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Russell George MS  
Chair  
Health and Social Care Committee  
Senedd Cymru

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22 July 2024

Dear Russell,

### Prisoner Healthcare

Thank you for your letter of June 19 requesting an update about progress in relation to recommendations in the committee's *Health and Social Care Provision in the Adult Prison Estate in Wales* report.

We continue to work in partnership with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to improve health and well-being in the secure estate.

The [partnership agreement](#) between HMPPS in Wales, the Welsh Government, health boards and Public Health Wales sets out our shared priorities to drive improvements in the health and wellbeing of all those held in Welsh prisons. It recognises the unique statutory obligations of each partner organisation and builds on the shared objective of ensuring those in prison can live in environments that promote health and well-being and where health services can be accessed to an equivalent standard of those within the community.

HMPPS in Wales is responsible for the delivery of offender management services in Wales. It is responsible for public sector prisons, the National Probation Service in Wales and has contract management responsibilities for the privately-contracted prison HMP and YOI Parc. The Welsh Government has responsibility for health services in public sector prisons and health boards are responsible for commissioning and delivering health services in public sector prisons in Wales.

The Welsh Government has recently completed a consultation about our new *Mental Health and Well-being Strategy* and our *Suicide and Self-harm prevention Strategy*. The *Mental Health and Well-being Strategy* identified people in prison as an under-served group and the *Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy* identifies prisons as a priority setting.

The findings in a number of Senedd committee reports, including the *Health and Social Care Provision in the Adult Prison Estate*, have informed the development of these strategies.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Officials will now be working with stakeholders to finalise the strategies and delivery plans, which will set out the initial priority actions. Progress in implementing the strategies will be reported as part of the monitoring arrangements that will be established, this includes progress on actions to support people in prison.

I have set out responses to your specific questions in the annex to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Murphy'.

**Sarah Murphy AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar

Minister for Mental Health & Early Years

## Annex

### **The inspection arrangements for HMP/YOI Parc and whether they fully align with those in place for public sector prisons in Wales (Recommendation 3).**

Healthcare at HMP and YOI Parc is delivered by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (this has been the case since 15 December 2022). There is an MoU in place between the health board, HMPPS in Wales and the Welsh Government. As a result of these changes, healthcare at HMP and YOI Parc is now in line with the other prisons in Wales in terms of inspection arrangements.

### **Since the healthcare at HMP/YOI Parc has been under the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (December 2022), the improvements that have been observed in the healthcare services provided.**

A range of improvements have been possible since the transfer of healthcare at HMP and YOI Parc to Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, including:

- Greater buying power as part of the wider NHS Wales system.
- Inclusion in the health board complaints system which provides equity with the community.
- Access to a wider range of healthcare professionals for recruitment.
- Learning from health services delivered in the community.
- Higher funding levels for healthcare due to the funding arrangement with HMPPS in Wales.
- Increased transparency and oversight of the health provision in the prison.

### **How the MoU between the health board, HMPPS, and Welsh Government ensures that healthcare delivery is consistent and meets the required standards.**

The MoU between the Welsh Government, HMPPS and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board provides a new baseline for healthcare delivery at HMP and YOI Parc. As part of the governance for the transition, a health needs assessment was undertaken, which informed the creation of a full-service specification for healthcare for the first time. Healthcare delivery is assessed against this specification.

The prison has a health partnership board in place and a monthly operational group meeting.

### **The representations that have been made to the UK Government to enable the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman to question professional and clinical judgment in complaints about health services in privately-run prisons like HMP Parc (Recommendation 5).**

Initial discussions took place with the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's office to scope out the recommendations. However, the transition of healthcare to Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board resulted in complaints about health services at the prison having access to the same level of scrutiny as they do in the wider community (non-prison population) and in public sector prisons. Complaints now follow the established processes within the NHS.

### **The consideration that has been given to adopting the approach used in England for making pre-prison medical records available to prison health services (Recommendation 8).**

The Welsh Government and Digital Health and Care Wales will be holding a workshop this summer with all prison healthcare teams to consider a range of IT issues within the prison estate. Access to healthcare records will be considered as part of this exercise.

