



**Annual Report of the  
Independent Monitoring Board  
at HMP Grendon**

**For reporting year  
1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025**

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## Introductory sections 1 – 3

### 1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

## 2 Description of the establishment

- 2.1 HMP Grendon was opened in 1962 as a category B prison (for those considered a risk to public safety but not categorised a maximum-security threat) and is designed to provide therapy for prisoners with personality disorders. It has developed both a national and international reputation for its work, and Grendon remains the UK's only therapeutic community (TC) prison whose sole purpose is therapy.
- 2.2 There are several prisoners serving indeterminate sentences (which do not have a set release date but a minimum time to be served set by the court). Most prisoners are serving long determinate sentences (which have fixed release dates). Serving prisoners apply for a place at HMP Grendon to address their offending behaviour and psychological needs. Many have personality disorders and addiction histories. The therapeutic regime is supported by a multidisciplinary group of stakeholders, and the therapy process requires considerable commitment, with many men taking several years to complete it.
- 2.3 Grendon is termed a 'democratic TC', as the prisoners take an active part in their therapy by, for example, chairing wing community meetings, which are held twice weekly. Small therapy groups are held on the other weekday mornings, where all men are encouraged to participate. Overall, both staff and men are responsible to their respective communities for their actions. There is no segregation unit.
- 2.4 The prison's operational capacity has been 185<sup>1</sup> (the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order, and the proper running of the planned regime), although the roll for most of the year was around 170. Following the reopening of one wing, the operational capacity is now 236.
- 2.5 F wing (a TC Plus facility, for those with learning disabilities) has a capacity for 20 prisoners, while the assessment wing (G wing) can accommodate 40 prisoners.
- 2.6 Arriving men remain on the assessment wing for between three and six months, where there is a similar regime to the TC wings.
- 2.7 Grendon is incorporated into the national offender personality disorder (OPD) pathway programme, which is a collaboration between the NHS and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). The programme provides psychological services to people with personality disorders who are at risk of reoffending.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures included in this report are largely local management information data. They reflect the prison's position at the time of reporting but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with Official Statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.

2.8 The prison is jointly managed with HMP Springhill (located on an adjacent site) and a single IMB monitors both prisons. Although the two prisons share many services and staff, Springhill and Grendon operate as separate units and exist for quite different purposes.

### **3. Key points**

#### **Background**

This has been the second year where the Board has operated without a Chair or vice Chair. Membership of the Board remains well below capacity and this in turn limits the number of new members that can be recruited and onboarded. A Board member visited the prison at least once every two weeks (with the alternate week allocated to monitoring HMP Springhill). This has meant that the depth of the Board's monitoring and reporting has been reduced. Consequently, the Board has focused its attention on areas that most affect outcomes for prisoners.

#### **3.1 Main findings**

##### **Safety**

- In the Board's view, the prison continues to operate within a generally safe environment with low levels of violence, self-harm, and use of force (4.1-4.3). Finds of illicit articles remain low (4.4).

##### **Fair and humane**

- Outcomes for men as a result of frequent plumbing and sanitation issues across the wings have been poor. This affects morale for both men and staff and impacts on therapeutic outcomes (5.1 and 5.7). Problems will continue until underlying infrastructure issues are addressed.
- Rat infestation continues to be a problem.
- Handling of prisoners' property and canteen continues to generate complaints (5.7).
- Equality and diversity issues have been addressed by dedicated managers (5.3).
- Faith services provision has been weakened by reduced staffing levels.

##### **Health and wellbeing**

- Generally, outcomes have been good for both physical and mental health provision, although one man's wait for a suitable hospital transfer was unacceptable (6.2).
- Delays in supplying essential equipment to men following referrals to social care were experienced during the year, but positive interventions have since taken place to address this matter. Support for men with drug and alcohol issues has been good (6.5).

##### **Progression and resettlement**

- The results from the recent therapy audits were still awaited at the end of the reporting year, but indications are that most issues raised in the 2024 audits have been addressed (7.1).

