



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Send  
Ripley Road  
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Surrey  
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5 October 2023

*Dear Chair,*

**HMP SEND: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 March 2023. I am very much aware of the amount of effort that goes into producing annual reports and thank you for providing a comprehensive picture of HMP Send over the reporting period.

I appreciate the Board's ongoing concerns about female offenders and women in custody that have severe mental health issues. HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) continues to work to mitigate this where possible, by delivering on the aims of the Female Offender Strategy and the Government's commitment to have fewer women entering custody, including ending remand for own protection solely on mental health grounds as set out in the draft Mental Health Act Reform Bill (June 2022). HMPPS is engaging with sentencers and all those who work in courts to raise awareness of the specific issues faced by women who offend and increasing understanding of the possible implications of sentencing. In addition, we are investing more than £15 million until 2025 to improve community support for women in the criminal justice system, including investing in new services and interventions that will act as alternatives to custody. HMPPS and NHS England (NHSE) have jointly undertaken a review of health and social care across the women's estate to obtain a better understanding of the current provision and ensure equity and next steps will be considered once the report is published (expected later this year).

NHSE is also looking at operational changes to improve the support for people with acute mental health needs, including those who encounter the criminal justice system, as outlined in the draft Mental Health Act Reform Bill (June 2022). NHSE reviewed its own memorandum of understanding with stakeholders in the criminal justice system in February 2023. The intention is to establish a common understanding of what is expected from each part of the health and care system in providing access to mental health inpatient facilities, including Health-Based Places of Safety, for those in mental health crisis.

Turning to prisoners subject to Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences, the Justice Select Committee (JSC) published their report into the IPP sentence on 28 September 2022 following a year-long inquiry. The Government has now issued a formal response to the Committee's report which can be found online.

The Government accepted the Committee's recommendation to review the Action Plan and shared the outcome of the review with the JSC on 26 April 2023 which can be accessed on the [parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk) website. HMPPS' review of the Action Plan specifically focused on improved, clear work streams, with

deadlines, and a robust overarching governance structure. The refreshed Action Plan will be a strong driver to build on past achievements and continue to provide the best possible opportunities for those serving an IPP sentence to progress towards a safe and sustainable release. The Government is, as a matter of priority, reviewing the Department's work to date to help more IPP prisoners progress towards release and will be considering thoroughly if there are further steps we need to take. The Secretary of State for Justice does not want to prejudge his conclusions, but please be assured that he will be giving the matter his close personal attention.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that HMP Send continues to be a prison where the levels of violence are low and there is a culture of respect between the majority of staff and prisoners. I was further encouraged to note the high percentage of prisoners engaged in purposeful activity, the Board's observation around prisoners' release planning, and was impressed to learn about the provision of murals painted by prisoners around the prison together with the art prize won by a prisoner for a craft item.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HMPPS comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Justice Secretary and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Send.

*Sincerely*  
*Damian Hinds*

**Damian Hinds**  
**Minister for Prisons and Probation**

## **HMP SEND: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2022 to 31 MARCH 2023**

### **HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report**

#### **Digital Technology**

HMPPS acknowledges the need for prisoner access to technology services. The ambition remains to provide in-cell technology to all prisons as soon as funding allows by prioritised need. In the meantime, prisoners have access to IT equipment through the education provider whereby they can complete distance learning and other courses. Requests for laptops for some prisoners to use in-cell for distance learning purposes could not be approved. HMP Send is also unable to have a virtual campus in the library due to different suppliers for library provision and education. The absence of a computer in the library does not impact on borrowing access.

#### **Probation Officers**

Prison probation officer levels have been affected by wider recruitment and retention issues across HMPPS' Kent Surrey and Sussex regional division. HMPPS continues to work proactively and creatively on recruitment for HMP Send and all prisons on balance with the needs of the community and their vacancies. To improve retention, several initiatives are now in place such as boosting career progression; improving the overall pay and reward package; prioritising employee health and wellbeing and ways of working; launch of a new exit interview process in 2021 and the retention toolkit in 2022; a new retention oversight process introduced in February 2023 to target priority sites with the highest attrition rates; and campaigns to attract undergraduates/students to work in part time roles and provided financial support to encourage staff to move permanently to areas with the most significant staffing challenges.

