



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Grendon
Grendon Underwood
Aylesbury
HP18 0TL

MoJ ref: SUB135353

26 June 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP GRENDON INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2025**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Grendon. I want to express my sincere appreciation for the work undertaken by you and your colleagues in producing such valuable insights, especially as you have continued to operate with a severely depleted complement of members. I understand you have been closely supported by the regional lead, who has assisted with the recent recruitment campaign and targeted advertising to attract applications. I hope this results in new members to improve the situation going forward.

I do recognise the Board's continued concerns about the building infrastructure following similar concerns to HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in last year's report. You can be assured that the investment needed across the estate continues to be reviewed with proposals informed by surveys already undertaken that assessed the conditions at each site and these will support the prioritisation of future capital budgets. Bids for shower refurbishments and cell window replacements have been submitted and remain under consideration, subject to compliant and affordable proposals, as demand for maintenance exceeds available funding across the estate and is focused on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency projects. In the interim, the facilities management provider at HMP Grendon has consistently worked to address and resolve previously identified issues, whilst recognising some essential repairs have proven costly, requiring specially ordered replacement parts which result in delays. All fire doors on the wings at HMP Grendon have been replaced and a new misting fire suppression system has been installed, allowing automatic activation in event of a fire for the safety of staff and prisoners. A new general alarm system has been fitted and the night sanitation system upgraded. Painting work has also been completed across various areas of the prison to improve the environment, including the community and group rooms where new furniture has been purchased to provide a more welcoming space. In addition, the TV system has been upgraded to provide high-definition, and a gradual project is ongoing to replace metal beds with new alternatives. There has also been a notable decrease in rodent reports and prisoners continue to be encouraged during community meetings to refrain from discarding food out of windows and the replacement windows bid will further support eradication efforts.

Despite the challenges that remain, I was reassured to read that the prison continues to provide a safe environment, with incidents of violence, self-harm and the need to use force remaining low. I was pleased to note the further improvement in the positive interactions between staff and prisoner and the provision of enrichment activities to help with personal development, given the prisons therapeutic model. It was

interesting to read about the positive feedback prisoners have provided about their experiences and I was encouraged by the reduction in those out of therapy awaiting transfers. I also welcome that new purposeful activity is being introduced this year that broadens the educational provision and is linked to therapy and building careers. In addition, the significant reforms of the Sentencing Act 2026, which received Royal Assent on 22 January 2026, will not only provide further options to the Courts to end the cycle of less serious offenders going in and out of prison but will also help HMPPS to inform the future requirements for the prison estate to keep protecting the public and reduce reoffending.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HMPPS comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I really value the contribution of Independent Monitoring Board members in improving our prisons and we are very grateful for your ongoing dedication on behalf of HMP Grendon.

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

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners' Property

The importance of prisoners' property is recognised and HMPPS are committed to ensuring it is managed with care and respect. Carefully considered has now been given to the IMB national thematic report on the impact of property loss on prisoners, and the thematic review by the Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations. In considering the reports, consultation with prison staff took place and a revised version of the *Prisoners' Property Policy* Framework was published on 17 November 2025. This included additional guidance on sending excess property, the handling of prisoners' laundry and the correct completion of the cell clearance certificate, as these were identified as common areas of difficulty. In addition, HMPPS has reminded Governors and other senior leaders of key points about handling property, such as the importance of prisoners complying with volumetric limits, since property within those limits will be moved with the prisoner when they are transferred. It is recognised that for much of the reporting period, the reception at HMP Grendon was temporarily housed in a portable cabin due to an ongoing fire project, which impacted storage and accessibility, leading to additional delays in sending property. Steps have been taken to reduce the volume of property held at HMP Grendon, including an initiative to encourage prisoners to hand property out during their visits, which has helped ease the storage burden. However, a high proportion of property complaints relate to when prisoners transfer to HMP Grendon and their property fails to arrive with them. Whilst outside the direct control of the prison, these are prioritised and actively chased up with the relevant prisons to ensure they are addressed as quickly as possible.

Cancelled Transfers

HMPPS is fully aware of the impact that cancelled transfers can have upon prisoners out of therapy and those awaiting progressive transfers which has been exasperated by population pressures across the prison estate. Enhanced reporting is now utilised to capture Prisoner Escort and Custody Service (PECS) performance data, which is shared with all Governors and Prison Group Director offices. The introduction of this has improved clarity and consistency in oversight, enabling both HMPPS and PECS to more effectively identify, manage, and respond to issues and concerns. In addition, an inter-prison transfer efficiency review has now been completed and implementation is being taken forward collaboratively across various national teams in HMPPS. Locally steps have also been taken to cultivate good relationships with other prison Offender Management Units to book and secure transfers in a timely manner. Transfers that are subject to multiple cancellations are escalated to ensure those moves are prioritised. In cases where transfers become delayed and may affect individuals' progression, HMP Grendon has facilitated transfers using their own staff, particularly most recently for category D prisoners. Using these approaches, as the Board's report notes, there has been a significant reduction in the prisoner out of therapy awaiting transfer which has had a stabilising effect on the wings.

Canteen Retail

There are clear requirements set by HMPPS for the delivery of prison retail services and the Board can be assured that the canteen supplier is subject to ongoing monitoring and assurance through established contract management and governance arrangements. HMPPS also continues to work with the supplier to offer an improved and more robust service, alongside the commitment to resolving and handling any issues or failures in a timely matter. Where items are confirmed missing, damaged, or lost, the supplier and prison are required to record the issue, use agreed mitigations and provide the necessary information promptly to enable an appropriate resolution without undue delay. HMP Grendon undertakes a quarterly

meeting with canteen supplier, where complaints and prisoner experiences about the canteen service are discussed and the prison's Business Hub has conducted a visit to the canteen supplier at HMP Bullingdon to improve understanding. Although a stock of some items is kept at the prison to address shortfalls in delivery, refunds or replacements are proactively sought, but on occasions it is recognised there have been delays when information has not been received from the residential areas in a timely manner. In addition, following an increase in return slips not reaching the canteen supplier at HMP Bullingdon, a new process has been introduced which is working effectively where slips are now scanned to retain a digital copy locally, before requests are sent to HMP Bullingdon alongside the completed canteen sheets.