Further to the letter from Rory Stewart MP to the Bob Neill MP on 30th May informing him of the Urgent Notification triggered by the HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for HMP Exeter (copy attached), the Minister would like Bob Neill MP to be updated on progress against key areas of concern. I would be grateful if the following points of note could be relayed.

Following the UN letter, senior officials in HMPPS and MoJ have been working directly with the prison and decisive action (outlined below) has been taken to tackle the issues that triggered the Urgent Notification process.

Immediate actions that have been prioritised include:

- The designation of HMP Exeter as a prison of concern for safety, resulting in enhanced support from the National and Group Safety Teams.
- A focus on improving the living conditions at the prison; with a manager and two trades staff seconded from the facilities management provider, Government Facilities Services Ltd, to address the maintenance back log; cell observation panels and windows are being prioritised.
- The further development of cell inspections and accommodation checks to ensure that cells that are not fit or safe for purpose are taken out of use.
- Faulty cell bells at the time of the inspection have been identified and repaired; and local assurance and oversight processes have been strengthened to improve timeliness of response to cell bells.
- A priority audit of the prison’s use of force procedures and governance arrangements.
- An urgent review of reception and early days in custody procedures is taking place to help reduce the risk of suicide and self-harm.
- A vulnerability assessment to address immediate concerns about drug supply.
- The development of a protocol to prescribe the level of regime and governance to support vulnerable prisoners housed on C1 landing. This will ensure that the regime is broadly equivalent to that provided for vulnerable prisoners elsewhere in the prison, to where men will be relocated soon as spaces permit.
- The provision of a further constant supervision cell in addition to the one available on F Wing. The constant supervision cell in the Care and Separation Unit will only be used for constant supervision when no facility is available on normal location and a risk assessment determines that its use is safer for the prisoner than moving him to another prison.
- An enhanced level of senior leader oversight to ensure that managerial grip on issues is maintained.

Further actions are also underway which are detailed in the action plan and the Secretary of State’s response which will published on Wednesday 27th June.

A long-term plan of action is being developed which will be published when the full inspection report for Exeter is published, in a few months’ time.