In the interim, there are firm plans to utilise Probation Support Officers to support probation work across the prison estate where there are longer term vacancies. HMPPS has also launched a pilot involving supporting trainee probation officers to take up a placement in our prisons, with HMP Send being one of the pilot sites. The longer-term view is for those staff upon qualification to then join the prison team where they trained. The much-awaited Pre-Release Team satellite provision for HMP Send is also now being discussed with a view to this support coming online in the next quarter helping to enhance the resettlement outcomes for all women being released from HMP Send.

#### **Offender Management in Custody (OMiC)**

Due to current staffing issues, HMP Send operates a modified and prioritisation system for delivery of the OMiC model to the women held there. The national OMiC team have published a Workload Management Strategy which can be deployed where Probation Prison Offender Management staff in post is at 90% or below against the target staffing figure. The development of the strategy is in response to critical operational staffing pressures, currently being experienced across the HMPPS estate and provides a clear route for escalation. These pressures will continue to impact on the ability of some establishments to deliver Case Management to the required levels and where capacity issues start to impact on operational delivery it is essential tasks and actions focused on risk management, parole and handover are prioritised. It is likely that the current staffing pressures will not be resolved for some time and therefore ways of mitigating against this are essential.

Prisons have been required to detail within their Regime Progression Plan's what key work they are planning to deliver and to who, based on their available resources. The Progression Plans are a short-term temporary measure which recognise that for 2023/24 many prisons are struggling to deliver key work

due to operational pressures. Progression Plans will be superseded by a new plan for 2024/25 which will set new expectations for the delivery of Key Work.

### **Prisoners' Property**

The Prisoners' Property Policy Framework, implemented during September 2022, places an emphasis on ensuring compliance with volumetric control limits, since anything within these limits will be transferred with the prisoner. It provides instructions to ensure consistency across different establishments. Volumetric control limits apply to all prisons and the Framework contains a leaflet to explain these limits to prisoners. The Framework introduced a new requirement that prisons must transfer excess property within four weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances which make this impossible. The Framework is clear that Governors should ensure management checks are undertaken to have confidence that prisoners' property is being handled correctly and with care. All complaints must be investigated in accordance with the Prisoner Complaints Policy Framework and the Finance Manual. The Framework sets out that Governors must ensure that property complaints and disputes are investigated thoroughly and efficiently, with prisoners being offered appropriate compensation where items have been lost or damaged.

Locally, Single Point of Contacts (SPOCs) have been identified at HMPs Bronzefield and Peterborough so that unanswered complaints can be escalated where required. The initial feedback indicates this is a positive initiative with some overdue complaints being addressed. HMP Send will continue to develop close working relationships with its key feeder prisons.

Regarding the transport contractor (Prisoner Escort Custody Services, also known as PECS), it was agreed with the Ministry of Justice that the new vehicle fleet would have increased capacity to facilitate an additional half bag of property for consumables to the limit of 7.5kg. The vehicle fleet is designed to transfer the number of prisoners intended, together with their property in line with the volumetric limit governed by the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework together with a reasonable volume of legal documentation. The introduction of the digitally recorded Prisoner Escort Record (dPER) accurately records the number and type of sealed property 'owned' by and transferred with the prisoner and an accurate record of property handover between different stakeholders. This is now embedded as business as usual. The digital process has assisted with investigations for property that is lost in transit with PECS suppliers.

### **Beauty Courses**

HMP Send does offer hairdressing courses through the awarding body City and Guilds, however this does not include a module on braiding and the prison is unable to affect this. HMP Send conducted a supplier comparison with South London Community College and they were offering the same modules and qualification as the existing provider. The prison now has plans to employ a prisoner for 'commercial hairdressing' in the salon which could include braiding. The prison is currently awaiting a quote from the maintenance contractor to alter the salon as there is not enough space at present to host an additional prisoner.