



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Preston
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MoJ ref: SUB130984

23 January 2026

Dear Chair,

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

Thank you for submitting your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Preston. I have read your report with care, and I am very grateful to you and your colleagues for the considerable work that has gone into preparing it and capturing a detailed and honest account of the prison's current state with the aim of improving practices. This is particularly impressive given that you were again operating below your recommended complement of members. I had an insightful visit to HMP/YOI Preston in May 2025 and was able to see first-hand some of the issues flagged in your report.

I was saddened to hear that there were two deaths in the prison during the reporting year, one death shortly after release and a further death following a transfer to another prison. I appreciate that these are always difficult events to deal with and offer my condolences to all those affected. I note that there are ongoing investigations by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman and we await any subsequent recommendations, which will be treated with the upmost importance.

I acknowledge the Board's repeated concern about the aging fabric of this Victorian prison and the impact this has on decency and operational efficiency. HMPPS Estates continues to review investment requirements across the estate and bids for HMP/YOI Preston including the refurbishment of showers, window replacement, roofing projects and reception reconfiguration. A project to raise handrail heights on wing landings is progressing and currently out to tender. It is with regret that no progress has been made in developing a project to replace the Offender Management Unit building this financial year due to funding constraints. However, an options and feasibility study has been commissioned for funding in the 2026/27 capital maintenance programme to explore replacement of the building within the prison boundary. The outcome of this study will inform future decisions on funding and project design and development. Unfortunately, perimeter wall repairs and installation of perimeter intrusion detection systems were delayed by the collapse of the original contractor, but I am pleased to report that these works are underway following the appointment of a replacement contractor. Demands for infrastructure improvements across the estate are much greater than funding available so all proposals are prioritised against available funding based on risk to life, capacity and decency which is informed by condition surveys. While funding pressures remain, these steps demonstrate our commitment to addressing the concerns you have reiterated.

I acknowledge the Board's observations on the impact of recalls following early release programmes. The Sentencing Bill currently before Parliament introduces a fixed term recall of 56 days for most standard determinate sentence offenders, replacing the current short term recalls of 14 or 28 days. This measure reflects recommendations from the Independent Sentencing Review and is designed to reduce churn, support rehabilitation and allow sufficient time to review licence conditions and risk management plans. Recall remains an essential safeguard to protect the public when risk increases but these changes will help ensure that prisons like HMP/YOI Preston are not unduly impacted by short term recalls.

The need for stronger community support to reduce unnecessary remand and improve resettlement is fully recognised and remains a focal point for improvement. The Bail Information Service has now been rolled out nationally with 70 prison-based Bail Information Officers producing reports to support judicial confidence in bail decisions. At HMP/YOI Preston, two officers deliver this service and work closely with courts and community teams. The Community Accommodation Service Tier 2 continues to provide gender specific accommodation for bailees and those eligible for home detention curfew with delivery in the North West region increasing from 43 beds in October 2022 to 113 beds as of November 2025. Strategic Housing Specialists are embedded in prisons including HMP/YOI Preston, to identify and remove barriers to accommodation and provide training for staff on housing pathways. Commissioned Rehabilitative Services contracts deliver specialist support for people in custody and on probation in their pre-release needs, including housing support. This complements mainstream services and duty-to-refer processes. Future men's Community Rehabilitative Service contracts, due to go live in 2027, will offer enhanced support for housing, finance and wider pre-release needs, with Community Link Workers helping individuals build positive lifestyles free from crime and substance misuse.

Whilst I appreciate you will be frustrated at having to raise repeat concerns, I was encouraged by the improvements highlighted in your report, including the increased opportunities for time out of cell and the work of the employment hub supported by a multi-agency forum. These developments, alongside the delivery of bite-sized education programmes and vocational training, demonstrate the commitment of staff and partners to rehabilitation and progression.

I note that your report has also raised some local concerns. The Governor will continue to keep you informed of any developments regarding these matters. HMPPS comments in response to the other issue raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I very much appreciate the important role played by all members of Independent Monitoring Boards in improving our prisons and we are grateful for your ongoing dedication on behalf of HMP/YOI Preston.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Timpson

Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Staff Development and Enable Programme

The Enable Programme is being piloted at early adopter sites, including Lancaster Farms to strengthen capability and confidence among prison staff. This approach provides an immediate boost to operational delivery and lays the groundwork for long term transformation. It focuses on relational practice and draws on learning from the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway.

Local implementation is supported by a Band 5 Implementation Coordinator and up to six Band 4 Capability Officers who mentor officers on the wing, facilitate delivery and embed learning through reflective sessions. Leadership development is a key component with Custodial Manager Leadership Portfolio modules being tested to build confidence and capability among managers. Investment in the working environment is also part of the programme, improving the sense of mattering and belonging for staff and contributing to a positive culture. Core Capability Packages have been developed to support officers with less than two years' service, reinforcing essential skills and confidence. Six prototype packages are available nationally:

- Health & Safety Matters
- Five Minute Intervention Matters
- Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork Matters
- Relational Practice Matters
- Procedural Justice Matters
- Wellbeing Matters

These packages combine face-to-face workshops, applied learning and further reading guides. Facilitator upskilling commenced in August 2025 to enable local delivery planning and delivery guidance has been provided to ensure the right people with the right skills facilitate learning. Additional capability packages will be rolled out as they are developed and informed by initial assessments. The two North West Prison Groups are subsequently working together to review and establish staff capability development initiatives based on the Core Capability Packages available for delivery.