



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair
Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Liverpool
68 Hornby Road
Liverpool
L9 3DF

MoJ Ref: SUB135579

8 July 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP LIVERPOOL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY 2025 – 31 DECEMBER 2025**

Thank you for submitting the Independent Monitoring Board's (IMB) Annual Report for HMP Liverpool. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your continued commitment to independent scrutiny in what is a demanding and complex reception prison.

I was very sorry to learn that there were four 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. I was encouraged by your comments that there was no apparent evidence of neglect in the majority of these instances but note that one of the deaths was likely drug-related and the need to tackle drug use in our prisons. As you note, all deaths are subject to investigation by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, and any subsequent learning will be carefully considered.

I understand that the condition of the estate at HMP Liverpool continues to present challenges, reflecting the age and complexity of the site. Future investment is informed by condition surveys, which assess the fabric and critical infrastructure across the establishment and support longer term maintenance planning. Current works include a programme of window replacement and damp remediation, alongside proposals for further improvements such as roof replacement and refurbishment of workshop spaces, which remain subject to funding and approval. I recognise the continued impact that persistent maintenance issues can have on daily living conditions for prisoners and on staff working environments. While investment must be prioritised across the wider estate, based on risk to life, capacity and decency, work is ongoing to address the most pressing issues identified at the site.

The Government remains committed to supporting those serving sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP), recognising the challenges associated with progression for this cohort. This work is being taken forward through the refreshed IPP Action Plan, published in July 2025, which places a clear emphasis on effective frontline delivery. This includes ensuring that individuals have robust sentence plans and are held in establishments that best support their progression. Local arrangements are in place to support this cohort, including regular multidisciplinary reviews, structured progression panels and the use of the IPP toolkit to assess whether individuals are ready for parole consideration or should be prioritised for transfer to a more suitable establishment. Legislative reforms introduced through the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 have already reduced licence periods and introduced measures such as automatic licence termination and the Risk Assessed Recall Review process. Further changes in the Sentencing Act 2026 will continue to support progression by reducing qualifying periods and enabling

earlier review. These reforms alongside strengthened frontline delivery are intended to support more effective and timely progression while ensuring public protection remains paramount.

You raise concerns regarding intended future changes to oversight arrangements for IMBs. Please be assured that the independent role of IMBs is an essential safeguard within the prison system. As work progresses to develop future structures, it is intended that this independence will be maintained. This includes preserving the distinct role of IMBs as monitors, separate from inspection functions and ensuring that appropriate mechanisms remain in place to allow concerns to be raised and escalated independently. While detailed proposals continue to be developed, existing arrangements already safeguard independence, and this will remain a central consideration in any future changes.

On a more positive note, I was encouraged to note the progress made during the latter part of the reporting year, including reductions in violence and self-harm and the development of a more coordinated whole-prison approach. I also welcome the Board's recognition of improving staff-prisoner relationships, which reflect the continued efforts of staff working in a challenging environment.

The Governor will continue to keep you informed of progress in relation to the issues you have raised. Responses to matters raised for HMPPS are set out in the annex below.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I recognise the value provided by Independent Monitoring Boards and thank you for your continued commitment on behalf of HMP Liverpool.

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

Facilities Management and Maintenance Oversight

We understand this is an area the Board has raised previously, particularly in relation to oversight, accountability and the quality of responsive repairs. Facilities management services at HMP Liverpool are delivered under a contract overseen by the MoJ Property Directorate. Since the last reporting period, additional steps have been taken to strengthen oversight and improve performance. A structured governance framework remains in place, including weekly and monthly performance reviews against Key Performance Indicators. In response to ongoing concerns, the site continues to operate under a Performance Improvement Plan, which has recently been reset to provide clearer accountability and stronger regional oversight.

An Area Property Operations Manager is now in post, undertaking regular compliance checks and supporting more consistent contract management. Performance is further scrutinised through established escalation routes, including defect management processes and formal review mechanisms. These measures are intended to strengthen oversight and improve responsiveness. However, it is recognised that the age and condition of the estate continue to present challenges and this remains an area of sustained focus.

Access to Information and Fire Safety Assurance

IMBs have a statutory role which includes access to information necessary to fulfil their monitoring responsibilities. During the reporting period, fire evacuation drills were conducted across residential units. It is acknowledged that due to a local oversight, reports from these drills were not consistently shared with the IMB. These reports have now been provided in full. Arrangements are now in place to ensure that IMB members are invited to attend future drills and that documentation is routinely shared, supporting transparency and effective independent monitoring.

Prisoner Property

We recognise that this is an issue the Board has raised consistently over a number of years, particularly in relation to property handling during transfers and the reliability of existing systems across estates. Since the previous reporting period, a revised Prisoners' Property Policy Framework, introduced in November 2025, has strengthened guidance on key areas including transfer processes, handling of excess property and documentation requirements. This update was informed by national thematic reviews and engagement with establishments. Operationally, reminders have been issued across the estate to reinforce compliance, particularly in relation to volumetric limits and the accurate completion of documentation to support transfers, which will hopefully help address the issues you report at particular establishments.

Unfortunately, the current property functionality within the National Offender Management Information System continues to present limitations. While a digital replacement has been considered, it is not currently prioritised, with development capacity focused on higher-risk operational systems. At HMP Liverpool, local improvements have been introduced, including enhanced tracking arrangements with courier services and closer monitoring of property transfers. The Governor reports that these changes are beginning to reduce the number of complaints, although further work is required to ensure consistency across all transfers.