- The number of progressive moves for men out of therapy has increased slightly, although the reduction in delivery of some group sessions has been affected by reduced staffing levels (7.1).
- The number of men waiting for transfers to other prisons has reduced, but the frequent cancellations of transfers is stressful for the men affected. (7.2).
- The changes in educational contracts from October 2025 due to a reduction in provision has caused disruption. However, a new curriculum has been approved and is intended to offer more appropriate outcomes for prisoners with long sentences, with courses that can be more efficiently delivered (7.6).

### **3.2 Main areas for development**

#### **TO THE MINISTER**

- 1) Can the Minister offer reassurance that sufficient funding will be made available to address the necessary improvements to accommodation at HMP Grendon? If so, what are the expected timeframes of this?

#### **TO THE PRISON SERVICE**

- 1) Property and canteen issues create unnecessary anxiety and complaints from prisoners. What priority is the Prison Service giving to effective solutions for the continued issues with prisoners' personal property and adherence to the National Policy Framework?
- 2) The frequent cancellation of transfers for prisoners from HMP Grendon to their receiving prison causes considerable tension. What provision is being made to improve the prisoner transfer experience, especially given the destabilising impact it has for the Grendon community?
- 3) What contractual arrangements are in place with DHL to deliver improvements to men's experience of canteen services and to give assurances that refunds are processed faster, especially when items are lost?

#### **TO THE GOVERNOR**

- 1) What is being done to address the rodent issue at Grendon given the limited impact that previous interventions have had?
- 2) Are there new strategies for recruiting Band 4 officers at Grendon, given the negative impact of staffing issues on therapy delivery?

The Board looks forward to monitoring positive outcomes for:

- establishing a new and stable community on D wing.
- delivery of the new educational offer that promotes better outcomes for prisoners and a more coherent delivery arrangement alongside therapy.
- continue to reduce the length of time prisoners out of therapy have to wait before being transferred to another establishment.
- recruitment of chaplains to enable the provision of vital multi-faith spiritual and emotional support to prisoners and staff.

### **3.3 Response to last report**

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
<p><b>To the Minister:</b> The Board continues to be concerned about how men who are out of therapy cannot move on to another prison due to overcrowding, which can have a major impact on the effective running of a therapeutic community. How are specialist prisons, such as Grendon, factored into considerations on prison sentencing policies?</p>	<p>The challenges of managing the national prison population continue to affect the ability to progress men in a timely manner. In May 2024, a dedicated functional head for offender management and population management was introduced at the establishment to address these issues directly. I understand that this has supported a notable increase in progression, with a 37% rise in transfers out of Grendon over the last year, from 60 in 2023–2024 to 82 in 2024–2025. Transfers to open conditions also increased from 8 to 15 in the same period.</p> <p>Most recently, the Independent Sentencing Review published its findings in May this year, setting out proposals to address prison and probation challenges and support victims so we can ensure long-term, sustainable improvements. The government accepts most of the recommendations in the review and will be taking the necessary actions to implement these through legislative changes.</p>	<p>The Board has monitored a slight improvement in this area; however, there are still issues with cancellations of transfers and some prisoners are still experiencing delays. The prison this year has seen an increase in transfers from Springhill when a prisoner is held in Grendon pending a transfer to closed conditions, which can be disruptive.</p>
<p><b>To HMPPS:</b> There continues to be an ongoing issue regarding men who remain too long at Grendon following the</p>	<p>A dedicated workshop and gardens work party now operate in the mornings for this cohort, alongside continued</p>	<p>The average monthly number of men OOT for this year was 21 compared with 27 for the last six months of 2024.</p>

