



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Send

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

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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 Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) 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

His Majesty's Prison (HMP) Send is a closed prison for adult women and transgender prisoners, with no remand prisoners or prisoners sent directly following sentencing. At the end of the reporting year, Send had 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 255¹. The prison had 245 prisoners at the beginning of the reporting year and 236 prisoners at the end. At the end of the year, 91 prisoners were serving life sentences, and one had an imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentence. A total of 5% were aged over 65 years. There were five transgender prisoners and 19 foreign national prisoners. Minority ethnic prisoners represented 24% of the prison population at Send.

Send is the only women's prison to have a democratic therapeutic community (DTC), a specialist unit where prisoners take part in group therapy and support each other to make positive changes and reduce the risk of reoffending. It also offers a preparation psychologically informed planned environment (pre-PIPE) unit and a progression PIPE unit (a residential environment designed to support the progression of prisoners with complex needs and personality-related challenges).

The prison is situated in the Surrey countryside. All wings in use have single cells. Most cells have a shower and a toilet. Ten double cells, currently used for single occupancy in one block, share bathrooms.

Salaries of the prison's staff do not attract the London weighting allowance. This, combined with a lack of public transport to the prison, affects the prison's ability to recruit and retain staff.

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (HMCIP) published a report on the prison on 1 July 2025, following an unannounced inspection from 17 March to 3 April 2025. The Chief Inspector concluded that Send was 'a very good prison'.

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

- The Board observes that management and staff make a great effort to try and ensure the safety of prisoners. Send does not feel like a dangerous place, although some prisoners are evidently concerned about their safety (see section 4).
- Self-harm increased by around 12%, with 661 incidents by 229 prisoners. Twenty-five of those incidents led to hospital admission. This continued an upward trend, following a 20% increase in self-harm in 2024-2025 (see 4.2).
- The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents (used to support prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide) newly opened during the reporting year increased significantly to 294, from 234 noted in our previous report (see 4.2).
- The level of violence remains generally low. There was an increase in assaults against prison staff (20, up from 14 in 2024-2025) and a slight decrease in prisoner-on-prisoner assaults (27, down from 31), although both are still up from 2023-2024 (see 4.3).
- Prison management has made efforts to minimise the use of force. There were 92 use of force incidents in the reporting year, compared with 102 incidents in 2024-2025 (see 4.4).
- The Board has heard reports of an increase in the availability of drugs – both illegal drugs and traded medication – within the prison, and there has been an increase in the number of drug tests confirmed as positive (see 4.5).

Fair and humane treatment

- Prisoners on the enhanced (top) level of the prison's incentives scheme who are not on the incentivised substance free living (ISFL) wing or on D wing (which is reserved for older prisoners) complain that their accommodation is not significantly different from that of other prisoners. The Board accepts that the layout of the prison, and the high proportion of enhanced prisoners, make it challenging to provide dedicated space, but considers that the prison could do more to reward prisoners on enhanced status (see 5.1).
- The prison acknowledges that it is preferable for prisoners to eat in the dining room rather than take food away to their cells, but the level of staffing has meant that this facility has often not been available (see 5.1).
- There has been a large increase in the number of instances in which prisoners have been segregated following an adjudication (a disciplinary hearing when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules). This is reported to be largely because of an increase in drug-related offences. There has also been a marked increase in the use of segregation to maintain good order and discipline, or for the prisoner's own protection (see 5.2).
- Overall, the Board has seen positive relationships between staff and prisoners, who have been observed being treated with respect and compassion (see 5.3).

- During the year, considerably fewer key work sessions took place (2,145; down from 3,433 in 2024-2025). This change is attributed to the decrease in available key workers (62, down from 86 last year) (see 5.3).
- There has been a sustained improvement in the prison's management and scrutiny of discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs). Prisoner feedback suggests that prisoner confidence in the process is increasing (see 5.4).
- Statistics about prisoners with disabilities were not regularly reported, making it difficult to assess whether prisoners with disabilities are being well supported (see 5.4).
- Prisoners' complaints appear to have been handled efficiently and responses were reasonably helpful, but the timeliness of response was worse, with only 72% of complaints answered on time (see 5.7).
- Missing prisoner property on transfer to HMP Send from other prisons remained a major issue. The Board received more applications (prisoners' written representations to the IMB) on this subject than any other. Timely distribution of hand-ins (approved property brought or sent in for prisoners by family and friends) was also a problem (see 5.8).

Health and wellbeing

- The number of applications to the Board, and complaints to the prison, about healthcare reduced this year, supporting our impression that prisoners were generally more satisfied with the healthcare they received than in previous years (see 6.1).
- We are concerned about the lack of a clear strategy for dementia and a co-ordinated approach to supporting prisoners showing signs of the condition (see 6.1).
- Despite the efforts of the prison to encourage healthy lifestyles, our perception is that a significant proportion of the prisoner population exceeds a healthy weight (see 6.1).
- We note the considerable impact that prisoners with severe mental health issues have on prison resources and on other prisoners, and continue to believe that prison is not the right place for them (see 6.3).
- A key concern for us this year has been the increased time that prisoners have spent locked up in cell as a result of restrictions to the regime (the daily routine and activities for prisoners) because of staff shortages (see 6.5).
- A shortage of gym staff, and the availability of operational staff, has frequently led to the cancellation of gym sessions and Parkrun, impacting significantly on prisoners' opportunities for exercise (see 6.5).

Progression and resettlement

- The number of prisoners engaged in education, excluding distance learning, has fallen by 40%. English and Maths Levels 1 and 2 classes have been combined to create mixed-level classes, and key courses for employability, such as business administration, catering and food safety, have been cut. We have been told that these cuts were required because of a significant real-terms reduction in Send's core education budget (see 7.1).
- The Board has observed classes where the prisoners are engaged and tutors are supportive. HMCIP has acknowledged the prison's strong reading strategy (see 7.1).

