



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Parc
Heol Hopcyn John
Bridgend, South Wales
CF35 6AP

MoJ ref: SUB 95038

8 March 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI PARC: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORTS
FOR 1 MARCH 2020 – 28 FEBRUARY 2021**

Thank you for your Board's reports for the year ending 28 February 2021. I understand the former Lord Chancellor, Sir Robert Buckland QC, met the Director and staff when he visited HMP/YOI Parc on 19 August 2021 and I hope this proved useful. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you operated with a severely depleted complement of Board members during an unprecedented reporting period. I was saddened to hear there were five deaths in custody during the reporting year. My officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I appreciate the Board's concerns about prioritising vaccines for operational prison staff. Although HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) did propose that prison operational staff were given priority status when vaccines became available, this recommendation was not accepted by the independent Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Along with the other UK nations, Public Health Wales and the Welsh Government have followed the advice of the JCVI and have taken an age-based approach to vaccine prioritisation, one of the strongest factors linked to mortality, morbidity and hospitalisations. Access to all vaccinations and boosters for prisoners will be offered in accordance with NHS policy and in line with the community. Prison staff will access all vaccinations and the boosters via vaccination services in the community. Any potential, future prioritisation would need to take account of clinical guidance available at the time.

Although it was a very difficult and challenging reporting year, it was encouraging to receive your comments about the outstanding effort and dedication of all staff during the Covid-19 pandemic in managing the welfare and safety of prisoners. I was further encouraged to note the positive outcome of the education quality assurance audit, and the hard work and dedication of the Offender Management Unit to continue to meet its commitments despite the challenges faced and redeployment of staff.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the staff on the Young Persons Unit in achieving a significantly reduced number of acts of violence, their engagement with young people to operate an orderly environment, and the approach taken with conflict resolution.

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/YOI Parc.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Victoria Atkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Victoria" and the surname "Atkins" clearly distinguishable.

VICTORIA ATKINS MP

HMP/YOI PARC: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 1 MARCH 2020 – 28 FEBRUARY 2021

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Pandemic Measures

Detailed national guidance and protocols are in place to limit the potential for virus spread as a result of prisoner transfers. This includes testing regimes for prisoners prior to transfer and where necessary isolation on arrival from any site deemed to be an Amber or Red level risk. The guidance covers all aspects of movement of prisoners including Court transfers.

Secure Video Calls

Secure social video calls were introduced as an emergency measure to help maintain family contact for those held in custody when social visits were suspended due to Covid-19. As mentioned in the recent Prison Strategy White Paper, HMPPS is committed to continue to offer secure social video calling and these will operate alongside, not as a replacement for, face-to-face social visits.

The software has a range of built-in security features, for example: all visitors need to verify their identity and be approved before a call takes place. Providing proof of identity is a necessity for face-to-face visits and so this is no different. If an unapproved face appears on the call, the call will automatically pause. In addition to the software security features, prison staff monitor calls via a separate terminal and can pause or terminate calls if necessary. Unfortunately, free-to-use video calling applications do not offer the level of protection required in prisons and would not be suitable.

Offending Behaviour Programmes

HMPPS is committed to reducing reoffending and offers a range of accredited offending behaviour programmes (OBPs) designed to address the risks and rehabilitative needs of individuals convicted of a sexual offence. Not all men convicted of sexual offending will be eligible or suitable for accredited OBPs, and some may not be ready or willing to engage in rehabilitative work. Accredited offending behaviour programmes are generally targeted at those individuals who are assessed as presenting a medium or higher risk of reoffending. Delivery sites will specialise in delivering different types of accredited programmes, with each programme requiring specific training to develop expertise in its delivery. Further, some programmes require different configurations of staff to be available to deliver appropriately, and sexual offending behaviour programmes in particular involve specialist psychology-trained staff as part of the delivery team. This, altogether, means that there is some requirement to move OBP-eligible prisoners to those sites that specialise in delivering a particular type of accredited programme.

As well as a willingness to participate and being eligible, programmes require between 6- and 18-months' time left to serve to be completed depending on the specific programme identified. Where individuals are identified for a programme that is not provided at a site, transfer arrangements can be pursued to move someone to an appropriate specialist delivery site. HMP/YOI Parc is close to HMPs Usk, Channings Wood and Ashfield which are designated specialist sexual offending behaviour programme sites (depending on the programme required), as well as a number of other specialist sexual offending programme delivery sites nationally. On HMP/YOI Parc's most recent OBP waiting list, only one individual was identified as requiring a sexual offending behaviour programme.