Ministry of Justice

Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
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Dear Chair,

HMP/YOI NORWICH INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MARCH 2025 – 28 FEBRUARY 2026

Thank you for sharing your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Norwich. I note the challenges the Board has faced with non-availability of members and I really appreciate your continued commitment in monitoring the prison throughout the reporting period to be able to provide the constructive observations provided in your report.

I was saddened to learn that six prisoners died during the reporting year. I offer my sincere condolences to all those affected and my thoughts go to their families and friends at what will undoubtedly have been a difficult time. Whilst the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman investigations remain ongoing in some of these cases I can provide assurance that recommendations are taken very seriously to ensure lessons are learnt.

I fully recognise the Board's request that healthcare provision in prisons must remain safe and effective. People in prison should receive access to healthcare that is equivalent in standard and quality to that available in the community. Although treatment in custody is the responsibility of NHS England and NHS Wales, the Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) are committed to working with health partners. Our shared priorities to improve the quality of health and care outcomes are set out in the National Partnership Agreement on Health and Social Care in England. This was published in February 2023 and has been extended to remain in place until 2027. NHS England continues to strengthen the oversight of healthcare providers through enhanced quality monitoring, scrutiny arrangements and has placed a greater focus on the effectiveness of communication between healthcare and prison staff. The healthcare provider has implemented actions to ensure compliance with prison rules, improved multidisciplinary decision-making and strengthen patient safety arrangements. The progress against these actions will continue to be monitored through established contract management and assurance arrangements to ensure that the high standards of care are maintained. It is acknowledged that some of the Boards concern relates to an instance during the reporting period of prisoners suspected of having tuberculosis. In such events healthcare providers are expected to adhere to NHS England guidance and established infection control procedures. Revised processes have been implemented locally to ensure prisoners will be accommodated in designated areas, allowing for the necessary clinical isolation whilst maintaining access to a restricted regime that supports their wellbeing. In addition, NHS Commissioners had the

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opportunity to visit HMP/YOI Norwich in May 2026 and this evidenced that the prison and the healthcare provider are working in a collaborative manner to ensure that prisoners gain access to the best possible levels of care.

I can also understand the Boards concerns about violence. Reducing the level of violence within prisons in England and Wales is a key priority, but I'm unable to comment on the other jurisdictions in the United Kingdom. HMPPS is aware that young adults in prison are more likely to be involved in violent incidents and they often present with complex needs. Whilst it is not possible to eliminate all risks of harm, efforts continue across a range of measures to address the levels of violence and for the young adult cohort in particular, HMPPS will be strengthening its approach through a new Managing Young Adults in Custody policy framework which will be published next year. In the meantime, prisoners assessed as presenting an elevated risk of violence continue to be supported through a structured case-management approach designed around the individual to address the underlying drivers of their violence to help them manage and move away from violent behaviours. Staff are supported through dedicated violence reduction training to help them better understand how to mitigate and manage these risks, including using the case management model for those at a raised risk of being violent. HMP/YOI Norwich also recognises that the overrepresentation of young adults in violent incidents continues to present challenges and to tackle this the prison is delivering a number of initiatives that support violence reduction, including preparing to introduce accredited offending behaviour programmes with provision that will be targeted specifically towards young adults to help behavioural change to reduce involvement in violence.

It was encouraging to read about the positive impact that the prisons violence reduction landing is having in deterring assaults and gang related incidents, as well the successes in discovering illicit items through targeted searching and intelligence. I was pleased by your comments commending prison staff for their professionalism and compassion with prisoners, particularly those who are new to prison and the efforts to secure donations of suitable seasonal clothing for a prisoner on release. It was interesting to read about the in-house courses to help prisoners increase their employability, the good work of the Resettlement team on release preparations and the work of Ormiston Families to help prisoners stay connected with their families.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor 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 recognise the important contribution that members of Independent Monitoring Boards provide across the estate and we extend our thanks for your continued dedication on behalf of HMP/YOI Norwich.



Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending

HMP/YOI NORWICH INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MARCH 2025 – 28 FEBRUARY 2026

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Education Budget

While there has been no reduction in the overall national prison education budget which increased for 2025-26 financial year, unfortunately the budget has not been able to keep pace with the significant cost rises in recent years for delivering high-quality education. As part of the new Prisoner Education Service that was introduced in October 2025 a revised funding formula was applied to ensure fair allocation based on prison population and regional cost differences. As a result, HMP/YOI Norwich has seen its Core Education delivery volume reduce by 8% and HMPPS has published transparency data of how each prison has been affected. However, this reduction applied only to Core Education contracts and prisoners still have access to a wider offer, including vocational training via industries and workshops, library services, careers advice, and further or higher education through distance learning. It remains the case that prisons plan their own curriculum based on a careful analysis of their population's learning needs and the Prison Education Dynamic Purchasing System remains available for Governors to commission provision for their local prisoner cohort. It is acknowledged that Education plays a critical role in providing purposeful activity that helps in rehabilitation, employability and reducing reoffending. As part of the funding changes, HMPPS is investing in digital infrastructure, new assessment tools, and specialist staff to ensure that every pound spent delivers the greatest possible impact for learners at the right time during custody. This ensures there are clearer expectations for screening and assessment to support learners needs, expanded access to secure online education content, and improved tracking of learners' progress as they move around the estate which avoids the need for repeat assessments. In addition, a full evaluation of the Prisoner Education Service is underway to assess the impact of the education provision on prisoner progress and rehabilitation outcomes to inform future policy and commissioning decisions.

Care and Separation Unit

It is acknowledged that the Care and Separation Unit at HMP/YOI Norwich is old, poorly designed and will require significant capital investment in due course. The Board's ongoing frustrations about the conditions within the Unit are recognised, but investment in the prison estate is underpinned by condition survey data, which has assessed the fabric, cells, and critical assets at each prison to inform future maintenance. Demands for maintenance across the large and ageing prison estate are much greater than the available funding and HMPPS must very carefully prioritise works to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency. While there are currently no funded plans for major capital improvements to the Care and Separation Unit at HMP/YOI Norwich, the Prison Group Director and Governor remain committed to identifying any opportunities within their limited funding to make local improvements.

Launchpad

HMPPS continues to develop digital capabilities where funding allows as the benefits that prisoner-facing technologies, such as Launchpad, can provide for both staff and prisoners in reducing reliance on paper-based processes and improving efficiency are recognised. However, at present there is limited scope to invest further in prisoner-facing technology due to the wider

HMPPS spending pressures. For this reason, HMPPS is not currently able to commit to implementation of Launchpad at HMP/YOI Norwich or extending this system to other prisons at this time.