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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Wymott  
Ulnes Walton Lane  
Preston, Lancashire  
PR26 8LW

MoJ Ref: SUB 082908

30 October 2020

Dear ██████,

**HMP WYMOTT: 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 continued to be short of Board members during the reporting year and as Covid-19 impacted significantly on the Board's ability to gather information during the final weeks of the reporting year.

I understand the Board's concerns about prisoners at HMP Wymott's who are serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP) and acknowledge that some are significantly beyond their tariff dates. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) remains committed to supporting efforts to reduce their risk and enable progression 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. HMPPS and the Parole Board continue to deliver and regularly review the joint IPP Action Plan which aims to deliver the support prisoners serving IPP sentences need in order to demonstrate that they can be safely released. We have invested significantly in the delivery of this plan, including the delivery of a HMPPS Psychology Services dedicated IPP strategy, which is providing case reviews of the most complex and challenging cases. These reviews have identified pathways for individuals who have not progressed following two or more parole hearings, which includes large numbers of prisoners convicted of sexual offences. We have also invested in the establishment of four specialist Progression Regimes across the country, providing 385 places in the prison estate to IPP prisoners who are struggling to progress in an environment in which they may work to understand and address their risks with dedicated support from staff

The latest published figures show the unreleased population standing at 1,895 at the end of September 2020, a reduction from 2,039 at the end of March 2020. This is good progress considering that the population of unreleased prisoners serving IPP sentences was over 6,000 at its highest in 2012. 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 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 we continue to work with these individuals with a multi-disciplinary approach to offer them opportunities to reduce their identified risks.

Regarding the accessibility of secure mental health beds in outside hospitals, the Department of Health and Social Care 2011 Prison Transfer and Remission Guidance has now been refreshed and amended following a comprehensive consultation process and is awaiting publication, as the planned release was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The refreshed guidance should help in this area. Additionally, new mental health service specifications have been published for low and medium-secure hospitals. The NHS-led Provider Collaboratives service for adult medium and low secure care gives local ownership to providers for the whole pathway, including the interface with the criminal justice system, and resources for their own populations, enabling them to make commissioning decisions to improve and integrate services. In respect to high secure care, a strategic commissioning plan will be developed by April 2021. This will describe the clinical model, pathways and capacity required for implementation during 2021/22.

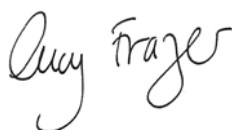
There is no doubt HMP Wymott has issues to address, it was therefore encouraging to hear that the prison has become better at dealing with the effects of psychoactive substances and compares favourably with its comparator prisons on levels of self-harm and violence. I was also pleased to hear about the good use of the dynamic purchasing system for training provision, significant improvements in the Offender Management Unit under the new Offender Management in Custody model, and that time out of cell has recently doubled each day despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic.

I was also pleased to read that various artworks and installations are regularly displayed in the prison's education centre and it was heartening to hear that prisoners at HMP Wymott produced an excellent piece of artwork for an exhibition by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. The prison and the prisoners involved should be very proud of this achievement.

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 Wymott.

Yours sincerely

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

**LUCY FRAZER QC MP**

## Annex

### HMP WYMOTT: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2019 – 31 MAY 2020

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

##### **Wing Refurbishment**

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Estates Team has a detailed design in place with an estimated cost of around £24 million for the refurbishment and fire safety improvements required for A and B wings. In order to carry out this work it will be necessary to decant a whole wing and approximately 192 places would then be required to house the prisoners. This, together with the impact by the ongoing Covid-19 situation, means that the project is currently on hold. In the meantime, HMPPS's Prison Maintenance Group will continue to ensure maintenance of the buildings are undertaken.

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

It is unfortunate and regrettable that prisoners' property continues to be an issue. Further to last year's response, the Board may recall that development of the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework was being informed by a project undertaken in summer 2019, involving stakeholders across HMPPS and the escort services. 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. 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. 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, subject to any further Covid-19 impacts on recovery. The feedback received at the meeting with 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 2020. While digital improvements are being explored, the nature of that work means that any digital changes are likely to take longer to develop.

##### **Kitchens**

Further to last year's response, an Estates Investment Proposal bid has been approved by the MoJ Estates Team, however, the project requires mandating and is currently on hold. It is acknowledged the prison has had increased demand over the years and although the team continue to work hard to deliver food reliably, the challenges presented by the building and infrastructure is recognised. In the meantime, HMPPS's Prison Maintenance Group will continue to ensure maintenance activities to the buildings and equipment are undertaken.