**How progress on mental health priorities will be monitored, including how the contribution of national standards will be assessed (Recommendation 10).**

**The anticipated timescales for developing a standardised clinical pathway for managing substance misuse in prisons (Recommendation 12).**

The Welsh Government has consulted on a draft Substance Misuse Treatment Framework and draft standards for mental health services for prisons in Wales. A summary of consultation responses was published in 2023, and the framework and standards for mental health services have been finalised. The Welsh Government is working with the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the College Centre for Quality Improvement (CCQI) to carry out baseline work with prisons to assess current mental health and substance misuse service provision against these standards.

**The revised priorities and workplan for the deep dive group, including monitoring access to support for prisoners with co-occurring issues (Recommendation 13).**

Information from the deep dive group has informed the development of the draft *Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy* and the draft *Suicide and Self-harm Prevention Strategy*. The consultation into both documents closed on 11 June and responses are being analysed. People in prison have been identified as an under-served group in the *Mental Health and Well-being Strategy*, and prisons were identified as a priority setting for the *Suicide and Self-harm Prevention Strategy*.

The deep dive group has been stood down and we are reviewing governance arrangements to support the new *Mental Health and Well-being Strategy* and *Suicide and Self-harm Prevention Strategy* and to strengthen links between mental health and substance misuse.

**Discussions with HMPPS about establishing an Expert Advisory Group for Medicines (Recommendation 14).**

The Welsh Government commissioned the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) to undertake a review of pharmacy services in prisons against the RPS professional standards for optimising medicines for people in secure environments. The review was completed in December 2021 and all health boards and prisons have produced and are progressing action plans in response to their individual reports.

The review identified the need to develop common indicators or quality frameworks, which can be applied nationally by health boards and prisons to help drive improvements and consistency in prescribing. To support and co-ordinate the work, a national prison pharmacy lead has been appointed.

The All-Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) advises the Welsh Government and the NHS about the use, management and prescribing of medicines. Its role extends to all environments and sectors where medicines are used, including secure environments.

Given its statutory advisory role, we intend to use AWMSG to provide advice on the use, management and prescribing of medicines in prisons. This will be informed by the work of the national prison pharmacy lead.

**Regarding the agreed service specification for healthcare services at HMP/YOI Parc, the measures that are in place to ensure the quality and effectiveness of dementia screening and support (Recommendation 16).**

The Welsh Government, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and HMPPS in Wales have agreed a service specification for healthcare services at HMP and YOI Parc, which includes dementia screening and support for those with dementia.

**The steps that have been taken towards finding a fair, sufficient and sustainable baseline for funding via the Welsh “block” for prison healthcare provision (Recommendation 21).**

The Welsh Government receives the majority of its funding from the UK Government in the form of a block grant and a proportion of its annual funding from devolved taxes.

The Welsh Government does not receive specific funding from the UK Government for prisoner healthcare on an annual basis. In 2014-15, the Welsh Government received a recurrent transfer of £2.544m to support prisoner healthcare in public prisons in Wales. No additional specific funding has been provided to Welsh Government (by the UK Government) in relation to prison healthcare.

Welsh Ministers, through the annual budget process, will determine the Welsh Government’s departmental spending plans. NHS allocations will subsequently be made to health boards in Wales. The prison population is included in population estimates used as a basis to determine the percentage shares of NHS allocations across health boards in Wales. It is a matter for individual health boards to determine the funding allocation to prisons in their area.

**The progress that has been made in collating and reviewing the costs of healthcare provision across prisons in Wales, and when we can expect this information to be published (Recommendation 22).**

Health boards plan services locally based on need, including in public sector prisons. Where different funding mechanisms exist (for instance in HMP Parc and HMP Berwyn) health needs assessments were undertaken as part of the process to identify cost/resources to provide health and social care provision in these settings.

We do not have plans to review the costs of healthcare provision in prisons, but we are exploring options to increase the scrutiny and oversight of healthcare arrangements to support continued improvements.

**The steps taken to monitor demand, provision and spend on social care in prisons to ensure funding issues do not prevent access to necessary care (Recommendation 23).**

The funding for this was transferred into the local authority Revenue Support Grant (RSG) in 2018 – it is for local authorities to ensure their statutory duties in this area are fulfilled. These are enshrined in the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act 2014 and came into effect in 2016. There is a memorandum of understanding in place between each prison in Wales, the relevant local authority and relevant providers.

**The steps taken towards identifying, developing, and publishing Wales-specific datasets on current and forecast prison population (Recommendation 25).**

The Welsh Government is not the data controller for this information. We would encourage organisations which require more Wales-level data for prisons to work directly with HMPPS in Wales.