



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Usk and Prescoed
47 Maryport Street
NP15 1XP

MoJ ref: SUB133470

17 April 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP USK AND PRESCOED INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Usk and Prescoed. I am again grateful to you and your colleagues for your efforts in producing such an informative annual report despite operating with several vacancies. I noted that there was an increase in the number of Board members at the end of the reporting period and hope the position continues to improve.

I was saddened to hear there was one death in custody during the reporting year. All deaths in custody are tragic and impact those living and working at the prison. I was therefore pleased to read of the support offered to prisoners and staff alike following the death. I would like to reassure the Board that any subsequent recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman will be taken very seriously.

I understand the Board's continued concerns about the re-categorisation of those serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences and associated level of recalls. Further to last year's response, we are not standing still on progressing this cohort towards a prospective future release. That is why on 17 July 2025 we published a refreshed IPP Action Plan that ensures that those serving IPP sentences have robust and effective sentence plans which they are actively engaging with and that they are in the establishment most appropriate to their needs. The Action Plan now includes measurable targets to ensure transparency and accountability.

To address the levels of recalls, the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 introduced significant changes to IPP sentence licence termination, including reducing the qualifying period for consideration of licence termination and new Secretary of State powers under the Risk Assessed Recall Review process. So far, the number of people serving the sentence in the community has fallen by two-thirds following the implementation of these changes. Additionally, the Sentencing Bill received Royal Assent on 22 January 2026 and further supports measures on IPP licence termination. These reforms are part of the Government's commitment to provide every opportunity for those serving the IPP sentence to demonstrate that their risk has reduced to the point that their licence, and therefore their sentence, can be terminated. A date for the implementation of these changes will be confirmed in due course.

I would like to assure the Board that HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) is committed to enabling the delivery of health and social care that is equivalent to the community across all justice settings. Similar to prisons in other parts of the estate, there is a national partnership agreement and

governance arrangements for Wales which outline shared priorities, governance structures and accountability. At HMP Usk and Prescoed, prisoners are trained through the RECOOP Buddy system to support peers with limited mobility. Funding has been secured to convert Prescoed's Mitchell Unit into a specialist residential facility for those with severe mobility impairments, with links to appropriate health and social care support. The Governor is also exploring the feasibility of low mobility facilities on two additional units to improve overall site accessibility. Both sites also run a facility in collaboration with the Salvation Army offering staff and peer led activities. The healthcare provider will ensure prisoners are assessed by the Occupational Therapist and Social Worker in a timely manner to ensure that appropriate care and/or buddies can be put in place for individuals who require additional support.

Category D prisons remain an integral part of the prison system and I remain committed to improving outcomes for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) in respect of paid employment. The Government recognises the important rehabilitative role that Category D open prisons play, including through ROTL opportunities, and consequently an action plan is in place to improve ROTL outcomes through the course of 2026. The new Progression Model introduced through the Sentencing Act 2026 will replace temporary early release measures and support a more sustainable long-term approach to managing the custodial population. The Government is also investing in new technology to reduce administrative tasks so staff can focus on work that reduces reoffending. HMPPS will continue to monitor impacts across the estate, including on opportunities for meaningful rehabilitation in open conditions.

I also recognise the increased time required to secure ROTL. Decisions require comprehensive risk assessment, that is why HMPPS is streamlining workplace vetting and strengthening coordination with community offender managers to ensure assessments progress more efficiently. HMPPS will also continue to work closely with all partners to improve the timeliness and consistency of information sharing. To monitor progress, HMPPS regularly tracks the average time taken to complete ROTL applications, reviewing the timeliness of external checks, and using internal management meetings to identify and resolve barriers promptly. Feedback from the Board and from prisoners' progression outcomes will also inform ongoing improvements. We remain committed to supporting safe and effective prisoner rehabilitation and ensuring ROTL continues to play its essential role in preparing individuals for release.

I have noted that many of the issues raised are repeated concerns from last year and I appreciate this must be frustrating. It was therefore encouraging to receive the numerous positive comments contained in the report. Particularly of note is the work done with neurodivergent prisoners and the new sensory garden. I was also encouraged to learn of the improved living conditions, increased time out of cell, and the success in providing work placements and employment on release despite a challenging environment.

HMPPS comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I greatly value the oversight members of Independent Monitoring Boards provide and we extend our thanks for your ongoing commitment on behalf of HMP Usk and Prescoed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James".

Lord Timpson

Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending

HMP USK AND PRESKOED INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Ageing Prison Population

HMPPS recognises that the rise in the number of older prisoners over the past 20 years has caused issues for some prisons, particularly around their often complex health and social care needs. The physical prison estate can present challenges for this cohort, and the new prison places being built are accessible by design and will significantly increase the number of cells adapted to the needs of those with mobility issues and physical disabilities across the estate. The Independent Sentencing Review recommended HMPPS produce a strategy for older prisoners, and as part of this work, HMPPS will be considering how best to use the estate to better support older prisoners across all prisons.

HMP Usk and Prescoed will continue to work with Monmouthshire County Council and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board for the provision of care for their older prisoners. Efforts to enhance provision and facilities at both sites remains a priority for the Governor and the management will continue to drive this at their local health board and estates planning meetings. Adequate out of hours and weekend services are now in place at the prison, including specialised nursing care and urgent GP provision. The Palliative Care Room has a robust operating procedure, with ongoing reviews to individualise the care provided to each prisoner. The Social Services team are working towards having a pool of carers who can in-reach and support prisoners if required with issues such as frailty, post-surgery, and palliative care.

Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL)

Please see the Minister's response above for more detail on ongoing work around ROTL. Alongside this, HMPPS is working to improve access to purposeful activity. The National Regime Model, launched in January 2024, sets out core expectations for regime delivery and requires every prison to have an annual delivery plan. This should be informed by a comprehensive needs assessment of the prison's population. Through consistency and accountability, this process creates a new regime culture that redefines purposeful activity to include time well spent, and measures prisons on their actual delivery of locally set delivery commitments against the percentage of prisoners in at least part-time activity.

HMPPS is striving to enable all staff to have purposeful and rehabilitative day-to-day interactions in everything they do. How we work and the culture that we operate in is fundamental to achieving the desired outcomes from what we deliver. Locally, HMP Usk and Prescoed routinely analyses local employment trends and assesses the employment needs of incoming prisoners. The prison runs several initiatives to ensure prisoners are work ready.

Telephony at HMP Prescoed

Funding for 14 additional PIN phones at Prescoed and Cilwrgi Farm has been secured and will be installed by the end of March 2026. This is primarily for residential units, including upgrades to privacy hoods and placement. HMP Usk and Prescoed is also participating in the trial of PIN enabled mobile phones with other prisons in the open estate. If successful, this will allow each room to have its own PIN handset.