

Chair
Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Leicester
Welford Road
Leicester
LE2 7AJ

MoJ ref: SUB137737

4 September 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP LEICESTER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
1 FEBRUARY 2025 – 31 JANUARY 2026**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Leicester. I am sincerely grateful to you and your colleagues for your continued resilience and commitment in monitoring the prison and capturing your helpful observations, despite the ongoing challenges of Board membership. I hope the situation improves going forward.

It is regrettable that a considerable proportion of prisoners were released from HMP Leicester with no accommodation to go to and that this continues to be a recurring issue. We know that prison leavers who have access to stable accommodation on release are significantly less likely to reoffend than people released homeless. That is why the Government is committed to achieving a significant reduction, by the end of this parliament, in the proportion of people who become homeless on their first night out of prison and are subject to probation supervision.

We will continue investing in Community Accommodation Service (CAS) models for prison leavers at risk of homelessness and HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) has expanded the CAS3 temporary accommodation service across the country. CAS3 currently has 341 bedspaces delivered across the East Midlands Region. Recent data shows that over the past year over 90% of HMP Leicester releases have been released back into Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) council areas. Consequently, CAS3 is currently delivering a further 82 bedspaces in those areas. HMPPS' regional Homelessness Prevention Team (HPT) have established regular fortnightly Sentenced Persons Accommodation Panels with representatives from prison, probation (including CAS3), and all Local Housing Authorities seeking to ensure that no-one moving on from prison or CAS1/2/3 falls through the net in exploring all possible accommodation options. These occur in every region and LLR has such active panels.

Our investment includes integrating digital community accommodation services to make it easier to identify and match individuals to the right housing support and accommodation at the right time. We will also continue to collaborate with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and other Government Departments to develop a strong foundation from which we can collectively get back on track to end homelessness.

At HMP Leicester, a full-time Strategic Housing Specialist (SHS) has been employed to strengthen accommodation outcomes and multi-agency coordination. They have established bi-weekly Local Authority Pre-release panels across the East Midlands to improve the outcomes for people being

released. In addition, they undertake focused engagement with Leicester City council. Due to the specific cohort needs of HMP Leicester the SHS has been working with the Area Executive Director on a 'repeat recall' project, targeting individuals who have entered custody the most frequently over a 12-month period. They are also implementing the renting ready programme, an initiative which offers knowledge and guidance to support maintaining a tenancy on release. Additionally, HMPPS is currently working with partners across the LLR region on the "Project Roofed on Release" programme. This project has been commissioned to review and co-design local working arrangements and consider how to improve processes, communications, and systems to work better for all prison leavers.

Although not directly related to homelessness on release, the significant reforms contained in the Sentencing Act, which received Royal Assent on 22 January 2026, will provide the Courts with options to end the cycle of less serious offenders going in and out of prison. It is envisaged that this will in turn ease the pressures on housing services in the long term.

HMPPS comments in response to issues raised for the attention of the agency are set out in the attached annex. Local issues of concern raised in your report will be addressed by the Governor who will continue to keep you apprised of progress of as work continues.

It was encouraging to receive your comments that the prison continues to be well led by a senior management team that strive to deliver a good service, together with your observations of the many positive interactions between staff and prisoners with an increasingly experienced staff group. I was also very heartened to learn about the improved workshop provision, the establishment of the new resettlement hub, and the continued good work of the Employment Advisory Board including the co-operation with their counterparts at HMP Fosse Way.

The Lord Chancellor and I are deeply appreciative of the important contribution made by Independent Monitoring Boards across the prison estate, and we are sincerely grateful for your continued dedication on behalf of HMP Leicester.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine'.

Catherine McKinnell MP

Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending

HMP LEICESTER: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 1 FEBRUARY 2025 – 31 JANUARY 2026

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Prisoners With Disabilities

Accessible Shower Facilities

HMP Leicester underwent a full shower refurbishment exercise over the course of the last two years. There is a further bid being submitted to ensure accessible shower facilities are provided for wheelchair users and individual care plans are in place to support wheelchair users at present.

Welford Unit Lift Repairs

The Welford lift was repaired in May 2026 but unfortunately broke down again nearly immediately afterwards. All issues were resolved in June 2026 and the lift is now fully operational once again.

Purposeful Activity

Workshop Spaces

To increase purposeful activity spaces, HMP Leicester has enhanced workshop provision by introducing additional capacity across several areas. This includes 16 part-time equivalent places in the Bearing Gifts textiles workshop, 12 part-time equivalent places in the furniture restoration workshop, and a further 16 part-time equivalent places in the planned podcast studio. An additional 23 sessions of Feelgood Friday and Wellbeing Wednesday have been delivered, providing a total of 347 hours of time out of cell that was not previously available prior to the reduction in education provision. These sessions focus on supporting mental health and wellbeing, while also developing employability skills. A further significant increase in time out of cell was achieved through the introduction of new courses and enrichment activities, including Traffic Management, Construction Skills Certification Scheme accreditation, Barista training, and other enrichment and employability-focused sessions.

Education Provision

HMPPS is acutely aware of the critical role that education plays in providing purposeful activity and reducing reoffending and continue to focus on how we can drive the maximum value for money and quality outcomes from the available provision including ensuring that allocations and attendance remain a priority locally and nationally. Many prisons have seen changes in the volume of provision that can be delivered through the Core Education contract from October 2025, despite the national budget for prison education not having reduced.

At HMP Leicester the number of hours provided reduced by 38% from 1st October 2025. This is driven primarily by inflationary pressures across all education services, which impact the proportion of the budget that can be spent through the Core Education contract and because of local commissioning decisions, as some types of delivery are more expensive than others. This applies only to Core Education contracts and does not affect other education services such as libraries, careers advice and guidance, distance learning or vocational training delivered through industries and workshops.