



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Rye Hill

**For reporting year
1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026**

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Contents

Introductory sections 1 – 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of the establishment	4
3. Key points	5
 Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	8
5. Fair and humane treatment	10
6. Health and wellbeing	13
7. Progression and resettlement	16
 The work of the IMB	
Board statistics	19
Applications to the IMB	19

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Rye Hill is a privately run prison for men, near Rugby, in Warwickshire. It opened in January 2001 and was operated by Group 4 Falck/GSL on a 25-year contract for the Home Office. In May 2008, GSL was acquired by G4S, which took over the running of the prison. A new contracting process was due to take place during the reporting year, but this was temporarily delayed.

The premises are purpose built, with twelve residential units, with a certified normal accommodation (the number of prisoners a prison can hold without being crowded) of 1058 and an operational capacity (the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime), of 1122.¹ The prison completed an expansion during this reporting year that increased the population by 69%. This growth required the addition of 50 prisoners per week over a 10-week period, with no gap week. It is now running at expected capacity. The prison had a population of 1119 at the end of the reporting year.

The prison is a category C training prison (which holds those whose escape risk is considered low, but who cannot be trusted in open conditions) for prisoners convicted of a sexual offence. This has been an ongoing process, with changes to gates and regime being made throughout the year to bring it in line with other category C establishments.

Population statistics

At the end of the reporting year, the prison held 61 prisoners under life sentences; this is only a small change from the 69 held at the start of the year. The number held on an imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentence more than doubled from 15 in March 2025 to 34 in March 2026. This is in part due to the 70% increase in prisoner numbers due to the expansion.

At the end of the reporting period, the prison held 1110 category C prisoners and 9 category D. HMP Rye Hill is a category C prison.

The ethnic breakdown has remained predominantly white, although as a percentage of the overall prison this has reduced. The breakdown is 76.2% white, 9% black, 8.3% Asian and 6.4% others. Foreign nationals make up 7.4% of the prison population. This is a slight increase on the previous year.

Service providers

- Healthcare and social care services are provided by Practice Partnership Group (PPG), commissioned by the NHS.
- The education provider is Novus Foundation for Change.
- Catering is provided by Aramark.
- Links with the Samaritans are established, together with a Listener service.

¹ Figures included in this report are local management information. They reflect the prison's position at the time of reporting but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with official statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- Admissions reduced significantly after the expansion was completed in May 2025. The average number was 25 per month, with a spike in December of 53.
- There were seven deaths in custody, all apparently from natural causes. There was one additional death occurring in the community following a prisoner's release.
- The number of violent incidents has remained low despite the expansion of the prison (up to 33 from 27). Self-harm incidents have reduced from 235 to 190 incidents. The implementation of violence-free initiatives appears to have had a very positive effect.
- The number of illicit items found remains very low.
- Use of force has continued to reduce from 181 incidents two years ago, to 145 last year and 74 during this reporting period. All incidents are reviewed weekly by the establishment's Use of Force committee.

Fair and humane treatment

- The completion of the expansion and recategorisation of the prison was completed within this reporting year. This has been done with minimal disruption.
- The use of the care and separation unit (CSU), for segregating prisoners remains low.
- The community led concessions and violence-free initiatives appear to improve behaviour in general and has reduced the amount of recorded violent incidents.
- 500 enrichment activities have taken place during the reporting year to educate, inform and entertain, practically supporting the community ethos important to life at HMP Rye Hill.

Health and wellbeing

- Time unlocked each day averaged 11.48hrs against a target of 9.5hrs and the continued focus on building a community ethos through the community concessions process appears to have directly impacted the increase in positive behaviour and a decrease of negative behaviour.
- There have been significant changes to both the personnel and the structure of healthcare in the past year. The healthcare team began operating from a new building during the reporting year. Although staffing increased, they were still running almost 5 full-time equivalents (FTE) down at the end of the year.
- As in previous years the demand for hospital outpatient appointments increased. The number of prisoners referred to treatment increased by 283%. 21.43% of appointments made were missed. Of these, 18% were missed as they couldn't be facilitated by the prison.
- It should be noted the healthcare team has dealt with significant challenges as part of the expansion. Concerns raised by prisoners with the healthcare team increased considerably (15.5 per month compared with 5.4 last year). Compliments are low and reduced from last year. The IMB received 30 applications (written representations from prisoners) relating to healthcare, representing a 170% increase from the previous year.

