



Ministry
of Justice

Damian Hinds
Minister of State for Justice

Chair: Lynn Emslie
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London
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Dear Lynn,

DISCONTINUATION OF SAFETY COMMITMENTS

Thank you for your letter regarding the recent update on the delivery of the prison Safety Programme, specifically the decision to withdraw funding for the Enhanced Support Service and Innovations Taskforce. This decision comes at a time where every Government Department has been asked to look for efficiency savings in the context of challenging financial circumstances.

Firstly, I would like to emphasise that I am grateful for the Independent Advisory Panel's continued advice, support and focus on our shared priority of preventing future deaths in custody.

I recognise your concerns about the provision of specialist support for complex prisoners at risk of harm to themselves and others. Continuing to support key at-risk cohorts is a priority and we have established a new work strand in the Safety Programme dedicated to how we can best support these groups. To name just two examples: in 2020 we established a multi-disciplinary Women's Self-Harm Taskforce to address the high levels of self-harm; and we are also exploring tailored support for Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentenced prisoners who have been assessed as at risk of self-harm, suicide or violence.

As you set out in your letter, the Innovations Taskforce was established to bring together innovative thinking and best practice to address the drivers of violence and self-harm in prisons. I feel passionately about introducing innovation to modernise and improve our services. I have asked my team to ensure that the valuable work started by the Innovations Taskforce and wider safety programme over the last year will be used to inform future efforts to secure funding aimed at promoting safety outcomes.

In addition to the Prison Strategy White Paper commitments, there are a number of other, funded commitments across my portfolio that promote safety. These include expanding and supporting our workforce to enable a greater focus on offender management and key work; working with NHS colleagues and healthcare providers to improve access to healthcare and substance misuse treatment in custody; creating a regime that supports safety; and the support provided by the national safety team.

I know that you are meeting with MoJ Prison Safety Policy officials over the summer, and they would welcome the opportunity to discuss these projects with you in greater detail.

Yours ever,

Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation