMP Berwyn to deliver more clinics directly on the residential houses. This work will continue when it is safe to do so.

### *Nursing Cover*

There is now a 24-hour nursing cover onsite at HMP Berwyn which is supported by an on-call GP service.

### *Representatives at Good Order or Discipline (GOOD) Reviews*

HMP Berwyn has a coordinated approach to the organisation of GOOD review meetings. A healthcare representative is dedicated on each shift to attend the reviews and has the required knowledge to positively contribute to these reviews.

## **Education**

### *Staffing*

Novus Cambria has extensive links and experience in developing education provision in prisons. All Novus Cambria staff, whether they have worked in prisons previously or not, attend HMP Berwyn's one-week induction. The prison induction provides basic general information about working in prisons and is specific to HMP Berwyn, for example security, keys, anti-corruption and Five-Minute-Interventions.

Novus Cambria's staff induction period is usually delivered over a four-week period. As well as introducing new teaching staff to the organisation, the induction covers aspects of working in secure environments, layout of the prison (particularly the Coleg and Workshop areas), general alarms, observation book and accident/incident reporting, Incentives policy framework processes and Prison Nomis entries. All new colleagues are subject to a nine-month probation period, during which they are given additional support.

These two induction processes combined do provide a substantive introduction to working in a secure environment, and to working in HMP Berwyn specifically. However, it is accepted there is a level of 'prison craft' that can only come through experience. It is a strength that Novus has recruited teaching staff who are well qualified and come with a wealth of experience and from a range of backgrounds. It is inevitable however that given how relatively new HMP Berwyn is, many of the staff will be inexperienced in working in such an environment. There is good support from the prison team in the form of training and less formal support and advice, and good support mechanisms in place for all staff, including new staff members. The team is also excellent at supporting each other, and those who have more experience of working in prisons will support and advise those newer to the environment.

### *Vocational Training Places*

The allocation of prisoners to vocational training places has been identified as a priority. The Governor is confident that with reduced activity spaces the arrangement to maintain the correct number of attendees

will be achieved. This will be closely monitored as the prison progresses its Exceptional Delivery Model (EDM) over the coming months.

#### *Success Data*

92% is the final result of the success data achieved for 2019/20. This result is promising although below the original 97% forecast based on the previous year results. The final achievement was affected by non-Offender Learning and Skills Service withdrawals which impacted in a negative way on the success data. However, this remains at target and judged as a good performance under these circumstances. HMP Berwyn's retention rate was recorded at 98% (the same as originally predicted).

#### **Meeting and Interview Space**

Further to the Minister's response above, the following actions are planned to increase meeting/interview space:

- Interview booths in the Offender Management Unit as part of the agreed Workshop Development Plan - anticipated to take place by March 2021.
- Use of the clinic rooms on each residential house to undertake healthcare work - anticipated to take place November 2020.
- Continued use of in-cell telephony contact where appropriate for interviews/consultations.
- Reverting the video visit space on the house blocks back to meeting and interview rooms when alternative arrangements to accommodate family video visits have been agreed.
- An area has been identified in one of the workshops where increased interview space will be provided as part of the last stage of the Workshop Development plan (as mentioned above).