



**The Professional Trade Union for Prison,
Correctional and Public and Private
Mental Health Trust Service Providers**

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26th November 2024

Dear Ruth Jones MP

HMP PARC

Thank you for your letter dated 7th November 2024 requesting the POA view on HMP Parc ahead of the Committee session on HMP Parc in December 2024. You have set out various questions which I will address, and I am very grateful that you recognise the tireless and difficult work that prison staff carry out on behalf of society.

The POA accept there will always be a minority of staff who are corrupt and do not only let themselves and their families down but place their colleagues and prisoners in danger and there can be no hiding place for them and the POA will work with any employer public or private to ensure systems are in place to eradicate corruption in prisons.

From the outset I acknowledge that the POA are the largest Trade Union that represents Prison Officer grades and related grades within the United Kingdom. The POA have 32450 full members throughout the United Kingdom in both public and private prisons. The POA although recognised through voluntary agreements at HMP Fivewells, HMP Oakwood and YOI Oakhill which are G4S operated we do not have any recognition rights at HMP Parc as G4S for whatever reason prefer to have their own staff association which is free to their members of staff and has been since they were awarded the contract. The POA do have approximately 113 uniformed members at the Parc but can only represent them in certain circumstances but not for collective bargaining. That is something the POA are working on to persuade G4S it is in their best interest to recognise the POA so that we can use our vast knowledge and experience to assist them in the workplace because at present the POA are limited into input at the Parc because we are not entitled to all information.

I will therefore answer the questions set with the limited information we have;

- The POA have never been satisfied with the operating environment at HMP Parc since it opened. We believe the model was to make a profit for its shareholders and as a result pay and terms and conditions such as

pensions were never as good as the public sector nor indeed were the staffing levels. It would be very wrong of me to paint an operational picture at this moment in time simply because I do not have the information as I would have where we were recognised on the model, work streams and staffing levels. I do not get to see on a daily basis neither do any national officials as to whether discipline is up to standard and relationships between staff and prisoners are as they should be.

- The POA do not get to see the training sessions at the Parc or indeed see the curriculum on what is being taught on their training, so it is very difficult to compare to the public sector prisons in Wales. When we have asked in the past about private jails within the UK, we have always had the standard answer from Ministers that it is commercial in confidence and therefore our requests for information have always been declined.
- Again I do not know if there are adequate anti-corruption measures in place at HMP Parc as we are not the recognised union but on balance if it is the same policies that HMP Oakwood, HMP Fivewells and YOI Oakhill have then I would suggest the policies are sound as the POA have helped to shape them with G4S in those establishments but for factual information I cannot assist you with HMP Parc by stating if the policy is adequate or inadequate as the POA have not seen the policy or how it is enacted locally.
- As per the above bullet point, I do not have this information regarding HMP Parc.
- The POA do not have a policy on our members being searched by X ray or body scanners. I would simply put it like this to ensure security at airports when you go on holiday or abroad you are searched and screened thoroughly and prisons in my opinion in order to maintain security should have measures in place that protect the prison and everyone who works within it including the use of x rays and body scanners.
- The POA have an excellent relationship with Senior Managers at G4S since we signed voluntary recognition deals at the prisons already mentioned and we hope that continues and we do have systems in place to deal with negotiations on pay and terms and conditions and where we disagree arbitration is normally the way forward to deal with disputes and areas of disagreement. I would like to point out that POA policy has never altered since the first private prison came into operation in 1993 in that we wanted all prisons in the UK to be nationalised at the first available opportunity as we believed it was the role of the state to deal

with those sent to prison by the courts and that to earn a profit from incarceration was wrong and morally repugnant. In keeping with our policy, we believe because of all the problems in HMP Parc it should be put into the public sector.

I hope this information has been helpful, but I accept it is limited simply because we do not have access to all the information because the POA are not the recognised union. If I can be of further assistance, then please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Gillan', followed by a small horizontal line.

STEVE GILLAN
General Secretary

Sent by email only to: Welshcom@parliament.uk



Ruth Jones MP
Chair of the Welsh Affairs Committee