<p>completion of their therapy, due to the lack of space at other prisons. There are very few opportunities at Grendon for these men to build on their experiences once they are OOT (out of therapy). What is being considered to address this matter?</p>	<p>access to work in the main kitchen and an additional gym session. A sustainability work party is also operating in the afternoons, developing green space at the rear of the prison. Men out of therapy are encouraged to take up off-wing jobs and are actively participating in education and personal development activities, including celebration events, diversity initiatives, and health-related programmes. They are also now eligible to apply for wing-based family days. Participation in weekly community meetings is expected, and the out-of-therapy policy and wing constitutions are being updated to reflect these changes. Events such as cultural cafés, creative writing sessions, and the Grendon debate club continue to support a healthy and enriching regime.</p>	<p>In the last two months of 2025 there were only 15 men OOT, which is the lowest level for several years and hopefully this downward trend can be continued.</p> <p>As per section 7.2, the activity for men OOT has been outlined although there have been restrictions to land-based activities due to staffing.</p>
<p><b>To The Governor:</b> There are still issues with the building infrastructure and associated poor sanitation arrangements in the non-refurbished wings, along with continued rat infestation and the overheating that is experienced by staff and prisoners during the year. What longer-term plans does the Governor have to address these issues?</p>	<p>From a national perspective, we wanted to update that significant progress continues at HMP Grendon on fire safety improvement works and the upgrade of the general alarm system. These works are scheduled for completion by the end of the 2025/2026 financial year and represent a total investment of approximately £25.3 million over the past five years. As part of the fire</p>	<p>The Board is pleased to report the opening of D wing as per section 5.1 of this report.</p> <p>Despite repainting across all wings, this has not been a refurbishment project, and many underlying residential problems remain. Rat infestation continues.</p>

	<p>safety improvement programme, all accommodation blocks are undergoing a full overhaul and recommissioning of the night-sanitation system. All wings have now been completed, with the exception of D wing, which remains on track for completion in October 2025.</p>	
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## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

#### **4.1 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody**

There were no deaths in custody in 2025. Following the death in custody in 2024, all five recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman report were implemented. This included changes to how departments and communities record and communicate issues around vulnerable men.

Incidents of self-harm remained low, at 17 (28 in 2024). In November 2025, 33% of men had some history of self-harming, with approximately 66% of men recorded as never having self-harmed. In October, razor blades were replaced by electric shavers, which should make a positive contribution to safety, although staff recognise that the removal of razor blades could cause anxiety for some men.

There were 30 assessment care in custody teamwork plans (ACCTs, used to support men who are at risk of self-harm and suicide) opened for the year (45 in 2024). Men told Board members that they felt supported by the process. The prison uses an analysis tool to check for quality assurance, and no particular issues were raised.

#### **4.2 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation**

There was a total of 316 intelligence reports (IRs, internal reports used to record information which may include significant threat to life, risk of serious harm to persons, or threat to the order and discipline of a prison) under the heading 'safer custody'. There were five fights/assaults amongst men and two assaults on staff.

There were 34 challenge, support and intervention plan referrals (CSIPs, used to support and manage men who pose an increased risk of violence) for the year, of which 11 were progressed to full support plans, with the balance managed through the therapeutic process.

#### **4.3 Use of force**

Incidents involving the use of force remained low, with four instances (seven in 2024). There was no use or drawing of batons or use of pelargonic acid vanillyl amide (PAVA, an incapacitant spray).

#### **4.4 Preventing illicit items**

There were three drugs finds (four in 2024). Mandatory and suspicion testing found 10 positives (excluding any positives from medication). There were two phone and 17 phone paraphernalia finds, compared with one phone find and 10 phone and paraphernalia finds in 2024.

Special meetings ('wing specials') are used as part of the therapeutic process to challenge a prisoner following illicit finds or suspicious activity, and this can impact negatively on the delivery of education and other activities (7.6).

There were no positive indications from the body scanner as a result of tests on new arrivals, but the scanner could not be used for six months due to the ongoing fire

project and the associated disruption to the reception area where it was normally located.

#### **4.5 Other safety issues**

Cell bells on one landing on B wing were not operational for the last two months of the year. The in-cell intercom system was used as a 'workaround'. The Board noted that cell bell repeater alarms across paired wings had been installed as part of the fire safety project, which is long overdue and means that a single member of staff on night duty can be effectively alerted to a cell bell on the opposite wing.

Less encouraging developments have been the continued reports of key lock compromises (77 for the year) where doors have been found unlocked.

## **5. Fair and humane treatment**

### **5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food**

Grendon has undergone a fire safety project for the past six years. D wing was the final wing to be completed, but work continues in other areas including healthcare and reception. The project has caused considerable disruption to all the communities which has been well-managed by men and staff. The handover by contractors of C wing in April was plagued with heating and electrical issues. The handover of D wing went more smoothly, but there were still issues with the night sanitation system, and men were issued with cell pots.

