



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Frankland
Brasside
Durham
DH1 5YD

21 June 2023

De Chair.

**HMP FRANKLAND: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 DECEMBER
2021 – 30 NOVEMBER 2022**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 30 November 2022. I am very much aware of the amount of effort that goes into producing annual reports and thank you for providing a comprehensive picture of HMP Frankland over the reporting period, especially as you continued to operate with several vacancies. I understand that the former Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab, visited HMP Frankland on 3 February 2022 to see the first separation wing designed for terrorists and I hope this was helpful.

I was saddened to hear there were five deaths in custody during the reporting year due. 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 address below the specific points you have raised for my attention.

Healthcare staffing recruitment is a national issue across all aspects of the NHS at the moment due to nursing shortages, and the local healthcare provider (Spectrum Community Healthcare) has been proactively reviewing staffing levels and working practises within the prison. Recruitment has taken place and vacancies at HMP Frankland have reduced significantly. NHS England will continue to work with the local healthcare team to regularly review staffing levels and ensure health needs are met. The Board should now see a significant improvement in both staffing and the management of staff.

Strategically, NHS England has set up a programme of work as a response to the NHS England People Plan. The aim of the programme is to improve the recruitment and retention of a larger, more diverse, inclusive and representative workforce for all health and justice services and programmes. It has developed resources to help enable health and justice commissioners, providers and other stakeholders to address workforce issues. The programme's workstreams covered areas such as equality, attracting people to work in health and justice, commissioning for workforce development, communication and engagement, and also various innovative projects designed to support the recruitment and retention of people with lived experience.

Turning to prisoners' property, as many of the prisoners transferred to HMP Frankland are category A, they will have no opportunity to pack their own property prior to transfer. This often results in the individual having to wait for property to arrive at a later date. The new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework, implemented during September 2022, 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

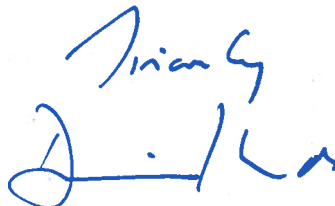
looks to provide greater direction and standardisation on a national basis. It strengthens processes in relation to the main problem areas identified by IMBs and staff including the handling of valuable property, managing cell clearances, compliance with volumetric control and forwarding on excess property following a prisoner's transfer.

The Framework is clear that Governors should ensure management checks are undertaken to have confidence that prisoners' property is being handled correctly and with care, and that property cards are being completed accurately and that the volume of property held by prisoners is checked regularly and does not become excessive. Staff at HMP Frankland will help address any concerns from individuals through liaising with sending establishments to follow up with queries and progress. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) also plans to undertake a review in due course to establish the impact of the new Framework.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that prisoners are treated with compassion, fairness and humanity. It was also pleasing to hear that staff in the segregation unit were named the 'team of the month' for July 2022 and that three prisoners from HMP Frankland had received a Platinum Award in the Koestler Awards. I note the prison's focus on soft skills including opportunities for prisoners to act as a 'buddy' for those who are less mobile, becoming a Listener (with support from the Samaritans) for prisoners in crisis and representing their wing or landing on the prisoner consultative committee. I was also encouraged to hear that, overall, prisoners speak highly of the staff within the workshops and generally appear to enjoy working there despite heating issues.

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 Frankland.



Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Ingress of Drugs

HMPPS is aware that drugs can undermine rehabilitation and fuel violence, and the illicit economy is linked to broader criminal networks. That is why the Prison Strategy White Paper (PSWP) outlined a commitment to ensuring a secure prison estate and a zero-tolerance to crime. This includes preventing illicit drugs being smuggled into the prison estate. Prisons are vulnerable to drug smuggling from a number of routes, including via the gate, reception, post, and smuggling by visitors and throwovers. Whilst the majority of prison staff are hardworking and dedicated, HMPPS recognises that a small minority may also be involved in the smuggling of drugs.

HMP Frankland has enhanced gate security (EGS) systems in place which enables the routine searching of staff and visitors. This includes the use of drug dogs, metal detectors and X-ray baggage scanners. The prison also has an X-ray body scanner, installed in 2019, which can be used to identify contraband internally smuggled by prisoners that could evade detection from normal searching practices. This is part of HMPPS' significant investment in prison security across the estate, including the £100 million Security Investment Programme (SIP). The SIP introduced a number of security measures to tackle the smuggling of illicit items, including drugs. An additional 75 X-ray body scanners resulted in full coverage across the entire closed adult male estate. Since October 2022, these additional scanners have recorded 28,626 positive scans, preventing items such as drugs from being internally smuggled into prisons. This funding also included installing EGS at 42 high risk prison sites (both private and public sector), implementing routine searching of staff and visitors. This includes 659 staff, 154 drugs dogs and over 200 pieces of equipment (archway and handheld metal detectors).

To prevent drugs such as psychoactive substances coming in through the mail, we have invested in an additional 50 drug trace detection machines, which will provide coverage across the public sector prison estate. This includes HMP Frankland that will benefit from next generation equipment. Our Counter Corruption Unit (CCU) proactively detects, disrupts and deters activities of staff suspected of wrongdoing. As part of the SIP, we increased the capacity of the CCU by recruiting 167 new staff including investigators based within Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU). Prison security is a key part of the cross-government 10-year combating drugs strategy, and we work with partners such as the police, National Crime Agency, and Crown Prosecution Service to collectively disrupt crime and to ensure that our evidence and investigations lead to more criminal justice outcomes.

Workshops Heating

The workshops have eleven heating units installed in the rooftop plant room. Each of these provides heating to different areas of the workshop facility and four of these have been replaced during the past few years. The remaining seven have been identified to be replaced and includes the consideration of a low/zero carbon solution. Currently three of these heaters are off-line awaiting repairs but should be reinstated once repairs are completed. A project to make the necessary upgrades to the workshop heating has been tendered and awarded to a contractor. This is now entering the design phase, after which a business case will require approval with the aim of completing delivery of this project by 2025.

Any further requests from the establishment will be carefully considered, however, it is worth noting that demands for maintenance are much greater than the available funding, Therefore, once a bid for a project

is received, HMPPS has to prioritise works very carefully to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity, decency and sustainability.

Older Prisoners

Further to last year's response, the Ministry of Justice and HMPPS are continuing to develop an Ageing Population Strategy, which will focus on improving services for older people in the criminal justice system in the areas of the physical environment, prison regime, health and care, and preparation for release and resettlement. Publication of the strategy is expected later this year.

At HMP Frankland, a member of the Senior Management Team is responsible for the management of older prisoners and an over 50's consultative group is in place. This forum also gives prisoners an opportunity to raise concerns and make suggestions on how resources can be focused to meet prisoners' needs. Separately, NHS England is committed to support all older prisons within HMP Frankland via a range of tailored health services. The healthcare provider will complete further health reviews for all prisoners over the age of 50, and they have a range of bespoke healthcare pathways available. NHS England has commissioned the charity Age UK to provide a Mental Wellbeing Service to all prisoners over the age of 50, including provision for delivering social groups to help with mental wellbeing and isolation, together with delivering age specific health promotion advice.

Pharmacy Provision

HMPPS has been trying to secure funding to upgrade the pharmacies and treatment rooms on A-D wings throughout the 2022/23 financial year. Unfortunately, funding was not available to complete these works within that financial year. New bids for funding have been resubmitted for consideration in the 2023/24 round of funding and HMPPS is currently awaiting a decision on financial allocations. HMPPS, NHS England, and the healthcare provider will work collaboratively to ensure any remedial work meets the necessary standards and requirements.