- A new commercial hair and nail salon opened in January 2026, with educational support from an industry partner (see 7.2).
- There was one Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoner at Send at the end of the reporting year. The Board remains concerned about the continuing impact of these sentences (see 7.3).

3.2 Main areas for development

Some questions have been repeated from the previous report where the underlying issues remain unresolved, to highlight areas where further progress is still needed.

TO THE MINISTER

- While Ministers' initiative on the use of restraints on pregnant prisoners attending hospital is very welcome, will the Government extend this approach to other prisoners, particularly those who are older and disabled? (see 6.2)
- What action will the Government take to address the barriers to the timely transfer of prisoners with severe mental health needs whose care cannot be provided effectively in prison? (see 6.3)
- How will the Government ensure that prisoners continue to have access to the functional skills and employability training they need, given the significant reduction in education provision? (see 7.1)
- When will the Government address the continued detention of IPP prisoners? (see 7.3)

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Will the Prison Service ensure that IMBs are routinely provided with the clinical reviewer's report on deaths in custody where the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) makes recommendations relating to healthcare? (see 4.2)
- When will the Prison Service introduce a clear strategy for managing and supporting the increasing number of prisoners with dementia? (see 6.1)
- What action will the Prison Service take to ensure that adequate funding is available for services supporting prisoners who have experienced domestic abuse? (see 6.3)
- What measures will the Prison Service introduce to ensure that smaller prisons have enough operational staff to maintain the regime when faced with unplanned demands, such as hospital escorts, and when will it address delays in the vetting of new staff? (see 6.5)
- How will the Prison Service address the ongoing difficulties in recruiting gym staff for the women's estate? (see 6.5)
- Will the Prison Service ensure that digital technology is introduced at Send without further delay, both to support prisoners' digital learning and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of prison services? (see 7.1)
- Where there is evidence that programmes, like the Railtrack training programme, help prisoners gain skills for employment, how will the Prison Service ensure they are properly funded and delivered on a regular basis? (see 7.2)
- Prisoner pay rates vary between prisons, particularly between the public and private sectors. What action will the Prison Service take to address these

inconsistencies and ensure a fairer approach to prisoner pay across the estate? (see 7.2)

TO THE GOVERNOR

- What action will be taken to address the reported increase in the availability of drugs within the prison? (see 4.5; 5.2.)
- What steps will be taken to increase the number of key workers and ensure that prisoners receive key work sessions more frequently? (see 5.3)
- When will the prison begin recording data on prisoners with disabilities so that it can assess whether their needs are being met appropriately? (see 5.4)
- What action will be taken to ensure a more co-ordinated approach to identifying and supporting prisoners showing early signs of dementia? (see 6.1)
- What further steps will be taken to address the ongoing shortage of gym staff? (see 6.3)
- What action will be taken to reduce the impact of operational staff shortages on the regime, including frequent reductions in activities and increased time spent in cell, and to address the unequal impact on prisoners on different wings? (see 6.5)
- Will the prison develop an education and skills strategy for kitchens, wing cleaning and recycling, enabling prisoners to gain qualifications and training relevant to those sectors? (see 7.2)

3.3 Response to the last report

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
To the Minister 1. The Board reiterates that the needs of complex individuals with multiple mental health issues are not served well in prison. Such prisoners also take up a disproportionate amount of staff time.	Full responses are in a letter from Minister of State for Justice, dated 27 November 2025 1. I do recognise the Board's concern that prison custody may not be suitable for some women with complex needs. Sentencing guidelines make clear that female offenders are more likely to have underlying mental health needs which can be considered when sentencing. In April 2024, a new mitigating factor was added for 'difficult and/or deprived background or personal circumstances', which includes mental health difficulties and could result in an adjustment to the sentence.	1. There continue to be prisoners at Send who have mental health issues that the prison is not well equipped to manage (see section 6.3).

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
2. The Board continues to believe that the continued detention, and repeated recalls of IPP prisoners for relatively small breaches of licence conditions, is unfair and inhumane.	The Mental Health Act 2025 includes reforms to prevent courts from detaining people with severe mental illness in prison as a place of safety and introduces a new statutory time limit of 28 days for the transfer of patients with a mental disorder from prison and other places of detention to hospital. 2. I am sympathetic to the Board's ongoing concern regarding continued detention, and repeated recalls of IPP sentenced prisoners. We want to ensure that those who are recalled are re-released as soon as it is safe to do so, either via direction by the Parole Board or by officials on behalf of the Secretary of State using the Risk Assessed Recall Review process. The enforcement of the IPP sentence, currently in place, is compatible with our international human rights obligations. The HMPPS Women's Group has developed an IPP Delivery Plan that outlines the collaborative efforts of staff in women's prisons, psychology teams, and Probation Practitioners in the community to support women serving IPP sentences. The plan ensures that interventions are responsive to each women's needs, strengths and capabilities.	2. At the end of the reporting year, there was one IPP prisoner at Send (with another being treated at an NHS hospital) (7.3).
To the Prison Service 1. Consistent volumetric control would help to address problems with property on inter-prison transfers. Many	1. HMPPS notes the Board's concerns about the handling of prisoners' property. Governors and other senior leaders have been reminded of the most important property handling points. This includes the need to ensure compliance with volumetric control	1. This continues to be a significant problem. Complaints about property on transfer was the largest category of prisoner applications to the Board this reporting year (5.8).

