



Mr Peter Bradley
Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Liverpool
68 Hornby Road
Liverpool
L9 3DF

MoJ ref: SUB 93389

10 January 2022

Dear Chair,

**HMP LIVERPOOL: 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 continued to be short of Board members during a very challenging reporting period. I note there were two Prison and Probation Ombudsman reports published during the reporting year following deaths due to natural causes. I would like to assure you my officials take recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman very seriously.

I have noted the Board's continued concerns about the delays in transfer of seriously mentally ill prisoners to appropriate secure facilities. I am pleased that, at the time of writing there were no men at HMP Liverpool awaiting transfer to a mental health bed in a secure hospital, however the regional NHS team acknowledges there were delays with transferring men from the prison to appropriate facilities during the reporting period.

As the Board will be aware, some transfer times fell outside of the timescales specified within the relevant guidance due to a lack of suitable beds on appropriate admission wards as a result of unprecedented demand across communities together with difficulties caused by the pandemic. The relevant units are currently restoring and recovering routine levels of service where possible and have offered assurance that they will endeavour to transfer men from HMP Liverpool in line with guidance. NHS commissioners will continue to support mental health services and staff at HMP Liverpool when there are difficulties in achieving transfers in a timely manner and will continue to monitor performance. Should any prisoners require a transfer, they will be fully supported by the mental health team on site until the transfer is achieved and resolution of delays will be given the highest priority.

Additionally, HMP Liverpool will continue to escalate all cases awaiting transfer to NHS Commissioners. A report is already sent to NHS Commissioners every Friday identifying prisoners awaiting transfer and the length of time they have been waiting. Early analysis already indicates there has been improvement in waiting times and the prison will continue to provide regular updates to receiving hospitals, especially in cases of any deterioration or increased risk being identified. All transfers are also discussed at the weekly Safety Intervention Meeting so that relevant partners are updated with assessment outcomes, risks, and transfer dates.

Despite a very difficult and challenging reporting period, it was encouraging to receive your comments that the Board considers HMP Liverpool to be a safe environment for prisoners, that they were treated fairly under the circumstances with an increasingly effective 'in-cell' education programme, and that there has been good relationships between staff and prisoners with open and regular communication. Staff at HMP Liverpool also deserve special recognition for the way they managed reverse cohorting, particularly for their exceptional management of the situation during May 2020, and so too does the Chaplaincy team for their role during very difficult times and helping to reinstate National Prison Radio.

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. HM Prison and Probation Service (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 Liverpool.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Victoria Atkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'V' and 'A'.

VICTORIA ATKINS MP

HMP LIVERPOOL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2020 – 31 DECEMBER 2020

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners' Property

There was a pause in the development of the new Prisoners' Property policy framework due to Covid-19, and the work resumed in August 2020. HMPPS has now circulated the draft framework with internal and external stakeholders, including the IMB Secretariat and the IMB representatives previously consulted, and the large number of comments received is being considered. As a result, the framework is expected to be published in early 2022. The framework will provide greater direction and standardisation on a national basis and has been designed with procedural justice at its core. It strengthens guidance on known problem areas such as volumetric control and seeks to ensure prisoners' property is managed efficiently, effectively, consistently and with care and respect.

While digital improvements to property processes are being explored, the nature of that work means that any digital changes are likely to be implemented longer-term and at this stage will not be part of the framework. However, property identification numbers will now be entered on the digital platform rather than be recorded by hand on the paper Person Escort Record. This will enable better tracking of property, should it be lost in transit. The Prisoner Complaints policy framework (national) has been revised, sections 5.3 and 5.4 specifically covers complaints that relate to another prison or property lost in transit.

Locally, there are clear instructions for cell clearances and items removed from a cell are recorded on Body Worn Camera and paper copy. This provides a clear audit trail and evidence should property go missing and a lost property claim lodged.

Maintenance

HMPPS acknowledges the current heating system is past its useful life span. Although a substantial amount of money has already been spent at the site, as acknowledged by the Board, another scheme for the full refurbishment of the remainder of the establishment is being finalised. This will include the replacing of all heating and hot water boilers and systems across the site. The funding for this is a part of the full refurbishment with a full costing currently being undertaken. A request has been made to complete this element of the refurbishment early in the project, however there is no certainty this can be achieved. When fully approved, the programme of work will be reviewed. In the interim, the Area Property Operations Manager (APOM) and the Amey site manager have put in place an interim measure of manual control with a programme of daily attendance to manage the current system until it is replaced.

As part of the full refurbishment of H wing currently in progress, planned improvement works such as replacement windows (site wide), damp remedial works, drainage repairs (site wide) and any identified works will be picked up on a rolling programme as each wing is refurbished. There is currently no end date as the full refurbishment works requires approval.

As the Board will be aware, HMP Liverpool established a Refresh team comprised of prisoners and supervised by an officer that undertook repairs to windows which were vandalised. This had been paused during the pandemic restrictions, however work has resumed again in recent weeks and is supported subject to staff resources. The focus has been the repairs to I Wing windows with 40% repaired to date. During the first week of November ten windows were repaired on I Wing and two on K Wing. The primary focus remains I wing and will then be redirected to G Wing. This ongoing work will continue as the prison progresses to its standard regime.