



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Lancaster Farms
Stone Row Head,
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Lancaster
LA1 3QZ

4 October 2023

Dear Chair,

**HMP LANCASTER FARMS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1
FEBRUARY 2022 – 31 JANUARY 2023**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 January 2023. I was saddened to hear there was a death in custody during the reporting year. I would like to assure the Board my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I appreciate the amount of effort that goes into producing annual reports and thank you for providing a comprehensive picture of HMP Lancaster Farms over the reporting period, especially with a small complement of Board members. I address below the specific points you have raised for my attention:

I note the Board's concerns about the mental healthcare provision. I hope to assure the Board that NHS England is currently in the process of re-tendering HMP Lancaster Farms' healthcare provision, which will see a new model deployed, with mental health as a separate contract to health and social care, enabling a more focused management and development of these services.

More broadly, the Government's published Draft Mental Health Bill (27 June 2022) includes a commitment to introduce a 28-day statutory time limit for transfers from prison to hospital for prisoners requiring mental health treatment under the Mental Health Act. This time limit mirrors that introduced in NHS England's good practice guidance, published in June 2021, starting at the point of an initial referral, and ending at the point of the prisoner's admission to hospital. To make the time-limit statutory, the Bill also introduces a statutory notice process to create a clear starting point for the 28-day period. It is envisaged these reforms will speed up access to specialist inpatient care and together with operational improvements, will ensure that people with severe mental health needs are able to access appropriate and timely support in the most appropriate setting.

Turning to prisoners serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP), HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has refreshed the original IPP Action Plan and this was published on 26 April 2023 and can be accessed here <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/39321/documents/192968/default/>. HMPPS key priority for the Action Plan is managing the sentences of those serving an IPP to a consistently high-quality, ensuring that the delivery of HMPPS systems and processes in every prison and probation region facilitates risk reduction and the prospect of progress towards a safe and sustainable release. This will include the delivery of specific interventions and services to enable sentence progression, rehabilitation, and effective resettlement for those who continue to serve the IPP sentence. At HMP Lancaster Farms, the Chaplaincy team has commenced IPP focus groups as another means to support these prisoners.

As the Board may be aware, the Committee's main recommendation was to undertake a full resentencing exercise of all remaining IPP offenders who had not yet had their license terminated. However, it remains the Government's long-held view that retrospectively changing the sentence which was lawfully passed would give rise to an unacceptable risk to public protection and that the IPP Action Plan, suitably updated, is the best option by which these offenders can progress towards safe release. As such, the Government rejected this recommendation and has no plans to conduct a resentencing exercise. The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice and his team, as a matter of priority, are reviewing all possible options and steps that may be open to address the IPP issue and looks forward to sharing more on this in due course.

Regarding the Board's comments about funding to maintain effective staffing levels, through the Prisons Strategy White Paper, we committed to recruiting 5,000 additional prison officers across public and private prisons by the mid-2020s. It is vital prisons are sufficiently resourced and we retain levels of experience that are fundamental to delivering quality outcomes in prisons. Against a challenging labour market, HMPPS continues to take steps to bolster recruitment and staff retention, and we have seen some indications of an improving resource picture nationally.

We know that a competitive staff pay, and reward package is also vital. The 2023/24 Prison Service Pay Award delivered a 5% increase for Band 7 - 12 Managers and Governors on modernised terms and fair and sustainable (F&S) conditions, and a 7% increase for Band 3 - 5 prison officers on modernised terms (F&S), this will raise the starting salary for an entry level prison officer (on the national rate, 39 hours with unsocial hours) from £30,702 to £32,851. HMPPS will monitor the effect of this significant investment. Recruitment activity is continuing at all sites with a current or future need, and we are increasing recruitment levels through several initiatives including an 'Advance into Justice' scheme which supports Armed Forces veterans and their partners into prison officer roles, including at HMP Lancaster Farms, and by fast-tracking people back into the service through the prison officer alumni scheme. HMPPS comments in response to other issues raised in your report (including detail about the retention strategy) are set out in the attached annex.

It was encouraging to receive your praise to the Governor and prison staff for working hard to provide a safe environment for prisoners at HMP Lancaster Farms and applauding the senior management team for their support to a transgender prisoner. Likewise, it was pleasing to hear about the new rehabilitation project 180 Crossfit programme and the first Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, that has unlocked potential.

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.

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 Lancaster Farms.

Yours sincerely,



Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation

HMP LANCASTER FARMS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2022 – 31 JANUARY 2023

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Self - Harm

The safety of those in our care continues to be a top priority. A revised version of the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) version 6 case management approach has been implemented across the prison estate, which as you are aware is used to support people at risk of suicide or self-harm in prison. Revisions in ACCT v6 include: a stronger emphasis on taking a person-centred approach; better multi-disciplinary team working; a consistent quality assurance process and an improved focus on identifying and addressing an individual's risks, triggers and protective factors.

