



HM Prison &
Probation Service

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Peter Clarke CVO, OBE, QPM
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
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16th July 2019

Dear Peter,

**HMIP report on an Independent Review of Progress (IRP) at HMP High Down
17-19 June 2019**

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report for HMP High Down, whereby you followed up nine key recommendations and three Ofsted themes from your most recent inspection in May 2018.

I am encouraged to note that you have seen good or reasonable progress being made in seven of the recommendations that you have reviewed. You have specifically identified improvement in the following key areas:

- **Reception Processes, including treatment for drug and alcohol-dependent prisoners**
Better organised and innovative Reception processes, with good screening for vulnerabilities and an improved physical environment. Prisoners are processed more quickly through Reception before being located in better-equipped first night cells. Men identified as having substance-related needs are prioritised and treated in a timely manner. This service will be further enhanced by the relocation of the substance misuse prescribing team to Reception.
- **Segregation of Prisoners**
Leadership of the Segregation Unit has improved, with rigorous managerial oversight of the regime and decision-making processes. Daily assurance checks of cells are now completed, which has resulted in a better awareness of maintenance issues with plans in place to improve conditions.
- **Violence Reduction**
A well-considered strategy has been implemented and is monitored via a dynamic action plan. The improved resourcing of the Safety team has resulted in improved

analysis and strategic actions, as well as effective case management through the Safety Intervention Meeting.

- **Strategic Oversight of Reducing Reoffending**

The completion of a prisoner needs analysis and separate analysis of prisoners' offending behaviour programme needs has increased the prison's understanding of the needs of the population. Work is ongoing to further understand the needs of vulnerable prisoners, which when combined with the existing needs analysis, will inform the broader action plan.

- **Risk Management Planning**

An improved Interdepartmental Risk Management Meeting is in place, enabling a more robust approach to release planning for high risk prisoners up to six months prior to release. Although a new process, a more formalised approach to improving contact between prison Offender Supervisors and Community Offender Managers is now in place.

- **Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The education induction process is now held in an environment more conducive to learning and focuses on introducing prisoners to the activities available within the prison. Prisoners now receive clear progression plans, which include more challenging academic and vocational targets where applicable.

In respect of the five key recommendations where you did not find sufficient progress, I can confirm that additional actions will be taken:

- **Offender Management Processes**

Although public protection processes have improved, the prison will focus on improving staff training to ensure higher standards of monitoring are completed. A review of resourcing will be completed by autumn 2019 to identify how the increased level of calls made, due to the in-cell phone system, can be monitored. The recent recruitment of ten Prison Offender Managers will improve staffing levels within Offender Management Unit (OMU). The focus will be on upskilling these staff to improve both meaningful contact with prisoners and the completion of timely assessments.

- **Use of Force against Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Prisoners**

We accept that improvement is required in this area to better understand the disproportionate use of force against BAME prisoners. Initial data analysis had commenced prior to the IRP visit and there will be a continued focus on analysis of the prisoner survey and a review of the prisoner debriefs, which will result in a coordinated action plan, September 2019, to address this issue.

- **Purposeful Activity Outcomes**

There is a clear commitment to improving provision, attendance and achievement in this area. A whole prison approach will be introduced by September 2019 to both raising awareness of purposeful activity and improving attendance and punctuality. This is already monitored on a daily basis, but processes will be implemented to increase accountability and ensure a more timely response to non-attendance. The protocol for reducing withdrawals from activities is in place and will be further embedded to ensure all areas are aware of the process. The prison will also review how they can record the achievement of soft skills in activity areas.

I was pleased to note that you have recognised the management team as being focused and motivated, with a staff group who are dedicated to addressing the concerns raised at the

previous inspection. The Governor will, with the support of the Prison Group Director, continue her focus on progressing the full Action Plan covering all the original recommendations. I remain committed to ensuring continued progress against HMP High Down's agreed Action Plan and I can assure you that through my operational assurance functions and the support of OSAG we continue to closely monitor the 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 accord with your findings.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Jarman-Howe', written in a cursive style.

Michelle Jarman-Howe
Executive Director (PSP South)

CC: Private Office
Phil Cople, Director General Prisons