



The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

10 November 2016

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you on behalf of the HMP Pentonville Independent Monitoring Board about our two on-going major concerns: (i) the levels of staffing and (ii) the replacing of broken windows.

Prisoners need to be safe. The additional checks and searches rightly being introduced following the tragic incident on 18th October will inevitably mean more work for staff. Pentonville needs more officers not only to sustain security and meet the relentless demands of the courts, but also to restart the rehabilitative regime that was being well developed before that incident.

We welcome your commitment to recruit 2,500 additional officers by 2018. But Pentonville needs officers now. In spite of its needs, Pentonville is still required to give 10 officers for detached duty. [REDACTED]

This makes restoring a stable regime even harder.

In our annual report dated 30 June 2016 we highlighted the big difference that replacing the worst windows on exposed aspects of the prison could make to the threat from drones delivering contraband. Current speculation suggests the weapon used on 18th October originated from outside the prison.

Even as our Board met for its monthly meeting on 1st November we learnt of yet another glitch which may delay the replacement of 84 windows; work which was due to start on 7th November. Completion of this work needs a real sense of urgency, which currently seems absent. Consideration should be given to whether every window a drone might be able to reach has been included in priority works.

Last year Pentonville bucked the national trend to record a modest decrease in violent incidents. We want Pentonville to get back on track in reducing violence and becoming an effective resettlement prison.

Your support on the matters I have highlighted could make all the difference. Please could you find an urgent solution for Pentonville?

Yours sincerely,

Camilla Poulton
IMB Chair, HMP Pentonville

Sent by email and first class post