



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Spring Hill
Grendon Underwood
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26 June 2026

Dear Chair,

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

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Spring Hill. I appreciate you and your colleagues' considerable efforts in producing such informative reflections on the current state of the prison, while continuing to operate with a significant shortfall of members throughout the reporting period. I'm informed that plans are underway to develop additional support that will help Board's with the onboarding process and retention of new members and I hope this will help improve the situation in the coming year.

I can understand the Board's concerns regarding improvements needed to accommodation huts and associated services at HMP Spring Hill and action continues to be taken to address issues. Two huts have received refurbishment work in the shower and toilet area. This has included new cubicle toilet doors, white rock on the walls, new surfaces for the wash basins in both areas and new flooring. T hut has also received a new sanitation block, which is a positive development. It is recognised that R hut requires some additional work and alternative quotations are being sought. Work on N hut has also commenced, as well a painting programme to all huts. HMP Spring Hill remains committed to making continual improvements within the resources available and a recent inspection of every room occupied by prisoners has resulting in several facilities-related requests. Wider upgrades have taken place to fire system and panels and to external lighting to improve security. The main kitchen has received electrical upgrades to ensure service during an emergency and capital bids have been submitted for site-wide shower refurbishments and structural repairs to the Diamond Centre. These bids remain under consideration as part of the wider pipeline, subject to compliant and affordable proposals due to demand for maintenance funding exceeding the resources available across the estate. In the meantime, locally through the prison facilities management provider some refurbish work is taking place to selected showers and toilets, with the majority of this being undertaken by prisoners with the necessary skills. Although progress is slower than originally expected this is providing welcome work opportunities for prisoners.

Regarding your concerns about the education budget, I can provide assurance that there were no cuts to the national prison education budget. However, many prisons have seen changes in the volume of provision that can be delivered through the Core Education contract since the new Prisoner Education Service started in October 2025. This is driven primarily by inflationary pressures across all education services, which has impacted the proportion of the budget that can be spent through the Core Education contract. The extent to which prisons are affected does vary due to the funding formula for prison

education also being refreshed to ensure that allocations are a fair reflection of prison population, function and regional cost differences, given many have changed since the funding formula was last set in 2019. This delivery reduction only applies to the Core Education contracts and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) have [published](#) transparency data on the level of commissioning under the previous and current contracts within prisons. I can clarify these changes do not affect other education services such as libraries, careers advice, distance learning or vocational training delivered through industries and workshops. However, separately at HMP Spring Hill some vocational courses have been scaled back due to low participation and limited reach given the changes in the population and shorter lengths of stay. Instead, there is now more appropriate delivery of shorter, bite-sized courses focused on developing softer skills which have been identified by employers as lacking in the labour market. In addition, to address the budget changes, locally the Dynamic Purchasing System and alternative funding streams have been utilised to provide more vocationally linked employment opportunities through Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and on eventual release. HMPPS is acutely aware of the critical role that education plays in providing purposeful activity and reducing reoffending and there remains a focus on how to drive the maximum value for money and quality outcomes from the available provision including ensuring attendance remains a priority.

I welcome the Board's findings that the prison continues to operate safely, with low levels of self-harm, incidents of violence and the need to use force to de-escalate these. I am particularly grateful to staff for their swift and professional response in two separate life-threatening incidents where they were able to provide life-saving CPR in one instance. I was encouraged by the good outcomes across healthcare services, including the positive feedback from prisoners about the substance misuse support on offer. It was pleasing to read about the increased opportunities for ROTL and for prisoners to engage in work opportunities with vocational qualifications. I was also encouraged by the employment fair attracting new and existing employers which resulted in interviews and job offers, as well as the Employment Advisory Board being able to attract local companies to offer employment. In addition, the significant reforms introduced by the Sentencing Act 2026, which received Royal Assent on 22 January 2026, will give courts greater flexibility to break the cycle of less serious offenders repeatedly entering custody. These changes will also help shape the strategic requirements of the prison estate in the future to support resettlement into the community.

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 oversight which members of Independent Monitoring Boards provide to our prisons and we are very grateful for your ongoing dedication on behalf of HMP Spring Hill.

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

An updated framework was introduced on 17 November 2025 following careful consideration of the IMB national thematic report on the impact of property loss, alongside the thematic review by the Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations. This work was informed by consultation with prison staff and reflects a continued commitment by HMPPS to ensure that prisoners' property is managed appropriately and with due care. The revised framework provides strengthened guidance in areas commonly identified as challenging, including the sending of excess property, the management of prisoners' laundry, and the accurate completion of cell clearance certificates. In addition, Governors and senior leaders have been reminded of key expectations in the handling of property, including the importance of prisoners adhering to volumetric limits, as property within those limits will accompany them on transfer. It is acknowledged that a high proportion of property complaints locally arise because prisoners' property has not arrived with them when they transfer to HMP Spring Hill. Whilst these are outside the prisons control, proactive measures are taken to log and refer these matters to the sending prison and responses are actively chased to ensure these are addressed promptly. It is also recognised that there have been operational constraints within Reception at HMP Spring Hill during which there have been delays in dispatching property on occasions when prisoners are returned to closed conditions. The Board may also be aware that some prisoners returning from ROTL have attempted to bring back items that have not been approved. Where items are not authorised or recorded on their property card, they cannot be transferred onwards. Despite this, prisoners can still expect to receive these items when transferring, even where there is no proof of ownership. The prison is therefore strengthening procedures for prisoners returning from ROTL to ensure that all items are approved, and that accurate property records are being maintained and fully documented. Furthermore, the completion of cell clearances has been prioritised to ensure all property is correctly recorded and stored.

Employment on Release

At a national level HMPPS is investing in under-utilised workshops and engaging with businesses to create more purposeful activity spaces, develop employability skills and help secure jobs on release. The New Futures Network, the specialist employment team, are specifically working to expand job and training opportunities both in custody and on release. The proportion of prison leavers sentenced to 12 months or more who were employed within six months of their release more than doubled across the past four performance years, from 15% in 2020/21 to 38% in 2024/25. HMPPS are also prototyping a new 'working week' initiative which aims to increase the volume of work in prisons and strengthen community business links to boost employability. HMP Spring Hill has enhanced its own employment offer and is now collaborating with more than 55 employers. ROTL participation has also grown, resulting in over 90 prisoners engaged in full-time work or education with a focus on building sustainable relationships to support continued employment after their release. In addition, Creating Future Opportunities (CFO) is operating across custody and the community to support those offenders with the most complex needs who are unable or unwilling to engage with mainstream provision. CFO is providing intensive, personalised Through the Gate support, beginning in custody and continuing post-release, ensuring continuity at the most critical points of transition, and supporting individuals to stabilise, engage and move towards employment and resettlement. At HMP Spring Hill, CFO is fully embedded within the employment and resettlement arrangements and works closely with colleagues across the prison. Alongside its core

offer, CFO has delivered targeted vocational activity aligned to local labour market needs and is currently supporting 78 of the hardest to help men at HMP Spring Hill. This includes 18 achieving NVQ Level 1 qualifications and 12 individuals have entered employment over the last 12 months.