



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Stocken
Stocken Hall Road
Rutland
LE15 7RD

MoJ ref: SUB 92826

6 January 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP STOCKEN: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MAY 2020 – 30 APRIL 2021**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 April 2021. 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 and Covid-19 impacted on your ability to gather information during the reporting year. I was saddened to hear there were six deaths in custody, three of which were natural causes with two of those being related to Covid-19. My officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I understand the Board's continued concern about the capacity within the open estate to allow Category D prisoners to progress. Further to last year's response, it is recognised that there is high demand for Category D places across the estate, not just at HMP Stocken, with many Category D prisoners being held in closed conditions. The Government's announcement to commit over £4 billion capital funding will make significant progress in delivering 18,000 additional prison places across England and Wales by the mid-2020s. This includes a project to deliver 660 new Category D places by expanding six existing Category D estate prisons through the addition of further houseblock units. Sites have been selected in consultation with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Prison Population Management and are based on highest demand, with site surveys establishing the operational feasibility of expansion. The six Category D prisons identified are HMP/YOI Stanford Hill 160 places; HMP Springhill 120 places; HMP/YOI Hatfield 60 places; HMP Leyhill 120 places; HMP Ford 120 places; and HMP/YOI Sudbury 120 places. Whilst the safety of the public is the highest priority, to prevent future victims, the ability to test prisoners in open conditions as they approach the end of their sentence is a critical step in their reintegration into society. Providing these new Category D places will improve the options for the staged rehabilitation in supervised conditions and offering significant advantages in safe management and resettlement compared with direct release from a closed prison.

Despite your concern, it was pleasing to receive your comments commending the Governor's leadership and the work of staff during challenging and uncertain times throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. It was encouraging to note that prisoners were treated fairly and humanely and there remains positive relationships between staff and prisoners despite the need for restricted regimes to control the spread of the virus. I too am grateful to everyone working at the prison for their effort and professionalism during this difficult time. I was reassured to read that the prison is safe where drug use, violence and use of force has reduced. I was also encouraged to read about the Hope Project providing in-cell canvas painting and the

prisons progress during 2021 to increase the purposeful activity available to prisoners in excess of 35 hours per week.

I note you have raised one local matter in your report about regime progression. The Board will be pleased to note that the prison has now moved Stage 1 of the [National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services](#) recovery. The Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues to provide high quality work and education, that changes lives and reduces reoffending. 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 Stocken.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Victoria Atkins', enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

VICTORIA ATKINS MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Recategorisation

There are complex and wide-ranging issues involved in transferring prisoners and allocation decisions must reflect both the specific needs and circumstances of the prisoner, as well as the operating environment and range of services at the receiving prison. Within the context of these often competing operational and logistical demands, HMPPS Population Management Unit seeks to ensure that prisoners who have been accepted for transfer are moved as soon as is practical. However, the Covid-19 pandemic is having a lasting impact on the adult male estate. To support reception prisons to serve the courts, maximise available capacity and ensure prisoners are accessing the required offending behaviour courses, some prisoners in the resettlement cohort are required to remain in training prisons in the interim.

As indicated by the Minister, there is high demand for Category D places across the estate, not just at HMP Stocken, with many Category D prisoners being held in closed conditions. HMP Stocken has over 90 prisoners that have been categorised as Category D and are waiting for a space in the open estate. The prison continues to attempt to progress prisoners at the earliest opportunity, but the average wait is around five months to transition to the open estate, with longer waits for prisoners in the South East. It is also recognised that there can be challenges in agreeing transfers for those prisoners returning to Category B conditions due to space and the individual's circumstances. Where any transfer issues do occur the National Allocation Protocol has an escalation route through operational line management and senior management to try to resolve these. Where segregation is used to hold prisoners awaiting transfer they are reviewed regularly by a multidisciplinary team to ensure that the location remains suitable for their wellbeing.

Resettlement

Where progressive prisoner moves do occur, these are consistently being completed in line with the offender flows with a success rate of approximately 90% across the estate. In all other instances the Probation Service provides commissioned rehabilitative services for sentenced prisoners wherever they are held and released. There are no plans to increase funding for training prisons to carry out resettlement work, but HMP Stocken and the North Midlands Prison Group are collaborating with Probation colleagues to ensure there is resettlement support and improvements have been made in a number of areas that offer guidance to those who are being released from HMP Stocken, such as a dedicated careers advice service and continued support for transitioning back to family life through Lincolnshire Action Trust, the family services provider. In addition, HMPPS is still in the process of realigning offender flows and creating additional capacity in the resettlement estate, once HMP Five Wells opens the number of prisoners at HMP Stocken awaiting a resettlement space should decline.

Programmes

HMP Stocken is resourced to deliver moderate and high intensity offending behaviour programmes (OBPs), with a focus on those convicted of violent offences. During the height of the pandemic group delivery of programmes were stopped nationally, however significant progress has been made to reinstate programme delivery under the National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services. The number of places has been impacted by the regime restrictions due to the need to deliver in small groups or on a one to one basis to control the spread of the virus, but places have continued to increase as restrictions

have eased. Delivery of Thinking Skills Programme, RESOLVE, Kaizen Intimate Partner Violence and Kaizen General Violence have continued during 2021.

HMP Stocken initially proposed providing 56 programmes in April 2021 which has increased to 75 in September 2021 and is 70% of their full delivery capacity. The prison is also now able to deliver programmes face to face in larger groups of six. Data has been collated nationally during the pandemic to monitor the number of prisoners waiting to access OBPs and this indicates that the places being offered at HMP Stocken enables the highest priority prisoners to access the programmes they need. New facilitators have also recently been recruited and once trained this will further strengthen the number of OBPs on offer at HMP Stocken over the final quarter of the year.