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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Woodhill  
Tattenhoe Street  
Milton Keynes  
MK4 4DA

MoJ Ref: SUB 082513

16 October 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP WOODHILL: 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 remained short of Board members during the reporting year.

I acknowledge the Board's repeated concern about delays in transferring prisoners with mental ill health to an appropriate setting. I would like to reassure you that we are determined to improve the secure hospital transfer process, to ensure delays are reduced and avoid prisons being used inappropriately. The Secretary of State for Justice is committed to working with the Secretary of State for Health (with health partners) to articulate a coherent picture of how healthcare is delivered throughout the criminal justice pathway. Government resources and priorities are currently being directed to the response to Covid-19, but we remain committed to continuing bilateral discussions on this topic when it is appropriate to do so.

We are also continuing to work in close collaboration with health partners to make sure that, where appropriate, vulnerable offenders are diverted away from custody and, where possible, from the criminal justice system altogether. This includes Health and Justice partners working together through the Community Sentence Treatment Requirement Programme, who ensure greater use is made of mental health, alcohol and drug treatment requirements as part of community sentences. In addition, revised guidance on the transfer and remission to hospital from prison, to improve the support offered to vulnerable prisoners, is due to be published later this year. This will promote timely access to appropriate treatment under the Mental Health Act (MHA) and should reduce unnecessary delays to treatment. The Government is also committed to legislate to reform the MHA and is working on publishing a White Paper in the coming months.

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) will continue to monitor the time taken from referral to transfer and provide support where needed, for example, ensuring effective liaison with specialised commissioning colleagues. New performance metrics are being developed by NHSE&I via a strategic reporting tool to monitor those being assessed under the MHA and tracking the assessment and transfer waiting periods. This will further support regional Commissioners to identify exceptional cases within prisons and act where necessary.

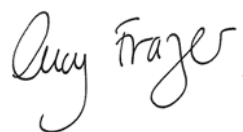
Despite the concerns raised in your report, it was reassuring to hear your judgment that the prison is reasonably safe and prisoners are treated humanely and there were no deaths in custody during the reporting year.

I welcome the introduction of the Woodhill Growth Project and hope this positive culture continues. I am pleased that HM Inspectorate of Prisons report on the short scrutiny visit held on 29 May 2020 outlined some positive findings in the prison's response to Covid-19.

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 Woodhill.

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 WOODHILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2019 – 31 MAY 2020

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

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

It is unfortunate and regrettable that prisoners' property continues to be an issue and the policy framework is awaiting publication. HMPPS is still working closely with stakeholders to consult on the proposed changes to the policy. Discussions ahead of consultation with IMB members began with the IMB Secretariat in late February 2020, however, in light of the pressures placed on Boards by Covid-19, HMPPS agreed with the IMB Secretariat to push consultation back. This work is now moving forward again and a meeting with IMB members took place in August 2020. Consultation with operational colleagues is also expected to resume soon. The feedback received from the IMB members will be considered alongside the comments received from other stakeholders, with the intention that the revised draft policy framework will be circulated for wider consultation at the end of this year. Locally, staff at the prison will continue to work hard to resolve property related issues.

The new Prisoner Escort and Custody Service 4 Generation contract commenced at the end of August 2020. The new fleet of vehicles allows for an additional half box of consumable items to the limit of 7.5 kg 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 a 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.

##### **Searching Prisoners**

Searching for and removing prohibited items not only helps HMPPS ensure the safety of prisoners generally but can also be fundamentally important in ensuring the well-being of the person that is being searched, including those who are vulnerable or have a history of self-harm for whom being left with weapons or drugs undermines their own safety. HMPPS Searching of the Person policy states that on transferring to another prison and all other discharges apart from on final discharge and discharge for Release on Temporary Licence, all male prisoners must be full-searched by officers at the sending prison. This policy framework is currently under review and will ensure the conducting of searches on transfer is reiterated within the framework.

All prisoners on arrival at HMP Woodhill are thoroughly searched including a body scan, this way any contraband on a prisoner, who has not been subject to a body scan by the sending prison, can be discovered.

