



Ministry  
of Justice

Lord Timpson  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP/YOI Thorn Cross  
Arley Road  
Warrington  
Cheshire  
WA4 4RL

MoJ ref: SUB119602

3 December 2024

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI THORN CROSS: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 MAY 2023 – 30 APRIL 2024**

Thank you for submitting your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Thorn Cross. I am hugely grateful to the Board for carrying out its statutory role effectively and for the considerable work put in to capture your findings about the prison.

Please do pass on my thanks to your colleagues for their contributions especially as you have continued to do this whilst operating with several vacancies. HMP/YOI Thorn Cross is my local prison, and where I first started recruiting offenders. It is great to hear from you and the wider team.

I sympathise with your repeated concerns about prisoners subject to Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences. This Government supported the changes in opposition to the IPP licence period and creating a statutory requirement for the Government to publish an IPP annual report in the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. It is right that IPP sentences were abolished, and we are committed to working at pace to make progress on the IPP sentence. I hope that the Board is now aware that the IPP sentence has been reformed in the Victims and Prisoners Act, which gained Royal Assent on 24 May 2024, providing a clear pathway to a definitive end to the sentence by reforming the termination of the licence for IPP offenders. On 5 September 2024 the Secretary of State announced the timings for these changes and I can confirm that the Government has commenced these IPP measures in a phased approach from 1 November 2024. This means the IPP sentence ended for around 1,800 people in the community on 1 November 2024. On 1 February 2025, the qualifying period for when the Secretary of State must refer an IPP licence to the Parole Board for consideration of licence termination will be three years, or two for those convicted when under the age of 18. This was previously ten years and means that around 600 people will be referred to the Parole Board.

I can also provide my assurance that HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) remains committed to supporting those serving IPP sentences in both custody and the community. In February 2024, the HMPPS Director General of Operations commissioned each of the Area Executive Directors for England and Wales, as well as the Long-Term High Security Estate, the Women's Estate and Contracted Prisons to develop operational IPP delivery plans. These Delivery Plans directly target front-line delivery to help support those serving IPP sentences to achieve the objectives within their sentence plans and move towards a future prospective safe and sustainable release and, when in the community, towards a future termination of their licence. Locally at HMP/YOI Thorn Cross, although the number of IPP prisoners are low, the Governor has engaged with the Prison Reform Trust and carried out some meaningful work to

understand the impact and struggles faced by an offender deep in custody. The learning from this study is being acted on during 2024/25.

Aside from your concerns, it was really encouraging to receive your comments that the prison continues to provide a safe environment where staff treat prisoners in a fair and humane way and that there are good relationships between staff and prisoners. It was incredibly reassuring to note that there have been decreasing trends in use of force and violent incidents. I welcome the good healthcare provision and the excellent support available for those with drug and alcohol addictions. I was also extremely pleased to note the increased efforts being put into securing training and employment opportunities, especially as this has enabled over 50% of prisoners to be released with employment.

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

The Secretary of State and I hugely appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful to you and your team for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP/YOI Thorn Cross.



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

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

**Building Projects**

It is recognised that the new Offender Management Unit (OMU) does not meet building regulations. This was identified through the assurance process that is in place, for all projects, to monitor the constructor and their performance. The constructor is obliged to rectify the building where it is not compliant with building regulations at their own cost and presented their revised rectification plan in September 2024, including the programme for completion. The programme includes demolition of the existing new build which has already taken place to allow for re-construction which is forecast to be completed in August 2025. It is acknowledged that the impact of this delay has had severe consequences in terms of other projects being delayed and has placed a strain on the staff occupying the old and current OMU building. As with all projects, lessons are captured, and applied where appropriate to future work and as a goodwill gesture, the constructor will weatherproof the roof of the current OMU which is underway.