



HM Prison &
Probation Service

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Peter Clarke CVO, OBE, QPM
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12th September 2019

Dear Peter,

**HMIP report on an independent review of progress at HMP Bedford -
5th – 7th July 2019**

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMP Bedford, in which you followed up 13 key recommendations and 3 Ofsted themes from your most recent inspection in August 2018.

I am encouraged to note that you have seen good progress being made across three of the recommendations and that three further recommendations have seen reasonable progress. This includes, but is not limited to the following areas of progress:

- **Living Conditions**
Significant wing refurbishments had taken place and there were credible plans for this to continue. The cleanliness of outside and communal areas had improved and there was better access to essential items.
- **Rehabilitation & Release Planning**
Sentence calculations were completed promptly and Home Detention Curfew processes within the control of the prison were mostly well managed. Prison offender supervisors were no longer cross deployed and the frequency of their contact had improved. The introduction of weekly Offender Management Unit (OMU) wing surgeries and keyworker contact for prisoners helped to allay many frustrations related to sentence planning. The completion of Offender Assessment System (OASys) assessments by the OMU had resumed and there was no significant backlog at the time of this review visit.

- **Segregation**

There were no prisoners segregated on residential wings. Living conditions in the segregation unit had improved significantly since the original inspection. The daily regime remained basic but was now delivered reliably. Some prisoners were allowed to attend association on the main wings as part of their reintegration plan. Day to day management of the unit had improved.

- **Education, skills and work**

New courses had been introduced and attendance at educational and vocational training had improved. The proportion of prisoners gaining a qualification, particularly in English and mathematics, had improved from a very low starting point and were now close to national averages. The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment had improved considerably.

In respect of the eight recommendations and one Ofsted theme where you found insufficient or no meaningful progress I can confirm that additional actions are planned or are now in place, for example:

- **Suicide & self-harm prevention**

A new head of function has been appointed and is reviewing the prison's approach to suicide and self-harm, including the weaknesses in Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) procedures. This work is being supported by the Regional Safety Team. A safety analyst has also recently been appointed to analyse the causes of self-harm. Analysis will be considered by the monthly Safer Custody Committee and used to inform support for individuals who self-harm. Key workers are now being deployed to support prisoners who self-harm and, as part of the new staff profile, two additional Band 3 prison officers in the safety team will provide dedicated individual support. The safety team will increasingly seek to involve families and significant others to support their loved ones when they are at risk of self-harm. Furthermore, the Governor will chair a new Quarterly Safety Summit from September 2019, to discuss the views and opinions of residents and staff and to agree key actions.

- **Security**

Up to date drug detection technology, including the use of x-ray body scanners is being explored nationally as part of a wider HMPPS programme to restore stability to the prison estate. The prison now has drug trace detection equipment that is being used regularly to detect illicit items and has deployed a new metal detector portal that can detect mobile phones in the visits area. Netting and thirty improved cell windows have been installed in risk areas and a further seventy new windows will be installed beginning October 2019 in the remaining risk areas. Furthermore, the prison now runs regular operations in collaboration with Police, Borough Council and community representatives, to deter throwovers and capture perpetrators, resulting in a number of arrests. The prison has a new drug strategy, informed by a comprehensive needs analysis. The prison will be reviewing its work

profile beginning imminently, which will ensure completion of Mandatory Drugs Testing.

- **Managing behaviour**

A new head of function has been appointed and is taking forward work to embed the prison's new Violence Reduction Strategy and action plan to reduce violence, including a range of sanctions and interventions. To improve the management of perpetrators and support for victims, the Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan (CSIP) process is being re-launched in September 2019. The safer custody team will be better resourced with the provision of two dedicated prison officers and all staff undertaking CSIP processes will be appropriately trained.

- **Use of Force**

A Use of Force (UoF) Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator are in place to ensure UoF paperwork is completed in a timely fashion. Management oversight of the use of force has improved and the new head of function will ensure that there is sufficient analysis of data to understand the causes. A weekly meeting will scrutinise spontaneous and planned removals, including Closed Circuit Television, Body Worn Camera footage and use of batons. The learning from this is being included in Use of Force refresher training and to give immediate advice to staff where necessary. Special accommodation can only be used on the Governor or Deputy Governor's authority and is now rarely used.

- **Staff prisoner relationships**

A great deal of training has already been undertaken with inexperienced officers to build their confidence and competence and this was noted by inspectors. A new Head of Business Assurance has arrived since the IRP inspection and has already established a new Training Committee that will review officer training provision in September 2019.

By the end of September, the prison will have seventy officers undertaking *Keyword* and the Governor has appointed two experienced officers to coordinate and support their work. Two Prison Officer Entry Level Training Mentors are also in place to provide daily support to the most inexperienced officers. Furthermore, the national Standards Coaching Team (SCT) has now been deployed to Bedford. The SCT are providing intensive support to staff in promoting consistent practices, creating positive staff/prisoner relationships and building confidence.

- **Equalities and Diversity**

A new Head of Safety & Equalities has been appointed and is reviewing the existing equality strategy. This review will include the introduction of peer support for prisoners with disabilities as part of the prison's responsible citizen initiative. The Governor has deployed additional resource to this work with the appointment of a full-time administrative officer. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are discussed daily and the prison's Health, Safety & Fire team conduct regular area evacuation exercises. A review of access to the education department, the chapel and showers on C & D Wings and potential cell adaptations will be undertaken and actioned by the Governor and Prison Group Director accordingly.

- **Time out of cell**

You noted that you had found fewer prisoners locked up during the core working day with more involved in purposeful activity. To further improve time out of cell, a re-profiling exercise will begin in early-September 2019. The core day will be reviewed to ensure all activities and roll-checks can be delivered on time. Evening association and other activities will be introduced for prisoners who engage well with purposeful activities.

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 Bedford's agreed Action Plan and I can assure you that through my operational assurance functions and the support of the Operational and System Assurance Group 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.

Yours sincerely,



Michelle Jarman-Howe
Executive Director (PSP South)

CC: Private Office
Phil Cople, Director General Prisons