

Eluned Morgan AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl, Llesiant a'r Gymraeg
Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref: MA/EM/0620/21

Lucy Frazer QC, MP
Minister of State for Justice
Ministry of Justice
PrivateOffice.LucyFrazer@Justice.gov.uk

16 February 2021

Dear Lucy,

I am writing to draw your attention to recent media reports in September 2020 and January and February of this year which make allegations regarding the experiences of Welsh speakers at HMP Berwyn, Wrexham.

The reports, amongst other matters, describe incidences where prisoners at HMP Berwyn are being discouraged from speaking Welsh by staff and highlight alleged discrimination of one inmate in regards to IEP (Incentives and Earned Privileges) warnings for speaking Welsh.

The previous Welsh Language Commissioner published a report, '*The Welsh Language in Prisons*' in late 2018 on the rights and experiences of Welsh speakers in prisons. The report concluded that more must be done to meet the needs of Welsh speaking prisoners to ensure they are given the best chance of effective rehabilitation. I was pleased that HMPSS accepted all 17 of the recommendations made in that report and was encouraged that HMPSS has prepared a new Welsh Language Scheme to address the matters raised.

However, the matters recently raised by the media concern me. I am aware that the Prison Governor is aware of the situation, and that has taken steps to introduce measures to improve the situation. However, I would appreciate clarity regarding the timescales of implementing those measures. I also seek your assurances that all new allegations are being investigated; and, should there be a basis to the allegations, appropriate action will be taken in a timely manner.

Broader, I am aware that your response to the Commissioner's 2018 report outlines that many of the actions are due to be undertaken by this September. I would be grateful for an

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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.

outline of the steps being undertaken to ensure these recommendations will be fully implemented across all prisons.

I have discussed these matters with the Welsh Language Commissioner, who shares my concerns and I understand that he has written directly to HMPPS to raise these matters. I am copying this letter to the Commissioner ahead of his meeting with HMPPS on 2 March 2021.

I am also copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Wales.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

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