



Chair  
Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Risley  
Warrington Road  
Risley  
Warrington  
WA3 6BP

MoJ Ref: SUB135239

24 June 2026

Dear Chair,

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

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Risley. I remain sincerely grateful to you and your colleagues for your continued resilience and commitment in monitoring and capturing your helpful observations despite ongoing membership challenges. I hope the situation improves going forward.

I was very saddened to hear four prisoners died during the reporting year, either in custody or shortly after release. Every death in our care is a tragedy, and whilst they may all be due to natural causes, it remains upsetting, particularly when it's shortly after release. I would like to reassure the Board that any recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are always taken very seriously.

It is regrettable that the Board continues to have concerns about the service and performance of maintenance contractors. Prior to publication of the IMB report, Amey (the contractor) appointed a new Site Manager at HMP Risley to strengthen on site leadership and operational grip. Delivery against the contractual Key Performance Indicators appears to show a relatively consistent and strong performance throughout the reporting period. Analysis of delivery for the period April 2024 to March 2026 indicates Amey consistently achieved 90% of the contractual requirement.

I appreciate this may feel different on the ground and that is why I wanted to assure you that Amey's performance is managed and reviewed at site and regional level on a weekly basis by both the Area Property Operations Manager and the Regional Property Operations Manager. This is further supplemented by monthly national-level reviews on contract performance by the Heads of Property Operations as well as a monthly governance review by the Director of Property Services. Any outstanding matters are promptly escalated through the appropriate channels.

Separately, I recognise there are many issues with the facilities at HMP Risley and I wanted to provide an update on these matters. The site heating system is now over 50 years old and has its associated challenges. A major heating upgrade scheme is being developed and is currently at design stage under the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Capital Projects programme that will provide a more sustainable long-term solution. Whilst the refurbishment of the showers on A, C and D wings are now complete, shower refurbishments are delivered on a rolling basis through the Forward Maintenance Register, subject to annual allocation of HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) funding. Showers remain a recognised pressure point across the prison estate, not limited to HMP Risley. Kitchen equipment replacement is managed through the annual asset replacement programme, however national funding constraints limit

the volume of assets that can be replaced in any one year. The incumbent contractor delivering fire safety works across the prison estate entered administration in August 2024. This resulted in unavoidable disruption to the programme at HMP Risley and across HMPPS. Replacement contracts are now being agreed, with fire safety works at HMP Risley expected to recommence later this year.

I note you have raised some issues of concern for the attention of HMPPS in your report and comments in response to these matters are set out in the attached annex.

I was pleased to read your positive comments about how the change in population was managed and your view that this will ease some of the difficulties previously experienced at the prison. Whilst this impacted on the links between the prison and employers, it was encouraging to note the efforts of the New Futures Network on self-employment opportunities. I was further encouraged to note staff being trained on emergency medication administration that saved lives during the reporting year, the reinstatement of 'retirement clubs' provided by Age UK, and the 'theatre in prison' production which prompted prisoners to reflect on the impact of their offences.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I are deeply appreciative of the oversight brought by members of Independent Monitoring Boards to improve the estate and we extend our sincere thanks for your ongoing commitment on behalf of HMP Risley.

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 RISLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Activity Spaces**

Since the last IMB reporting period, HMP Risley has increased the number of tier 1 opportunities and has sought to minimise the impact of changes to the education funding for the year. The tier 2 offer has been expanded to allow all prisoners an opportunity to attend some activity. Allocation to activity spaces has remained high at 96% for most of the past twelve months demonstrating that all opportunity is being maximised, and attendance levels are also good.

At a national level we are investing in under-utilised workshops and engaging with businesses to create more purposeful activity spaces, develop employability skills, and help secure jobs on release.

Whilst not directly linked, 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 and consequently impacting demand for activity spaces. The government is also investing in new technology to reduce admin so staff can focus on work that reduces reoffending.

#### **Prisoners' Property**

HMPPS fully recognises the importance of prisoners' property and is committed to ensuring it is managed with care and respect. HMPPS has considered carefully the IMB national thematic report on the impact of property loss on prisoners, and the thematic review by Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations of the property complaints they have received over the last five years. In considering the reports, consultation with prison staff took place on the issues raised. A revised version of the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework was published on 17 November 2025 and includes additional guidance on the sending on of excess property, the handling of prisoners' laundry and on the correct completion of the cell clearance certificate, as these have been identified as common areas of difficulty. Alongside that, HMPPS has reminded Governors and other senior leaders of key points around property handling, including the importance of prisoners complying with volumetric limits. Compliance with volumetric control remains of key importance, since property within those limits (as well as certain items, such as legal papers, which are exempt from the limits) will be moved with prisoners when they transfer to other establishments.

At HMP Risley, property storage and distribution processes have been reviewed within the establishment. Property storage space has been expanded, and all property is distributed to prisoners within seven days of arriving at the establishment.