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Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI New Hall
Dial Wood
Flockton
Wakefield
West Yorkshire
WF4 4XX

MoJ Ref: SUB 083967

15 December 2020

Dear ██████████,

**HMP/YOI NEW HALL: 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, particularly as you continued to be short of Board members during the reporting year and the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on your ability to gather information.

I understand the Board's concern about the time it takes to transfer prisoners with mental ill health to a secure unit. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) are determined to improve the transfer process, ensure delays are reduced and avoid prison being used inappropriately. The Secretary of State for Justice is committed to working with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and health partners to articulate a coherent picture of how healthcare is delivered throughout the criminal justice pathway. The Government is also committed to reforming the Mental Health Act and the MoJ is working closely with the Department for Health and Social Care to respond to the independent review, chaired by Professor Simon Wessely which includes recommendations about improving the secure transfer process. A joint White Paper will be published in the coming months.

Transfer times are improving at HMP/YOI New Hall with the last four transfers taking place within the guided timescales. NHS England and Improvement's (NHSE&I) Specialised Commissioning team is continuing to work in collaboration with the Department of Health to review the process to ensure timely transfers under the Mental Health Act. NHSE&I also continue to monitor the time taken from referral to transfer and provide support where needed. Where there are any challenges delaying the transfer of care these are escalated within the Trusts and the Clinical Commissioning Groups on an individual basis. The 2011 Prison Transfer and Remission guidance has also been amended following a comprehensive consultation process and is waiting publication as the planned publication in March 2020 was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The regional Health and Justice commissioning team has also been working in partnership with the healthcare provider and HMPPS to develop a joint business case to increase the financial resource for Holly House based on the new trauma informed delivery model. While a review did begin at the start of the calendar year, Covid-19 has impacted on its progress. However, a bid has been submitted to the health commissioners for dedicated healthcare staffing for the unit.

A new prison functional head and custody manager are also now in post to refresh the project plans and individual care plan meetings are taking place, as well as an overarching meeting each week to monitor progress of women located on Holly House.

I am grateful to the Board for acknowledging the work that has taken place to improve conditions at the prison. Regarding the areas of concern, in total 154 reactive repairs have been required in the kitchen during the 12 months up to November 2020. This includes recent repairs to the flooring and the replacement of the hygienic cladding panels to the walls. Whilst most issues have been addressed there are some fridges still requiring parts; these are on order to enable completion. Repairs and the condition of the kitchen have been added as a standing agenda item at the monthly meeting between the Governor, HMPPS Prison Maintenance Group and the service provider, Amey, to closely monitor progress in this area.

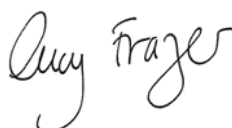
Within the gymnasium, although the equipment remains the responsibility of the prison, a new floor has been installed and funding provided for new windows. It is hoped that this will be completed within this financial year 2020/21. In addition, over the past 12 months, 44 reactive repairs have been completed to improve the condition of the gymnasium. A previous unsuccessful bid to refurbish the showers will be resubmitted for consideration during the next financial year 2021/22.

Despite your concerns it was reassuring to receive your comments that women are treated fairly and humanely by prison staff. I was pleased to note that the accommodation is clean and to a good standard and the introduction of in-cell telephony has been well received. I was also encouraged to read about the progress the prison has made to improve the management of safety issues and reduce levels of self-harm, including among some women who have prolific self-harming behaviours.

I note you have raised a local issue of concern in your report to the Governor. Comments in response to this and the other issue raised in your report for HMPPS 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 New Hall.

Yours sincerely

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

LUCY FRAZER QC MP

Annex

HMP/YOI NEW HALL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MARCH 2019 – 29 FEBRUARY 2020

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners' Property

Further to the response to last year's report sent to the Board on 27 January 2020, HMPPS has worked closely with stakeholders to consult on proposed changes to the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework. 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 and the feedback received from IMB members at these meetings is being considered alongside the comments received earlier this year from other stakeholders. The intention is that the revised draft policy framework will be circulated for wider consultation at the beginning of 2021.

The Prisoner Escort and Custody Services 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. Locally HMP/YOI New Hall continues to monitor the transfer of prisoners' property and where this is not received this is escalated with the sending prison at the earliest opportunity. In addition, HMPPS is taking steps 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.

Healthcare Staffing

NHS England commissioners and the prison regularly review the healthcare contract and the staffing resource at both the Prison Health Operational Group and Contract meetings. Staffing began to improve when the Board's reporting period ended and an action plan is in place to ensure further improvements are made which is being monitored at each meeting. However, it is pleasing that the Board recognise the hard work of healthcare staff locally in providing critical services within a challenging population. Changes to the prison's staffing profile during the Board's reporting period has also ensured that operational staff are now available to support clinics in the healthcare centre.