



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Nottingham
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21 January 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP NOTTINGHAM: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MARCH 2023 – 29 FEBRUARY 2024**

Thank you for submitting your Board's annual report on HMP Nottingham which I have read with interest. It is clear that you and your colleagues have worked hard to produce the report and highlight the key issues, particularly as you continued to operate with several vacancies throughout the reporting period. I am grateful to each of you for your contributions and dedication, please do pass on my thanks to your colleagues.

I was extremely saddened to read that four prisoners died during the reporting year, either in custody or shortly after release. I pass on my deepest condolences to their friends and family. I would like to offer reassurance that deaths both in custody, and those shortly after release, together with recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) are taken very seriously and I was encouraged to read that PPO criticisms from previous investigations had been addressed. It is important in these tragic circumstances that we act on recommendations.

I share the Board's concerns about timely access to mental health facilities, and I can confirm that the Government and we at the Ministry of Justice are working with the Department of Health and Social Care to introduce a Mental Health Bill as soon as possible. This will include a range of reforms to support and improve access to mental health care for patients in the Criminal Justice System so that those affected get the timely care they need. It is also acknowledged that there are pressures on mental health services nationally and in response, NHS England Health and Justice National team are working strategically across the system to improve pathways.

I recognise the Board's disappointment around resentencing of prisoners subject to Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) and that concerns around IPP prisoners have repeatedly been raised in your reports. It is important to note that a resentencing exercise would likely result in most of those still serving an IPP sentence in custody being released without any licence supervision, despite the Parole Board having previously considered that these individuals should remain in custody for the protection of the public. You will understand that we cannot take any steps that would put the public at risk. I am though conscious of the significant issues faced by those serving IPP sentences and the need to support them and it is right that IPP sentences were abolished. We are carefully considering what further work we can do to enhance support for those still serving IPP sentences, including working closely with organisations and campaign groups to ensure the most appropriate course of action to support them is taken.

I share your concerns around pressures on capacity across the prison estate. In October the Government announced additional steps to address the challenge both in the short and long term. This includes the launch of the Independent Sentencing Review to ensure we are never again in a position where we have more prisoners than space in our prisons. To allow the Sentencing Review adequate time to complete, the Lord Chancellor has also announced a package of bridging measures to reduce demand on the system, including increasing the time eligible offenders can spend on Home Detention Curfew from six to twelve months and reforming how we review recalls to prison to target the unsustainable growth in the recall population.

I recognise that the remand prison population creates acute pressures in the reception estate, and we are committed to working with partners across the Criminal Justice System to ensure that this is effectively managed. To ease pressures HMPPS are implementing a dedicated and pro-active Bail Information Service (BIS) in all courts and reception prisons across England and Wales, recruiting additional BIS officers to support the courts in the formation of suitable bail packages where appropriate. Plans are also being confirmed to allow magistrates' courts to issue custodial sentences for up to twelve months for a single offence, up from six months. This will save approximately 2,000 sitting days in the Crown Court and will help reduce the remand prison population.

I am encouraged to read your comments about how HMP Nottingham is prioritising support for neurodiverse prisoners as well as the reopening of The Wellbeing Suite and the positive feedback received from prisoners on sessions run there.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as progress is made. 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 are grateful for the important role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate, and we really appreciate your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Nottingham.



Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoner Location

HMPPS continues to strive to maintain offender flows in the face of ongoing population pressures across the entire adult male prison estate. However, the growth of the remand population to unprecedented levels because of the courts backlog, and previous industrial action taken by the Criminal Bar Association are also impacting the adult male estate. The landscape remains extremely challenging, and prisons are being asked to show flexibility with their prisoner cohorts. The priority remains to maximise capacity in reception prisons enabling them to serve the courts. Prisons are encouraged to ensure that the rehabilitation needs of each prisoner is met and protected, and each prisoner is held in the right place at the right stage of their sentence to get the help they need to manage their risks.

The increased churn of prisoners has resulted in the establishment operating under considerable strain with continual pressure to accommodate new arrivals and move sentenced prisoners. This has impacted upon the ability to offer meaningful work and education to enable prisoners to gain knowledge, skills and qualifications within the short timescales of stay within the prison, and the ability to locate prisoners close to the communities to which they are to be released to. However, with the decrease to the prison population following executive action the potential now exists to move a greater number of prisoners into open conditions which are geared to fostering closer family ties and preparing individuals for their release.

Seriously Mentally Unwell Prisoners

HMPPS are committed to improving mental health outcomes for people in contact with the Criminal Justice System, to ensure that offenders and defendants with acute mental health needs receive timely support, in the most appropriate setting. It is recognised that vulnerable people in prison who meet the threshold for detention under the Mental Health Act and require a transfer to hospital continue to experience delays in accessing the specialist care and treatment they need. Responsibility for the commissioning of secure mental health beds rests with Mental Health Provider Collaboratives in each region. NHS England will continue to escalate to them the demands for places within the prison population. NHS England Health and Justice Midlands Teams continue to maintain oversight of long waits and access to secure inpatient treatment in a mental health hospital. Delays have been escalated to the Provider Collaboratives and Mental Health Specialised Commissioners both regionally and nationally, given this is a widespread issue. Fortnightly multi-agency calls are held and chaired by NHS England Health & Justice Midlands Team to support prioritisation of patients and expedite transfers. A national data exercise is underway to determine the scale of demand and waiting times for all patients. Once completed, further delivery actions can then be agreed.

HMP Nottingham will always hold a contingent of prisoners suffering with poor Mental Health, who are well supported with a professional mental health service commissioned by the NHS. Thankfully, only a small proportion of those suffering poor mental health are held in conditions of Segregation. A local analysis points to an average of two at any one time for whom alternative provision either in secure hospitals or Mental Health units is being pursued. Safeguards are in place to support these individuals.