Progression and resettlement

- Education attendance and successful course completions have remained very good, with an overall achievement rate of 84.9%.
- There continues to be a large number of enrichment opportunities at Rye Hill that are varied and engaging.
- The numbers of prisoners receiving contact from family or friends has remained consistent throughout the year at about 40%. The use of video visits has continued to make it easier for contact to be maintained. The initiative for prisoners to meet with other prisoners has continued and enhanced for those without visits from outside.
- The 'job centre' initiative has given prisoners a real sense of community-based employment practices.
- The increase in vocational training is considerable but there have been issues recruiting staff when competing with outside organisations.
- Some targeted one-to-one work has continued with an increasing number of imprisonment for public protection (IPP) prisoners, and this continues to make a real difference to their progress, including the release of one IPP prisoner and multiple referrals to open conditions for others. However, there are still challenges for those with complex needs within the IPP and lifer cohorts.
- There were 84 direct releases from Rye Hill; a 25% increase on last year's figures. 33 of these were parole directed and there were 14 onward deportations.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- The Board remains concerned that there is no centrally directed, long-term solution to the injustice of the IPP sentence and its impact on the mental health and wellbeing of affected prisoners. Despite the excellent internal work at HMP Rye Hill, the number of IPP prisoners has increased with the expansion this year. What specific actions from the HMPPS's IPP annual report will be taken forward at HMP Rye Hill, given the increased number of IPP prisoners held there following this year's expansion?
- The Board recognises the work undertaken in education and vocational training within the prison. It also recognises the desire to build relationships with external partners to support prisoners' integration on release into the community. Are there any initiatives the Government is able to facilitate to enable prisons that hold prisoners convicted of sexual offences (PCoSOs) to build meaningful national partnerships with employers and charities? The Board is also interested in what actions the Government can take to encourage appropriate employment opportunities on release?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- What immediate steps will HMPPS take to ensure that prisoners at HMP Rye Hill can access timely and clinically appropriate healthcare, given the persistent missed appointments and delays in obtaining GP appointments, mental-health assessments, and specialist referrals that are placing prisoners at risk and undermining statutory equivalence of care?

TO THE DIRECTOR

- With a disproportionately older population at HMP Rye Hill, coupled with the increasing difficulties accessing appropriate healthcare, the Board remains concerned that this is becoming an area that needs closer attention to avoid risk of harm. Are there any additional steps you can take to avoid the cancellation of hospital appointments related to prison staffing issues?

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

At the beginning of the reporting year, the prison had higher numbers of incoming prisoners as a result of the completion of the expansion and category C prisoners being moved into HMP Rye Hill from across the prison estate. From June 2025 to March 2026 the numbers evened out with an average of 25 receptions per month with a spike in December of 53 receptions.

The induction process initially included a full body scan of every prisoner being received. Some of the prisoners fully expected to be scanned and others did not.

During June 2025 we completed a thematic review of the body scanning process. We had been uneasy about every new prisoner receiving a full body scan and wanted to understand the process. We wanted to get a prisoner perspective of how having a positive body scan outcome and subsequent segregation had affected prisoners new to the prison.

We were informed that cohort scanning was introduced due to the perceived significant risk levels of arriving prisoners, who predominantly arrived from local reception prisons. The prison believes this approach was successful as it maintained an MDT rate for the reporting year of 1.08%, whereas the majority of local prisons are at 20% or above.

We also raised the question of inconclusive outcomes with the prison, and whether further training could be provided to further minimise any prisoner being segregated without good reason. In September 2025 the process was changed so that a full body scan was no longer completed for all prisoners being transferred in from other prisons.

