



██████████
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Lowdham Grange
Lowdham
Nottingham
NG14 7DA

Moj ref: SUB 90649

14 September 2021

Dear ██████████,

**HMP LOWDHAM GRANGE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2020 – 31 JANUARY 2021**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 January 2021. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you were short of experienced Board members during the reporting year. Firstly, I would like to offer my condolences to the Board for the loss of two dedicated and valued members, present and former Chairs who very sadly passed away unexpectedly last year. I was also saddened to hear there were two deaths in custody; every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) very seriously.

My officials have advised that there are five outstanding coroner inquests all of which will be heard with a jury. Covid-19 has presented challenges for many coroners across England and Wales, in particular, social distancing restrictions have severely impacted the number of people who can attend hearings. However, I can confirm that hearings into the four deaths that occurred between November 2018 and August 2019 are scheduled to take between March and December 2022. The Senior Coroner only recently received the PPO report for the self-inflicted death in August 2020; the inquest (with a jury) will therefore be listed in due course, subject to any further restrictions relating to Covid-19.

Turning to the Board's repeated concern about prisoners who remain in prison serving indeterminate sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). Across the custodial estate, the latest published figures for the unreleased IPP population stood at 1,722 at the end of June 2021, which is a reduction from 1,969 at the end of June 2020. As part of the psychology work stream consultancy/case file reviews are written on all priority IPP prisoners in custody where they have failed to make any progress after two or more post-tariff parole hearings. This cohort has been expanded to include all short tariff prisoners (less than 2 years), irrespective of previous hearing outcomes. These reviews reinvigorate cases that are not progressing and, where necessary, with consultation, practitioners agree and identify appropriate individual progression pathways. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) also continues to monitor the four Progression Regimes in terms of delivery.

It is accepted that all indeterminate sentenced prisoners (ISPs) should be located at the establishment best placed to meet their sentence planning needs in terms of interventions, and prisons will seek out suitable locations for ISPs who are assessed as needing to access certain interventions in other prisons, as promptly as is reasonably possible. ISPs may have their parole reviewed at least every two years, depending on the specifics of individual cases, and may transfer during a parole review if it is to access a

progression opportunity and providing it does not disrupt an impending parole hearing date. Prisons should seek out opportunities to progress them at the earliest opportunity following the conclusion of a parole review to increase the chances of a timely and successful transfer. HMP Lowdham Grange is continuing to work closely with the prisoners in its care to support their progression.

I note the Board remains concerned for people in prison with mental ill health. It is regrettable that individuals have waited a considerable time to be transferred to a secure mental health hospital to access suitable treatment. I appreciate the efforts the Board have made to raise such important issues to our attention. Throughout 2020 and the early part of 2021 there have been delays in hospital admission due to the number of people tested positive for Covid-19, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) are continuing to address this as part of the Restoration and Recovery of services across the healthcare sector. The pathway into secure hospital beds is complex and challenging, NHSE Health and Justice (Midlands) Governance team and Commissioners have developed a Delayed Hospital Transfers clinical case review multi agency fortnightly meeting to proactively manage reductions in the waiting times for patients across the Midlands region and to ensure the most vulnerable and high-risk patients are being supported. Patients can move up and down this list dependent on their presenting risks and patients who are from outside the local area are also discussed at this meeting. These meetings have impacted positively on the waiting list. Locally at HMP Lowdham Grange, the developed continual improvement strategy is helping individuals awaiting a transfer through enhanced care and clinical led support.

More broadly, the Reforming the Mental Health Act White Paper published on 13 January 2021 builds on recommendations made by Professor Sir Simon Wessely's Independent Review in 2018 and provides a commitment to introduce a statutory time limit of 28 days for the transfer process and a new independent role to manage the transfer process. Additionally, the Transfer and Remission of Adult Prisoners Guidance published on 10 June 2021 promotes timely access to appropriate treatment and reduce unnecessary delays -

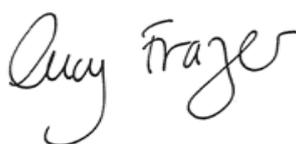
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/guidance-for-the-transfer-and-remission-of-adult-prisoners-andimmigration-removal-centre-detainees-under-the-mental-health-act-1983/>

Despite your concerns, it was reassuring to receive your comments that the Covid-19 outbreak was managed well through close collaboration between Public Health England, the prison management and healthcare staff. I was pleased to read that around 2,500 items of personal protective equipment were produced and donated by the prison to two local hospitals. I welcome the positive work around equality and diversity and the forming of a race and equality task force group. Likewise, the community rewards prisoner incentive scheme and the efforts the prison has made to combat drug supply.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Director 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 Lowdham Grange.

