



Ministry  
of Justice

**Lord Timpson**  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Rye Hill  
Willoughby  
Rugby  
CV23 8SZ

**MoJ ref:** SUB119984

17 December 2024

Dear Chair,

**HMP RYE HILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 APRIL 2023 – 31 MARCH 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Rye Hill which I have carefully read through. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for capturing such helpful observations and recognise the hard work that has gone into producing this report, particularly as you continued to operate with several vacancies.

I was deeply saddened to hear that two prisoners died in custody during the reporting year, both, apparently, from natural causes. I offer my condolences to the friends and families of those that died. I was reassured that both deaths were reviewed by the PPO and that there were no recommendations for the prison from either review.

I appreciate your continued concerns regarding Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences. On 5 September, the Lord Chancellor announced that the Government would implement reforms we supported in opposition to the IPP licence period in the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. These commenced on 1 November, when the licences for 1,742 IPP offenders in the community were terminated. The remaining reforms will be implemented on 1 February 2025, when the reduced qualifying period for consideration of licence termination will see around 600 additional referrals made to the Parole Board.

The Government is determined to support the rehabilitation of IPP offenders through a refreshed Action Plan, which we published on 15 November 2024. The refreshed Plan puts an important emphasis on effective frontline delivery in our prisons and the Probation Service, to ensure that those serving IPP sentences have robust and effective sentence plans, which they are actively engaging with, and that they are in the correct prison to access the right interventions and rehabilitative services. This is the most effective way to help them to reduce their risk so that they can progress towards safe release from custody. The refreshed Action Plan was published in our IPP Annual Report and can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hmpps-annual-report-on-the-ipp-sentence-2023-to-24>.

It was encouraging to receive comments from the Board about the success of using prisoner-led initiatives to discourage violence and build a sense of community. I was also impressed to read about the significant improvements that have been made since last year in education achievement.

I note the concern you have raised in relation to the opening of the new building which the Director will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Lord Chancellor and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we would like to express our gratitude for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Rye Hill.



**Lord Timpson**  
**Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending**

## **HMP RYE HILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2023 – 31 MARCH 2024**

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

#### **Compassionate Release**

I note the Board's concerns regarding Early Release on Compassionate Grounds (ERCG). HMPPS balance essential public protection concerns with the needs of prisoners who may be reaching the end of life or have serious and complex health or social care needs while serving custodial sentences. The policy allows for prison Governors to make applications at any stage of a prisoner's sentence when a terminal or complex diagnosis is given.

For terminal diagnoses, while the policy provides a guide that the prisoner is within the last few months of life as an appropriate point at which to release under the provisions of ERCG, each case is considered on its own merits. The current process to confirm diagnosis, provides vital and necessary information for an informed decision to be made regarding the need for early release and possible ongoing care requirements in the community if early release were to be granted.

#### **Prison-requested transfers**

As a training prison and a national resource, HMP Rye Hill could receive from anywhere. However, where practicable, prisoners are accommodated as close as possible to their home probation region to maintain family ties and aid resettlement. Whilst this is a priority, unfortunately, it is not always possible due to a variety of factors including wider population pressures, security concerns or where prisoners have specific sentence planning needs which can only be met at certain establishments.

The establishment works closely with population management and has a local transfer strategy to ensure that appropriate prisoners are both allocated and transferred to and from HMP Rye Hill. We note that there are occasions when individuals request a transfer on compassionate grounds, and we work on a case-by-case basis to reach an appropriate decision. Due to the pressures that are being seen nationally, this is often a challenge. However, we do whatever we can to reach an appropriate outcome in all circumstances.

#### **Property**

HMPPS is aware of the problems around property and continues to explore what further can be done. Since the introduction of the Prisoners' Property Framework, prisoners must comply with volumetric control limits since any property within these limits will be transferred with them. This includes items which are exempt from volumetric control, such as legal papers. It is not possible to transfer with a prisoner all excess property which they might have accrued above these limits and any excess property outside of these limits should be transferred within four weeks.

Property cards must be updated to reflect any changes to a prisoner's property and prisoners must be invited to sign the card as soon as possible after any changes, having a proper opportunity to see that it is correct. All property accompanying prisoners leaving the prison for any reason, including for court appearances or transfer to another establishment, must be checked against the property record cards and discrepancies recorded. A prisoner must be invited to sign any newly created property card at the receiving prison.