We were pleased to note a change of process during the reporting year so that body scans are intelligence led and only completed where risks are assessed as heightened based on where prisoners are transferring from and any information on their records.

All new arrivals are greeted by a Prisoner Led Initiative (PLI) member and they are taken through the induction process.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

There have been eight deaths in custody for the reporting period, an increase of 60% from the previous year, however this should be balanced against the increase in population numbers. In May 2026, there were four Coroners' Inquests that were outstanding. However, all are apparently considered to be of natural causes.

Five of the deaths occurred in an external hospital setting, and one additional death occurred in the community following the individual's release.

Following issues raised in our previous annual reports the Head of Safer Custody has proactively arranged events including a visit from Adrian Usher, Prisons and Probation Ombudsman to talk about their role and the process within the prison estate.

A total of 223 assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans, used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide, were opened during the reporting period. Whilst this indicates an increase from the previous reporting period (169), again once balanced against the increased population numbers, this is not disproportionate.

Self-harm incidents were down from last year's reporting cycle of 235 incidents and were reported at 190 occurrences, 13 of which required hospital attendance.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

There were 33 recorded acts of violence, which remains consistently low, despite the increased number of prisoners. A violence-free initiative has been implemented, with units who have no recorded incidents of violence receiving rewards in the forms of increased structured activity and enhanced meal options. This appears to have been well received by prisoners.

4.4 Use of force

Incidences of use of force (UoF) have reduced considerably - with a total of 94 in the reporting period (down from 181 the previous year and 145 the year prior to that). Of the 94, 38 were spontaneous. Incidents were either recorded on body worn video cameras (BWVCs) or via CCTV, which is reviewed weekly by the establishment's UoF committee.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Positive mandatory drug test (MDT) results remain extremely low, with a failure rate for the whole of 2025 at 2.29%. Five of the failures were dismissed at adjudication due to the prisoner being on prescribed medication.

In the first three months of the year to the end of March 2026 (the last quarter of the reporting period) the failure rate was 1%; there were five positive tests out of 505 tests completed. Security measures are in place to keep these numbers low. Incoming post is all scanned or x-rayed and drug detection sniffer dogs are used.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The completion of the expansion, recategorisation to a category C prison and increase in the prisoner numbers has been executed with the minimum of disruption and the Board consider this to have been well managed. The newer units are fully operational, and applications received by the IMB regarding accommodation are comparatively low in number.

Clothing can be ordered from a list of approved suppliers and prisoners have access to good standard laundry facilities to maintain their own clothing. The IMB have received no applications regarding clothing specifically during the reporting period, however clothing does at times form part of property that is sometimes reported as lost or missing from stores or following transfer.

As previously stated, enhanced food is offered as one of the rewards for the violence-free Initiative. Foods relating to religious or cultural celebrations are made available and dietary needs are accommodated. The IMB have been able to observe the wing serveries in action, and this is an area that the Director has also commented on as part of daily briefings. Recent monitoring of the main kitchens was positive, with prisoners reporting positively on their work there.

5.2 Segregation

HMP Rye Hill enjoys comparatively low use of segregation in the care and separation unit (CSU). As part of the expansion, all prisoners being transferred into Rye Hill were body scanned and those with a positive scan were held in CSU until they had a negative scan. As a result, for a short period of time the CSU reached capacity and two cells on Andrews Unit were used as a proxy CSU. However, this was a very short-term approach, and the numbers have returned to normal now.

The CSU was utilised a total of 163 times by 83 prisoners in the reporting period. Each prisoner receives a daily visit by a different PLI Lead and the IMB observed this to be happening on visits to the unit.

The IMB is aware that when a prisoner is segregated there are immediate plans put in place to support them back to the units.