Despite repainting across all wings, this has not been a refurbishment project, and many underlying residential issues remain. Throughout the year there were faulty urinals, leaking and blocked toilets, non-functioning showers, and issues with regulating the heating. There are currently temporary boilers on C and D wings. The original pipework and drainage system was not designed for the current population, with sewerage frequently backing up the system on one wing. Cell windows have water pooling on the ledges, which needs rectifying. GFSL (Gov Facilities Services Limited) reported a 29% increase in its 'reactive' caseload over the year.

There were issues with the night sanitation system preventing men from accessing toilets, which resulted in men being issued with cell pots. The Board reports every year on this degrading mitigation for a system that still fails to meet basic levels of decency, in spite of the promised improvements.

Staff reported that beds across all wings were in disrepair. D wing was refitted with new furniture and wooden beds, which is an improvement on the very old and saggy metal braced beds. The intention is for all the other wings to have new beds and there is funding for much needed improvements to furniture across all wings.

Rats have been an issue all year, exacerbated by their habitat being disturbed by the ground works for the new neighbouring prison. Despite remedial local actions by contractors, problems persisted throughout the year. In October, one wing moved its servery from the pod into the dining area due to rats coming into the pod from an outside wall.

These issues continue to have a negative effect on morale for staff and men and do not support therapeutic outcomes (see also 5.7).

More encouragingly, thanks to the efforts of men, the gardens attached to each wing have seen a marked improvement.

Food: the kitchen introduced the automated meal ordering system called Athena. In September, healthcare reviewed all men who were allocated a special diet to ensure they were still required, and then worked with catering staff and Athena to identify the best menu options.

In the second half of the year, both staff and men commented to Board members that food portion sizes had reduced. Wing staff were instructed to check portion control on the pods during mealtimes, and the Board intends to monitor this matter.

The new food in prisons policy is due to be delivered from February 2026 with an emphasis on healthier eating. The Board will also monitor any outcomes from this initiative.

Canteen: there were 44 prison complaints about canteen related matters, which accounted for 12% of total complaints (5.7). In the first half of the year there were recurring problems where fresh food was either out of date or out of stock, and refunds were not automatically raised. Delays in refunds (over 14 days) were still being reported by men in November. The business hub reported that DHL have capacity issues, which means they have struggled to deal with the volume of credits.

New vapes were issued across the estate in October. They are designed to be more tamper proof. New electric razors were issued across the estate in November and some men who wished to shave body hair for religious reasons found this difficult.

## **5.2 Staff-prisoner relationships**

Relationships between men and the specialist officers and non-uniform staff is central to the effective delivery of the therapeutic community on each wing. This was one subject of the Community of Communities' audit in 2024: early indications from the 2025 audits are that this area has improved (see also 7.1). Throughout the year, the Board observed many positive interactions between wing staff and men on the wings, although the Board acknowledges that its own monitoring of community meetings has been limited.

## **5.3 Equality and diversity**

Events have proved popular, especially those with an outside speaker: staff and men meet over food, which helps to break down barriers. There is, however, no dedicated national funding which limits their frequency. Some events require therapeutic community 'backing' (a vote by the wing community) for men to attend and this process can complicate engagement.

There have been 'enrichment' events, including a former resident playing music and sharing how he has taken advantage of what he learned at Grendon. There was an all-day race and inclusion conference in August which was well-supported.

Gardens Libraries and Museums (GLAM) ran two projects over the year, with two sessions per week for 20 men who learn about simple craft projects based on the artifacts from museums. Cultural cafés are rotated on the wings and men choose a topic and format to share on the wing.

A monthly LGBTQ group acting as a safe space (no backing required) has met monthly. There have been Gypsy, Roma and Traveller gatherings, and black history month was celebrated throughout October with games, music, and cooking. The diversity and inclusion manager plans to engage with catering to support events beyond faith and race.

A bi-monthly newsletter promotes events together with the diversity reps on each wing.

