



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Hindley
Gibson Street
Bickershaw
Hindley
WN2 5TH

MoJ ref: SUB2135356

17 July 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI HINDLEY INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY 2025 – 31 DECEMBER 2025**

Thank you for submitting the Independent Monitoring Board's Annual Report for HMP/YOI Hindley. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for the time and commitment in providing independent oversight within a busy and complex resettlement and training prison. Your report provides a clear account of the challenges faced and the work undertaken during the year. I also had the opportunity to be able to visit the prison in October 2025 to hear first-hand from the Governor and staff about the valuable work taking place.

I was very sorry to learn that there were two 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.

I recognise that the reporting period has taken place in the context of sustained pressures across the estate, including high levels of population churn and increasing complexity of need. I have read your report with care and acknowledge the concerns you have raised.

I note the Board's concern regarding the level of substance misuse, the availability of weapons and the routes through which illicit items continue to enter the establishment, including the effectiveness of searching arrangements at the main gate. The threat posed by illicit items remains a significant challenge across the prison estate and requires a coordinated response at local, regional and national level. At HMP/YOI Hindley, this includes a multi-agency approach involving the Counter Drone Taskforce, Police and regional intelligence teams to identify and disrupt supply routes. Targeted operational activity has been undertaken to address drone enabled ingress, including a coordinated intensification period focused on vulnerabilities within the establishment. This work has contributed to a reduction in reported drone activity over the reporting period. Alongside this, action is being taken locally to strengthen searching capability. This includes increasing Enhanced Gate Security capacity and expanding the use of both routine and intelligence-led searching, supported by additional staffing resource. Work is also underway to improve infrastructure and processes to enhance the effectiveness of gate security over time.

At a national level, investment continues in a range of security measures, including counter-drone capabilities and enhanced gate security arrangements, supported by intelligence-led activity to respond to evolving threats.

I was encouraged to note the Board's observations of positive practice across the establishment during the year. In particular, the continued delivery of good quality healthcare, effective multi-disciplinary working and positive prisoner feedback are important strengths. I also welcome the strong resettlement outcomes achieved, including the proportion of prisoners moving into employment on release, alongside the contribution of specialist provision such as the pre-PIPE unit and the work of chaplaincy services.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you informed of as work progresses. Responses to matters raised for HMPPS are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I continue to appreciate the value of the scrutiny provided by Independent Monitoring Boards, and we extend our thanks for your continued commitment on behalf of HMP/YOI Hindley.

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

HMP/YOI HINDLEY INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2025 – 31 DECEMBER 2025

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Education Provision and Purposeful Activity

The volume of education delivered through core contracts has reduced across the estate due to increased delivery costs and wider inflationary pressures affecting the Prisoner Education Service. This has resulted in a reduction in commissioned education places at HMP/YOI Hindley. Core education forms one element of a broader education, skills and work offer. Governors retain flexibility to allocate provision and commission activity to meet the needs of their population, including vocational training, workshops and enrichment activity.

The establishment has taken steps to increase overall activity capacity by reconfiguring workshop provision to expand part-time opportunities, enabling a greater number of prisoners to access purposeful activity. Work is ongoing to secure additional commercial contracts to make use of available workshop space. A business case has been submitted to develop further workshop capacity on the site of a disused residential unit, which would provide additional activity places if approved. Additional opportunities are also being explored through the use of under-utilised classroom space and the development of enrichment provision. Allocation and attendance are monitored daily to maximise participation and ensure available activity places are used effectively.

At a national level, delivery continues to be monitored through contract management arrangements, supported by ongoing evaluation of the Prisoner Education Service to inform future commissioning and policy decisions.