



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Leyhill
Wotton-under-Edge
Gloucestershire
GL12 8BT

8 August 2022

Dear Chair

**HMP LEYHILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2021 – 31 JANUARY 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 January 2022. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work. I was saddened to hear there were three deaths in custody during the reporting year. 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 appreciate the Board's ongoing concerns around prisoners serving indeterminate sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). Whilst our main priority is to protect the public, I would like to reassure you we remain committed to doing all we can to support the progression of prisoners serving IPP sentences to reduce their risk to the point where the Parole Board determines that they may be safely released. Our commitment to the IPP action plan continues, which includes the delivery of specialist progression regimes that gives prisoners a chance to develop and test their ability to manage their risks and lives in an environment of increasing freedoms and responsibilities.

Further to the figures from last year, the number of IPP prisoners who have never been released stood at 1,554 at the end of March 2022. This is a reduction from 1,784 at the end of March 2021 and good progress considering that the population of unreleased prisoners serving IPP sentences was over 6,000 in 2012. As this population of prisoners continues to decrease, the proportion of those who remain in prison who committed more serious offences and whose cases are complex grows. These prisoners are still assessed to pose a high risk of committing further violent or sexual offences and have a complex set of risks and needs. These must be addressed before the Parole Board can consider that their risk to the public is safely manageable in the community under probation supervision. HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) will continue to work with these individuals to offer them opportunities to reduce their identified risks. For these reasons, there are some prisoners serving an IPP sentence who have spent a significant number of years in custody after completing their tariff.

Our commitment to increase Approved Premises spaces for high-risk offenders by 200 beds is on schedule to be delivered by March 2024. By March this year HMPPS achieved its initial target of creating an additional 100 bed spaces. The following Approved Premises are local to HMP Leyhill: Ryecroft, Brigstocke Road, Bridge House and Ashley House, and all are accessible by public transport. HMPPS also launched a new transitional accommodation service providing up to twelve weeks' basic

accommodation and support for those leaving prison. Initially launched in five probation regions, HMPPS is rolling out the service across England and Wales, supporting prison leavers and people on probation who would otherwise lack stable accommodation. The competition for new contracts went live on 18 May 2022 and the service is due to be up and running by the end of the year.

Following the unification of the Probation Service in June 2021, responsibility for the delivery of all probation services moved to Probation Service Regional Probation Directors and I can assure the Board quality has not been lost. Key probation interventions such as Accommodation, Women's Services, and Personal Wellbeing, are delivered by Commissioned Rehabilitative Service (CRS) providers to sentenced people in prison and on probation. Under the new approach, all resettlement prisons will have an embedded resettlement provision managed by or otherwise linked to a Probation Delivery Unit. The embedded pre-release teams will provide services not currently available via CRS. Additional CRS contracts will commence across a number of Regions in Autumn 2022.

There has been a transition period following unification which affected the delivery of resettlement services in some prisons. Regional Probation Directors are working to stabilise the pre-release teams and CRS provision to secure improved service delivery to all people in prison. The embedded pre-release teams will provide immediate resettlement needs and pre-release support for all people in prison including people out of area.

Although monitoring proved difficult for the second consecutive reporting period, it was encouraging to receive your comments about the atmosphere at the prison despite the challenges due to the pandemic, and that the prison is a safe environment with continued low levels of self-harm incidents and violence. I was pleased to note the initiatives taken with education provision, and the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Team that is indicative of an inclusive community.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor 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 Leyhill.


STUART ANDREW MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoner's Property

HMP Leyhill will continue to work with all sending establishments to ensure that property issues are minimised. It is acknowledged HMP Leyhill continues to experience prisoners arriving with excessive property and the prison will address this at a local level. The Governor assures the Board that any items of missing property is investigated immediately with the sending prison.

On a national level, the introduction of digitally recorded Person Escort Records, including property tags, will assist with investigations for property that is lost in transit with Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) suppliers. HMPPS is also considering what more can be done to encourage prisoners to send out or dispose of excess items to reduce the amount of their property that cannot transfer with them. Steps are also being taken to ensure a consistent approach when prisons forward on any excess items to prisoners at their new establishments after transfers have taken place.

The new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework is currently going through the necessary clearance processes and will be published as soon as that is concluded. The Framework aims to ensure that property is handled with efficiency, care and respect and that staff and prisoners are clear on the arrangements in place including stronger guidance to ensure volumetric control limits are respected and prisoners do not build up excessive amounts of property.