There were 27 discrimination incident report forms (DIRF) submitted for the year (17 in 2024). Issues were monitored to have been dealt with appropriately, and in some

cases, staff were referred for additional training. Staffing issues in chaplaincy meant that some responses were late, but men were written to about extensions for responses. Some DIRFs were referred to healthcare's complaints system, and several were dealt with through the therapeutic process. Although there is an internal quality assurance process in place, (via regional diversity lead and a member of the SLT separately) DIRFs are not checked by an independent and external process. The prison plans to implement this change next year.

Neurodiversity: approximately 50% of men self-declare as neurodiverse and on F wing the figure is 100%. Welcome initiatives include the Governor, when attending an adjudication, being made aware in advance of men with a neurodiverse condition (e.g. a man may interrupt or have reduced attention span). The neurodiversity manager attends healthcare meetings and in one instance assisted with an easy-ready document for a man with diabetes. On F wing, a communication passport is being developed to help inform staff e.g. in the use of force. For the period September 2023 to November 2025, 156 members of staff had attended induction training on neurodiversity.

A sensory room has been created on F wing where lava lamps, white noise machine, oil diffusers, and a weighted blanket have been supplied. There are plans to develop rooms on other wings.

Further to comments in 5.1 about the general state of the fabric, staff conducted a 'bus to bed' exercise to focus on the experience of newly arriving men who might be elderly, disabled or neurodiverse. Their report in September highlighted areas in the temporary reception hut and the assessment wing including access issues, trip hazards, easy-read documents, as well as the poor condition of the fabric of community rooms, dining room, and showers.

## 5.6 Incentives scheme

Most behavioural issues at Grendon are dealt with in the therapeutic community. If a prisoner is deselected or has completed therapy they are referred to as 'out of therapy' (OOT). As part of a reevaluation of how these men are managed, the incentives scheme process was reassessed so that any continuous disruptive behaviours could be managed through incentives scheme reviews. Throughout the year, there were no more than two men per month on standard level (the middle level) with all other men on enhanced level (the top level).

## 5.7 Complaints

Total complaints for the year were 363 against 335 in 2024. There were significant increases in complaints about residential issues, supporting the Board's own observations (5.1). Property continues to dominate the majority of complaints, reflecting the ongoing inability of the prison service to manage the recurring and well-reported issues.

Major categories	2025	2024	2023
Property	72	69	54
Confidential access	22	18	9
Canteen	44	33	23
Residential	87	28	2
OMU/OASys	16	23	3

<b>Total all complaints</b>	<b>363</b>	335	220
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## **5.8 Faith**

The quality assurance development (QuAD) chaplaincy inspection reported that improvements in procedures and policy and more effective collaboration between team members were required. There was no managing chaplain from July until the end of the year. There were also vacancies for one Muslim, a Roman Catholic, a Free Church and Church of England chaplains (services for latter were being covered). The Hindu priest took annual leave for several months. The Buddhist chaplain plans to reduce his hours in 2026.

Other faiths were all covered and the bereavement councillor was available throughout the year, and cover will be maintained into 2026. However, the lack of provision in some key areas suggests that some areas of pastoral support needs are not being met.

The prison visitor scheme is in operation, with three men visited by three volunteer visitors.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Physical healthcare**

As part of the ongoing fire safety project, healthcare relocated to a temporary building. Men had to be escorted to appointments and inevitably this meant that they waited longer for their appointments in the unit.

Targets for first reception screenings to be seen within 24 hours of arrival were met. However, the increase in the number (27 for the year) of 'lodgers' from Springhill (men who are temporarily transferred when it is not safe to keep them at Springhill) had an impact on delivery of some secondary screenings.

The temporary building meant that dental care was provided by a mobile bus. Some sessions were lost due to delays getting the bus into the prison and this also impacted on six-week breaches for some new patients to be seen. The dental team proved to be very flexible with this temporary regime. More complex care such as root canal work could not be completed as quickly using the unit's less sophisticated X ray equipment.

A survey in December of 35 men by EPIC (Empowering People Inspiring Change) found that 70% of patients were happy with the timeliness of response to applications, 73% thought waiting times were reasonable and 70% thought their healthcare needs were met. Healthcare does not operate a 24 hour service in Grendon. The report found that 'just over a half of patients (53%) felt that in a medical emergency their healthcare needs would be met' when there was no healthcare on site. EPIC recommended 'the development of personal management plans for those with long term conditions.'