The IMB undertakes to visit the CSU regularly and member activity is planned to incorporate this. Prisoners have not raised any concerns regarding treatment whilst in CSU, and the prison appears proactive in keeping length of stays to a minimum. Rule 42 paperwork was completed on four occasions in the last 12 months.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

In the reporting period, Prisoner Led Initiatives (PLIs) have continued to be an area of strength. There are several initiatives in place, and the staff consult regularly with the Prison Council on various areas. There is a 'banding' system, where prisoners can apply to be a Red Band orderly position, and more recently a Blue Band. There are a limited number of these positions and those prisoners that are successful in applying for one receive an elevated level of trust, such as moving unescorted through the prison during the core day.

Overall, staff and prisoner relationships appear good, and this is reflected in the limited number of applications the Board has received on this topic. Key working is on target and there are focused monthly topics, such as daily routine or family and social contact.

The recent focus of the violence-free initiative and community concessions as a reward for positive behaviours have been well received and appears to be limiting negative behaviour.

As in the previous report, HMP Rye Hill utilises a number of media communications, such as the Directors Vlog, Rye Hill TV and radio channels. These are all produced in house within the Media Hub.

There have been over 500 enrichment activities to educate, inform and entertain. This includes 110 within the first quarter of 2026. The community ethos is an important part of life at HMP Rye Hill.

5.4 Equality and diversity

There were 37 Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms (DIRFs) submitted by prisoners and of these, five were upheld. HMP Rye Hill updated their Equality Policy in December 2025.

The policy makes a commitment to making sure prisoners' needs are met, including the provision of appropriate food and goods for prisoners of black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. It also details the various religious items that are allowed within the prison, to support the practice of faith. This is commensurate with what the IMB has witnessed when visiting various aspects of the prison.

Of the 1117 prisoners within HMP Rye Hill when completing this section, 464 (42%) are aged 50 or above, which is the criteria within HMPPS for classifying older prisoners. This is a significant number when considering the associated age-related comorbidities and disabilities. Health and wellbeing is covered in section six of this report, but it is pertinent to recognise it here also, and the risk to those with disabilities, when appropriate healthcare is not appropriately accessible.

It was not possible to obtain information from healthcare to confirm how many prisoners are being served by the neurodiversity team as we had in the previous year.

A screening process takes place within education and 30% of prisoners present with neurodiverse challenges.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

71% of prisoners have a registered religion. There are 25 registered named religions currently recorded.

The Chaplaincy supports prisoners to attend services, and there are specific services for 14 different faiths every week, with additional general and pastoral sessions for other faiths. Chaplains and spaces are provided for the use of prayer, meditation and meetings. There are specific policies in place to ensure that the multifaith premises are used well and respectfully.

There are many faith-based celebrations and events that take place throughout the year, including Christmas, Eid, Easter and these are open to all and inclusive. Pastoral support is available where needed and there are specific timetabled sessions three times a week.

5.6 Incentives schemes

HMP Rye Hill has a local Incentives Scheme Policy (there is also a National Incentives Framework with which the local scheme must comply). Rye Hill's latest version of this policy was reviewed in June 2025 and will be reviewed in late 2026. The behavioural framework is used outside of the adjudication process. It is designed to be a tool for

incentivising prisoners to maintain good behaviours and engage in the prison regime. There are four levels: basic, standard, enhanced level 1 and enhanced level 2.

5.7 Complaints

Complaints have risen considerably, with an average of 103 per month being received for the reporting period (this was 63 last year). Around 8% of these complaints were then appealed after an initial response was given. The number of complaints has risen in line with the increase in overall population, so this must be considered as a contributory factor. There has also been the introduction of a complaints 'Questions and Answers' meeting, which prisoners can attend.

The complaints policy was last reviewed in November 2025. Prison staff and prisoners are encouraged to deal with issues informally in the first instance. Once a complaint is received, it is logged by the complaints clerk, located within the offender management unit (OMU), who registers the complaint and any replies. The policy details that if a complaint is not upheld, that the reason for not upholding it is explained clearly and politely. As part of applications received, the IMB has seen several complaints responses where the explanation has been overly brief, and the tone, at times, curt. Particular concerns about responses have been raised by the Board to secure better understanding and clarity for prisoners.