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
prisoners report missing property on arrival at Send. 2. Poor communication has led to delays in the provision of medication to newly arrived prisoners. 3. The Board would like to see a policy which states that the use of escort chains for prisoners during intimate medical examinations or confidential consultations outside the prison be the exception rather than the norm. 4. Action is required to	limits, since any property within those limits transfers with prisoners when they move establishments. 2. For those individuals transferring into HMP Send from other establishments, the healthcare provider anticipates arrivals with at least seven days of controlled medication where needed. If controlled medications are not sent, staff contact the sending prison to have them courier this over. For regular medications, the healthcare provider has access to emergency stocks of critical and vital medications with Electronic Prescribing Services active. 3. Wherever possible, it is usual practice for female members of staff to escort women to medical appointments that will involve any intimate examinations. Subject to risk assessment, restraints may be removed during certain medical procedures or examinations. The need for the prisoner's privacy must be considered and documented as part of the risk assessment, particularly where the prisoner is to undergo an intimate examination or procedure. HMPPs has carried out an extensive review of the External Escort Policy Framework to consider the needs of the women's estate, including the development of a bespoke risk assessment for female prisoners and supporting tools to assist staff knowledge and awareness. The revised policy was published on 30 October 2025, with an implementation date of 5 January 2026. 4. HMP Send has made multiple attempts to recruit Physical	2. The Board has received no recent complaints from new arrivals about medication. 3. Risk assessments are made and documented, but it appears to be exceptional for restraints to be removed (6.2). 4. There continues to be a shortage of PEIs at

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
ensure the availability of sufficient gym staff, taking into account the needs of the women's estate.	Education Instructors (PEIs), including through transfer campaigns; however, these efforts have not proved successful. One existing staff member is currently undergoing training to qualify as a PEI. Future campaigns will be strategically marketed to enhance visibility and reach across the wider prison estate, with the aim of attracting a broader pool of suitable candidates.	Send, despite efforts by prison management to attract applicants (6.5).
5. Prisoners need access to digital technology to prepare themselves for re-entry to life in the community.	5. The prison education provision is being overhauled to put a greater emphasis on IT, through the roll out of the Digital Education Platform (DEP) and the new Prisoner Education Service (PES) contracts. HMPPS and the Ministry of Justice have recognised that modernising the digital infrastructure and content is key to expanding IT learning in prisons. Locally, IT provision has increased through the sourcing of laptops for educational use and the expansion of classroom capacity. HMP Send is also working with its education provider to embed digital skills across the curriculum and ensure distance learners are adequately supported.	5. The Board has seen no evidence of significant progress in the provision of digital technology to prisoners at Send (7.1).
6. The Board would like to see longer-term funding for training initiatives - such as the Railtrack training programme (now discontinued) - where needs analysis shows that they provide relevant skills	6. The discontinuation of the Railtrack programme was regrettable, given its alignment with employment needs and employment outcomes. HMPPS is actively exploring alternative vocational pathways that reflect labour market demand and prisoner interest. The hair salon's expansion to include African Caribbean hair training is one example of our commitment to inclusive and relevant skills development. HMPPS continues to seek sustainable funding models to support long-term training initiatives	6. The Railtrack course has been run again, but its future funding is uncertain. Overall, vocational training has been reduced (7.2).

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
for employment in the community. 7. The inconsistency in prisoner pay rates in different prisons, particularly between those in the private and public sector, is unfair and needs to be addressed.	including funding for reinstatement of the Railtrack programme. HMP Send do offer a range of alternative employment options and workshops including The Clink horticulture and gardens project, Waste Management Industry Training (WAMITAB) and Fine Cell. A Rift Self-Employment programme is also available. 7. The Prison Service Order 4460 Prisoners Pay sets out minimum pay rates for work and outlines expectations for purposeful activity, it also recognises that not all activities are automatically paid, and that Governors/directors have the flexibility to determine local policy based on operational priorities and available resources.	7. Pay rates at Send have been increased, but prisoners continue to complain that they are lower than elsewhere and see this as unfair (7.2).
To the Governor 1. The Board is concerned that prisoners have reported that drugs are available on one particular wing. 2. The Board would like to see a differentiation in accommodation for those enhanced prisoners who do not qualify for the ISFL wings.	1. The prison has compiled a Drug Action Plan, which has a multi-agency approach and addresses the three pillars of the national Prison Drugs Strategy: restricting supply, reducing demand and building recovery. 2. Very little differentiation can be made to the buildings as fundamentally all the wings at HMP Send house enhanced prisoners. The ISFL unit is not an enhanced unit; it is a drug recovery unit. Other privileges are offered for enhanced prisoners not currently on the ISFL unit and some also prefer to remain on their current unit rather than move to the ISFL unit. The	1. The Board has continued to receive reports that drugs are available in the prison and have, in fact, become more available in the last reporting year (4.5). 2. A spur on J wing was designated as enhanced, but this has been discontinued. Enhanced prisoners who do not qualify for ISFL or D wing continue to complain that they are disadvantaged (5.1).

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
3. Data reviewed in the diversity and inclusion meetings should include information concerning prisoners with disabilities. 4. The perception of prisoners is that the IP policy is still unfair. 5. The Board would like to see a process in place for healthcare professionals to record why prisoners decline breast screenings. 6. The shortage of gym staff needs to be addressed.	Incentives Policy (IP) does not stipulate that there is enhanced accommodation, and Send does not have any enhanced wings. 3. This has been discussed at Diversity and Inclusion meetings: information on prisoners with disabilities is not circulated, as the available data is regarded to be unreliable as it includes self-reporting. 4. Prisoners were invited to contribute during the consultation period of the current IP Policy and throughout the year in Prison Council meetings and Lammy Forums. The feedback from the population is that they want to see and feel a differentiation between the levels. There is an appeals process that is published and used and any perceived unfairness should be channelled through an appeal. The complaints process is also used for these 'appeals'. 5. The reasons why prisoners decline breast screenings are various. Efforts will continue to be made to maximise take-up. 6. There is a national shortage of Physical Training Instructors (PEI) and recruitment to HMP Send is further hindered due to the high cost of living in the South, limited public transport to the prison and lack of	3. The prison still does not have reliable information on prisoners with disabilities (5.4). 4. It is reported that prisoners consider that the revised Incentives Policy, introduced in February 2025, is fairer (5.6). 5. How to encourage prisoners' take-up of screening has been the subject of discussion at recent Healthcare Review meetings (6.2). 6. The prison has run PEI campaigns for nine months with limited or no success. The target for the gym is three members of staff. At the

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
	London weighting. Other prisons within commutable distances to HMP Send, such as, for example HMP High Down and HMP Downview, both attract the London weighting.	end of the reporting year, it had 1.5, since depleted to 0.5. The prison is offering detached duty and payment plus. The campaigns are being run as a public interest transfer that offers significant financial opportunities but are still not attracting potential candidates. Regional and national help has been sourced (6.5).

