



Ministry  
of Justice

Lord Timpson  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Leyhill  
Wootton-under-Edge  
GL12 8BT

MoJ ref: SUB128721

18 November 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP LEYHILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2024 – 31 JANUARY 2025**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Leyhill. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for the considerable effort invested in capturing such valuable observations, and I welcome the support you have received from the prison locally in facilitating your monitoring activity.

I do understand the Board's frustrations about prisoner access to communication devices in the open estate when compared with closed prisons which you have also raised with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in your report. There have been delays to the pilot scheme intended to introduce mobile PIN phones in parts of the open prison estate where in-cell telephony is not available. I can provide assurance that the intention remains to undertake this pilot scheme at HMP Leyhill. The importance of maintaining strong family ties is recognised and the prison has been working closely with colleagues across HMPPS to explore the options to enhance the opportunities available for prisoners. Work is also ongoing at the prison to expand the provision of PIN phones, with the programme due to conclude this Autumn. While some infrastructure challenges remain other solutions are being explored that may support improved contact with family and friends and to ensure more equitable access to PIN phones across all the residential units.

I also recognise your further concerns about the capacity within Approved Premises as in recent years demand for placements in Approved Premises nationally has outstripped supply. This demand continues to be a challenge, but we are working to increase capacity. The digitalised approach to referrals, which was in a pilot phase when I wrote to you last year, is also now fully operational across the country. This is helping to match individuals to placements, whilst maximising occupancy and improve timeliness. HMPPS now prioritises referrals for Parole Board cases above others enabling placements to be typically around six weeks after the decision to release. Locally, HMP Leyhill monitors Approved Premises availability and whilst this remains challenging, release timelines continue to align with expectations following the 21-day reconsideration period. It is also acknowledged that SDS40 tranches increased demand to support prisoners release, but it was encouraging to read that the Board considered the Offender Management Unit at the prison handled the situation well.

Regarding your request for the prisoner food budget to be increased, it remains the case that governors have the flexibility to manage expenditure locally as part of normal budget planning. This allows the Governor at HMP Leyhill to ensure that meals remain varied, nutritious, and compliant with religious,

cultural, and medical requirements. The Board was informed last year that the budgets for prisoner food had been incrementally increasing in recent years, from £2.18 per prisoner per day in 22-23 to £3.01 in 24-25 and I can confirm that the budgets for 2025-26 have been increased again in line with the inflation funding HMPPS received. In addition, as HMP Leyhill remains committed to delivering nutritious and balanced choices for all prisoners, work has taken place locally to understand the reasons for the lack of engagement from prisoners. Food forums have now been fully reinstated with the importance of engagement continuing to be promoted and actively encouraged to allow feedback to be captured and acted upon.

It was encouraging to receive your comments about the progress the prison has made since the last report and the new strategy for education, skills and work to enhance prisoners' employability and give them the best possible chances on release. Despite the concerns about the changing demographic at the prison to young offenders, I was reassured that incidents of violence, use of force, self-harm and Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) documents opened remained low and there is a strong focus on supporting vulnerable prisoners. It was also encouraging to note that a residential forum has been established, providing prisoners with an opportunity to engage and offer feedback. Additionally, an innovations fund has been introduced to incentivise ideas aimed to improving employability and promoting positive outcomes within the community.

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 the remaining issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister 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 Leyhill.

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 LEYHILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2024 – 31 JANUARY 2025

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

#### **Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences**

The Government is very mindful of the specific challenges faced by those serving IPP sentences and is determined to make further progress to support this cohort towards a safe and sustainable release, but this will not be in a way that compromises public protection. Although published data on 30 June 2025 showed that the unreleased IPP prisoner population in custody had fallen to 978 with the number of recalled IPP prisoners standing at 1,508, to support the rehabilitation of IPP offenders a refreshed IPP Action Plan was published on 17 July 2025. This has put an important emphasis on effective frontline delivery in prisons and the Probation Service as this is the most effective way to help them to reduce their risk so that they can progress towards safe release from custody. The Action Plan also now includes measurable targets to ensure transparency and accountability, and regional plans are being reviewed to support delivery of these outcomes. Locally HMP Leyhill remains focused on ensuring that IPP prisoners are supported to progress and that barriers to release are actively addressed with regular reviews and structured supervision supporting case management. Psychological input is available where needed, and multidisciplinary case conferences are held to ensure robust decision-making. The re-launch of the ISP forum has also provided a valuable platform for IPP prisoners to have a voice.

#### **Community Offender Manager Workload**

To take account of the Probation Reset, early release schemes and other short term capacity measures, a recent review of the Probation Prioritisation Framework (PPF) has taken place to provide clarity on the prioritisation of tasks and what work can be reduced or paused when capacity issues begin to impact on probation delivery. The framework and guidance applies to the whole Probation Delivery Unit and can be used to assist with the capacity of all practitioners, alongside the Workload Measurement Tool (WMT) to measure the workload of individual staff delivering sentence management activities. Additionally, HMPPS has established the Our Future Probation Service programme to rebalance demand and capacity within probation. Over the next 18 months the programme will be implementing policy and digital improvements to enhance productivity and ensure staff can focus on public protection and reducing reoffending. This will support prisons and probation colleagues to successfully implement the Sentencing Review measures in the Sentencing Bill.

