



Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

MoJ ref: MC77632

13 May 2019

ASSAULTS ON PRISON OFFICERS

Thank you for your letter of 14 April regarding allegations that female prison officers have been assaulted by offenders who self-identify as trans-women.

I can reassure you that there is no record of any type of sexual assault by transgender individuals in custody against female prison staff. Strict safeguards are in place to care for and manage transgender individuals in custody whilst protecting our staff and other prisoners.

The safety and wellbeing of our prison staff – the hidden heroes who are currently having to deal with the enormous difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic – is our priority, together with the safety of the prisoners in their care.

Violence against our dedicated staff will never be tolerated. We take their wellbeing extremely seriously and are clear that no-one should have to face being assaulted in the workplace. As such, we supported the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018, which increased the penalty from 6 to 12 months for those who assault emergency workers, including prison officers. Under the Act, judges must also consider tougher sentences for a range of other offences – including assault occasioning actual bodily harm, inflicting grievous bodily harm and sexual assault – if the victim is an emergency worker.

With regard to the care and management of transgender prisoners: we are committed to ensuring that all those under our care and management are treated fairly, lawfully and decently, with their rights properly respected. In 2019, the Ministry of Justice conducted a review into the care and management of individuals who are transgender and this led to the publication of a revised Policy Framework which strengthens the risk and safeguarding process. This was fully implemented on 31 October 2019 across all men's and women's prisons. All known risks, either towards, or presented by, a transgender person in prison, will always be taken into account. Individuals can and will be cared for and managed in the gender with which they identify, regardless of their location in a male or female prison.

Yours sincerely,

LUCY FRAZER QC MP