



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Rye Hill
Willoughby
Rugby
CV23 8SZ

MoJ ref: SUB137598

2 September 2026

Dear Chair,

HMP RYE HILL INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

Thank you for submitting your Board's annual report on HMP Rye Hill. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for the time and commitment you continue to dedicate to your independent monitoring role. Your report provides a balanced assessment of the prison, recognising both the positive work taking place and the areas where further progress is needed.

I was saddened to read that eight prisoners died from natural causes during the reporting period and extend my sincere condolences to their families and friends. I appreciate the Board's continued scrutiny of the learning arising from these cases and can assure you that recommendations following deaths in custody are carefully considered to strengthen practice across the prison estate. I was pleased to read that following issues raised in previous annual reports, the Head of Safer Custody at HMP Rye Hill arranged events including a visit from Adrian Usher, Prisons and Probation Ombudsman to talk about their role and the process within the prison estate. I am sure staff found these events very helpful and informative.

I recognise the Board's continuing concern regarding prisoners serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences, particularly following the increase in the number held at HMP Rye Hill after the prison's expansion. The Government remains committed to supporting this cohort to progress safely towards release whilst maintaining public protection. The latest IPP Action Plan, published in July 2026, strengthens frontline delivery by placing greater emphasis on effective sentence planning, specialist support and improving progression opportunities, supported by clear measures to monitor progress. These improvements sit alongside recent legislative reforms which provide a clearer route towards the end of an IPP sentence for those who can safely comply with their licence conditions following release. At HMP Rye Hill, this national approach is complemented by continued work to maximise education and rehabilitative opportunities, helping prisoners engage positively with their sentence plans and prepare for progression.

The Board also asks what more can be done to improve employment opportunities for prisoners convicted of sexual offences. Meaningful education, skills and work remain central to reducing reoffending and preparing prisoners for successful resettlement. While rising delivery costs have affected the volume of education delivered through the new Prison Education Service contracts, the Director continue to shape local curricula to meet the needs of their population. At HMP Rye Hill this has included reviewing the

curriculum following the introduction of the new education contract, alongside plans to increase workshop capacity. Prisoners also continue to benefit from vocational training, careers guidance, library services and digital learning, helping them develop the knowledge and practical skills needed to support employment on release.

It was encouraging to read about the progress made over the past year. The reductions in violence and use of force, together with the continued success of Prisoner Led Initiatives, demonstrate the positive culture that staff and prisoners are continuing to build. I was also pleased to note the prison's ongoing work to support prisoners to progress through recategorisation, reflecting the establishment's commitment to rehabilitation.

I note you have raised two local issues of concern in your report which the Director will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HMPPS comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Lord Chancellor and I sincerely appreciate the important role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards and we extend our thanks for your ongoing commitment on behalf of HMP Rye Hill.

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

Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Access to healthcare

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that people in custody receive timely, safe and clinically appropriate healthcare. NHS England has strengthened oversight of healthcare provision at HMP Rye Hill through its quality and contractual arrangements, requiring the healthcare provider to demonstrate how waiting lists, missed appointments and referral backlogs are being reduced, while ensuring clinically urgent patients are identified and prioritised. This work is already delivering encouraging improvements. During the first quarter of 2026/27, waiting times for GP appointments reduced significantly compared with the previous year. Mental health services are meeting their assessment targets and waiting times for routine dental appointments have also reduced through increased clinical activity.

The prison continues to make full use of its weekly allocation of hospital appointments, with clinical priorities agreed jointly between healthcare staff and hospital providers. Appointments are not cancelled because of regime pressures, and NHS England, the healthcare provider and HMPPS will continue to work together to sustain these improvements and ensure prisoners receive safe and effective healthcare.