It is the Board's view that complaints are generally dealt with in line with the timescales outlined in the complaints policy. Additionally, Independent Prison Complaint Investigation (IPCI) forms are available on all wings should a prisoner wish to escalate a complaint to that organisation.

5.8 Property

There were 22 applications received regarding property in the reporting period. This accounts for almost a fifth of the total applications received. 12 of these applications related to property being lost during a prisoner's transfer from another prison to HMP Rye Hill. With the increase in prison population, this number could be considered as relatively low.

HMP Rye Hill updated its prisoner property policy in January 2026 - the policy recognises the importance of personal property and possessions to prisoners and how property forms part of the measure of their quality of life. The policy encourages that particular care be taken of sentimental items and recognises the value of these items to prisoners.

HMP Rye Hill, in conjunction with the Prison Council, have begun work to develop a new digital property card with the intention of alleviating problems caused by loss of, or incomplete property cards.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Practice Plus Group (PPG) has run the healthcare department since November 2022.

As part of the expansion of the prison, Healthcare has been operating from a purpose-built building with an additional five clinic rooms. The staff in post has increased from 39.04 FTE in March 2025 to 47.89 FTR in March 2026. There are 4.5 FTE of vacancies as of March 2026.

The department regularly collects and measures the number of healthcare complaints, concerns and compliments received from prisoners; these are maintained by a Patient Engagement Lead and most are available to the IMB on a monthly basis.

Number of health complaints, concerns and compliments per month:

	Highest	Lowest	Average
Complaints	53	0	14.9
Concerns	73	0	15.5
Compliments	4	0	0.54

Concerns and complaints numbers have tripled since the previous report. The number of health-related applications from prisoners to the Board increased to 30 during the year, an increase of 170% (see 'the work of the IMB, page 18). Despite this being relatively low actual numbers, it is an area where we have continually been asked to monitor. One of the key areas is relating to the removal of 'addictive' medication, despite prisoners coming to the prison having been on this treatment previously.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Waiting times for appointments in two areas are high: dentist and optician. We have been unable to confirm the number of patients waiting and the average wait for GP services.

Number of patients waiting to be seen (in days):

	April 2025	February 2026	Average wait
GP	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Dentist	4	152	98.2
Podiatrist	2	0	2
Physiotherapist	4	14	6
Optician	1	112	35

Many of the healthcare complaints referred to in 6.1 relate to accessing healthcare appointments.

Information provided to the Board for this reporting period was contradictory. However, there was a clear increase in prisoners missing booked appointments. The number of missed appointments during the reporting year was 267 or 21.43% of the total appointments made. Not all of these were due to prison issues. Only 49 or 18% were cancelled by the prison.

The appointments missed related to dermatology, outpatient appointments for various ailments that were non-urgent and non-urgent x-rays.

The number of prisoners referred to treatment increased from 160 referrals for 2024-25 to 613 referrals for 2025-26; an increase of 283%.

The Head of Healthcare suggests that this is due to the number of patients transferred during the expansion who have co-morbidities and complex long-term conditions. There are also a number of patients that needed to be re-referred due to no longer being in the catchment areas for previous referrals or who transferred in having not been seen for several years by a healthcare professional.

There was an increase in 'referral to treatment' breaches (waiting longer than 18 weeks for an initial appointment) from 86 in March 25 to 127 at the end of the reporting period.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of booked appointments	237	386	298	325
Number of attended appointments	194	272	239	274
Number of missed appointments	43 (-18%)	114 (-29.5%)	59 (-20%)	51 (-16%)

There is a weekly discussion to ensure that appointments are covered and where this is not possible a medical decision is made as to whose appointment is not prioritised. The number of applications to the Board in regards to poor healthcare and the above figures do give cause for concern.

6.3 Mental health

The number of prisoners under the care of the Mental Health Team has increased from 92 at the start of the reporting period, to 102 at the end. The prison has an ACCT policy in place, which was not updated during the reporting period. The aim of the policy is to create a safe and caring environment and recognise individuals at risk. ACCT reports are produced daily and circulated as part of the daily briefing, so that all staff are aware. As part of the ACCT process, all prisoners have a care plan that is updated throughout. Mental health nurses and doctors are required to attend the ACCT case review meeting.