#### **Increased Capacity**

While there have been challenges with the Category D expansion contract, the Board can be assured that a new procurement process was launched to deliver the four new houseblocks at HMP Leyhill following the original contractor going into administration in 2024. The onboarding of the replacement contractor is underway and a period of commercial confidentiality is in effect to allow for the finalisation of the designs which includes ancillaries, timelines, and governance arrangements. In addition, a project to construct the 97 Rapid Deployment Cells is taking place with completion expected in 2026 which will include 19 ancillary units. These are designed to support both operational delivery and staff welfare, providing enhanced facilities such as additional storage, laundry areas, staff rooms, office space, serveries, self-cook areas and a multi-use games area. Two buildings are also being converted to provide workshop space and an additional classroom for vocational training. To ensure the new capacity is effectively integrated into the wider estate, the deployment includes provision for additional staffing and the profile will be reviewed and adjusted in line with these developments to maintain safe and effective operations as capacity grows. The Board will be aware that C1 Unit has now reopen following upgrades to meet fire

compliance standards. Improvements are also taking place to the existing accommodation with replacement heating already completed in reception. During the remainder of the financial year roof repairs are due to take place to the Chapel and Legal Visits, as well as improvements to the heating in A & B Wings. Fire safety improvement works are also expected to begin in April 2026 lasting 24 months.

### **Work and Qualifications**

HMPPS is committed to expanding opportunities for prisoners to engage in education, skills and work provision to support rehabilitation and reduce reoffending. Prisoners are being supported into skilled work through vocational courses, a future skills programme, and expanding the prisoner apprenticeship programme which can now be accessed by prisoners in both the open and closed estates, with a catering apprenticeship currently being implemented at HMP Leyhill. National events are scheduled quarterly and an Unlocking Hospitality event ran between 8 – 19 September 2025 where employers delivered employability sessions in prisons to support prison leavers into the hospitality and catering industry, including day-in-the-life-of presentations, practical demonstrations and interview sessions.

Regional Employment Councils have also been launched, which include the Devon & North Dorset and Avon & South Dorset regions. For the first time, they bring businesses together with probation and the Department of Work and Pensions to support offenders leaving prison. This builds on the work of the Employment Advisory Board initiative providing external business insight and networks into prisons to ensure prisoners have the skills and training employers need to meet labour market demands. A potential new chairperson for the Employment Advisory Board has been identified who visited HMP Leyhill and met with key stakeholders in September 2025. A dedicated local Community Employment Team also continues to engage with employers to identify vacancies and support recruitment for prisoners on ROTL and those approaching release. Some welcome developments have taken place recently with employers such as Keltruck, Westbase, Suez, Morrisons and various recycling and waste management businesses to offer ROTL or possible employment opportunities to prisoners on their release. Work roles and education available within the prison also continues to be aligned with external employment pathways, to ensure a coherent and purposeful approach to skills development and job readiness.

### **Prisoner Work Transport**

Transport capacity is a recognised challenge in supporting prisoners on release on temporary licence (ROTL) to undertake employment opportunities in the community. However, HMP Leyhill has secured business case approval for vehicle replacements, with the first vehicles expected to arrive in March 2026, which will increase seat capacity by 10%. The prison continues to work collaboratively with employers to utilise their vehicle transport where appropriate and shift-based working arrangements have enabled staggered start and finish times to allow prison vehicles to be used for multiple journeys. The prison transport department has also streamlined journeys for Resettlement Day Release (RDR) and Resettlement Overnight Release (ROR) which has freed up vehicle capacity for ROTL employment.

### **Prisoners' Property**

Careful consideration is being given to the findings in the IMB national thematic report on how property loss impacts on prisoners, as well as those received from Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations following a thematic review of the property complaints they have received in the last five years. Following these reports, Governors and other senior leaders have been reminded of the most important property handling points and consultation is taking place with prisons on further areas raised in the reports. The HMPPS Prison Performance Committee has also considered the assurance of prisoner property and that the operational reporting line of Prison Group Directors (PGDs) and Area Executive Directors (AEDs) are best placed to drive improvement, who are now working within their teams to reflect on current practice, and reinforce the importance of compliance within the Policy Framework. Locally HMP Leyhill has already implemented improvements to property management processes both in Reception and across residential units to ensure prisoners retain the correct amount of personal property in line with policy. It is

acknowledged that over time property can be accumulated among prisoners serving long sentences which can be a challenge. However, as the Board indicates in its annual report, stored property has reduced locally. The prison also remains committed to treating all property with dignity and respect, particularly during transfer and will continue to work closely with sending prisons to ensure property is appropriately managed and transferred.