



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
Stuart Andrew MP
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Onley
Rugby
Warwickshire
CV23 8AP

MoJ ref: SUB099343

31 August 2022

Dear Chair

**HMP ONLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MARCH 2021 – 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 28 February 2022. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work, especially as you continued to operate with a number of vacancies.

I note the Board's continued concerns about category D (open prison) spaces. HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) recognises the high demand for category D places for adult males has resulted in many of these prisoners being held in closed conditions and how this affects their access to services such as release on temporary license (ROTL).

Further to last year's response, I can confirm that we intend to deliver 660 additional open prison places through the expansion of the category D estate. These expansions will be delivered through adding one or two 60-bed units at five existing category D prisons. They are HMPs Ford (120 places), Hatfield (60 places), Leyhill (120 places), Springhill (120 places), Standford Hill (120 places) and Sudbury (120 places). All sites were carefully selected based on demand and utilising relevant information. At HMP Onley, I understand that since January 2022 there has been an improvement in the prison's ability to move prisoners to open conditions once assessed as suitable.

Turning to recruitment and retention of prison officers and probation staff, there is no defined enhanced payments scheme that covers both prisons and probation. Market Supplements are currently in place for Band 3 Prison Officers and Band 2 Officer Support Grades (OSGs) in some prisons where recruitment and retention is most challenging. Decisions around adding prisons to the suite of those receiving Market Supplements is subject to the approval of HM Treasury, and the bar for obtaining such approvals is set high. HMPPS has been challenged by both HM Treasury and the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) to reduce the reliance on Market Supplements (which are technically time limited) and to establish a more sustainable approach to pay. In this context the Government has recently announced a pay award which gives at least a 4% increase to all prison staff, and significantly more than this to OSGs and Prison Officers who are on modernised pay arrangements. This is expected to positively effect both recruitment and retention. Separate talks with recognised trade unions around the probation pay award are ongoing.

The recruitment of trainee probation officers onto the Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) learning programme is not an issue as PQiP vacancies are successfully filled at the twice-yearly intakes. The lack of probation officers working in HMP Onley may therefore be attributable to a number of other factors, including the challenge of opening a new prison (HMP Five Wells), and I understand the shortages have now been addressed. Prison Officer recruitment is supported by a number of initiatives, including a fast-track scheme to support armed forces staff and veterans to become prison officers. Additionally, the First Deployment National Start campaign offers an incentive package for hard to recruit to prisons. There is currently an 'always on' approach to recruitment activity for HMP Onley which is also receiving a tailored approach to recruitment advertising through a variety of channels. This is to help raise awareness of HMPPS as an employer in the local community and highlight the breadth of roles available.

To improve prison officer retention, work is being undertaken to embed an outreach strategy to ensure all candidates are engaged with prior to joining the service, and that they have the opportunity to visit the prison and ask any questions that they may have around the role and HR issues. Additionally, HMPPS has implemented a 'supporting each other' initiative which includes New Colleague Mentor and Buddy Schemes which are being implemented across all prison regions throughout 2022–23. HMP Onley has also been selected to trial two pioneering pilot schemes that will widen the appeal of the role to a wider demographic. For probation staff, HMPPS launched three career pathways for staff approaching retirement to help encourage them to remain in service for longer if they choose to do so. A national and standardised approach to exit interviews has been introduced to understand the key drivers of attrition across the Probation Service to better target improvement activity.

Although it was another challenging reporting period, it was encouraging to receive your comments about the prison's efforts in providing prisoners with as much time out of cell as possible whilst maintaining infection control protocols. I was further encouraged to hear about improved cell-bell response times, the professionalism of the Care and Separation Unit staff in dealing with prisoners with complex and extreme behaviours and the reduction in complaints about disability despite the number of registered disabled prisoners remaining constant at 20%.

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 Onley.