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

The Board observes that management and staff at Send make a great effort to try and ensure the safety of prisoners, including those who have complex needs. Send does not feel like a dangerous place, although some prisoners are evidently concerned about their safety.

There appears to have been an increase in the number of prisoners segregated for their own protection (see 5.2) and an increase in the number of prisoners identified as 'non-associates, who need to be kept apart.

Safety data is presented and discussed at the monthly safer custody meeting and an action plan is monitored. In addition, the weekly safety intervention and high risk meetings focus on individuals who require a high level of support.

4.1 Reception and induction

There were 216 arrivals during the reporting year, the same as in 2024-2025, but up on previous years.

The Board met new arrivals as part of its weekly monitoring. We found the induction process to be broadly effective. Reception staff are frequently cross-deployed to other roles, which has meant that sometimes no one is available to fill the induction officer role. The prisoner-led part of the induction process continued to be good, although there was a delay in appointing a replacement when the experienced orderly (a prisoner who takes on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison) changed roles.

The prisoner experience can be affected by arrival time: for example, if prisoners arrived before a bank holiday weekend, induction may have been delayed for several days, contributing to a negative first impression.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

In common with the rest of the women's estate, Send is a prison where prisoners mostly direct violence at themselves rather than others.

Self-harm increased by about 12% this reporting year, following an increase of about 20% in 2024-2025. The total number of incidents was 661 by 229 prisoners, compared with 590 in 2024-2025 and 479 in the previous reporting year. The main triggers reported for self-harm have varied, but the three principal reasons given were mental health, 'no specific reason', and prison rules. Twenty-five self-harm incidents led to hospital admission in the reporting year, an increase from three in 2024-2025.

Across the reporting year, 37% of self-harm incidents were carried out by prolific self-harming prisoners. Behaviour defined as prolific is prisoners who self-harm five or more times a month.

The number of newly opened assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents (used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide) opened during the year increased significantly to 294, up from 234 in 2024-2025 and 158 the previous year.

Prisoners spent a total of 102 nights in an enhanced engagement (EE) cell, which allows prisoners at risk of self-harm to be monitored 24-hours by a prison officer. This was mostly only for a few days, apart from three prisoners who were on EE for between 14 and 16 nights each. From our observations, the Board has been impressed by the compassionate care and support given to these and other complex individuals, who together consumed a great deal of staff and management time.

Sadly, there were two deaths in custody during the reporting year.

In the first case, a prisoner died in hospital, from lung cancer, on 30 November 2025, while on release on temporary licence (ROTL). The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) reported on the death on 23 June 2026. The PPO found no non-clinical issues of concern. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care the prisoner received at HMP Send was of a good standard, but they repeatedly did not attend medical appointments, and healthcare staff did not explore the reasons why. The PPO recommended that the head of healthcare should ensure that a robust system is in place to monitor missed appointments. The prison has an action plan to address this.

The second death occurred on 24 January 2026 in the prison and is subject to an ongoing investigation by the PPO.

The Board considers that IMBs should be shown the clinical reviewer's report on deaths in custody where the PPO makes recommendations relating to healthcare.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Send continues to be a prison where the level of violence is generally low. There was a marginal increase in violence this year, with 47 assaults compared with 45 in 2024-2025. Of these, 20 assaults were against prison staff (up from 14 in 2024-2025) and 27 were prisoner-on-prisoner (down from 31 in 2024-2025).

The prison has continued to use challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs), which are used to address low level poor behaviour before it becomes entrenched or escalates. Forty-six CSIPs were opened, a marginal increase from 42 in 2024-2025. Bullying continues to be the main contributing factor in referrals.

The Board has observed that a number of prisoners choose to self-isolate. During the year, one prisoner appeared to offend repeatedly in order to be segregated from other prisoners.

4.4 Use of force

There were 92 use of force (UoF) incidents, compared with 102 in 2024-2025. Board members observed some of the weekly UoF meetings throughout the reporting year and were satisfied that incidents were appropriately reviewed, with lessons learned and disseminated. From our observations, prison management has worked hard to train new staff to use de-escalation techniques and to minimise the use of force.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The Board has heard reports, both from prison management and from prisoners, of an increase in the availability of drugs – both illegal drugs and traded medication – within the prison this year. The Board has been told that this is a major factor in prisoner bullying and debt, and lies behind many of the assaults. It is thought that

drugs are being brought in during prisoner transfers and by visitors. We understand that additional security measures are being taken to address this. Access to drug detection dogs is limited because this resource is shared with HMP High Down and HMP Downview.

Random mandatory drug testing (MDT), as well as testing based on specific suspicion, has been carried out regularly. The table below shows the data we have been given by the prison for this and the previous reporting year.

	2025-26	2024-25
Number of random MDTs	289	301
Those <u>confirmed</u> as positive	22	5
Number of suspicion drug tests	69	21
Those <u>confirmed</u> as positive	17	7

We note that the number of tests confirmed as positive has increased (see section 5.2).

