



Sir Bob Neill MP
Chair
Justice Committee
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

22 May 2020

DEPLOYMENT OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION ACROSS THE PRISON ESTATE AS PART OF COVID-19 MITIGATION PLAN

Thank you for your letter dated 29 April in which you ask for clarification about the use of the former Secure Training School at Medway (which has now been formally designated as an annex to HMP Rochester) and about the deployment of temporary accommodation across the category C and category D prison estates.

In your letter you ask for an update on the progress of plans to open the first secure school at the site of the former Medway Secure Training Centre. As I said in my original letter, we do not expect the temporary use of the site to impact on plans to launch the Oasis Restore Secure School. The Youth Custody Service will continue to have access to the site to allow necessary preparatory work, including site surveys, to take place ahead of refurbishment, and based on current plans we expect to open the first Secure School in 2022.

You also asked for clarification on the progress for installing the first 500 temporary single occupancy cells and when they will become operational. We are starting to install beyond the first 500 that we announced and now have plans to install more than 500 additional cells at other priority sites. I can confirm that as of 21 May nearly 600 cells have been delivered across 17 prisons and 48 cells are already in use at HMP North Sea Camp, and further cells coming into use at HMP Hatfield. The remaining 15 sites (HMPs Askham Grange, Bure, Channings Wood, Coldingley, Foston Hall, Highpoint, Hollesley Bay, Kirkham, Kirklevington Grange, Lindholme, Littlehey, Moorland, Prescoed, Stafford and Wymott) where cells have been delivered are undergoing final operational checks before they are occupied. We expect the number of operational cells to increase steadily over the coming weeks.

Our ambition is to place 2,000 temporary units (which includes the 500 previously announced) across the prison estate and this will support the compartmentalisation strategy we are implementing across the estate to protect and shield prisoners. This is an ongoing programme of work.

You asked what impact the additional measures are having on useable operational capacity. The temporary accommodation units we have installed to date are intended to be used as a means to increase residential space in prisons, for example by reducing the number of shared cells, and do not change the useable operational capacity.

I am pleased to hear that the Committee welcomes the measures we are putting in place to protect staff, prisoners and visitors across the prison estate. This highlights the extraordinary efforts of staff on the front line and at headquarters to ensure that the vulnerable are protected and to manage the potential impact on the NHS. I am proud of the dedication they have shown in the service of the public.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write to me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Lucy Frazer'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LUCY FRAZER QC MP