STUART ANDREW MP

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoner Re-categorisations

Category C to B transfers

The National Allocation Protocol (NAP) was introduced to support national offender flows. Reception prisons will no longer be able to accommodate routine transfers of prisoners who are categorised to a higher security category. Arrangements should be made to transfer these prisoners to establishments of a higher security category within the training or resettlement estates. Prisoners who have been re-categorised from C to B in the category C estate and have more than 28-days time left to serve should transfer to a prison in the Long Term and High Security Estate. If a transfer cannot be secured, the escalation route within the NAP should be followed.

C to D transfers

The availability of category D spaces has been impacted by the requirement to close a number accommodation blocks in the open estate over the course of 2021 which no longer met statutory fire safety standards. The impact on the overall open estate has been managed through replacing some of these places, particularly in the south, with existing temporary accommodation which was on some sites already as part HMPPS' Covid contingencies and in other sites, with new temporary accommodation. HMPPS is also investing £3.8 billion over the next three years to deliver 20,000 additional, modern prison places including 2,000 temporary prison places across England and Wales by the mid-2020s. As mentioned in the Minister's letter, this portfolio of work will deliver 660 additional places through expansion of the category D estate at a number of sites across the country.

Offender Behaviour

As part of the rolling down of the Resolve programme, the guidance provided to prisons was that the Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) would be the medium-risk offer for prisoners convicted of violent offences, or in cases where the offender presents with Learning Disabilities and Challenges, the New Me Strengths (NMS) course. For prisoners assessed as high or above risk level should continue to be considered for Kaizen, or where the offender presents with Learning Disabilities and Challenges, Becoming New Me Plus (BNM+). For prisoners convicted of gang-related, Identity Matters is available. For intimate partner violence offences, Building Better Relationships, Kaizen, BNM+, and NMS are all available. Accredited offending behaviour programmes however are not suitable for all individuals.

Those individuals identified as eligible and motivated to undertake an accredited offending behaviour programme, that is not delivered at HMP Onley, can be referred to a relevant specialist delivery site. HMP Onley continues to offer TSP in the interim whilst the prison reviews its population needs and considers the interventions required to best meet this need, including Kaizen and Identity Matters programmes (one-to-one gang related programme).

Prisoners' Property

The new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework was published on 1 August 2022 with an implementation date of 5 September 2022. The Framework is the result of extensive consultation, including with the IMB. It has been designed with procedural justice at its core and aims to ensure consistency and fairness and enhance prisoners' satisfaction with processes and outcomes. Given the nature of property, and the movement of prisoners between establishments, the Framework looks to provide greater direction and standardisation on a national basis. It strengthens processes in relation to the main problem areas

identified by IMBs and staff including the handling of valuable property, managing cell clearances, compliance with volumetric control and forwarding on excess property following a prisoner's transfer.

Maintenance

As mentioned in last year's response, a major capital bid to replace all the windows on A to E wings and G and H wings was given initial approval in January 2019. This will be considered for delivery when the programme of works for 2023/24 is developed over the autumn. In the meantime, HMPPS will continue to repair windows and broken panes of glass.

As the Board will appreciate, demands for maintenance are greater than the available funding even with the significant increases achieved in the last two Spending Reviews. We therefore have to prioritise works very carefully to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity, decency and sustainability.

Site Security

A procurement exercise re-commenced for a national X-Ray baggage scanner contract for supply and maintenance earlier this year. HMPPS can advise that the tender is in the final stages, with testing of the machines and necessary evaluations to be undertaken shortly. We are on track for awarding the contract late summer/early autumn. Rollout of the scanners to HMP Onley and other identified Enhanced Gate Security (EGS) sites will start thereafter, to be completed by the end of the current financial year. We will work with the successful bidder to finalise an installation schedule once the contract is in place and will be contacting individual sites to make arrangements in due course. HMPPS would like to assure the Board that we are working at pace to progress the procurement as quickly as possible to complete the EGS programme.