Dear Executive Directors, Directors and Governors,

**Introducing the Structured on Wing Activity (SOWA) project.**

*There is no action required in response to this briefing. The purpose is to notify you of the newly launched Structured on Wing Activity (SOWA) Project.*

At the end of February a paper was presented to Prison Recovery Board (PRB) introducing the projects that comprise the Future Regime Design Programme. This includes a project to develop a model of Structured On Wing Activity (SOWA) which will be the first part of the Stage 1 regime model to be developed. This project has now been formally commissioned to commence.

**What does SOWA hope to achieve?**

SOWA has four initial strategic objectives:

* To introduce greater purposeful activity into residential periods and units;
* To translate COVID-19 learning into regime delivery, promoting safety and participation;
* To provide an overarching national regime framework for localised adaptation; and
* To test and confirm the core principles through recovery for subsequent inclusion in wider Stage 1 (and beyond) design.

**Supporting recovery from COVID**

The aim is to incorporate pre-COVID work/ideas and COVID-19 lessons such as a need for smaller regime groups, digitally enabled purposeful activity and the residential unit as a venue for staff and prisoner led activity into a formalised framework that “builds back better” rather than returning to pre-COVID regimes.

SOWA sits within the Prison Reform Portfolio as it contributes towards the wider Stage 1 regime model. However, it straddles reform and recovery work as we cannot implement a model at Stage 1 without this impacting on recovery (the period of progression from stage 4 to 2).

**Initial Plans**

Governors have undertaken considerable amounts of work to plan for future Stage 1(and beyond) regimes locally. Many sites are considering alternatives to mass movements and mass unlock, seeking to localise regime delivery onto residential units to minimise movements, splitting sites into smaller units and imbedding smaller cohorts for activities based on the success of regime groups. SOWA will not undermine these plans and will work collaboratively with Directors, Govenors, staff groups, Trades Unions,prisoner groups and other stakeholders to develop a national model(framework) where existing plans can sit. The aim is to produce a framework of regime expectations or parameters which strikes the right balance between central oversight and local ownership.

**Longer-term reform**

We must be realistic in what can be delivered before and within stage 1. We will not be able to reform all areas and imbed the level of reform we may wish to pursue. However those elements of regime innovation that cannot be delivered within the national framework for recovery, will be prioritised and pursued as longer term reform projects.

**Initial Steps**

In the meantime we are keen to hear views from as many people as possible. We will be attending regional and national meetings between Directors and Governors to get feedback and look to engage wider staff groups and prisoner residents. The fortnightly Governors Reference Group (GRG) will focus on this project and we have invited additional Governors to join this group. Independently from this we welcome any individual comments and/or opportunities to discuss local plans for post-COVID regime. We are keen to hear about and recognize the wealth of planning, ideas and potential from all colleagues and stakeholders, including governors and directors to ensure an effective engagement and that they may receive an appropriate level of central support and enablement as part of the described plans for a national model(framework).

Please send any of feedback and contact Chris ( Chris.Gunderson@justice.gov.uk) and Milosz (Milosz.bruski1@justice.gov.uk) who are leading SOWA for any further information.