Ministry of Justice

Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
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Dear Chair,

HMP NOTTINGHAM: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MARCH 2025 – 28 FEBRUARY 2026

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Nottingham. I am very grateful to you and your colleagues for your resilience and dedication in monitoring and capturing your helpful observations, particularly as you operated with little over one third of the recommended complement of members. I hope the situation improves forthwith.

I was saddened to hear six prisoners died during the reporting year, one of which was apparently self-inflicted and two within 14 days of release. I offer my condolences to their friends, family, and all those affected. Whilst all deaths in our care are tragic, it was reassuring to note the consistent use of Code Blue calling following a Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) report and is evidence that recommendations made by the PPO are always taken very seriously.

It is regrettable that secure mental health spaces and prisoners requiring transfers to these facilities continues to be an issue. NHS England now has a national Mental Health and Justice Strategic Advisory Group that reports directly to parliament, and focuses on meeting the requirements of the Mental Health Act Bill including the 28-day transfer timescales from prison to adult secure mental health facilities. Mental Health Provider Collaboratives for the Midlands have newly developed strategic and operational action plans to accelerate both prison transfers, which includes remodelling of beds/bed capacity and care pathways, and also the procurement of additional beds. These actions are reviewed contractually by specialist teams within NHS England and progress reported to the national group routinely.

I appreciate your concerns about investment in probation and resettlement programmes. The Government recently published its Homelessness Strategy and committed to achieving a 50% 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. To enable this, HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) will continue investing in Community Accommodation Service models for prison leavers at risk of homelessness together with 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.

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The new Community Support contracts for men also remain on course to commence in Summer 2027. Staff working on the new contracts will support people with the transition from custody to community by attending pre-release meetings, having handover meetings between prison-based staff and community providers, and offer a meet-at-the-gate service for a proportion of vulnerable service users. We will also continue to collaborate with colleagues in the Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Government and Other Government Departments to develop a strong foundation from which we can collectively get back on track to end homelessness and support released prisoners' reintegration into society.

We recognise the challenges presented by an ageing prison population and that is why the Ministry of Justice is developing an Older People's Strategy in response to recommendations from the Independent Sentencing Review and the Chief Medical Officer for England's report, The Health of People in Prison, on Probation and in the Secure NHS Estate in England. One of the Strategy's four core chapters focuses on the suitability of the prison estate and is considering how accommodation, accessibility and the wider prison environment can better support older people in custody, including those with disabilities, mobility issues, dementia, frailty and social care needs. Regarding compassionate release policy, The Secretary of State has the power to grant release on compassionate grounds where exceptional circumstances exist, but public protection remains the overriding consideration and any release must be supported by evidence that the individual can be safely managed in the community. Compassionate release is, therefore, reserved for exceptional cases and where these circumstances are evidenced. Alongside this, work is underway to strengthen understanding of the Early Release on Compassionate Grounds process across HMPPS and to streamline the associated processes where appropriate, so that eligible cases are identified, considered, and progressed efficiently.

I note that your report has raised several matters for the attention of HMPPS and responses to those issues are set out in the attached annex. Issues raised for the attention of the Governor will be addressed locally who will continue to keep you aware of progress as work continues.

Whilst there are numerous issues to be resolved at HMP Nottingham, it was reassuring to hear the prison has a strategy to counter self-harm, drugs, debt and boredom. A significant reduction in self-harm figures ought to be commended and staff should be proud of their high-quality intervention work.

The Lord Chancellor and I sincerely appreciate and value the scrutiny brought by Independent Monitoring Boards across the estate and we are grateful for your continued hard work and commitment on behalf of HMP Nottingham.



Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending

HMP NOTTINGHAM: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MARCH 2025 – 28 FEBRUARY 2026

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Mental Health Assessments and Transfers

HMPPS and NHS England understand the need for quicker assessments and prompt transfers to appropriate hospital accommodation where required. Increased dedicated Mental Health practitioner support has been introduced two days per week on site to strengthen referral management, waiting list oversight, triaging, and implementation of the Mental Health Pathway. The healthcare provider will be fully embedding the pathway to improve referral quality, clinical prioritisation, and access to specialist mental health services.

Mental Health staff and prison Safer Custody teams continue to work closely together through shared risk management processes, joint reviews, and improved ACCT integration to identify concerns earlier, prevent crises where possible, and ensure prisoners with the most complex mental health needs receive appropriate support and escalation. Additionally, the Midlands Health and Justice Commissioning team continue to chair a fortnightly call with the commissioners and providers of secure mental health services to discuss and support the timely assessment and transfer of prisoners. However, the availability of suitable beds remains a significant constraining factor.

Prisoner Churn

HMP Nottingham's role as a reception prison means that a high level of population churn is unavoidable at current population levels. Frequent transfers to other prisons are necessary to maintain sufficient capacity to receive new prisoners from court as well as prisoners on recall. HMPPS continues to manage prisoner movements as efficiently as possible through national allocation processes, working with prisons and regional teams to ensure prisoners are held in the most appropriate establishment to get the help they need to manage their risks. Allocation decisions take account of individual prisoners' needs and circumstances, alongside security requirements, available services and wider population pressures. Education provision across the prison estate means that, where prisoners are transferred, most are able to continue their education courses at their receiving prison.

Late Receptions

HMPPS recognises the impact that cancelled or delayed transfers can have on prison population management and individual prisoners. Regrettably, transport cancellations are sometimes unavoidable and can arise for a variety of operational reasons. These may include changes in operational priorities, prison readiness, healthcare requirements, security considerations, bedspace availability, court-related demands, and transport resource allocation. Contractors will endeavour to keep establishments updated and informed, particularly in circumstances where transport may need to be re-directed or cancelled.

HMPPS' dedicated Population Management Unit will continue to work with Prisoner Escorting and Custody Services (PECS) to realign out-of-area prisoners to the appropriate reception prison where operationally possible.

Prisoners' Property

HMPPS fully recognises the importance of prisoners' property and are committed to ensuring it is managed with care and respect. Unfortunately, the current property functionality within the National Offender Management Information System continues to present limitations. While a digital replacement has been considered, it is not currently prioritised, with development capacity focused on higher-risk operational systems.

Separately, HMPPS has considered carefully the IMB national thematic report on the impact of property loss on prisoners, and the thematic review by Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations of the property complaints they have received over the last five years. In considering the reports, consultation with prison staff took place on the issues raised. A revised version of the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework was published on 17 November 2025 and includes additional guidance on the sending on of excess property, the handling of prisoners' laundry and on the correct completion of the cell clearance certificate, as these have been identified as common areas of difficulty. Compliance with volumetric control remains of key importance, since property within those limits (as well as certain items, such as legal papers, which are exempt from the limits) will be moved with prisoners when they transfer to other establishments. HMPPS remains committed to improving the management of prisoners' property and considers possible areas for improvement on an ongoing basis.