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Since the incentivised substance free living (ISFL) wing opened in 2023, there have been ongoing problems with electricity supply. Work is underway to provide a mains power supply but, in the meantime, the problem is being overcome by the use of generators, which are noisy and smelly.

ISFL is popular with the prisoners but is largely reserved for those with a history of substance abuse. Some of the prisoners on the enhanced (top) level of the prison's incentives scheme, who are not on ISFL or D wing, have complained to the Board that their accommodation is not significantly different from that of other prisoners and that they do not have access to dedicated areas for association. During the reporting year, a spur on J wing was designated for enhanced prisoners. They were given more freedom to associate on their spur landing but, during times of restricted regime, they were often confined to their cells. This spur is now back in general use. Prison management says that the layout of the prison does not allow for designated association areas or accommodation for enhanced prisoners, who represent around two-thirds of the prison population. The Board accepts that the layout of the prison, and the high proportion of enhanced prisoners, make it difficult to provide dedicated space for enhanced prisoners, but considers that the prison could do more to reward prisoners with this status. (See also sections 5.6 and 6.5.)

Prisoner feedback about the food was generally positive and the addition of fresh produce from the prison gardens is valued by the prisoners. The catering manager states that following new guidelines set out in the Food in Prisons Policy Framework, they are introducing plant-based protein and reducing ultra-processed dishes.

In principle, prisoners can choose whether to eat lunch in the dining hall, on the wing or in their rooms but, due to low staff levels, the opportunity to eat in the dining hall is frequently not available.

Senderella's, the facility within Send for prisoners to purchase both donated and new clothes, was closed for most of the reporting period, and some prisoners struggled to obtain warm clothing at the onset of winter. The service has now been reinstated.

5.2 Segregation

HMP Send does not have a segregation unit. Instead, prisoners who are segregated for disciplinary reasons are held in cellular confinement (CC) within their normal accommodation.

During the reporting year, there were 57 prisoners segregated for a total of 1,119 days. This figure is made up as follows:

- Rule 45 (GOoD: prisoners segregated to maintain good order, discipline or for the prisoner's own protection): 102 days
- Rule 53 (pending adjudication): 14 days
- Rule 55 (CC awarded following an adjudication): 1,003 days.

The table below shows a comparison of the number of incidents of segregation with those supplied to the Board last year.

	Rule 45 (GOoD)	Rule 53 (pending adjudication)	Rule 55 (CC following adjudication)
2025-2026	18	10	80
2024-2025	7	9	47

The Board has been told by the prison that the increase in the number of instances of CC being awarded following adjudication is due to drugs-related offences (see section 4.5).

Over the year, the enhanced engagement cells were occupied for a total of 102 nights, down from 158 in 2024-2025, with no prisoners using the EE cells during the last two months of the reporting year (see section 4.2).

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

As in previous years, the Board has generally observed that prison staff are helpful and caring when interacting with prisoners, and that prisoners are generally treated with respect and compassion.

During the year, the Board received 24 applications (18 in 2024-2025) about problems experienced by prisoners with staff or other prisoners, including bullying. This represented 10% of the total applications in 2025-2026 (8% in 2024-2025). Of these 24 applications, 16 (14 in 2024-2025) related to complaints about members of staff. No trend was identified from these applications. On the very few occasions where prisoners have raised serious complaints to the Board about members of staff, these have been reported to the Deputy Governor

During the year, a total of 2,145 key work sessions took place, significantly down from 3,433 in 2024-2025. The number of key workers was 62, down from 86 in 2024-2025.

The average time from eligibility to key worker allocation was one day (12 days in 2024-2025). The average time from eligibility to the first key worker session was 26 days (28 days in 2024-2025). In other words, key workers were allocated more quickly but still took almost a month to meet with the prisoner.

Some prisoners have told members of the Board that they value their relationship with their key worker, while others say they do not know who their key worker is.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The Board observes that there has been a genuine and sustained commitment from the prison management to addressing issues of equality and diversity.

There were 52 discrimination incident report forms (DIRFs) submitted in the reporting year compared with 48 in 2024-2025 and 60 in 2023-2024). Race was the protected characteristic most frequently identified, accounting for 37% of complaints, followed

by disability and religion/belief, both with 19%. Of the DIRFs submitted, 28% were either partially or fully upheld when investigated.

The monthly diversity and inclusion (D&I) meeting reviews DIRF data, and considers whether there is any statistical evidence of discrimination in respect of race, age and religion. Statistics on prisoners with disabilities are not available at this meeting as, according to management, the data is not captured consistently and would also include neurodiversity data, which in some cases is self-reported and may therefore be unreliable. The lack of reliable data makes it difficult to judge whether the prison is effectively supporting prisoners with different disabilities.

Members of the Board have observed many of the D&I meetings, which are well run and well attended.

The Board has also observed meetings of the monthly DIRF scrutiny panel, which is attended by a small number of prisoners representing some of the protected characteristics. The panel reviews anonymised DIRFs to ensure complaints have been properly investigated and the responses were appropriate.

The Board received three applications about equality, down from five in 2024-2025. We have also conducted regular DIRF checks to ensure compliance with guidelines. Recent feedback suggests that prisoners now have more faith in the DIRF process.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The Board continued to receive positive feedback from prisoners about the support provided by chaplaincy. Some of the chaplaincy team have worked at the prison for many years and one has recently retired after 30 years' service. Chaplains visit all new arrivals and any prisoners in CC or EE.

During the reporting year, an average of 93 prisoners attended weekly faith-related activities, including worship and study groups. This is slightly down on last year. The Board has been assured by the prison that prisoners are entitled to attend these services, and attendance should be prioritised even during periods of tighter regime management.

The chaplaincy team organises structured faith-based educated and non-faith based courses (Making Sense of Forgiveness, Parenting, Living with Loss and Flourish). However, social and creative activities have been put on hold due to the inconsistency of the prison regime over the past six months.

