



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

**Alan Scott**  
**Executive Director, Public**  
**Sector Prisons (North)**  
Her Majesty's Prison and  
Probation Service,  
PO Box 368, Leyland, PR25  
9EJ  
(site of HMP Wymott)  
[EDPSPNorth@justice.gov.uk](mailto:EDPSPNorth@justice.gov.uk)

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

29 July 2019

Dear Peter,

**HMIP report on an independent review of progress at HMP Durham  
1-3 July 2019**

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMP Durham, whereby you followed up 10 key recommendations and 3 OFSTED themes from your most recent inspection in September and October 2018.

I am encouraged to note that you have seen reasonable progress being made in recommendations linked to safety and decency, and meaningful progress in Ofsted themes 2 and 3, specifically:

- **Reception and first night processes**  
You were pleased to see that the framework and system for the initial vulnerability assessment had been reviewed responding more effectively to prisoners' immediate welfare needs. Assessments are now conducted in private with good daily support from the mental health team and prisoner orderlies in reception, and an effective prisoner information desk service.
- **Managing behaviour**  
It was noted the quality of Challenge Support Intervention Plans (CSIP) for the management of perpetrators of violence or bullying were now more developed with better intervention plans, actions and reviews. Processes were embedded through the safety intervention meeting which reviewed all live CSIPs and new referrals through an enhanced multidisciplinary approach.
- **Security**  
You found effective progress in improving safety through the introduction of a body scanner, detector poles, netting over exercise yards and more cameras. Positive Mandatory Drug Test (MDT) results for psychoactive substances had reduced as had the level of serious assaults. It was encouraging that you recognised that staff and prisoners spoke about feeling safer, something which you concurred with during the review.

- **Education, skills and work**

The oversight of the quality of education, skills and work by managers and leaders had improved with a clear focus on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. There were also more effective quality improvement actions, moderation of lesson observation reports and identification of themes for staff development enabling prisoners to better understand the progress they had made against their personal targets.

In respect of the three key areas and one Ofsted theme where you found insufficient progress I can confirm:

- **The management of prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm**

The Governor acknowledges that improvement is still required to build on existing work. Effective tracking of Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) recommendations has revealed a decrease in repeated recommendations with the safety and welfare of prisoners a key priority for all staff. A new quality assurance process in place since June 2019 is driving improvement in Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) case management and quality. A local operating process has also been introduced and included in the Safety Policy which describes the responsibility for case management based on level of risk in each case. This will improve the strategic oversight of prisoners in crisis particularly those with complex needs.

- **Offender management of prisoners presenting high risk of harm to others**

You identified that too little attention was given to pre-release risk management planning. The Governor agrees that more effective working with partners is essential. A tracking system has been implemented to ensure information about Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) is sought prior to release and arrangements are in place to escalate matters where that information is not being provided promptly by the community offender manager. The Offender Management Unit (OMU) will continue to work with National Probation Service (NPS) and Through the Gate (TTG) colleagues to ensure that relevant information about prisoners is provided in preparation for their release and release planning improves through a multi-agency approach to resettlement and risk management.

- **Management of MAPPA**

Although the Interdepartmental Risk Management Team (IDRMT) discuss high risk and very high-risk cases at their scheduled meetings, you identified that there is insufficient action from these discussions and that the effectiveness of, and the attendance at the meetings was still not sufficiently good. The IDRMT terms of reference and format of the meeting have been adapted to ensure greater coherence. The prison's focus will now be on improving attendance from key staff members and stakeholders and providing a clear record of discussions and decision making of which community offender managers will be an inclusive part.

- **Education, skills and work**

The Governor acknowledges that a recently introduced central data management information system still requires some time to fully embed to provide managers with an accurate understanding of prisoners' progress towards the achievement of their targets or goals. The prison will continue to implement this system and employability portfolios and undertake evaluation of the effectiveness of these measures to ensure they represent a consistent reflection of prisoners' education and skills progress.

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 Durham's agreed Action Plan. I can assure you that through my operational assurance functions and the support of 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 be 'AS', written over a horizontal line.

**Alan Scott**

Executive Director, Public Sector Prisons (North)

CC: Private Office

Phil Cople, Director General Prisons