



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Alan Scott
Executive Director PSP North
Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
PO Box 368, Leyland, PR25 9EJ
(site of HMP Wymott)

EDPSPNorth@justice.gov.uk

Peter Clarke CVO, OBE, QPM
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
3rd floor, 10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU

10 December 2019

Dear Peter,

**HMIP report on an independent review of progress at HMP Onley -
11-13 November 2019**

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMP Onley, whereby you followed up on ten key recommendations and three Ofsted themes from your most recent inspection in November 2018.

I am encouraged to note that you have seen good or reasonable progress being made across some of the recommendations and Ofsted themes', specifically;

- **Early days in Custody**

The induction wing was more ordered and new arrivals were better supervised. Induction staff were more informed and supportive and peer mentors were used well to help prisoners settle in and undertake the initial stage of the induction process. There was a new, welcoming, well-resourced induction room on H wing (induction unit) and the recently introduced induction booklet was comprehensive and helpful. First night cells were now clean and fully equipped. Prisoners spoke positively about their early day's experience.

- **Managing behaviour**

A range of strategic actions had been taken to reduce violence. Levels of violence against both staff and prisoners had reduced significantly since the last inspection and were now in line with similar prisons. Some substantial work had been undertaken to understand and address the causes of violence, and a comprehensive local safety strategy had been completed in April, with an associated action plan. We acknowledge the gaps identified in the recording of incidents and are addressing this by changing the

way in which we record using the Incident Reporting System (IRS). Responsibility for updating IRS now sits within the Safety team, ensuring that reasons for violence are recorded at the point that investigations are concluded. We will also continue to focus on embedding our Victim Support policy.

- **Security - Intelligence**

The backlog of Mercury Intelligence Reports (MIR) had peaked earlier in the year at over 700. Additional staffing and a daily triage system had been put in place to prioritise the most serious MIRs. All new MIRs were now opened and reviewed each day and the backlog of MIRs had been reduced to just 30, all of which were relatively low risk. We will focus on ensuring that action is taken in response to intelligence reports, as appropriate, by ensuring a daily triage takes place, and that agreed actions are minuted and followed up. The intelligence will therefore be dealt with in a timely manner and the risks associated with the previous intelligence backlog reduced.

In respect of the three key areas and Ofsted themes where you found insufficient or no meaningful progress I can confirm:

- **Security – Drug Strategy**

You identified weaknesses in our current drugs strategy and the high levels of positive drug test results. We will review our strategy with the support of specialists from the central Drugs Taskforce in early December. We will resource a full suite of drug testing programmes to identify those who continue to take illicit substances whilst at HMP Onley. You observed that our substance free wing is in its infancy, but there is an action plan in place to develop the unit to support and reward those that undertake substance misuse treatment and remain drug free.

- **Staff prisoner relationships**

You identified that plans are in place to increase mentoring support and training opportunities that will help our staff to develop the necessary skills and confidence in managing the dynamic mix of prisoners. We have increased the line management support in place on all wings. We are, from 25 November, being supported by the Standards Coaching Team who will work with our managers to help upskill our 'new in service' workforce alongside two dedicated Prison Officer Entry Level Training (POELT) mentors. Our newly recruited Officers are undertaking the new Prison Officer Apprenticeship which will support us to ensure that our workforce have the necessary skills for the role. We are now supported by both detached duty and the Payment Plus Bonus scheme which sees the establishment able to provide the full range of profiled work. Recruitment continues with new Prison Officers projected to be starting with us over the coming months. We have developed a retention action plan based on feedback from our staff which we will use to improve the retention rate at Onley and reduce in turn the number of new Officers required. Progress against this action will be monitored via our Retention and People action plans.

- **Reducing risk, rehabilitation and progression**

You recognised that concerted efforts had been made by the Offender Management unit to reduce the backlog of initial 'Start Custody' Offender Assessment System (OASys) assessments, however an unacceptably high number of men did not have an up-to-date assessment of their risk and needs, and levels of contact with offender supervisors was

infrequent. We will address the backlog of OASys assessments by utilising overtime and Payment Plus by trained OASys assessors, predominantly Prison Offender Managers (POMs) and Probation Officers. The introduction of the OMU fortnightly wing surgeries, although in their infancy, will improve our contact with prisoners throughout their sentence.

The Governor, with the support of the Prison Group Director, will continue to progress the full Action Plan covering all the original recommendations.

I remain committed to ensuring continued progress against HMP Onley's agreed Action Plan, and I can assure you that through my operational assurance functions and the support of Operational and System Assurance Group (OSAG) we continue to closely monitor progress.

Whilst I acknowledge that there is still much work to be carried out at the prison I am encouraged that progress is being made and that our monitoring of the prison is in line with your findings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AS', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Alan Scott
Executive Director PSP North

CC: Private Office
Phil Cople, Director General Prisons