

██████████  
Vice Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Long Lartin  
South Littleton  
Evesham  
WR11 8TZ

**MoJ Ref:** SUB88051

26 May 2021

Dear ██████████,

**HMP LONG LARTIN: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 JANUARY 2020 – 31 DECEMBER 2020**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 December 2020. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in capturing these helpful observations, especially as you were short of Board members. I was saddened to hear there had been a death in custody; every death is a tragedy and my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I acknowledge the Board's repeated concern about the standards of sanitation at HMP Long Lartin. It is disappointing that it has not proved possible to install in-cell sanitation on the old-style wings A-D and there are no definitive plans to have them demolished and replaced. As part of the long-term strategy for the prison estate that is currently in development, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) will be considering the continued use of night sanitation systems and the feasibility of replacing them with in-cell sanitation.

Regarding HMP Long Lartin's failing night sanitation system, I am pleased that significant funding has been awarded to replace it with a new reliable access control system which will improve prisoner access to toilet facilities at night. This project is underway and is anticipated to be completed by April 2022. Alongside the installation of the new system, the bathroom facilities (toilets, wash basins, showers) will also be replaced / modernised improving decency across all four affected wings. Other major improvements are planned for HMP Long Lartin, as the Board are aware, which will take place over the next three years; this work will also include replacement of a sewage treatment plant.

I am grateful to the Board for highlighting some other key issues in your report particularly around segregation and the mental health of people in prison. As identified, Covid-19 restrictions have understandably impacted on some progressive work with individuals held in the Care, Separation and Reintegration Unit (CSRU). This should improve as HMP Long Lartin moves into the recovery phase. I hope to reassure the Board that there is now a dedicated Senior Psychologist resource in the CSRU who is working alongside HMP Long Lartin's operational team to develop a progressive, psychologically informed unit. As the Board are aware, unfortunately the plans to recruit a Complex Nurse to the CSRU have been deferred by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I). However, it is hoped that, as Covid-19 pressure on the NHS reduces, this important role will be filled.

In terms of improving efficiency across the pathway for transfers to a secure hospital under the Mental Health Act and remissions, new performance metrics are due to be implemented during 2021-22 to

monitor referrals, assessments and transfers. The strategic direction continues to be the maintenance of existing hospital bed capacity, not an increase, albeit with improved geographical distribution.

NHS-led mental health Provider Collaboratives are key in managing the patient pathway and addressing the needs of their local population. Work is also underway to develop a whole-pathway approach to the care of people in prison. This includes diverting vulnerable people from the criminal justice system where appropriate, and reconnecting those leaving custody with health services in the community. A regional fortnightly meeting with the Provider Collaboratives, NHSE/I specialised commissioning, prison mental health providers and HMPPS has been established since August 2020. In addition to this, there will be ongoing monitoring to ensure that the needs of those in segregation units are highlighted to aid prioritisation discussions within the units which make up the collaboratives to support timely admission. Although transfer waiting times currently remain a national issue, the Long Term and High Security Estate (LTHSE) will continue to work with high secure hospitals to improve outcomes.

More broadly, a White Paper titled, Reforming the Mental Health Act, was published on 13 January 2021, which builds on recommendations made by Professor Sir Simon Wessely's Independent Review in 2018. The White Paper provides a commitment to take forward the Review's recommendation to introduce a statutory time limit of 28 days for transfers to secure mental health hospitals when someone becomes unwell in custody or experiences a relapse in an existing condition.

Turning to the Board's comments about counter-terrorist check (CTC) vetting, I am pleased the Board noted some improvement during the reporting year. The average time taken for CTC clearance checks to be completed is currently around 35 working days, and like with most services timescales, these were impacted by the pandemic. The vetting team have advised they are not aware of any significant cases where the timescale has reached 90 days or more and no specific incidences have been reported by vetting applicants or staff at HMP Long Lartin. Delays are normally the result of applicants failing to complete the documentation which times out after a designated period of time. The application then requires re-opening which applicants are not always initiating.

Lastly, turning to some positive comments captured in your report, it was encouraging to hear staff communicated effectively about changes to the regime and tailored the regime to the particular circumstances of HMP Long Lartin. I welcome the efforts made throughout lockdown to provide an active Listener scheme, a full gym service and an additional visit per month. I am pleased to hear that HMP Long Lartin continues to demonstrate favourable levels of violence compared with other prisons in the LTHSE.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Chalk', with a stylized, cursive script.

**ALEX CHALK MP**

## **HMP LONG LARTIN: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2020 – 31 DECEMBER 2020**

### **HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report**

#### **Facilities Maintenance and Repairs**

The backlog of maintenance and repairs has improved significantly in the last reporting year despite Covid-19 restrictions. The Amey team and HMPPS Prison Maintenance Group team are continuing their efforts to ensure work/repairs are addressed in a timely manner. Amey is working hard to rectify the conditions on the grounds of the prison, both internally and externally. Cutting the overgrown grass, brambles, and weeding has begun and is looking much tidier.

During the growing season, Amey intends to make use of a contractor to help maintain grass levels to a reasonable standard to ensure it is well kept. During the initial Covid-19 national lockdown pest control were unable to visit the site resulting in vermin levels being unchecked. To tackle the infestation, a riddance programme was introduced, however, this had little effect. Following on from this, aggressive baiting and treatment programmes were introduced, and this has led to a significant reduction in the number of vermin on site. Control measures will continue until the issue is resolved.

#### **Staffing**

Owing to the refurbishment project requiring a wing decant and a reduction in the prison population, enabling staff to be redeployed to HMP Long Lartin (approximately one year), staffing levels have returned to normal. Staff wellbeing remains a priority and time is being invested in staff support sessions. Recruitment of prison officers to HMP Long Lartin remains challenging, the MoJ is now engaged in an active recruitment campaign for the prison.

#### **Segregation Reviews**

LTHSE has not reinstated virtual segregation reviews but have implemented a new meeting which brings together Heads of Segregation in dispersal prisons. This collaborative approach enables discussions to take place about certain individuals who are considered suitable for a transfer. The Governor and his team have worked to develop relationships with other dispersal and Category B training establishments and is working proactively to enable meaningful transfers to take place. This has led to a reduction in the average occupancy number of the CSRU.

#### **Psychologically Informed Planned Environment (PIPE)**

A range of pathway options are available nationally to support people in prison as they progress through the Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) pathway. PIPE services are one type of intervention available. OPD treatment interventions offer the most typical progression route for those completing a preparation service, however, there are many clinical and operational factors that could inhibit progression for prisoners with complex needs on the OPD pathway. It is essential that clinical judgement informs the most appropriate next step for those involved in the OPD pathway.

The progression of prisoners at HMP Long Lartin who are experiencing difficulties in finding suitable follow on services is being actively considered and supported by a range of multi-disciplinary practitioners from HMPPS jointly with NHSE/I. A joint approach between clinicians and offender managers is taking place to identify suitable options that meet the needs of the people in prison. The multi-disciplinary approach would include reviewing possibilities of re-categorisation where appropriate, consideration of hospital assessment where required, and convening case forums in situations where treatment services

have been deemed to be clinically inappropriate, following referral and assessment. This approach has seen successful moves for high complexity cases.