A monthly patient engagement notice called 'you said, we did,' is visible on health notice boards across all wings. Two trained healthcare champions have made a positive contribution with blood pressure and weight testing, as well as helping men to communicate better with healthcare. On one IMB visit, two men said to Board members that access to services was better than they had experienced in other prisons.

### **6.2 Mental healthcare**

All urgent mental health referrals were seen within 48 hours and 93% of routine referrals seen within five days.

NHS good practice guidance sets a 28 day timescale for transferring mentally unwell prisoners from custody to hospital. There was only one such transfer in the year, but the man waited 130 days for a bed, which is unacceptable and reflects ongoing capacity issues in secondary mental health care.

### **6.3 Social care**

Referrals to Buckinghamshire County Council worked well for the six cases, but following the collapse of a supplier there were issues with access to remedial equipment, such as shower chairs and toilet seats, and one man had to wait over five months for support. Millbrook Healthcare has since been appointed as national supplier, and the Board will continue to monitor this area.

#### **6.4 Exercise, time out of cell, gym**

The Board received no applications about access to the gym, and there was only one prison complaint.

'Boats Not Bars' delivered a six-to-eight-week rowing programme for six men in conjunction with Marlow Rowing Club.

#### **6.5 Drug rehabilitation**

The drug and alcohol recovery team (DART) operated an active caseload of approximately 30 men per month. The drug of choice throughout the year was alcohol and these men are supported with monthly mutual aid sessions and recovery stories. The annual Recovering Together event in December was attended by 40 men, family members, and visitors from outside agencies. Acupuncture has been offered as taster sessions on the wings and there are plans to roll out more regular sessions. DART recorded many positive comments from men about the positive influence of their work, and the EPIC report commented that 'feedback on drug and alcohol services remained very positive, with patients feeling well supported in their recovery and well informed about the risks of harms.'

#### **6.6 Soft skills**

During breaks in therapy, there were opportunities for men to engage with agencies such as Good Vibrations who offer communal music making as a means to support communication and social skills. Kestrel Theatre Company put on a production of 'Ink' – a play created from scripts from seven men. Earlier in the year Geese Theatre Company delivered well-being and team building sessions with staff and men on each community.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Therapy**

The fire safety project has meant that Grendon has operated for several years with one community closed. In December, D wing reopened with nine men. This involved creating a new community. This poses its own challenges both for the dynamics on the new community but also for the potentially destabilising impact on the assessment wing from where the initial new men arrived as well as putting further pressures to staff the wing. The plan is to transfer men gradually to the new wing. This takes operational capacity for the prison back to 236.

The Board commented in its 2024 report on the Community of Communities audit and the decline in the therapeutic culture at Grendon. Results from the 2025 audits had not been received before the year end, but initial feedback from those wings which had been audited was positive.

A significant part of therapy takes place in small groups. Staff vacancies, particularly Band 4 Officers (and aggravated by increased staffing required for D wing) have been an issue. Men told Board members about the impact that staff shortfalls were having on their therapy and expressed frustration that when sessions were cancelled/postponed it had an impact on their progress. One man spoke about the potential cumulative impact that he felt therapy cancellations could potentially have on his parole hearing as he would be unable to evidence completion of his objectives on time. At the end of the year there were 10 vacancies for specialist Band 4 officers.

There are also core creative psychotherapy sessions (psychodrama and art). Men commented to Board members how art workshops had positive effects on their rehabilitation and well-being.

Offender behaviour pathways: Grendon has delivered 58 to date against a target of 61 for the year ending April 2026. Men score one point following 12 months of continuous therapy and an assessment.

Throughout the year, men told Board members about their time at Grendon. Below are extracts from IMB rota reports:

One man had just completed therapy after a little over four years. He said he felt he had taken advantage of everything Grendon had to offer, and he was planning a progressive move. Another man who had been at Grendon for over three years, but in prison for 35-plus years, reflected that it took time and effort to change but felt that he was making progress. Men spoke positively of their experience and said that the staff were great and approachable. However, others felt rather disillusioned, especially when their therapy sessions were cancelled, due to staff being needed elsewhere, often at short notice.