### *Contraband*

HMP Woodhill works proactively with the police concerning contraband 'throw overs' and this has led to a number of arrests. Security staff in one month alone successfully stopped a considerable number of mobile phones being thrown over the perimeter wall of the prison and some parcels containing drugs. An awareness leaflet regarding throw overs and drones has been distributed across the local housing estates.

Some prisoners hold a large amount of property and occasionally items, e.g. hidden within a tin of food, are not found by the sending prison. However, staff at HMP Woodhill search all property before issuing to prisoners.

Additionally, the prison will shortly be adopting a new process to tackle fraudulent mail marked under Rule 39 (correspondence that cannot be opened by prison staff) but have not been sent in by legal professionals. This will mean accepting Rule 39 correspondence electronically, and any hard copies required to be sent as registered mail by the firm of solicitors.

### **Long-Term Segregated Prisoners**

These prisoners are continually reviewed through the local segregation review process and periodic formal reviews to continue segregation are considered by the Prison Group Director beyond the 42 day and six-month mark. Within this process available pathways for prisoners are considered and recommendations made to local teams regarding the management of individuals.

Referrals to the Close Supervision Centres (CSCs) are considered monthly. Where prisoner referral does not lead to selection for assessment, this can be reviewed as their case progresses. The Close Supervision Centres Management Committee provide recommendations for the management of each prisoner that they do not accept into CSC for assessment. Prisons are also supported by the Long Term High Secure Estate (LTHSE) Pathway to Progression team in the ongoing management of prisoners.

As the Board will be aware, prisoners who have been identified for other specialist progressive services within the custodial environment must give consent to such referrals and relocation within that service, which in itself can present a barrier to their progression. Shifting these often-entrenched stances can take considerable time and input from local multidisciplinary teams but does lead to more sustainable progression than simply moving the prisoner to another establishment. LTHSE segregation units have clinical resources available to them to support this work. Forced returns to normal location without positive engagement from the prisoner concerned are generally unsuccessful and can lead to very difficult situations for staff and other prisons on the wing they have been sent to.

HMP Woodhill completed excellent work with some long-term segregated prisoners prior to the Covid-19 restrictions. It is inevitable that the current restrictions of the pandemic have impacted on the ability to work progressively with prisoners in segregation.

### **Maintenance Work**

An Estates Investment Proposal has been submitted to consider the refurbishment of the shower rooms throughout the establishment. An Asset Investment Bid is submitted annually and for 2020/21 funds have been approved to enable refurbishment work to be made to two showers on House Unit 2.

The replacement of washing machines and dryers and Bain-Marie for the serveries were all procured by the prison and installed alongside the Fire Safety Improvement works, along with highlighted floor coverings and painting. The segregation unit boiler/heating issues have also been resolved.

## **Resettlement**

### *Prison Education Framework (PEF)*

The PEF funding provision has been used to commission appropriate education and library, skills and work opportunities for 2020/21. However, Covid-19 restrictions have prevented the delivery of these opportunities at HMP Woodhill. Specifically, more appropriate education courses, more tailored library resources and increased workshop contracts have been impacted. The Directorate Education, Skills and Work team is working closely with the Governor to ensure that suitable provision is prioritised when the restrictions are eased, and the re-roll completed.

### *Offender Behaviour Programmes (OBPs)*

HMP Woodhill's suite of OBPs has been extended and diversified with reconfiguration to ensure provision for prisoners serving both short and longer-term sentences for a wide range of offence types. This includes full implementation of Kaizen; an accredited high-intensity violence programme and Foundation, an engagement intervention. The pre-existing programmes provision also remains in place, namely 50 placements on the annual Thinking Skills Programme for general offending and RESOLVE, the medium-intensity violence programme. Alongside this, a pool of staff have been trained to deliver the Healthy Identity Intervention for those convicted of a terrorism offence and Motivation and Engagement for prisoners who are not progressing well (those held in segregation). All CSC prisoners are allocated a HMPPS Psychologist and offered an opportunity to complete bespoke risk-reduction treatment.