



Ministry  
of Justice

Lord Timpson  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Bure  
Jaguar Drive  
Badersfield  
Norwich  
NR10 5GB

MoJ ref: SUB132055

27 February 2026

Dear Chair,

### **HMP BURE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 AUGUST 2024 – 31 JULY 2025**

Thank you for submitting your Board's annual report on HMP Bure. 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, particularly while operating below your recommended complement of members.

I was saddened to hear that three deaths occurred in hospital during the reporting year; two have been confirmed as natural causes, with one inquest outstanding. I would like to offer my condolences to all those affected and note your comments on recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman..

I appreciate that concerns about education and purposeful activity were also raised in last year's report and understand why the Board remains troubled by the potential impact on the curriculum and opportunities available. I can confirm that there have been no cuts to the national prison education budget but the cost of delivering high quality education has risen significantly in recent years. Although the budget increased in cash terms, it has not kept pace with rising costs. As a result, from October 2025 there was a national reduction of approximately 20–25% in Core Education delivery, following a careful, evidence based analysis. A revised funding formula has been introduced to ensure fairer allocation based on population size and regional cost differences. Core Education reductions do not affect library provision, careers advice, distance learning or vocational training delivered through industries and workshops. Governors may also use the Dynamic Purchasing System to commission additional provision tailored to their local population. Locally, efforts are being made to prioritise and reshape provision so that the impact on prisoners is minimised.

I recognise the recurring mention of the treatment towards Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners and I understand the Board's continued frustration about this cohort. Fixed term recalls apply only to offenders serving standard determinate sentences, who have automatic release dates. For those serving indeterminate sentences, including IPP prisoners, recall decisions must be based on behaviour that is causally linked to the original offending and assessed as posing a current risk to public safety. This is referred to operationally as release following a Risk Assessed Recall Review. Recalled IPP offenders have already been re released using this power in cases where they would otherwise have been required to wait several months for their scheduled oral hearing before the Parole Board.

Thank you for raising this important issue around specialised units for dementia and geriatric healthcare, particularly in light of the age and needs of many men at HMP Bure. NHS England has confirmed that they are currently working with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and local authorities in the region, including Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils to explore the development of a specialist unit within the East of England for men whose social care and health needs cannot ordinarily be met in a standard custodial setting but who do not require admission to hospital. This work represents a meaningful step toward addressing the type of provision the Board has highlighted. Alongside this, the Government and HMPPS continue to take forward the Independent Sentencing Review's recommendation to develop a long term strategy for older prisoners, which specifically includes examining the potential for more specialised accommodation and support arrangements across the estate. At present, no operational decisions have yet been made locally, but this national work will help shape what future provision may look like.

In regard to the reiterated concern around the digitalisation of adjudications, I understand why the continued reliance on paper based processes feel burdensome and outdated but I am pleased to share that some progress have been made. While adjudicators must still record hearings manually, the Digital Prisons System now enables staff to register reports and attach relevant documents electronically, replacing the earlier National Offender Management Information System process and improving the reliability of records. In addition, early work within the Artificial Intelligence Adoption Unit is exploring the use of "Prison Transcribe", technology designed to record adjudication interviews, generate full transcripts and produce summaries. This approach has the potential to improve the accuracy and completeness of adjudication records, strengthen safeguarding and defensibility, reduce administrative burden for staff, enhance consistency and fairness and support better learning and quality assurance. Although this work remains in development, it represents a significant step toward a more modern and accessible system.

I appreciate the Board's continued concern about disparities between prisoner pay at HMP Bure and other prisons. Prisoner pay is governed by PSO 4460, which gives Governors discretion to set local pay rates based on operational need and available resource. In October 2024, a one off national uplift was provided for Governors to support prisoner pay pressures. The Governor confirms that HMP Bure allocated all of this uplift directly to prisoner wages in that financial year. Retail pricing is benchmarked quarterly against local community convenience stores to ensure fairness and avoid disproportionate pricing. While there is no national minimum wage for prisoners, Governors were encouraged to explore alternative pay approaches, such as progression pay or higher induction pay and will continue to review what is achievable within local budgets.

The significant reforms contained in the Sentencing Act, which received Royal Assent on 22 January 2026 will provide the Courts with options to end the cycle of less serious offenders going in and out of prison. This includes the biggest ever expansion in tagging and the use of restriction zones to better protect victims. Alongside this, the probation budget will be increased by up to £700 million over the next three years to bolster community justice, including the probation service's resource and ability to tag offenders. The government is also investing in new technology to reduce admin so staff can focus on work that reduces reoffending.

I was most encouraged to read your positive assessment of the time out of cell available to prisoners, which you report often reaches up to 10 hours a day and far exceeds that provided in many prisons. I welcome your recognition of the sustained effort by staff to preserve this standard even when the prison experienced operational challenges.

Local issues of concern in your report will be addressed by the Governor who will continue to keep you aware of progress 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 appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful for your continued commitment and hard work on behalf of HMP Bure.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

## HMP BURE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 AUGUST 2024 – 31 JULY 2025

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Detached Duty and Staffing Pressures**

Detached duty is an essential mechanism to stabilise regimes across the prison estate when particular establishments face acute staffing difficulties. For HMP Bure, the validated staffing supply figure is set at 91% of its Target Staffing Figure (124), which means that the prison may be asked to provide up to 11 officers to support other establishments when required. This calculation is applied consistently across the estate to ensure fairness and operational resilience. The Workforce and Capability Team are progressing a joint review with NHS England through the Escort, Bedwatch and Constant Supervision project. This work is examining the optimum number of hospital escorts required from each establishment and exploring whether enhancing on-site healthcare provision could reduce the need for external escorts. The outcomes will inform future workforce models and improve planning for establishments such as HMP Bure that experience frequent pressures associated with hospital attendance and bed watches. At HMP Bure, we acknowledge that detached duty also affected staffing last year and continue to work collaboratively with national teams to help maintain a safe and stable regime despite these pressures.

#### **Property Management and the Need for a National Scheme**

The revised Prisoner's Property Policy Framework strengthens guidance on the areas most commonly associated with property complaints, including the sending on of excess property, the handling of laundry and the correct completion of cell clearance certificates. HMPPS and senior leaders have been reminded of the importance of volumetric control, as property within the permitted limits will accompany prisoners when they transfer. As part of the planning for the current contract, the escort provider engaged with policy colleagues to ensure the vehicle fleet had increased capacity to transport an additional half bag of property for consumables. Escort vehicles continue to transport property within volumetric limits, including a reasonable volume of legal documentation, which is recorded in the digital person escort record. This now provides an accurate and transparent record of the number, type and transfer of sealed property bags at each handover point. No complaints have been reported at HMP Bure relating to property lost or delayed in transit during the past year. Where property cannot travel with a prisoner because volumetric limits have been exceeded or there is no safe space available on the escort vehicle, responsibility for forwarding additional items remains with the sending prison, as required by the framework. Locally, HMP Bure has implemented an early-resolution process to ensure that property issues raised by prisoners are identified and addressed promptly. This complements the strengthened national guidance and supports more consistent management of property across the establishment.

#### **Delays in Installing Wing CCTV**

The CCTV project for accommodation and activity areas at HMP Bure remains in the early stages of development. The design phase was completed in November 2025 and now require a formal review to determine feasibility, costings, sequencing and installation requirements. Projects of this scale are often complex and require areas of accommodation to be taken offline, which must be managed alongside other operational and safety demands. Funding remains a significant constraint across the prison estate and all bids must be prioritised nationally according to risk to life, capacity and decency. HMPPS will continue to consider the establishment's request alongside competing demands across the wider estate.