On the assessment wing, men talked about the challenge of adapting to a very different regime – from managing their own time to talking about emotions. They spoke of the need for trust, something they found difficult, as their default was to trust no one.

In the July edition of the diversity and inclusion newsletter one man wrote:

*'When I look back at the last 3.5yrs in Grendon there's been times when I really wanted to pull out, run away from my problems like I've always done, and blame everyone and everything for my problems when really all I had to do was look inside myself, see what was triggering me. Whether that be a feeling, something you don't like or the process of therapy in general. Just asking myself "why am I so affected by these things" that's the big question, so when I tell my group about it and we start tracing it back to other times in my life where these things might have affected me and connect the dots. So, in the future I can be aware of these things and hopefully have a different outcome. This is the same thing with my violence, drug taking and everything else but as long as we are blaming everything and everyone for our problems we aren't taking responsibility for our own stuff. If I always look inwards before outwards and recognise what I'm feeling and why I might be feeling it, I'm a lot better equipped to deal with problems that come my way. My advice is just to be open and honest; everyone's journey is different so good luck on yours.'*

72 men were transferred out of Grendon in 2025. Of these, 36% were for progressive moves which included completion of therapy, achieving category D (open conditions) and two men who were released. This figure is slightly higher than the previous year.

But Grendon does not work for all, and the balance of transfers were for men who:

- deselected themselves or who were deselected by the community
- were considered not ready for therapy
- returned to their sending prison for security reasons

From these non-progressive moves, 25 were from the assessment wing. Of the total number of men transferred, 55% spent more than 12 months at Grendon.

## **7.2 Out of therapy (OOT) and lodgers**

Men are OOT if they have completed their therapy or are not considered suitable for therapy. Both groups wait for a suitable transfer sometimes for several months. The average monthly number of men OOT was 21 compared with 27 for the last six months of 2024. In the last two months of 2025 there were only 15 men OOT, which is the lowest level for several years and hopefully this downward trend can be continued.

As reported last year, there have been issues with single transfers, places in suitable prisons for a progressive move and the estate-wide capacity problems. Men have had their transfer cancelled on average four times before a successful transfer and some have expressed frustration with their transfers being cancelled on multiple occasions. In November one man said that he had been waiting six months for a transfer to another prison. Men also spoke about the negative impact the delays in finding spaces elsewhere were having on them. The prison has, however, made progress in how it manages men who are OOT and offers opportunities for other purposeful activity (see 7.2).

As noted in 6.1, there has been an increase this year in the number of men transferring from HMP Springhill for security reasons (either their own, or as flight risk) and who stay sometimes several days, usually on the assessment wing. Their presence can be destabilising.

### **7.3 Work/purposeful activity**

Work at Grendon is predominantly therapy in groups or community meetings. Activities in the afternoon focus on education and creative psychotherapies.

The lack of staff last year meant that there were no land-based activities available, but a new workshop was opened for separating plastics, and with plans to create a small food-packing area to prepare breakfast packs. This is open to men who are OOT.

Farms and Gardens now include morning sessions for men who are OOT. An eco-garden has been established using environmentally friendly cultivation methods to augment food for the kitchen. It has been recognised by staff that there are still too many men unoccupied on the wings in the afternoons while-off wing vacancies are not filled.

### **7.4 Offender management, progression**

OMU staff are allocated to each wing but staffing pressures at the end of the year could mean less presence on the wings and deprioritising of offender assessment system (OASys) reviews.

At the end of the year, there were 17 men with an imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentence, and 16 men are RAG rated 'green' i.e. the men are engaging with their sentence plan and there are no current barriers to progression. Following a negative parole hearing, one man will be supported in January by the IPP Progression Panel made up of his internal and external probation officers and the IPP probation manager.

### **7.5 Family contact**

The uptake of visits has been high throughout the year for both social and remote virtual visits. In addition, there are two family days on each wing (except the assessment wing) and three children's days (at the Christmas event 10 men had families including 16 children). Wings also organise social days and invite professional bodies to attend. The Board heard men making impressive presentations at these events about the therapeutic work at Grendon.

