



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Coldingley
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20 January 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP COLDINGLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 AUGUST 2023 – 31 JULY 2024**

Thank you for submitting your Board's annual report on HMP Coldingley which I have read with great care. I would like to express my gratitude to you and your colleagues for your work in producing the report and for capturing such helpful observations despite operating with a depleted complement of members.

I have noted that in-cell sanitation has been a long-standing issue for the Board and rightly so. I wholly understand and accept the Board's dissatisfaction with the night sanitation system at HMP Coldingley and agree it is not acceptable in any prison. Whilst the Ministry of Justice Property Services continue to work to refurbish the old accommodation and install in-cell sanitation, the project has been brought forward to expedite this work as quickly as is possible.

Regrettably, as a result of further construction delays, the date by which all prisoners will have access to in-cell sanitation has slipped from June to November 2026. The overall programme of works at HMP Coldingley is now due to be completed by March 2028. Whilst this news is disappointing and frustrating, I have been assured that the local maintenance contractors (GFSL) are working hard to ensure any existing night sanitation is maintained to support the wing population, and the Governor will continue to do their best to provide additional staff to unlock prisoners to use facilities.

I appreciate the Board's continued concerns about prisoners serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences and noted their increasing numbers at the prison. 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 Lord Chancellor will also have two new powers, the power to use 'Risk Assessed Recall Review' (RARR) for recalled IPP prisoners and the power to disapply a recall. The first enables her to re-release people who have been recalled at any point without referring the case to the Parole Board, where safe to do so. The second enables her to not reset the two-year period after someone is re-released from a recall.

The Government is determined to support the rehabilitation of IPP offenders through a refreshed Action Plan, which we published on 15 November. The 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 online at GOV.UK. I am very mindful of the specific and substantial challenges faced by those serving IPP sentences and this is an issue I feel passionately about. I can assure you the Government is committed to working with organisations and campaign groups to ensure the appropriate course of action is taken to support those still serving IPP sentences.

Facilitating prisoners' transfers to support sentence plans or be closer to their families will no doubt aid their reformation and rehabilitation, however this has become extremely difficult owing to the ongoing population pressures across the entire adult male prison estate. As a training prison HMP Coldingley could receive prisoners from any adult male prison in England and Wales. However, where practical, prisoners are accommodated as close as possible to their resettlement home probation region to maintain family ties. Whilst this is a priority, 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.

This Government recognises the pressure facing our prisons and the landscape remains extremely challenging. Our interim measure to free up prison places by temporarily reducing the time those sentenced to certain Standard Determinate Sentences (SDS) serve in prison from 50% to 40%, known as SDS40, is an opportunity to progress prisoners in line with offender flows. Prisoners will, where possible, be moved into the training estate to fill these places ensuring that their individual sentence plan targets and rehabilitation needs are considered. SDS40 will not apply to prisoners sentenced for sex offences and certain domestic-abuse related offences irrespective of length together with serious violent offences with a sentence of four years or more. Despite the challenges, we are confident that the SDS40 initiative will provide welcome relief across the prison population and enable some movement of category C resettlement prisoners to establishments that better serve their resettlement needs.

Whilst it was concerning to read that violence has increased, the availability of illicit items is widespread and disappointing to note that education course capacity was not being utilised. I was encouraged to receive your comments about the good use of the prisoner council and Wayout TV. It was also heartening to learn about the Turning Lives Around peer-led initiative which is closely aligned to my personal values, the commitment and innovative ideas of the librarian, and the Governor's local reading strategy and personal dedication to the initiative.

I note you have raised several local issues of concern in your report which the Governor 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 Secretary of State and I sincerely appreciate the invaluable role of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are extremely grateful to you and your team for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Coldingley.



Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Kitchens

HMPPS recognises that the kitchen is at its operational limit. However, contingencies are in place to provide standby kitchen facilities in the event additional capacity is required. An area behind the existing kitchen has been identified and contingencies are sufficient to increase delivery. Whilst all requests from the establishment will be considered, demands for maintenance are currently much greater than the available funding. Therefore, once a bid for a project is received, HMPPS has to prioritise works very carefully to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency. There are no plans to increase the operational capacity of HMP Coldingley at present.

Mentally Unwell Prisoners

Long term segregation has significantly reduced over the course of 2024 and there is support available for those with mental health issues, such as the mental health team, neurodiversity lead, and the substance misuse provider. NHS England are in the process of implementing an Multidisciplinary Team Model and Joint Care and Separation Unit Standard Framework which will increase the healthcare provision within all our care and separation units (vulnerable prisoner units).

The opening of B wing has provided greater opportunities to support prisoners who might be vulnerable on the older wings. Prisoners are remotely unlocked at night on the older wings, where there is no CCTV on the residential landings. Although segregated conditions may not be appropriate for all mentally unwell prisoners, a constant observation cell is now available. If this cell meets the need, further funding will be sought to repurpose other cells.