



Ministry  
of Justice

Lord Timpson  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair  
Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP/YOI Parc  
Heol Hopcyn John  
Coity  
Bridgend  
CF35 6AP

MoJ ref: SUB133416

17 April 2026

Dear Chair,

### **HMP/YOI PARC INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 OCTOBER 2024 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2025**

Thank you for your Board's detailed and thoughtful annual report. I appreciate the considerable dedication you and your colleagues have shown during what was clearly a demanding year. Your ability to maintain meaningful scrutiny despite operating with a significantly reduced complement is commendable and I am grateful for the clarity and care with which you have set out your observations across such a complex establishment.

I was deeply saddened to read of the eight deaths that occurred during the reporting period. Every death is a tragedy and I offer my sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who have lost loved ones. Recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are treated with the utmost seriousness and work continues to ensure that learning from these investigations is fully applied.

You raise serious concerns about the delays in Shared Services Connected Limited (SSCL) vetting and the impact this has had on HMP/YOI Parc's staffing levels. I recognise how disruptive it is when trained officers cannot be deployed because their vetting clearance has not yet been completed. This has also affected the recruitment and deployment of staff across healthcare, education and catering, placing additional pressure on an already stretched regime. Security vetting is vital to maintaining the safety and integrity of our prisons. However, recruitment volumes across HMPPS and contracted providers have increased significantly and additional safeguarding checks have been introduced to strengthen national security standards. These necessary changes have lengthened vetting times. I understand the frustration this causes and I want to reassure you that action is being taken to improve the situation. Additional vetting staff have now been recruited, with the first new cohort becoming operational in December 2025 and further teams being added throughout the first half of 2026. As this expanded workforce reaches full capacity, vetting timescales will continue to improve. Flexible resourcing and overtime have also been deployed to reduce backlogs and local Vetting Contact Points have been strengthened to support the efficient processing of applications.

I note the Director's account of the specific challenges HMP/YOI Parc has faced, including the number of trained officers awaiting vetting clearance. I welcome the close collaboration between G4S and HMPPS to prioritise HMP/YOI Parc's cases and ensure that newly trained staff can be deployed as quickly as possible. This partnership will remain in place until performance stabilises.

Looking ahead, the significant reforms introduced through the Sentencing Act, which received Royal Assent on 22 January 2026 will give courts clearer and more effective tools to break the cycle of less serious offenders repeatedly entering custody. The Act expands the use of restriction zones to protect victims and is supported by a substantial increase in the probation budget, up to £700 million over the next three years to strengthen community justice and increase the ability to monitor offenders through tagging. At the same time, the Government is investing in new technology to reduce administrative burdens and allow frontline staff to focus on the work that most reduces reoffending.

The pressures you describe during this period were significant. You report elevated levels of deliberate self-harm, persistent violence across the prison and constraints on regime delivery arising from staffing shortages, vetting delays and high numbers of bed-watches. Your Board's reflections on the frustration this caused for prisoners and its impact on wellbeing and purposeful activity are clearly and sensitively expressed. I was encouraged, however, by your recognition of strong leadership within the Young People's Unit, progress in tackling illicit items and the development of positive equality and diversity initiatives, including support for LGBTQ+ prisoners.

HMPPS and healthcare partners' responses to the remaining issues you raise are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I recognise the important contribution that members of Independent Monitoring Boards provide across the estate and we extend our thanks for your continued dedication on behalf of HMP/YOI Parc.

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/YOI PARC: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 OCTOBER 2024 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Offender Management Unit Staffing and Capacity**

HMPPS recognises the pressures on HMP/YOI Parc's Offender Management Unit (OMU) during the reporting year. National population pressures, the activation of temporary additional capacity and early-release initiatives have contributed to unusually high caseloads. Engagement is underway between HMPPS and G4S to assess current staffing levels and understand the factors contributing to these pressures. This assessment will help determine whether resourcing adjustments are required. Work linked to the implementation of the Sentencing Act includes consideration of how OMUs can best support the future sentence structure. This will form part of the wider operational readiness programme being developed across HMPPS.

#### **Dental Capacity and High Cancellation Rates**

Dental provision has been constrained by limited clinical space and a high volume of cancelled appointments. HMP/YOI Parc and NHS Wales colleagues are working together to improve attendance by strengthening communication with prisoners about appointments, improving scheduling so healthcare is prioritised appropriately and deploying peer workers to encourage attendance. Work is also underway to optimise use of the existing dental suite to increase clinical output. Healthcare partners continue to review service delivery to improve access to both urgent and routine dental care.

#### **A&E Delays and Monitoring of Escorted Healthcare Appointments**

Governance structures between G4S and the Health Board have been strengthened to improve oversight of A&E transfers and strengthen service resilience. Joint improvement plans are monitored regularly and further work is underway to negotiate reduced waiting times at local hospitals. Opportunities to bring more specialist clinical services into the prison, such as neurology and cardiology are being developed for 2026. The prison and healthcare partners are also exploring options for deploying paramedics on site to reduce the need for external A&E attendance and G4S has committed to increasing the number of officers available for hospital escorts.