5.6 Incentives schemes

A new incentives policy was introduced in February 2025. Feedback received during the reporting year suggests that prisoners view the new scheme as fairer and more transparent in both its operation and outcomes. However, prisoners who are regularly on the basic (bottom) level, or who receive negative incentives and earned privileges (IEPs), report that it is difficult to achieve enhanced status and easy to be downgraded. Enhanced prisoners on some wings also feel that enhanced status provides insufficient incentive and limited differentiation from other levels (see section 5.1).

5.7 Complaints

During the reporting year, the Board received monthly data from the prison on its performance in responding to prisoner complaints, including a list of any responses overdue by four weeks or more. The Board also carried out regular sampling checks and was broadly satisfied that complaints were being processed and recorded efficiently and that responses were courteous and reasonably helpful. The Board does not have access to the responses to healthcare complaints.

Disappointingly, the timeliness of the prison's response to complaints was worse than last year, with 72% of complaints responded to on time, compared with 80% in 2024-2025. Getting timely responses from other prisons, mainly about property transfer, has been a persistent problem. However, by the end of the reporting year, there were reported to be no significantly overdue responses.

5.8 Property

The Board received a total of 69 applications relating to property (up from 42 in the previous year): 17 (up from 13) relating to property within the prison and 52 (up from 29) relating to property lost or mislaid during transfer, mainly from HMP Bronzefield. Property on transfer was the subject of more applications to the IMB than any other issue, accounting for 21% of all applications. Many prisoners arrived without some of their property; many had to wait a long time for it to arrive; and in some cases their property, including valuables and items of great personal significance, was never found. Complaints referred to the transferring prisons were often subject to considerable delays in receiving a response.

The prison received 73 complaints classed as 'external', directed at other prisons, and 109 internal complaints about property at Send: mainly lost property and delays in accessing hand-ins. During the first part of the year, a significant backlog developed because of staff shortages, and the redeployment of reception staff to other work, with some prisoners waiting up to three months to access their property. The situation improved in early 2026, but it is not clear that the improvement has been sustained.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The Board received 23 applications from prisoners concerning healthcare. These were evenly spread across the reporting year and included four relating to concerns about the health of another prisoner questioning, with applicants questioning whether their needs were being adequately addressed. The percentage of applications to the IMB, relating to healthcare issues, at 9%, is lower than in the last two reporting years. Complaints about healthcare received by the prison, or submitted direct to healthcare, were also down on the previous reporting year. We do not have access to complaints which are sent direct to healthcare, but understand that no trends or areas of particular concern were noted. The reduction in the number of healthcare applications and complaints supports our impression that prisoners are generally more satisfied with the healthcare they have received than in previous years, though there are exceptions.

In all areas of healthcare, practitioners report a negative impact from the frequent, and often, last-minute regime lockdowns. The Forward Trust charity reported that many sessions addressing substance abuse were cancelled, often at short notice, with service users locked in cells. The social care team reported that peer workers were often unable to access service users during lockdowns, causing distress to vulnerable prisoners.

No surveys on obesity have been conducted since 2022, when it was judged that 49.9% of prisoners at Send were obese or morbidly obese. Our observations suggests that a significant proportion of the population still exceeds a healthy weight. Liaison between healthcare, gym and kitchen staff has resulted in improvements to menus, including an increase in fish options and a reduction in fried potatoes. However, extended periods in cells and limited access to the gym make it difficult to support a healthy lifestyle. In our view, information on canteen sheets is inadequate to support healthy choices.

The Traka lockers, installed in 2024 to facilitate the dispensing of in-possession medication, are still not in use. IT issues were ongoing and staff training remained incomplete.

During the reporting year, the Board was concerned to learn that the prison health service is unable to refer dementia patients to outside agencies. The number of prisoners diagnosed with dementia is reported to be less than five, but the prison population is ageing and an increase is likely. This is not just a healthcare issue, and the Board is concerned at the lack of a clear strategy and a co-ordinated approach to supporting individual prisoners showing early signs of dementia.

At the end of the reporting year, four prisoners at Send had diagnosed eating disorders. Again, this is an area in which individuals cannot be referred to external support organisations. We have noted a number of prisoners refusing food and have been broadly satisfied that this is monitored appropriately by the prison.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Waiting lists for GP, dental, podiatry and optician services have remained consistent with NHS wait times experienced by the general public in the community. Physiotherapy wait times lengthened to 17 weeks in 2026, from 11 weeks in 2025.

In the Board's view, healthcare staff and prison management have made efforts to encourage prisoners to engage with screening programmes, although, of the number of women eligible for breast screening, a worrying 50-60% declined a check. There is a low uptake for chlamydia testing and more than 25% prisoners decline bowel screening. Health promotion at wellbeing days, engagement with individuals with lived experience and recruitment of healthcare champions does not appear to have markedly improved the number of prisoners consenting to screening.

Following a death in custody, the healthcare department is monitoring more closely when prisoners fail to attend healthcare appointments (see section 4.2).

In last year's report, we expressed concern about the use of escort chains during intimate examinations and consultations at hospital. While we are satisfied that this is subject to individual risk assessment, chaining still appears to be the usual outcome. We believe that the presumption should be that restraints should be removed during examinations, unless there is a particularly high escape risk, as is the policy for pregnant prisoners.

6.3 Mental health

The team delivering mental health services has expanded during the reporting year, and the prison now has a full-time psychotherapist on staff. New courses have been introduced to address specific needs, including Coping with Trauma and Emotional Eating and (for staff) a study on Understanding the impact of Ethnicity on Therapy.

Approximately 30% of prisoners at Send are involved with the mental health team. Service providers report an increase in the complexity of mental health problems exhibited by prisoners at Send, specifically noting a rise in diagnosed personality disorders. We are aware of several cases this year of prisoners with severe mental health issues. We have been impressed by the care that healthcare and prison staff have taken for these prisoners, both through our observations and discussions with staff. We note the considerable impact that these prisoners have on prison resources and on other prisoners, and we continue to believe that prison is not the right place for them.

