



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Five Wells
Millers Park
Doddington Road
Wellingborough, NN8 2NH

MoJ ref: SUB138770

7 October 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP FIVE WELLS INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2025 – 31 MARCH 2026**

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

I was saddened to learn that there were four deaths in custody during the reporting year, my thoughts are with the families and friends of those who died, as well as all those affected. I appreciate the Board's continued scrutiny of these cases and the attention it has given to the learning arising from deaths in custody. I note the recurring themes identified through Prisons and Probation Ombudsman investigations and welcome the work undertaken locally to strengthen procedures and oversight.

I recognise the Board's concerns regarding support for prisoners released without a licence requirement, particularly given the risks associated with the period immediately following release. The Government remains committed to reducing homelessness among prison leavers and strengthening the support available to those returning to the community. Strategic Housing Specialists continue to work with local authorities through pre-release housing panels to secure accommodation for individuals leaving custody, including those released without statutory supervision. Accommodation Commissioned Rehabilitative Services also provide support to individuals at risk of homelessness, helping them secure or maintain accommodation and access emergency housing where necessary. Alongside this, wider support remains available to help address needs relating to wellbeing, substance misuse and resettlement.

I also note the Board's concern regarding the demand for Approved Premises accommodation. While demand continues to exceed supply in some areas, work is ongoing to make the most effective use of available capacity. A national Central Referral Unit now oversees referrals, suitability assessments and placement decisions, helping to improve consistency, responsiveness and occupancy levels across the Approved Premises estate. More broadly, the Government is investing in Community Accommodation Services, supporting people at risk of homelessness on release and helping them transition successfully back into the community.

It was encouraging to receive the Board's recognition of the efforts made by HMP Five Wells to instill improvements. I welcome the significant reductions in violence, self-harm and the use of force, together with the prison's ability to maintain a stable 'green' regime throughout the year. I was also encouraged by the positive impact of initiatives such as Bridges and TRUCE, which have strengthened staff-prisoner relationships and contributed to a safer environment. These outcomes, alongside improvements in staffing stability and purposeful activity, provide a strong foundation on which the prison can continue to build.

I note you have raised five 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 appreciate the efforts of Independent Monitoring Boards members to scrutinise our prisons and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Five Wells.

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

Limited to access to Building Choices Programme

HMPPS continues to review demand for accredited programmes and is currently working with HMP Five Wells to ensure demand data accurately reflects those prisoners who require and are suitable for Building Choices. HMP Five Wells increased delivery capacity by moving to a four-session-per-week model and investing additional resources into higher-intensity Building Choices groups and provision for prisoners with learning difficulties and challenges. Further scrutiny of demand data is underway, and future investment options will continue to be considered should sustained demand be demonstrated.

Suitable spaces to deliver courses and initiatives in key areas such as Mental Health and neurodiversity

The Neurodiversity Sensory and Training Hub at HMP Five Wells has been developed through close collaboration between Healthcare, Neurodiversity and Learning and Skills teams. The hub will support psychoeducation, interventions, outreach activity and wider rehabilitative services, helping to improve support for prisoners with neurodiverse needs across the establishment. The hub will primarily be used by the Neurodiversity Nurse (Mental Health), the Neurodiversity Support Manager, and the Psychology team to deliver psychoeducational sessions and targeted interventions. The facility will also be available to other departments, including Education and Safer Custody, to support a broad range of rehabilitative and wellbeing initiatives.

To further support prisoners with learning difficulties and literacy needs, which form part of our wider neurodiversity strategy, a dedicated Shannon Trust office has been established within the activities area. This provides a suitable space for delivering interventions to vulnerable prisoners and those employed in Industries. In addition, the Education, Training and Careers team will use the space to deliver paired reading interventions, with staff training currently underway. Looking ahead, HMP Five Wells aims to establish a dedicated intervention space on each houseblock. This will help meet the increasing demand for support delivered by the Education, Training and Careers team and the Shannon Trust, while strengthening the prison's reading strategy and improving access to interventions across the establishment.