



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Bure
Jaguar Drive
Badersfield
Norwich
NR10 5GB

MoJ ref: SUB97270

28 June 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP BURE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 AUGUST 2020 – 31 JULY 2021**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 July 2021. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work, especially as you have had illness among your members, you continue to have a number of vacancies and as Covid-19 placed constraints on your monitoring.

I was saddened to hear there were eight deaths in custody during the reporting year, seven of which were due to natural causes. As you are aware the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) carry out independent investigations into deaths in custody and I would like to assure the Board my officials take recommendations from the PPO very seriously

I understand the Board's concerns about prisoners serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP). Every effort continues to be made to locate an IPP prisoner to a prison best placed to meet their sentence planning needs in terms of interventions as promptly as is reasonably possible. Whilst an IPP prisoner may have their parole reviewed at least every two years, depending on the specifics of individual cases, a transfer would still be considered to access a progression opportunity where it does not disrupt an impending parole hearing date. Prisons will otherwise seek to progress IPP prisoners at the earliest opportunity following the conclusion of a parole review. In addition to my predecessor's response last year, the delivery of offender behaviour programmes was affected by the pandemic restrictions with deliver ceasing nationally before reintroduction in smaller groups to control the spread of the virus and keep staff and prisoners safe. As the regime at HMP Bure continues to progress delivery will expand as the return of larger group sizes will provide more programme places throughout the course of this financial year.

The commitment of HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to do all that it can to support the progression of IPP prisoners has delivered a substantial reduction in the numbers that are in custody which was at its highest in 2012 at over 6,000. Despite the challenges that Covid-19 presented, the latest published national figures at the end of March 2022 show the unreleased IPP population standing at 1,554. This is a reduction from 1,784 at the end of March 2021 demonstrating that opportunities remained available to IPP prisoners wishing to progress. These efforts are continuing through initiatives such as case reviews for those prisoners who are struggling to progress to help identify the most appropriate pathway for the individual. A bespoke and regularly refreshed IPP action plan includes a work stream that is overseeing the specialist progression regimes, which give prisoners a chance to develop and test their

ability to manage their risks and lives in an environment of increasing freedoms and responsibilities. There are also a broad range of work streams aimed at both the progression towards a safe release, and towards the sustainability of that release, following a positive parole outcome.

However, it is important to note, that as the number of IPP prisoners who have never been released continues to decrease the proportion of those that remain in prison who have committed more serious offences and whose cases are complex grows. These prisoners are still assessed as posing a high risk of committing further violent or sexual offences and have a complex set of risks and needs which must be addressed before the independent Parole Board consider that risk can be safely managed in the community. Prisoners must also be willing to address their individual risks, which is why some prisoners spend a number of years in custody after completing their tariff. This is not a simple task, but HMPPS continues to offer them the opportunities to reduce their identified risks to the point that the Parole Board determines that they can be safely released and managed in the community.

It was pleasing to receive your comments that prisoners continue to receive fair and humane treatment and that there are good relationships between staff and prisoners. I was encouraged to read about the recognition given to the safer custody team for their support to prisoners and families and that incidents of violence and self-harm have reduced. It was reassuring to note that the joint working between staff, partners and prisoners has been invaluable to keep everyone at the prison safe during the pandemic, such as the monthly residents council prioritising wellbeing and that prisoners were appreciative of the range of activities in the open air put on by gym staff during Covid-19 restrictions. I note the Board were also grateful to those members of staff who have willingly taken time out of their busy schedules to respond to varied requests for information. I too am grateful to everyone working at the prison for their continued hard work and professionalism during these challenging times. It was also pleasing to read that prisoners have an appetite for the distance learning opportunities that are available to improve their future prospects on release and I was encouraged to note the efforts made to keep the residential accommodation clean and transform this environment with colour and artwork.

I note you have raised some other issues in your report for HMPPS to address which 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 Bure.

Yours ever,



VICTORIA ATKINS MP

**HMP BURE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 AUGUST 2020 – 31 JULY 2021**

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

In-cell Telephony

HMPPS recognises the importance of having in-cell technology across the prison estate as it aids access to family ties, friends and support networks. Due to the reduced time out of cell which prisoners received during the Covid-19 pandemic to control the spread of the virus and keep safe and prisoners safe, this exacerbated access to communal wing telephones. However, as the regime at HMP Bure continues to improve following restrictions so does the access to communal wing telephones. Installing infrastructure into the prison environment is complex and can take up to 12 months to install in-cell telephony into each prison. As of April 2022, in-cell telephony has been implemented in 71% of prisons within the public closed estate and installation at further sites is continuing at pace. Funding is not currently available for HMP Bure but there is a focus on securing additional funding and HMP Bure will be added to the scope of works when funds become available.

Residential Unit 7

It is recognised that the heating in Residential Unit 7 needs major maintenance and replacement work, despite servicing and cleaning of the in-cell ventilation systems being completed in August 2021. Funding was obtained in previous financial years for the necessary work, but the project had to be cancelled due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. MoJ Property are currently confirming the costs again to complete the required work and once established will seek approval to complete the work during this financial year.

In addition, it is acknowledged that cells on residential Unit 7 remain equipped with bunk beds, however, these cells are only being occupied by one prisoner rather than two. As indicated to the Board previously the intention is not to crowd Residential Unit 7 unless it becomes absolutely necessary and removal of the bunkbeds is not a maintenance priority.