Yours sincerely,



RT HON LUCY FRAZER QC MP

HMP LOWDHAM GRANGE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2020 – 31 JANUARY 2021

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Covid-19 Testing

Currently there are over 100 prisons undertaking pre-transfer testing, all testing is voluntary and refusal to test does not prevent a transfer from going ahead. Upon arrival prisoners will have to undertake reverse cohort processes and are offered testing as part of the reception process.

HMP Lowdham Grange prisoners are now routinely tested for Covid-19 on arrival, and those who leave the establishment either on escort or transfer are also subject to these tests. All staff and prisoners have had the opportunity to receive the Covid-19 vaccination in line with the community programme.

Funding for Services and Provisions (post Covid-19 regime)

The Custodial Contracts Group is well-connected to the wider HMPPS processes and systems which enables new initiatives across the estate to always include the requirements of privately managed prisons. In addition, private providers can be innovative within the existing funding from the Authority and there may be opportunities for providers to propose “disinvest to reinvest” opportunities for this type of work. HMP Lowdham Grange has been represented at workshops to discuss the post-Covid-19 landscape and been given an opportunity to feed into discussions about what the regime might look like. The joint working between the prison and the Healthcare provider has seen several supportive innovations taken forward in the year.

Resourcing for Probation

Reforming probation to protect the public and tackle reoffending remains a top priority for the Ministry of Justice and work to stabilise and strengthen the Probation Service (PS) continues. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown the importance of having a sufficiently flexible probation system to ensure it can cope with whatever lies ahead. That is why it was decided to bring the delivery of unpaid work and behavioural programmes under the remit of the PS. This is about taking pragmatic steps to ensure justice is delivered and reduce crime in the face of an unprecedented crisis. More than £300 million worth of extra funding has been pumped into the service since July 2019.

The funding is helping to more than double the recruitment of probation officers, from the usual annual intake of 600 trainee probation officers to 1,000 last year with plans to recruit a record 1,500 this financial year. This will mean staff can keep a closer eye on the most dangerous individuals and ensure many more take up the opportunity to reform.

The Probation Workforce Strategy was published in July 2020, the three-year overview details ambition for a positive, inclusive and diverse workforce and sets out how HMPPS will invest this across prisons and the community in six areas; skills, recruitment, retention, diversity, leadership, and wellbeing. Alongside this work, HMPPS is working closely with PS regions and specialist recruitment agencies to address employment market challenges, particularly in difficult to recruit areas, and is working towards a new approach to raise professional standards and fully recognise probation qualifications.

Prisoners' Property

Following a pause in the development of the new Prisoners' Property policy framework due to Covid-19, a meeting with IMB representatives took place in August 2020. The feedback received from those members was considered alongside the comments received from other stakeholders, and comments from subsequent operational engagement. HMPPS has now circulated the draft framework with internal and external stakeholders, including the IMB Secretariat and the IMB representatives previously consulted, and the comments received are being considered. The framework is now expected to be published early 2022.

The framework will provide greater direction and standardisation on a national basis and has been designed with procedural justice at its core. It strengthens guidance on known problem areas such as volumetric control and seeks to ensure prisoners' property is managed efficiently, effectively, consistently and with care and respect. While national digital improvements to property processes are being explored, the nature of that work means that any digital changes are likely to be longer-term and as such will not be part of the forthcoming framework.

Locally at HMP Lowdham Grange, staff will follow up property related complaints.

New Contract for Lowdham Grange

A competition to identify the most suitable operator for the new contract has commenced that will encourage and measure the most innovative and cohesive programmes of rehabilitation and care as its outcomes. In parallel, NHSE/I will be considering the prison Healthcare Needs Assessment, in terms of response and delivery on the key components of health and well-being. These contracts will complement each other and enable the people in prison to progress through the requirements of their sentence plan.