



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Send
Ripley Road
Woking
Surrey
GU23 7LJ

MoJ ref: SUB129086

27 November 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP SEND: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Send. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations. I am also pleased to see that you were at a full complement of members by the end of the reporting period.

I do recognise the Board's concern that prison custody may not be suitable for some women with complex needs. Whilst sentencing remains a matter for the independent judiciary, sentencing guidelines that judges and magistrates are by law required to follow encourages courts to take an individualistic approach and focus on the issues in the case. These make clear that *"female offenders are more likely to have underlying mental health needs"*, which can be considered during sentencing. In April 2024, a new mitigating factor was also added across its offence-specific guidelines, for *"difficult and/or deprived background or personal circumstances"*, which includes mental health difficulties and could result in an adjustment to the sentence. Liaison and Diversion services, commissioned by NHS England, are able to provide information to support court officials to understand the health needs of an individual to better inform remand and sentencing decisions and this service continues to be promoted to courts.

In addition, following the Independent Sentencing Review's (ISR) recommendations, the Government introduced the Sentencing Bill on 2 September 2025 to deliver many of its recommended reforms. I welcome that these are reflective of third sector organisations informing the ISR that custody is often unsuitable for many women due to their vulnerabilities and low risk to the public. I understand that levels of self-harm and mental health issues in women's prisons are too high, but I can provide reassurance that there is specialist training for new officers, as well as the recruitment of psychologists to support women with complex needs and a pilot of a compassion focused therapy group designed for women. NHS England are planning to review mental health specifications to ensure further focused care is provided to people within prisons. This is in addition to the variety of evidence-based interventions and services that are already provided for women in prison. These services include the Women's Offender Personality Disorder Pathway, as well as the Women's Estate Psychology Service team, which provides forensic psychologists within all 12 women's prisons to deliver therapeutic services for women in our care.

The Mental Health Bill has now progressed to Report Stage in the House of Commons. The Bill includes reforms to prevent courts from detaining people with severe mental illness in prison as a place of safety and introduces a new statutory time limit of 28-days for the transfer of patients with a mental disorder from prison and other places of detention to hospital. In preparation for implementation, we are working closely

with the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, the Welsh Government, the Home Office, and the Youth Custody Service to develop a comprehensive plan outlining the operational improvements required to support the reforms. These changes are expected to take effect 18–24 months following Royal Assent. The Government has also committed to publishing annual reports on the Bill's implementation. I remain firmly committed to improving the experiences and outcomes of prisoners with serious mental health needs, and I am confident that this collaborative approach will deliver meaningful and lasting change.

I am sympathetic to the Board's ongoing concern regarding continued detention, and repeated recalls of Indeterminate for Public Protection (IPP) sentenced prisoners. IPP offenders can only be recalled for behaviour or breaches of their licence that are causally linked to their offending, such as the behaviour of the offender or the circumstances the offender is in, mirroring those in place at the time of the index offence. However, what might appear to be a relatively minor breach may indicate a much-increased risk of serious harm. It is worth noting that during 2024, there were 619 IPP recalls, which was the lowest since 2017. We want to ensure that those who are recalled are re-released as soon as it is safe to do so, either via direction by the Parole Board or by officials on behalf of the Secretary of State using the Risk Assessed Recall Review process. We expect the number of IPP recalls to continue to fall given the significant reduction of those serving IPP sentences in the community. The enforcement of the IPP sentence, currently in place, is compatible with our international human rights obligations.

I can also advise that the HMPPS Women's Group has developed an IPP Delivery Plan that outlines the collaborative efforts of staff in women's prisons, psychology teams, and Probation Practitioners in the community to support women serving IPP sentences. The core principle of the Plan is to adopt an individualised and relational approach, ensuring that interventions are responsive to each woman's unique needs, strengths and capabilities. This personalised method aims to facilitate meaningful progression through their sentence and promote positive outcomes.

I was heartened to read that the Democratic Therapeutic Community marked its 20th anniversary, and despite not being fully subscribed for the reporting year, I welcome the Board's report that prisoners praise its transformative impact. I was also pleased to read about the positive resettlement outcomes, particularly in securing employment and accommodation for those leaving custody.