It was not possible to obtain information from healthcare to confirm how many prisoners are being served by the neurodiversity team as we had in the previous year.

6.4 Social care

It was not possible to obtain information from healthcare to confirm how many prisoners are receiving daily or limited social care as we had in the previous year. Healthcare holds regular weekly meetings to discuss vulnerable prisoners, with a view to ensuring their safety.

6.5 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation (DART)

The DART team currently (as at the end of March 2026) supports 261 prisoners, this is an increase of 32% on the previous year.

The team pre-empted an increase in their total caseload of 100 clients and group work has increased to accommodate the increase in the client caseload.

The team continues to provide an Integrated Drug Treatment Service (IDTS) subcontracted to The Forward Trust via the Practice Plus group. The team aims to provide psychosocial support to prisoners with both historic or current drug and/or alcohol issues.

There are health and wellbeing champions to act as positive role models and mentor other service users. In addition, as part of individual care plans, clients are encouraged to set future SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) goals that incorporate improvements to their own physical health and mental wellbeing.

6.6 Wellbeing and community ethos

Over the past year the senior management team has continued with its focus on building community ethos within the prison, led by the Head of Residence. Its focus has been on developing equality and inclusivity; healthy lifestyles; progression within the community; promoting rehabilitative culture; consistent regimes; and a continued focus on embedding the community concessions (CCs) where prisoners can earn positive experiences for their unit and this has encompassed promoting a community feel across the prison. Increased rewards include enhanced meals, the ability to purchase new enrichment equipment for the unit and extra options available through the digital catalogue, amongst other options.

This focus has continued to have a positive impact on increasing positive and decreasing negative behaviour.

Time unlocked each day has been 11.48hrs against a target of 9.5hrs.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education

Education attendance for the year was 80.7% against a target of 80%. This compares positively with 79.8% from the previous year. This was maintained despite the addition of 458 new prisoners and relocation to new buildings within the expanded establishment. In addition, there were 1050 basic skills qualifications and 2680 work skills qualifications completed during the reporting year.

The focus on maths and English courses continued. The following passes were noted:

- Maths entry level passes = 75
- Maths level 1 and 2 passes = 98
- English entry level passes = 98
- English level 1 and 2 passes = 228

The overall achievement rate is 84.9% which is a slight reduction from 2024-25, but the number of passes has significantly increased with the larger population.

The reading initiative has continued, with over 300 individuals completing a three month reading diary submission and over 100 regularly involved in a reading group. 1-2-1 reading support sessions are available with PLI Reading champions. Approximately 500 prisoners use the library each week.

Enrichment activities throughout the prison have an educational element but the following are a taste of those organised through the education and activities team. These include monthly Coventry University seminars, off-unit structured activity four evenings a week, which includes collaborative games, art and study groups, Nottingham Trent university research projects and neurodiversity awareness days.

Following the expansion there have been additional offers of education in IT, art, horticulture, business and additional training opportunities through Assessment and Qualification Alliance (AQA) units on GDPR awareness, research skills and reading support.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Employment levels have remained high, with an employment rate consistently above 95%. A new prisoner pathway booklet has been created to show all the opportunities available to prisoners whilst at Rye Hill and a 'job centre' has been created to manage allocations within the prison and to give prisoners a 'real life' experience in this area.

During 2025:

- 4411 job applications were received
- 701 appointments have been made
- 442 interviews have been conducted by the job centre team
- 4225 feedback letters / talks have taken place
- 1230 CVs and cover letters have been created and provided to prisoners to use

New vocational training has been established to cover forklifts, barbering, bricklaying and plastering. We have been informed there are challenges with external recruitment for staff to facilitate these sessions.

The 'work allocations' process was the subject of a Board thematic review during 2026.

