



Chair
Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Isle of Wight
Albany Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5RS

MoJ ref: SUB135847

10 July 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP ISLE OF WIGHT: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
1 JANUARY 2025 to 31 DECEMBER 2025**

Thank you for submitting the Independent Monitoring Board's Annual Report for HMP Isle of Wight. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your continued commitment to independent monitoring across what is a complex and unique Long-Term and High Security Estate (LTHSE). I was pleased to have the chance to visit the prison in April 2025 with Richard Quigley MP to learn more about the important work being delivered locally from the Governor and staff.

I was very sorry to learn that there were seven deaths in custody during the reporting year. Every death in custody is a tragedy and my condolences are with the families, friends and all those affected. All deaths are subject to independent investigation by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, and any findings will be carefully considered.

The delays in transferring prisoners to secure hospital settings remain a longstanding system wide issue with constraints primarily linked to the availability of secure beds and the coordination between custody and health services. Responsibility for arranging transfers sits with health partners and these challenges are regularly escalated at both regional and national level. Locally, the prison continues to work closely with healthcare providers to identify and escalate urgent cases. As you will be aware, legislative reform through the Mental Health Bill will introduce a statutory 28-day transfer time limit. Work is ongoing across government and with NHS partners to support implementation of this change. Alongside this, cross system oversight arrangements are in place to improve accountability and address barriers to timely transfer.

You raise concerns regarding the extent of local flexibility available to Governors in relation to staffing and budget decisions. Workforce planning and resource allocation are managed through regional and national frameworks to ensure consistency across the estate and to respond to wider system priorities. While this approach is designed to balance competing demands, it can limit the ability to respond quickly to emerging local pressures. At HMP Isle of Wight, there have been improvements in probation staffing levels during the year with additional qualified officers and trainees joining the establishment, alongside strengthened delivery through increased visibility of offender managers and the introduction of a dedicated pre-release role. Further clarity on roles, responsibilities and resourcing will be set out through the Custodial Sentence Management Model, which is due for publication.

Your report highlights a challenging operating environment, including staffing pressures, infrastructure limitations and the complexity of the population. These issues reflect the wider challenge of balancing national coordination with local delivery. Continued focus on workforce stability, healthcare pathways and operational flexibility will remain important.

It was encouraging to read the number of areas of positive practice. It is encouraging to note improvements in staff experience levels and the investment in leadership capacity on the wings, as well as the continued commitment of staff working in challenging environments such as the separation and reintegration unit. I also welcome the continued strong delivery of healthcare services, particularly the introduction of initiatives such as wing-based clinics and improved multidisciplinary working within the inpatient healthcare unit. The development of peer support, education delivery and family contact arrangements, including high levels of video calling, provide further evidence of positive work across the establishment.

Issues raised in your report that fall within local operational responsibility will continue to be addressed by the Governor, who will keep the Board informed of progress. Responses to matters raised for HMPPS are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I continue to appreciate the value and scrutiny brought by members of Independent Monitoring Boards to improve the estate and we extend our thanks for your continued dedication on behalf of HMP Isle of Wight.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Workforce Planning and Recruitment Constraints

Probation workforce planning is managed through regional and national controls to support delivery across the estate. At HMP Isle of Wight, this has limited the ability to recruit in advance of anticipated staffing shortfalls, reducing local resilience and increasing operational pressure during the reporting period.

Since that time, probation resource has strengthened. The establishment has recruited trainee probation officers who will remain in post during training, alongside additional qualified probation officers and probation service officers. This has increased capacity and stability within the team. Delivery has also been strengthened through the introduction of a full time pre-release role and increased visibility of offender managers through regular wing-based engagement.

Gate Security and Illicit Items

Funded gate security enhancement projects are progressing at both Albany and Parkhurst sites. At Albany, works are scheduled to commence summer 2026. At Parkhurst, works are planned between September and October 2026. These projects will improve access control and strengthen physical security infrastructure. In advance of these works, additional mitigation has been introduced. This includes increased searching activity, deployment of dedicated gate searching resource, and the introduction of new detection technologies including X-ray equipment, archway metal detectors and specialist search tools. Additional mobile phone detection capability is also being deployed to support the identification and disruption of illicit communications linked to drug ingress. These measures form part of a wider approach to managing illicit items, which continues to rely on intelligence-led searching activity, disruption techniques and joint working across security functions.

Infrastructure and Capital Investment

A range of infrastructure projects are in development across both sites, reflecting the scale and complexity of estate requirements at HMP Isle of Wight. Funded works currently in delivery include gate replacement and fire safety programmes. Further projects, including roof replacements and CCTV upgrades are progressing through design, assurance and business case stages. These proposals are supported by condition surveys and long term maintenance planning, which inform prioritisation across the estate. While demand for capital investment exceeds available funding, projects are assessed against risk, with priority given to safety, operational capacity and decency. Infrastructure challenges at the establishment reflect wider estate pressures, including historic underinvestment, and continue to impact operational delivery and management capacity.

Programme Provision and Rehabilitation

Programme provision across the LTHSE is managed on a national basis, with prioritisation applied across the overall population rather than individual establishments. At HMP Isle of Wight, delivery of the Healthy Sex Programme has increased from three to five places during the current year through reallocation of resources within the estate. A further increase in provision is planned for 2026/27. Allocation to programmes is determined through national prioritisation criteria and is not linked to prison location. While

demand continues to exceed available places, provision is kept under review and adjusted where possible. Alongside this, programme delivery is evolving through the transition to new interventions, including Building Choices, which aims to broaden rehabilitation opportunities.

Central Laundry

The central laundry refurbishment project is scheduled to commence in August 2026, with completion expected during 2027. In the interim, alternative arrangements remain in place, including the use of wing laundry facilities and limited workshop provision. These arrangements allow continuity of service but continue to place pressure on existing infrastructure and operational delivery.