To support the implementation of ACCT v6, we are developing and phasing in a new safety training package (Safety Support Skills training) for staff. It brings together related safety topics and encourages a joined-up approach to prison safety. Staff guidance has also been developed on understanding and supporting someone who is self-harming. This has drawn on guidance from the NHS England and third sector, academic research, learning from inpatient mental health services, prisoner focus groups and good practice examples from establishments.

Prolific self-harmers at HMP Lancaster Farms have a designated mental health worker and a prison offender manager who are fully involved in their care, and the team at HMP Lancaster Farms does their utmost to evolve innovative strategies to support those in need.

Retention Strategy

HMPPS has created a retention strategy to help stem attrition, which is linked to wider activities around employee experience, employee lifecycle and staff engagement at work. Alongside the strategy a retention toolkit has been introduced which identifies local, regional and national interventions against the drivers of attrition, which are utilised by Governors/Directors to ensure that they are embedding individual Retention Plans.

The Board may be aware, that in 2021 a new exit interview process was introduced to undertake in-depth conversations with staff regarding their reasons for leaving. This has enabled leaver trend data to be analysed. Since the launch of the retention strategy, toolkit and exit interview process in 2021, a new retention oversight process was introduced in February 2023 to target priority sites, these include establishments with the highest attrition rates and those that are a cause for concern due to increasing attrition. Other factors contribute to decisions on which establishments are prioritised and includes attendance and assaults on staff rates.

To aid retention, we have rolled out over 150 New Colleague Mentors (NCMs), to support the wellbeing of new colleagues, who we know are most likely to leave the service. NCMs provide them with a welcoming and supportive onboarding, induction, and early career journey experience. They also provide informal peer-to-peer support.

The induction period at HMP Lancaster Farms is very comprehensive and new prisoner officers are supported by NCM(s). Likewise, the recognition scheme to reward staff is well used.

Purposeful Activity

HMPPS has developed a new National Regime Model for prisons formally launched in April 2023, where prisons are required to develop a vision of the regime they aspire to deliver following a national prescribed design process. This vision must contain mandated regime elements. The vision will become a local target for prisons to work towards and Governors will review their progress quarterly. A new vision will be set at the start of each reporting year to drive continuous improvement. A new local regime lead will assume responsibility for overseeing this annual design and delivery cycle. These staff will receive a new national training programme to become subject matter experts in regime.

HMP Lancaster Farms delivers two accredited offending behaviour programmes currently, the Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) and through Kainos the contracted service, the Challenge to Change Programme. In 2022/23, delivery was maximised building on recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic period where delivery was significantly curtailed due to the group activity nature of the course. Places provided to prisoners eligible and suitable for the programmes exceeded initial plans and completions rate met for TSP. Both programme delivery offers for 2023/24 again have been maximised to ensure the highest amount of places are available for the resource investment.

Additional resource has been put into purposeful activity and the Governor will continue to expand this area with new and innovative ideas. The Governor has reported good progress in terms of filling the industries and education facilitator vacancies and allocating more prisoners in to activity places.

Prisoners' Property

HMPPS notes the Board's concerns about the transfer of prisoners' property, despite implementation of the new *Prisoners' Property* Policy Framework. The Framework, which came in to effect on 5 September 2022 introduced a new requirement that prisons must transfer excess property within four weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances which make this impossible. To avoid the problem of delays altogether, the Framework places an emphasis on ensuring compliance with volumetric control limits, since anything within these limits will be transferred with the prisoner. HMPPS will monitor the impact of the Framework going forward and will continue to look at what further improvements can be made.

Prisoner Escort Custody Services (PECS) vehicle fleet allows for property consumables to the limit of 7.5kg. PECS provide transportation for prisoners and their property. The introduction of the digitally recorded Person Escort Record (dPER) including a property section that accurately records the number and type of sealed property 'owned' by and transferred with the prisoner and an accurate record of property handover between different Stakeholders. This is now embedded as business as usual. The digital process has assisted with investigations for property that are lost in transit with PECS supplier. PECS review complaints during monthly formal meetings with the supplier and overall fewer complaints for lost property are received and often the issue is not attributed to the PECS supplier. During 2020 to 2023 there has been no complaints received from HMP Lancaster Farms in relation to property.

The 'handing and sending in' policy set out in the Incentives Policy Framework can be accessed here https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1105714/incentives-policy-framework.pdf. The policy position is clear, other than books, (save for the additional rights unconvicted prisoners have), unless items are being permitted in line with the 'one-off parcel of clothing' rule specified in the Framework, property should not be sent / handed in to convicted prisoners, unless the Governor feels there is an exceptional need for a prisoner to receive an item. Such decisions must be taken on an individual, case-by-case basis.