

To: 1. Prisons Minister

Date: 13.07.2018

From: Simon Boddis, Prison Estate Transformation Programme

Subject: FOR ACTION: Notifying MPs and stakeholders of intention to increase the number of open prisons that accept men convicted of sexual offences

Annexes: A: Core script for phone call between Prisons Minister and MPs

B: [REDACTED]

C: National and local stakeholders to be notified following call to MPs

Issue

1. Announcing the decision to authorise the following open prisons - [REDACTED] and HMP Hollesley Bay, to hold appropriately risk assessed men convicted of sexual offences, and to increase the proportion of these offenders held at [REDACTED]

Timing

2. **Pressing.** To avoid delays in implementation, this decision should be communicated to MPs and stakeholders before parliament rises for recess.

Recommendation

3. That you:
 - i. Call the MPs for [REDACTED] and HMP Hollesley Bay (Therese Coffey). A core script is attached at Annex A.
 - ii. Agree that the HMPPS [REDACTED] Executive Director [REDACTED] meets with the MP for [REDACTED]

Argument

4. The Secretary of State has agreed to hold sex offenders at HMPs Hollesley Bay and [REDACTED], and to increase the proportion held at [REDACTED], as a necessary action to increase occupancy in the open estate and to make future expansion of open prisons feasible.
5. For Hollesley Bay and [REDACTED], the recommended handling approach is for you to call the constituency MPs before recess regarding this decision using the core script attached at Annex A. [REDACTED]
6. This will be supplemented by letters from officials to national stakeholders and local handling activity led by the Governors involved (further details at Annex C), as well as reactive press lines and Q&A. The content of this material will be drawn from the core script for your calls to the MPs.
7. For [REDACTED], where the change is one of scale rather than introduction of a new population group, it is recommended that [REDACTED] meets with the constituency MP to discuss these changes, probably in September.

Media Handling

8. It is likely that this decision could receive coverage in the local press, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We recommend reactive lines that are consistent to the messages set out in core script attached at Annex A. Draft press lines are as follows:

“Under this Government, more sex offenders are being convicted and there are now 4,000 more held in custody than there were in 2010.

“This includes a growing number of men who present a low risk and have been assessed as suitable to be held in open prisons.

“It is necessary to respond to these shifts to ensure that prisoners are held in conditions which both protect the public, and offer a rehabilitative environment which tackles their offending behaviour and reduces further victims of crime.”

SIMON BODDIS

Cleared by:

Press Office – [REDACTED]

Annex A – Core Script for Calls with MPs

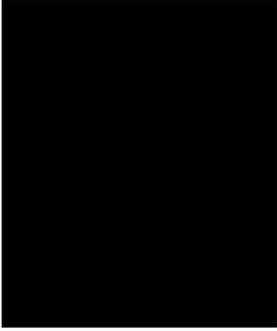
- [REDACTED]
- **Therese Coffey MP (Conservative – Suffolk Coastal) HMP Hollesley Bay**

EXPANDING THE OPEN ESTATE TO ACCOMMODATE MEN CONVICTED OF SEXUAL OFFENCES

- Under this Government, more sex offenders are being convicted and spending longer in prison. Since 2010 sentences have increased by over 20 per cent, with sex offenders facing on average five years in prison.
- There are now 4,000 more men in prison convicted of sexual offences than there were in 2010. This includes a growing number of men who present a low risk and have been assessed as suitable to be held in open prisons.
- In response to this population trend, the Justice Secretary has agreed to authorise [HMP Hollesley Bay / [REDACTED]] to accept men convicted of sexual offences as part of their population. Subject to agreement of detailed local implementation plans, I expect these changes will take place by the end of the year.
- This followed an operational assessment that recommended introducing men convicted of sexual offences to [REDACTED] and HMP Hollesley Bay. Authorising more open prisons to accept men convicted of sexual offences, if they satisfy the current open conditions eligibility tests, would ensure a greater geographical options for men convicted of sexual offences that are category D.
- The safety of the public is our highest priority. The ability to test men in open conditions as they approach the end of their sentence is often a critical step in their reintegration into society.
- The risk assessment of all prisoners is undertaken on a case by case basis and the re-categorisation process places primacy on risk of harm to the public. The prisoner must be able to demonstrate that he has reduced the risk of harm to the public or of escape/abscond sufficiently to warrant re-categorisation to a lower security category.
- The prisoners will be subject to a robust risk assessment in line with all prisoners held at this prison. Some prisoners may be allowed out of the prison on licence for resettlement purposes. These are strictly controlled and approved by prison staff. All prisoners will be required to comply with individual licence conditions.
- By making this change we are improving options for the staged rehabilitation of offenders in supervised conditions. This can offer significant advantages for the safe management of offenders compared to release directly from closed conditions.
- As part of the transformation of the estate we aim to get the right prisoners held in the appropriate conditions to both protect the public and offer a rehabilitative environment to tackle their offending behaviour.
- Increasing the number of places in the open prison estate for men convicted of sexual offences, who are assessed as low risk, will go towards achieving this aim and free up much needed capacity in closed prisons.

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE

- We will always ensure there are sufficient prison places for offenders sentenced to custody by the courts and aim to ensure that the prison estate reflects the needs of offenders and provides best value for the taxpayer.
- [If needed] I understand if you have concerns over any risks to the safety of your constituents caused by this change. I can assure you that there is nothing inherently riskier or more dangerous about this prisoner group than other prisoners already trusted in open conditions, and invite you to visit the prison to gain a greater understanding of their risk management practices.



Annex C – National and Local Stakeholders to be notified following call to MPs

On confirmation that the call with MPs has taken place, the following stakeholders will be notified by MoJ Officials (national) and the Prison Governors (local).

National

- HMPPS Trade Unions
- HMI Probation
- HMI Prisons
- Parole Board
- Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
- Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (and the respective Police and Crime Commissioners)
- IMB National Council

Local

- Public Health England & Care UK
- Education Partners
- Local Trade Unions
- Local Authorities
- Prison staff
- Local Probation
- Local Community Rehabilitation Company