The healthcare department also reports an increase in the number of prisoners identified as having attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). While the number of ADHD assessments has risen compared with the previous year, the waiting list remains long. Restricted space and poor sound insulation in residential areas of the prison mean that distressed, traumatised or neurodivergent prisoners cannot always be adequately shielded from noise and disruption, especially at night. One prisoner described to us how triggering this could be.

The Brainkind charity, which had been delivering a seven-day support service for prisoners with acquired brain injuries, ceased working at Send in January 2026, when funding was withdrawn. Services to support prisoners who have suffered domestic abuse ended on 31 March 2026, when the nationwide contract was not renewed. During the reporting year, the domestic abuse service delivered, on average, 80 sessions per month to victims of abuse.

One landing in HMP Send houses prisoners who are engaged with the democratic therapeutic community (DTC). DTC capacity is 20 but only 14 places were filled at the reporting year-end and the DTC landing is shared with other prisoners. The

intensity of the programme and commitment required have resulted in a drop-out rate of about 25%.

Send also hosts a PIPE community, which is divided into preparation PIPE (capacity 10) and progression PIPE (capacity 20). At the start of the reporting year, there were eight prisoners in preparation PIPE and 14 in progression PIPE. Two prisoners completed the preparation course during the reporting year and five completed progression. Applications for places increased steadily over the course of the year.

6.4 Social care

Social care at Send is provided by an external team of five, which is also responsible for other Surrey prisons. The caseload of prisoners requiring support with personal care, occupational therapy and release preparation varied from 20 to 32 across the reporting year. Prisoners who do not qualify for support from the social care team are assigned to prison peer workers (a trained prisoner who provides support to other prisoners). During the reporting year, one or two peer workers supported nine prisoners with care needs. Most of their 'clients' had physical needs. Attempts to recruit additional peer workers have been unsuccessful, because of the nature of the role and issues with security-clearing applicants. Regime restrictions have at times constrained the ability of peer workers to deliver support to vulnerable individuals.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

A key concern for us this year has been the increased time that prisoners have spent locked up in cell as a result of restrictions to the regime because of staff shortages. We acknowledge that prison management has done its best to minimise impact on prisoners, but we have observed frequent cancellation of activities and increased time in cell throughout the reporting year. The impact has been greater on prisoners in the main block and J wing than for those on D wing and the ISFL, who are generally not locked in their cells.

Approximately 25% of the Send population use the prison gym, which is well-equipped and valued by users, although prisoners complain that access to the facilities is much worse than at other prisons. The availability of gym sessions is impacted by the shortage of gym staff and by regime lockdown. Two years ago, there were three full-time staff running the Send gym. Throughout the reporting year, there has been only one full-time physical training (PT) lead, plus one part-time qualified PT instructor. At the end of the reporting year, the full-time PT instructor was due to leave and no replacement had been appointed. Last year, the Board reported on the difficulty of recruiting and retaining gym staff; the situation has deteriorated over the past 12 months. Prison management appears to have done its best to attract applicants, but there seems to be systemic obstacles to attracting and retaining gym staff.

Parkrun, which takes place on Saturday mornings if a PT staff member is on site, attracts a regular group of around 35 runners. This is seen as a good introduction to sport for prisoners who do not visit the gym, but it is only open to enhanced prisoners, and it has often been cancelled because of staff shortages.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

The Board has been told, by both prison staff and prisoners, that the availability of drugs has increased in the prison during the reporting year. The prison has told us

that there has been an increase in the number of drug-related adjudications (see sections 4.5 and 5.2).

The Forward Trust supports prisoners with a history of addiction. The caseload rose slightly during the reporting year from about 130 to 142, representing more than 50% of Send's population.

6.7 Soft skills

There has been a range of positive activities to help support the wellbeing of prisoners. These have included an annual art exhibition, managed by the Watts Gallery, a fine embroidery workshop, a recreational art class and line dancing sessions. The Women's Institute has not operated at Send for some years but was being re-established at the end of the reporting year. The prison has also hosted a number of events featuring inspirational external speakers.

We have frequently observed prisoners doing craft activities in their cells, often on their own initiative.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

Over the reporting year, the Board has spoken to many prisoners who have said how positive they were about courses they were studying and, importantly, how their learning will help them in the future once they are back in the community. When we have observed different classes, prisoners were almost always engaged and tutors supportive and encouraging.

The Board is concerned that there has been a significant reduction in education provision at Send since October 2025. The number of education and vocational skills training courses have been cut and staffing reduced. Course attendance levels since June 2024 have been consistently higher than 80%. Attendance remains high but now the overall number of prisoners in education has reduced. For comparison, 62 prisoners were engaged in learning in August 2025 while only 42 in July 2026.

We have been told that the reduction in provision was required because of changes in the contractual arrangements, which meant that, in effect, Send's core education budget was reduced by over 40%.

Courses, including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), literacy, catering, food safety, and business administration, amongst others, have been cut, and Levels 1 and 2 in both Maths and English classes have been merged. The Board is concerned that mixed-level classes can create barriers to progression. Staffing has reduced to two full-time and seven part-time posts, from a complement of eight full-time and three part-time before the cuts. Staff are no longer able to provide one-to-one support where needed. The Board is concerned about the impact this may have on prisoners with more complex or neurodiverse needs. Last year, we reported on the positive impact on prisoners of the 'celebrating success' events. It is disappointing that these have not taken place this year due to concerns over staff availability.

Distance learning has not been cut: sessions increased from three to five per week in response to the number of learners engaged in higher level learning. Across the reporting year, 20-30 prisoners were completing distance learning courses at any one time, ranging from animal care and creative writing to criminology and business management. Prisoners spoke positively to the Board about their courses and the support received. Some still raised concerns about accessing online education materials and having enough time to complete work in timetabled sessions.

