Ministry of Justice

Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
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Dear Chair,

HMP COLDINGLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 AUGUST 2025 – 31 JULY 2026

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Coldingley. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for the commitment you have shown and your helpful observations on the current state of the prison, despite your membership reducing during the reporting period.

I fully understand why the Board continues to have concerns about the lack of in-cell sanitation on the older wings at the prison. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) recognises the importance of providing decent accommodation and it was unfortunate that the original contractor of the project went into administration which has caused delays to this project and many others across the estate. The installation of the in-cell sanitation at HMP Coldingley forms part of a substantial programme of investment on C Wing, which includes fire safety improvements, window replacements, cell call upgrades and replacement of the district heating main and electrical rewiring. The project is progressing through development and an indicative timescale is that work should commence on the in-cell sanitation element in Spring 2027. In-cell sanitation works in A and D wings are expected to follow after the completion of the C Wing refurbishment. Owing to the number of variables involved, I am unable to provide any timescales for A and D wings works at present, and all programme dates remain indicative and may be adjusted as the detailed design is developed and delivery progresses.

I also recognise the pressure that prisoner population churn can place on prisons and staff. Reforms introduced in the Sentencing Act were necessary to ensure that prisons could continue to serve the courts, operate safely within the available capacity and to help put the prison system on a sustainable footing. However, it is recognised that these sentencing changes, together with the wider population pressures, have increased movements across the estate. The Board can be assured that HMPPS continues to monitor the prisoner population closely through data and engagement with operational leaders to better understand and mitigate any adverse impacts wherever possible. This engagement has led to a reduction in HMP Coldingley receiving prisoners outside of its usual catchment area which had been particularly de-stabilising during this reporting period. HMPPS anticipates that there will be greater opportunities to support planned progression as population pressures ease following the sentencing reforms, which will enable prisoners to better access to the employment, education and development they need. In

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addition, to ensure that the right services for rehabilitation are provided to the right people, at the right time HMPPS is developing a core offer to provide agency clarity on who benefits best from what offer and this work will be kept under constant review so that it is in line with the available evidence to meet these rehabilitative needs.

I recognise that delays and cancellations to parole hearings will be disappointing for prisoners given the influence these have on their progression or release. However, it is important to note that public protection is the overriding priority for the independent Parole Board and they will only adjourn a case where this is necessary to ensure they have the information needed to make a fully informed decision about whether an individual can be safely managed in the community. The Parole Board continues to use its prioritisation frameworks for listing both paper and oral hearings and through the Parole System Oversight Group, work is taking place to improve efficiency in the system and the timeliness of decisions to ensure prisoners are not held in custody any longer than necessary. New reasons for adjournments and deferrals are being implemented to provide a better understanding of the reasons cases do not go ahead to increase accountability. Cases are also being actively reviewed prior to their oral hearing date to minimise outstanding directions with regular reviews of aged cases to ensure the right evidence and reports are provided to ensure the next oral hearing is effective. In addition, the Parole Board holds regular engagement events to enable prisons and prisoners to have a better understanding of the parole process and given the Boards concerns, the Parole Board will contact HMP Coldingley about a visit as a priority.

Whilst there is still work to do, to tackle incidents of violence there have been changes to how the prison supervises hotspot areas with increased staff patrols and camera coverage. A new Safety team is also in the process of being recruited to make further improvements in the coming year. It was reassuring to read that the improved staffing has led to greater time out of cell and has allowed good working relationships to be developed with prisoners. I was encouraged by the positive feedback from prisoners about healthcare services and the improvements that have been made to healthcare staffing. It was pleasing to note that there have been improvements in the cleanliness of the prison with some work opportunities for prisoners to paint the wings to improve the environment. I also welcome the increase in the number of prisoners that have employment and accommodation to go to on release.

I note you have raised two 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 continue to appreciate the contribution of Independent Monitoring Board members in improving our prisons and we remain incredibly grateful for your hard work on behalf of HMP Coldingley.



Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending

HMP COLDINGLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 AUGUST 2025 – 31 JULY 2026

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Illicit Items

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) recognises the threats that illicit items pose and is committed to tackling the conveyance into prisons. Effective prison security is a prerequisite for safe, stable and rehabilitative regimes and in recent years the use of specialist staff and equipment has been expanded to support prisons to tackle the smuggling of contraband which can fuel violence and create instability. It is acknowledged that the evaluation following the conclusion of the Security Investment Programme that implemented airport-style Enhanced Gate Security reported that staff found that it successfully prevents the ingress of illicit items when it is used consistently and it is perceived to deter illicit items being brought into prisons. However, airport-style Enhanced Gate Security currently operates in only 58 prisons and drugs can enter prisons through multiple routes with the threat to security constantly evolving, which is why HMPPS must also shift and adapt to keep pace and cannot publish all its counter measures as this would undermine security. However, in June 2026 the Government committed to a further £35 million to improve counter drone security and work is continuing with law enforcement agencies and on researching suitable technologies.

HMP Coldingley is making progress locally with increased searching and staff visibility, alongside physical improvements such as window meshes and CCTV. The extensive support from the Dedicated Searching Team has found record amounts of phones and drugs. Random mandatory drug testing also resumed in April 2025, with positive rates averaging 43% in the first six months which has steadily reduced to average 30% in the last six months to October 2026. To support those that wish to live drug free, significant improvements have been made to the Incentivised Substance Free Living Unit and it is encouraging that prisoners have informed the Board of its successes and the positive environment it provides. In addition, the prison is also exploring a new initiative to tackle the most prolific drug users by creating a dedicated unit, as well as further suspicion testing and moving suspected dealers to identify and disrupt drug use.

Accredited Offending Behaviour Programmes

HMPPS recognises the frustration caused by the delayed delivery of the Building Choices offending behaviour programme (OBP). OBP funding was able to be provided to HMP Coldingley through decommissioning accredited interventions at another site. However, implementation has taken longer than initially expected as we need to ensure appropriate and fully trained staff are in place to allow effective programme delivery to begin. Progress is being made with a Programmes Manager, Specialist Treatment Manager and Psychology staff in post. Once the programme facilitators have undergone vetting and have successfully completed national training, programme delivery will commence which is anticipated to now be in 2027.

Prisoners' Property

The frustrations caused when property is delayed, damaged or lost during transfer are recognised. As an update to the previous response, the consideration given to the IMB national thematic report, the thematic review by Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations and the consultation undertaken with prison staff, resulted in a revised version of the Prisoners' Property Policy Framework being published on 17 November 2025. This update has provided additional guidance on common areas of difficulty that were identified, such as sending on of excess

property, the handling of prisoners' laundry and on the correct completion of the cell clearance certificate. It is encouraging that there has been a reduction in the number of property applications raised with Board and particularly an improvement in handling of property locally. However, there is more to do and HMPPS remains committed to strengthening the management of prisoners' property to ensure that belongings are managed with care and respect and considers areas for improvement on an ongoing basis. Compliance with volumetric control will remain of key importance as this will ensure that property within those limits will be moved with prisoners when they transfer to another prison.