



Chair  
Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Holme House  
Holme House Road  
Stockton-On-Tees  
TS18 2QU

MoJ Ref: SUB135309

25 June 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP HOLME HOUSE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 JANUARY 2025 – 31 DECEMBER 2025**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Holme House. I am sincerely grateful to you and your colleagues for your continued resilience and commitment in monitoring the establishment and capturing your helpful observations, despite ongoing membership challenges and operating with a reduced complement throughout the reporting period.

I was saddened to read that seven prisoners died during the reporting year, either in custody or shortly after release. I offer my condolences to their friends and families and would like to reassure the Board that recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) are taken very seriously. I've noted the PPO's findings relating to the death of a prisoner in 2025, which highlighted the professionalism and compassion shown by healthcare and prison staff who facilitated opportunities for fellow prisoners to offer comfort in the individual's final days. Such examples of dignity and humanity are important, and I am grateful to those involved.

I recognise the Board's ongoing concerns regarding capital maintenance works. A bid for a roofing project covering the laundry, workshops, visits, and gymnasium areas is currently progressing through the design and development phase. It is unfortunately not possible at this stage to provide assurance that all major capital works will be funded and delivered during 2026 given that projects of this scale are complex, costly, and operationally demanding. Delivery would require significant planning and, in some cases, taking parts of the establishment offline, which must be carefully balanced against the need to maintain safe and stable operations. As with all such proposals, this bid will be considered alongside other infrastructure priorities across the wider estate. Given that demand for maintenance and capital investment exceeds available funding, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) must prioritise works to ensure resources are directed to where they are most urgently required, particularly in relation to risk to life, capacity, and decency.

HMPPS continues to review investment requirements across the estate, informed by condition surveys and long-term maintenance planning. At HMP Holme House, a bid has been received for shower refurbishments in House Blocks 1 to 4, and this work is in the pipeline. A feasibility study will also consider increasing storage and improving the reception area. There are active projects involving upgrades to internal and perimeter lighting, due for completion in June 2026. A project to upgrade shower facilities in House Block 1 was completed in August 2025, with a total investment of approximately £400,000.

In relation to your concerns regarding accommodation support, I can confirm that this Government is taking forward a range of measures to increase the number of prison leavers accessing sustainable accommodation. HMPPS continues to invest in Community Accommodation Service models for those at risk of homelessness, alongside embedding stronger local partnerships, co-location with local authorities, and improved pre-release planning. We are also investing in digital integration to better match individuals to appropriate accommodation at the right time. These actions support delivery of the Government's commitment to reduce homelessness among those leaving custody.

At HMP Holme House, a Strategic Housing Specialist is leading this work locally by strengthening collaboration with local authorities, including establishing pre-release panels and increasing their regular presence in the prison to enable earlier engagement and planning. Work with local outreach organisations is enhancing 'Through the Gate' support to encourage attendance at accommodation appointments and uptake of offers on release. In addition, a Renting Ready course is being introduced to help individuals secure and sustain accommodation.

I note your comments around the significant challenges and impacts of the re-role of the prison and was pleased to read your positive observations about how the transition was delivered. It was particularly encouraging to note the professionalism and commitment of staff in managing this significant change, ensuring continuity of operations and maintaining standards of care for prisoners. I was also encouraged by your comments on the well-run reception processes, as well as the continued focus on decency across the establishment, which has led to tangible improvements in accommodation, facilities, and living conditions.

I note that you have raised a number of local issues of concern in your report, which the Governor will continue to discuss with the Board as work progresses. 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 provided by members of Independent Monitoring Boards in helping to drive improvements across the estate. We extend our thanks for your ongoing commitment at HMP Holme House.

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 HOLME HOUSE INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2025 – 31 DECEMBER 2025

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Catering Budgets**

Budgets for prisoner food have increased incrementally, rising from £2.18 per prisoner per day in 2022–2023 to £3.01 in 2024–2025. Budgets for 2025–2026 were increased in line with inflation funding received by HMPPS. Governors retain the flexibility to manage their overall budget and may supplement food provision if needed.

Prison Rules require that prisoners are provided with food that is wholesome, nutritious, well prepared and served, reasonably varied, sufficient in quantity and reflective of the population mix. HMPPS continues to work closely with catering managers to understand any current challenges and share good practice with food suppliers. It is also working closely with the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities and other partners to provide advice to prisoners and staff on healthy eating and to support the continued development of nutritious menus.

#### **Key Work**

Whilst HMP Holme House does not have the authority to influence overall staffing levels, at a local level the Regime Management Plan is utilised to balance the delivery of all regime elements, including key worker provision. A Key Work Quality Improvement Action Plan is in place, and the establishment fully recognises the importance of delivering this critical function whenever operationally feasible.

#### **Prisoner Wages**

Governors have the flexibility to determine local policy based on operational priorities and available resources. PSO 4460 (Prisoner Pay) sets out that decisions regarding rates of pay for prisoner activities are made at establishment level. The PSO outlines expectations for purposeful activity and recognises that not all activities attract payment. It also provides Governors with the discretion to pay above nationally set minimum rates and requires establishments to review their pay policies annually.