In August 2025, a thematic review of reading strategy was conducted by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP). HMP Send was recognised as one of the nine prisons where inspections identified strong practice.

The librarian resigned in May 2025 and a new one was not appointed until December 2025, with the former librarian attending twice monthly to provide oversight in the interim. Reading initiatives continued, but there were no direct library-led initiatives. The library has been refurbished but there is still no computer system, which impacts skills development for library orderlies as well as resulting in inefficient time management and stock control. Prisoners have raised concerns with the Board about access to the library due to regime disruption.

The Board has repeatedly highlighted the lack of progress in the provision of information and communications technology (ICT) at Send and concludes, again, that the prison is failing to prepare prisoners for life in a digital society. The current tech offer is limited to the use of the digital education platform system, installed on computers in education classrooms. From January 2026, up to ten prisoners were able to use in-cell laptops to complete digital literacy courses and distance learning. However, the Board has been told that this provision is to be withdrawn due to funding constraints.

In previous years, we have urged HMPPS to speed up the plans to implement in-cell technology, but can still see no evidence that anything substantive is likely in the foreseeable future. As a result, prisoners at Send appear to have fewer opportunities than those in many other prisons to develop their digital skills.

The failure to use digital technology in prison processes, such as the handling of applications, also has an impact on prisoners.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Courses with qualifications include horticulture and hairdressing. Prisoners have told the Board that the training they receive in hairdressing is invaluable and that they intend to use their qualifications on release.

A new commercial hair and nail salon was opened in January 2026 for both staff and prisoners. The London salon supporting this venture holds monthly training sessions.

Work areas, including wing cleaning and recycling, do not offer skills training or industry qualifications. The Board believes that these would enhance employability.

There have been a few short courses such as the Railtrack programme which, having stopped after two courses last year, ran another course in March 2026.

With the business administration course closing, there is less administrative work available where prisoners could learn valuable skills for employment. Administrative work in the kitchens has been streamlined from 1.5 full-time jobs to one full-time role. The job holder has been able to develop spreadsheet skills.

Those working in the kitchens do not work towards any qualifications or certificates. The Board would like to see a recognition of skills gained in the kitchens that could help on release. Prisoners have asked us about more varied work opportunities, such as being able to work in the gym and upcycling furniture.

Prisoners have continued to report that pay rates are lower than at other prisons, particularly HMP Bronzefield (a private prison from which many prisoners from Send have been transferred).

7.3 Offender management, progression

Under new rules, prisoners now serve a single extended 56-day fixed-term recall period (FTR56), replacing the previous 14-day and 28-day recall periods. There was minimal impact on new arrivals, and only eight prisoners were released from Send under FTR56.

In previous reports, we have highlighted the injustice of prisoners held on indeterminate for public protection (IPP) sentences many years beyond the tariff set by the courts. By the end of the reporting year, there was one IPP prisoner still at

HMP Send. The Board remains concerned about the continuing impact of these sentences.

Only four prisoners had access to release on temporary licence (ROTL) during the year. This reflects the fact that those categorised as eligible are usually transferred to open prisons.

7.4 Family contact

Family contact remains an important issue for prisoners, with some noting the challenges of maintaining relationships particularly where contact with children has to be facilitated through social workers.

Well-organised family days took place across the year and appear to be valued by prisoners eligible to take part.

Between April 2025 and end of March 2026, four prisoners accessed child resettlement leave (CRL) and four who accessed ROTL for work and maintaining family ties (see section 7.3).

7.5 Resettlement planning

The prison reports that 176 prisoners were released in 2025-2026. Of these, 93.2% had accommodation arranged on release. Twelve were released homeless. Twenty-nine were released to community accommodation service Tier 2 (CAS2) or CAS3 temporary accommodation for those at risk of homelessness, and 37 to approved premises (which provide intensive supervision for those who present a high or very high risk of serious harm). Most of the remainder were released to family or friends, or to private rented accommodation. Thirty-two foreign national prisoners were deported or repatriated.

A work coach from the Department of Work and Pensions, working with the prison employment lead, met with all prisoners due for release. Twenty-four prisoners (16.4%) secured jobs before their release, including ten with Iceland. Other employers included Greene King, Elite (Railtrack) and Thames Water. It is not known whether prisoners continued with their employment on release.

A number of employment fairs, employer presentations and workshops took place over the 12 months, including a self-employment workshop delivered by RIFT Social Enterprise which ran throughout the year.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	353

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	%	Previous reporting year	%
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	17	7%	25	10%
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	14	6%	18	8%
C	Equality	3	1%	5	2%
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	14	6%	9	4%
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	21	9%	21	9%
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	3	1%	11	5%
F	Food and kitchens	4	2%	6	3%
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	23	9%	34	14%
H1	Property within the establishment	17	7%	13	5%
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	52	21%	29	12%
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	3	1%	5	2%
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation	31	13%	20	8%
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	24	10%	18	8%
K	Transfers	3	1%	4	1%
L	Miscellaneous	16	6%	21	9%
	Total number of applications	245		239	

Annex A

Service providers

- Education: Milton Keynes College
- Escort contractor: Serco
- Healthcare and pharmacy: Central and North West London (CNWL) NHS Foundation Trust (with support from other providers for dentistry, optometry, physiotherapy, podiatry and other services)
- Library: Surrey County Council
- Maintenance: Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL)
- Mental health: CNWL NHS Foundation Trust
- Psychology services: Women's Estate Psychology Services (WEPS)
- Resettlement support: the Probation Service and the Commissioned Rehabilitative Services
- Substance misuse programme: The Forward Trust
- Social Care: Surrey County Council
- Visitors' centre: Prisoner advice and care trust (PACT)



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