



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair
Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI ISIS
Western Way
London
SE28 0NZ

MoJ ref: SUB136081

17 July 2026

Dear Chair,

HMP/YOI ISIS INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
1 January 2025 –31 December 2025

Thank you for submitting the Independent Monitoring Board's Annual Report for HMP/YOI Isis. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your continued commitment in providing independent oversight of the treatment and conditions of those held at the establishment. Your report provides valuable insight into the experiences of prisoners and staff within a complex and dynamic young adult environment. As I mentioned in my response to your previous reporting period, I was fortunate enough to be able to meet the Governor and staff when I visit the prison in April 2025 and welcomed this opportunity to gain an insight into the work being taken forward.

I recognise that the reporting year has taken place in the context of a challenging population profile, with a high proportion of young adults and increasing complexity, alongside wider pressures across the prison estate. Against this backdrop, I note both the areas of continued concern and the progress identified by the Board.

I recognise the Board's concern regarding the changes to education provision, particularly in an establishment serving a large cohort of young adults, for whom access to education is key to improving long-term outcomes. While the overall national budget for prison education has not reduced, the volume of provision delivered through core education contracts has changed. This reflects wider inflationary pressures across education services and a refreshed funding formula which aims to ensure that allocations more accurately reflect population, function and regional cost variations. These changes apply to core education delivery but do not affect other important elements of provision, including vocational training, libraries, careers advice and distance learning. Alongside this, investment continues in digital infrastructure, assessment tools and specialist staffing to improve the quality and impact of education delivery. I recognise the importance of maximising participation and outcomes within the available provision, and HMPPS will continue to support establishments in prioritising attendance, engagement and the effective use of education as part of rehabilitation.

I note the Board's concern regarding the provision available to prisoners beginning life sentences, particularly within a young adult context. HMP/YOI Isis operates as a dual designated training and resettlement prison, receiving both determinate and indeterminate sentenced prisoners in line with the National Allocation Protocol. While bespoke programmes are not always required at the earliest stages of a life sentence, I recognise the importance of ensuring that prisoners are able to make constructive use of their time in custody and progress appropriately. The establishment is developing a local life sentence

strategy, informed by engagement with prisoners to strengthen management and support arrangements for this cohort. This work will complement national approaches to progression and rehabilitation and continued attention will be given to ensuring that provision supports long-term outcomes.

I was encouraged to note the Board's observations of improvements in safety and stability during the year. In particular, reductions in violence, self-harm and the use of force, alongside a significant increase in key work delivery, reflect the positive impact that improved staffing levels and consistent engagement can have on outcomes for young adults.

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/YOI Isis.

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

Disproportionality in Use of Force and PAVA

The establishment undertakes targeted local reviews of use of force and PAVA incidents involving black prisoners. These reviews examine incident context, severity, the rationale for force, use of de-escalation, staff involvement, body-worn video footage, adjudication outcomes and repeat patterns. This analysis is used to assess whether observed disproportionality can be explained by incident profiles or whether further scrutiny of practice, decision making or governance is required. Findings indicate that PAVA exposure affecting black prisoners is more frequently linked to indirect exposure during larger scale incidents involving multiple prisoners, including serious violence and the presence of weapons. These incidents can result in a higher number of prisoners being affected where PAVA is deployed to manage significant risk. Reviews have not identified evidence of PAVA being used solely in response to non-compliance. The Use of Force Committee provides ongoing oversight, supported by input from equality leads, safer custody, violence reduction and prisoner representatives. Further work continues to strengthen de-escalation practice and ensure learning from incidents is applied consistently.

Prisoner Property

A revised Prisoners' Property Policy Framework, introduced in November 2025, provides strengthened guidance on the management of property, including transfers between establishments, handling of excess items and completion of documentation. Operational reminders have been issued to establishments to reinforce compliance with property processes, including volumetric controls and the importance of accurate record keeping. Digital property tracking remains under consideration but is not currently prioritised against higher-risk and safety-critical digital programmes. The proposal remains within the wider prioritisation pipeline and will be reviewed alongside other demands.

The current property card functionality within NOMIS is not used consistently across the estate and is not considered fit for purpose. While a digital property tracking solution has been explored, it is not currently prioritised for delivery. Existing digital capacity is focused on higher-risk and safety-critical programmes, including adjudications, reducing the risk of release in error, and wider systems transformation activity. The development of digital property tracking remains within the prioritisation pipeline and will be reconsidered through formal review processes alongside competing operational demands.

Distance from Home and Family Contact

Transfers closer to home are managed through national population management processes and remain dependent on available capacity across the estate. Where distance limits access to visits, establishments provide a range of alternative contact options. These include in-cell telephony, secure video calls, email services and structured family engagement initiatives such as Storybook Dads and family days. Families are supported by prison-based services to access these options, ensuring continued contact where in-person visits are not possible.

Analysis of Disparities in Use of Force

The establishment continues to review use of force and violence data alongside qualitative insight gathered through prisoner forums, focus groups and surveys. This activity supports a broader understanding of the drivers of violence, including perceptions of safety, experiences of different groups

and factors influencing behaviour. Findings are used to inform violence reduction strategies, including interventions focused on behaviour management, staff capability and early identification of risk.

Monitoring and Scrutiny of PAVA Use

Use of PAVA is subject to routine scrutiny through safety, equalities and use-of-force governance structures. Recorded use of PAVA has reduced over the reporting period, broadly in line with reductions in violence and use of force more generally. PAVA is deployed in response to high-risk incidents, including serious violence and multi-prisoner disorder, where it is assessed to be the safest available option. Data continues to be reviewed where volumes allow, with learning identified through established governance processes.