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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP & YOI Winchester
Romsey Road
Winchester, Hampshire
SO22 5DF

MoJ Ref: SUB 083617

23 December 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP & YOI WINCHESTER: 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, particularly as the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on your ability to gather information.

I understand the Board's ongoing concerns about the condition of the Care and Separation Unit (CSU). Further to last year's response the plans for the construction of a new CSU are now at an advanced design development and costing stage. It is recognised that progress has been slower than hoped and commencement of building work remains dependent on the design and funding approval, surveys and enabling work. However, despite the impacts of Covid-19 it is anticipated that the enabling works could begin in the financial year 2021/22. In the interim HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Prison Maintenance Group (PMG) have continued to make improvements to the existing CSU with the installation of a new boiler system completed this year.

I acknowledge the Board's concern about the prison's performance and the need to improve standards. HMP & YOI Winchester is in receipt of focussed support which includes robust governance processes to assist the Governor to drive improved outcomes for both staff and prisoners locally. Through this governance and additional assurance reporting, there have been clear improvements evidenced in the way the prison operates and in its effective planning. During the reporting period Custodial Managers trained by the national Standards Coaching Team have helped promote consistent best practice across routine tasks and along with consistent local leadership this has built positive staff-prisoner relationships. An emphasis on Five Minute Interventions and a focus on Key Work has also supported positive interactions and built confidence amongst staff with less experience. Cleanliness has also improved which the Board has recognised, despite the clean and decent project having to be paused due to Covid-19. PMG is also continuing to support the improvement of conditions across the prison having spent £287,000 during the 2019/2020 financial year and a further £293,000 for additional reactive repairs and maintenance. In addition, the prison has installed a body scanner which is providing an effective tool to help tackle the illicit economy which in turn is helping to improve the prisons stability.

Regarding foreign nationals being held in prison beyond their sentence, it is recognised as being essential to inform prisoners in good time of the intention to remove them from the country to enable both prisoners and staff to prepare for life after prison. The Home Office is committed to ensuring foreign national are informed at least 30 days in advance of the end of their custodial sentences.

However, it recognises that this may not always be possible where a prisoner is serving a short sentence, despite prisons such as HMP & YOI Winchester referring prisoners of interest within the prescribed timescales. Where this is the case the Home Office ensures that individuals are informed about the deportation processes as early as possible by Immigration Officers who will visit the prison concerned.

Individuals of interest to Home Office Immigration Enforcement can be lawfully detained in prison or at an immigration removal centre beyond their conditional release date under the IS91 authority to detain process. Individuals can also be detained longer than the Home Office would wish due to the individual being unwilling to engage, such as with embassies regarding travel documents to ascertain their status, as well as any potential language barriers. However, the Home Office is committed to ensuring that all processes are expedited as quickly as possible and that foreign nationals are either deported or released. The Home Office also continues to review its processes to ensure that foreign nationals are kept informed of the status of their deportation case and the reasons for ongoing detention where appropriate.

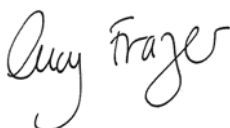
While it would not be appropriate to discuss the circumstances of specific individuals, the Home Office is responsible for providing translation of documents where required. HMP& YOI Winchester always liaises closely with the Home Office to ensure all relevant legal documents pertaining to immigration status have been issued and translated. The prison also uses multi-disciplinary support to try to engage individuals to co-operate and integrate whilst they remain in custody. In addition, where there are complex cases or concerns about an individual's mental health, assessments are carried out by trained and approved practitioners to ensure next steps in the deportation process are proportionate.

Despite your concerns and recognising there is more to do, it was encouraging to receive your comments about the steady improvements in the prison's performance, and I am grateful to all staff for their continued efforts, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. I was reassured to note improvements have also been made in the management of prisoners at risk of self-harm, in responding to cell bells and that staff are working hard to tackle violence with levels reducing. It was also pleasing to read about the quality of healthcare services and that the equality and diversity improvements last year have been built on with better consultation with prisoners.

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 Winchester.

Yours sincerely

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

LUCY FRAZER QC MP

Annex

HMP & YOI WINCHESTER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2019 – 31 MAY 2020

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Recruitment and Retention

A market supplement is offered to roles where HMPPS experience significant recruitment and retention challenges and at HMP & YOI Winchester this is currently being targeted to Band 3 Prison Officers. HMPPS pay policies also allow for pay incentives to be offered to address recruitment and retention pressures subject to a business case being submitted by the prison. However, administrative roles at the prison have been filled and there are no issues with administrative recruitment. In addition, regionally HMPPS is experiencing a large increase in applications for vacancies. HMPPS also continues to invest in its pay structures increasing the basic starting salaries for non-operational roles by 2.5% in 2020 and existing staff in administrative roles received total increases in salary of between 2.5% and 7.5%. Incentives are also provided through the people policies to encourage experienced staff to seek promotion and continue their career with HMPPS.

Reduced Mobility

HMP & YOI Winchester have mitigating processes in place for all new arrivals with reduced mobility which ensures they do not miss out on initial reception processes, such as first night and induction. The prison is mindful of the needs of prisoners with reduced mobility and it is recognised that the current concrete stairs to the reception area are not suitable for those with reduced mobility. However, plans have been developed to replace these and prison managers have been tasked to consider the feasibility of a stair lift or other reasonable adjustment to support prisoners needs.

Regarding education access, following a successful funding bid the old kitchen has been converted in to a wheelchair accessible workshop and education facility. There is also ramped access to the vulnerable prisoner classrooms via the Tailor workshop. Whilst there is no lift to access the main education facility, all education provision is currently being delivered via residential areas due to Covid-19. As the prison safely builds its recovery a blended learning approach is planned to continue with a proportion of learning provided within the residential areas. The prison has also commissioned outreach work through the education contract allowing additional support to learners within residential areas, healthcare and the CSU to ensure equal access to the available provision.

It is recognised that there is currently only one cell which is fully accessible, with widened access for a wheelchair and built-in shower. For those prisoners with reduced mobility a lift in the main prison does enable access to all residential areas, as well as some wider areas and services outside of the main prison such as visits. As most services within the main prison, such as the serving of meals and collection of medication takes place on the two's landing this is where prisoners with reduced mobility are normally located. Where prisoners have more complex needs they will be located in the social care cells in Healthcare. Ongoing refurbishments on A and B Wing are improving the wheelchair access to ablution facilities and this work will continue on to D Wing once the current work has finished. HMP & YOI Winchester will also continue to explore opportunities for reasonable adjustments to support prisoners with reduced mobility subject to sufficient funding being available.