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. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I value the important role of Independent Monitoring Boards and extend our appreciation to you and your members for your ongoing dedication on behalf of HMP Send.

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 SEND: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 MARCH 2025

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoner's Property

HMPPS notes the Board's concerns about the handling of prisoners' property, and this is an area to which further attention is being given with ongoing consultation with prisons to identify where improvements can be made. Governors and other senior leaders have been reminded of the most important property handling points. This includes the need to ensure compliance with volumetric control limits, since any property within those limits transfers with prisoners when they move establishments.

Locally, HMP Send's volumetric control checks are conducted by residential officers during weekends using designated boxes where staffing levels allow. These checks are documented in both case notes and wing diaries. When women report missing property upon transfer to HMP Send, reception staff will note the missing items so that this can be investigated locally and the issue resolved.

Medication provision

For those individuals transferring into HMP Send from other establishments, the healthcare provider anticipates arrivals with at least seven days of controlled medication where needed. If controlled medications are not sent, staff contact the sending prison to have them courier this over. For regular medications the healthcare provider has access to emergency stocks with critical and vital medications with Electronic Prescribing Services active. Further escalation processes can also be utilised including contacting out of hours prescribers enabling use of community pharmacies and contacting 111 services where needed.

Escort chains

Wherever possible, it is usual practice for female members of staff to escort women to medical appointments that will involve any intimate examinations. Subject to risk assessment, restraints may be removed during certain medical procedures or examinations. The need for the prisoner's privacy must be considered and documented as part of the risk assessment, particularly where the prisoner is to undergo an intimate examination or procedure. The risk assessment must also consider directions of the removal of restraints, where appropriate. HMPPS has carried out an extensive review of the External Escort Policy Framework to consider the needs of the women's estate, including the development of a bespoke risk assessment for female prisoners, and supporting tools to assist staff knowledge and awareness. The revised policy was published on 30 October 2025, with an implementation date of 5 January 2026.

Gym staff

HMP Send has made multiple attempts to recruit Physical Education Instructors (PEI's), including through transfer campaigns; however, these efforts have not proved successful. One existing staff member is currently undergoing training to qualify as a PEI. Future recruitment campaigns will be strategically marketed to enhance visibility and reach across the wider prison estate, with the aim of attracting a broader pool of suitable candidates. The gym provides specialist support to a range of different cohorts within HMP Send i.e. neuro diverse, over 50s etc, in addition to biannual Prisoners Wellbeing events

which are extremely successful. There is also outside gym equipment in two of the highest populated accommodation areas and a weekly Parkrun.

Access to digital technology

The prison education provision is being overhauled to put a greater emphasis on IT, through the roll-out of the Digital Education Platform (DEP) and the new Prisoner Education Service (PES) contracts. HMPPS and the Ministry of Justice have recognised that modernising the digital infrastructure and content is key to expanding IT learning in prisons. The new infrastructure setup allows for more flexibility and security, which in turn opens up new digital opportunities for learners to engage with.

Locally, IT provision has increased through the sourcing of laptops for educational use and the expansion of classroom capacity. HMP Send is also working with its education provider to embed digital skills across the curriculum and ensure distance learners are adequately supported.

Longer-term funding for training initiatives

The discontinuation of the Railtrack programme was regrettable, given its alignment with employment needs and employment outcomes. HMPPS is actively exploring alternative vocational pathways that reflect labour market demand and prisoner interest. The hair salon's expansion to include African Caribbean hair training is one example of our commitment to inclusive and relevant skills development. HMPPS continues to seek sustainable funding models to support long-term training initiatives including funding for reinstatement of the Railtrack programme. Whilst funding is not currently available for the Railtrack programme, HMP Send do offer a range of alternative employment options and workshops including The Clink horticulture and gardens project, Waste Management Industry Training (WAMITAB), and Fine Cell. A Rift Self-Employment programme is also available.

Pay parity

The Women's Group Finance Business Partner has shared information on different uses of non-pay budget across all public sector women's prisons, including pay, to help support Governors in making informed decision regarding the allocation of local budgets. The Prison Service Order 4460 Prisoners Pay sets out minimum pay rates for work and outlines expectations for purposeful activity, it also recognises that not all activities are automatically paid, and that Governors/Directors have the flexibility to determine local policy based on operational priorities and available resources.