The main reason the Board looked at this is that 12 of the 122 applications received by the Board from prisoners related to work, working conditions and the allocation of roles.

The purpose of the review was to understand how the process works in practice, whether work allocation was conducted fairly and in line with sentence progression. Additionally, the Board had received information from prisoners in Industries One, where hair nets are made for a private contractor, that conditions were difficult.

Our conclusion was that HMP Rye Hill has a work allocation system that is structured, transparent in principle and broadly aligned with the establishment's focus on sentence progression and employability. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the processes in place, and most prisoners spoken to were aware of how to apply for roles, what was expected of them and how their behaviour and risk status influenced the opportunities available. The integration of 'Job Centre' support, skills passports and progression planning reflects a genuine effort to mirror community-based employment practices and to prepare prisoners for suitable work on release.

However, the review also identified areas requiring continued attention. Work that is essential for accommodating higher risk prisoners and those without basic qualifications, presents some challenges. The physical demands of the work, the noise levels, and the lack of protective equipment were raised by prisoners as concerns. However, when brought to the attention of the senior management they stated that their opinion is that these risks are effectively managed. The Board continues to monitor this area and raise issues on its findings.

Additionally, some individuals, particularly those with disabilities, neurodiversity, or limited dexterity, stated entry level roles may be disproportionately difficult, with limited scope for progression if additional support is not effectively implemented. When questioned senior management provided progression data that does not indicate systemic barriers, however the IMB feel that the lived experiences shared by prisoners suggests that closer operational oversight and more tailored interventions may be beneficial.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The OMU has continued with a structure of 'pods' of prison offender managers (POMs) working together with probation officers to support a set group of prisoners. Many of the new prisoners arriving to fill the expansion places had not had a completed offender assessment system (OASys) report. This work was ultimately completed, with over 168 reports being completed. 73 men were transferred to category D prisons during the reporting period having been re-categorised.

One of the thematic reports the Board completed during the reporting year was entitled 'Life sentence prisoners and their experience of progression'. We had identified a concern from some prisoners that support for life sentenced prisoners wasn't as good as that given to other prisoners in the establishment and so the Board wanted to monitor this area in more depth.

The objective of our monitoring was to explore life sentenced prisoners' expectations in relation to how they progress through their sentence and in particular what action they can take to demonstrate they have reduced their risk and how they feel they are prepared for a parole hearing.

Our conclusions were that life sentence prisoners are generally content with the supportive environment and opportunities they are provided with. There were a number of concerns relating to progression to successful parole and the Board felt more could be done in providing regular support from consistent staff, especially where prisoners have

serious underlying issues that are possibly not being dealt with.

This year the prison transitioned to a new offending behaviour programme structure called Building Choices, whilst still delivering the old suite of programmes. There were 158 programme participants, with 145 completing their programme during the reporting year.

7.4 Family contact

Social visits and social video calls have continued to be available. Family days have continued as in previous years. Additional prisoner to prisoner visits have been arranged for those prisoners who do not receive a visit from outside the prison.

The number of visits to the prison is high and has increased in line with the increase in prisoner numbers. The numbers during the reporting year are recorded below:

- Number of social visits - 5993
- Number of social video calls - 5880

7.5 Resettlement planning

There were 84 direct releases during the reporting year, compared with 67 in the previous year. This represents a 25.4% increase on the previous year. 33 of these releases were parole directed and there were 14 onward deportations.

The number of prisoners on Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences increased from 15 to 40 during the expansion of the prison. At the end of the reporting period this number had reduced to 34. Three had been referred to open conditions and one had been released.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	5, (including 2 on induction)
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	4 (including 1 on induction)
Total number of visits to the establishment	154

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	0	5
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	1	5
C	Equality	6	3
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	7	13
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	2	7
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	2	3
F	Food and kitchens	0	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	11	30
H1	Property within the establishment	9	12
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	3	10
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	0	4
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation	5	10
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	5	22
K	Transfers	1	4
L	Miscellaneous	3	8
	Total number of applications	55	136



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