



MoJ ref: SUB122829

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Channings Wood  
Denbury  
Newton Abbott  
Devon  
TQ12 6DW

11 April 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP CHANNINGS WOOD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2023 – 31 AUGUST 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Channings Wood. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations, particularly as you were short of members throughout the reporting period.

I was saddened to hear that a prisoner had died during the reporting year, ten days after his release. I offer my condolences to all his friends and family and would like to reassure the Board that recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are taken very seriously.

I have read your report with care. 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. This would present an unacceptable risk to victims and the public. You will understand that whilst it is right that IPP sentences were abolished, we cannot take any steps that would put the public at risk. I am though conscious of the significant issues faced by those still serving IPP sentences and the need to support them, ensuring that they have robust and effective sentence plans and are in the correct prison to access the right interventions and rehabilitative services. We are carefully considering what further work we can do to enhance support, including working closely with organisations and campaign groups to ensure the most appropriate course of action to help those still serving IPP sentences to reduce their risk, so that they can progress towards safe release from custody.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is continually reviewing the investment required across the estate. Investment proposals are underpinned by the data collected in recent condition surveys which assess the fabric, cells, and critical assets at each prison. These will inform long-term forward maintenance registers, which can be prioritised against future capital budgets. A project to install two boilers in healthcare is in development and works to install fire sprinklers are due to commence at the beginning of 2025. I am pleased to see that you have observed good progress on the refurbishment and maintenance of showers and that the refurbishment project was completed in December 2024. I am assured that you are kept updated on the roofing situation via monthly meetings and you will be aware that the Governor shares your concerns regarding the lack of progress. All requests from the establishment are considered and I have been given assurance that the work will start in the future. Once a bid for a project is received, HMPPS prioritises works very carefully to make best use of funding,

focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency. I note that to remedy the ongoing failure of the heating system the Governor has hired temporary stand-alone generators and boilers which provide some heat to the industries building.

HMPPS are committed to enabling those in our care to live with independence, respect and dignity respecting personal choice at every stage of their sentence. However, HMPPS do not own or commission Social Care services. The Care Act (England) and Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) stipulate that Local Authorities are responsible for delivery of social care for their geography, including Approved Premises and Prisons in that area. The number of older prisoners has risen significantly over the past 20 years and I recognise the challenges this increase can bring to prisons. In regard to the assurances by the previous Government to develop a national strategy for older prisoner, HMPPS is currently reviewing its approach to strategy development, focusing work on a small number of core operational strategies to successfully deliver key outcomes and priorities. It is therefore considering currently how best to ensure the needs of older prisoners are met and whether this requires a bespoke strategy or whether support for them should instead be reflected in wider strategic work. In the interim, there is a range of work ongoing to improve support for older prisoners, focusing on working with partners to improve health and care support for older prisoners, how we are using the estate to best meet their needs, and how to spread best practice on purposeful activity. The aging population at Channings Wood have been identified as a cohort requiring additional support within their Strategic Needs Analysis. The Head of Reducing Reoffending is looking at options to engage with our increasing aging population.

It was encouraging to receive your comments about the positive work the Governor has undertaken around reducing drug conveyance which indicate that the measures taken are effective. The decline in assaults during the reporting period and the results of your survey, indicating that 87% of prisoners feel safe most of the time and 92% of prisoners on the main wing feel safe most of the time, are also pleasing to read.

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 Lord Chancellor 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 Channings Wood.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

**Lord Timpson**

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

## **HMP CHANNINGS WOOD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2023 – 31 AUGUST 2024**

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

#### **Prisoner Property**

HMPPS note the Board's continuing concerns about the handling of prisoners' property. This is an area to which HMPPS is currently giving further attention. Careful consideration will be given to the findings in the IMB national thematic report on how property loss impacts on prisoners (September 2024), as well as those due to be received from Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations following a thematic review of the property complaints they have received in the last five years.

As the Board identifies, a common area for problems is when excess prisoner property is forwarded on when a prisoner transfers. It is therefore key that prisoners comply with volumetric control limits, since anything within those limits will transfer with them. HMPPS is focusing on what more can be done to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Framework and are grateful for the continued feedback from IMB members. HMPPS also note the Board's concerns about the lack of digital improvements on property handling. While it is recognised this will be disappointing, other pressures around digital changes mean that it is not anticipated that an electronic property card will be in place in the immediate future.

#### **Management of Prisoners - 'Dirty Protest'**

Efforts continue to support and reintegrate the individual noted within the IMB report. Any 'dirty protest' within a prison is best confined to an area that will cause the least disruption. On the authority of the Governor or operational manager, a prisoner on a 'dirty protest' will be moved to designated accommodation in the segregation unit. and managed via a segregation review board where specific prisoner issues are discussed and every effort made to ascertain the reasons for the protest, end the protest and return the prisoner to normal location at the earliest opportunity.