In December, there were 64 men who have no contact with family or friends either from physical or video visits. Men are offered support from Prison Advice and Support (PACT) and Prison Visitors (see 5.8).

From April, the cost of calls to all UK landlines and mobile numbers was reduced by 20%. This is welcome news for men whose wages have not kept up with the rising costs on their canteen.

### **7.6 Resettlement planning**

Two men were released in 2025 and were supported by the resettlement team at HMP Springhill.

### **7.7 Education, library**

All activities have to be supported or 'backed' (see 5.3) according to each community's constitution. Men require backing to attend education off the wing, and this follows a prescribed process. A wing 'special' (see 4.4) can be called in the afternoon and this too can have a material impact on attendance at education. In

January, attendance was running at 56%. To improve communication between communities and the activities team, a 'prisoner workforce planning' meeting was introduced: attendance in June had improved to over 90% before falling back due to staff sickness and disruption as a result of the change in education contracts in October.

The core education contracted hours provision across HMP Springhill and neighbouring HMP Grendon has been reduced by 33% since 1/10/25. Historically, provision at Grendon has been focused on essential digital skills qualifications (EDSQ), functional skills in maths and English, and customer services. For parts of the academic year 2024/25 there was no delivery of EDSQ and disruption to English and maths delivery due to recruitment issues.

Courses under the new contract are designed to focus on more effective delivery: for example, functional skills will be delivered on the wings rather than in the education department. New courses such as music, barbering and teacher training will be introduced from January, will link with therapy and will be angled towards building careers in custody, rather than collecting certificates. Men will also be able to access progression awards from 2026 (e.g. communication skills for work and improving own learning and performance) which are modular based and aimed at men who need a more flexible, personalised way of learning. In addition, WAMITAB (a certificate in waste management, recycling, cleaning), horticulture and Boats not Bars (6.4) were available in the last quarter.

This new provision should mean an increase in the broader educational provision for men in Grendon, which is to be welcomed, together with a more effective way of delivering education along-side therapy. However, the move to the new contract caused considerable disruption in the last quarter of the year for delivering maths and English. Men studying for the Open University (eight in November) had their facilitator support disrupted for a period, but men were able to sit exams.

At the end of the year, 26 (15%) of men were assessed at Entry Level 3 or below for maths and 14 (8%) for English. The Shannon Trust (a peer delivered reading and maths scheme) was operating with mentors and learners until the last quarter, but delivery stopped in the last quarter which is regrettable – a new process is being developed.

The library: in addition to its traditional role of lending books and CDs, the library also hosted:

- monthly creative writing course with invited guest for an average of eight men.
- reading group and Reading Ahead Challenge (the old 'six book challenge').
- archives workshop which fed into creative writing course.
- poetry course for five months before it was moved to education.
- reading festival in November with an inspirational talk from author Charles Cumming attended by 25 men and guests.

## 8. The work of the IMB

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	5 (including 2 in training)
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	6 (including 2 in training, 1 dual boarding)
Total number of visits to the Establishment	50

### Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Current year	Previous year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	2	4
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	0	1
C	Equality	2	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	1	1
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	3	3
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	1	4
F	Food & kitchens	0	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	1	5
H1	Property within the establishment	0	0
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	0	2
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	0	1
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	2	1
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	0	1
K	Transfers	0	1
L	Miscellaneous	0	1
	<b>Total number of applications</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25</b>

## **Annex A**

### **Service providers**

- Healthcare:
  - Primary healthcare: Practice Plus Group (PPG)
  - Pharmacy: Practice Plus Group (PPG)
  - Social Care: Buckinghamshire Council
  - Drug and alcohol recovery team (DART): Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
  - Podiatry and physiotherapy: Practice Plus Group MSK, Buckinghamshire
  - Mental health services: Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
  - Dental: Time for Teeth
  - Audiology: Specsavers
  - Optician: The Prison Optician Trust
- Education: Milton Keynes College
- Library: Buckinghamshire Council
- Maintenance: Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL)
- Food: HMPPS
- Escort contractor: Serco



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