



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

Action Plan: HMP Swaleside

Action Plan Submitted: 17 April 2026

A Response to the HMIP Inspection: 01-11 December 2025

Report Published: 19 March 2026

## INTRODUCTION

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and HM Inspectorate of Probation for England and Wales are independent inspectorates which provide scrutiny of the conditions for, and treatment of prisoners and offenders. They report their findings for prisons, Young Offender Institutions, and effectiveness of the work of probation, and youth offending services across England and Wales to Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). In response to the report HMPPS / MoJ are required to draft a robust and timely action plan to address the priority and key concerns. Action plans provide specific steps and actions to address the priority and key concerns, that are clear, outcome focussed, measurable, achievable, and relevant with the owner and timescale of each step clearly identified. Action plans are sent to HMIP and published on the GOV.UK website. Progress against the implementation and delivery of the action plans will also be monitored and reported on.



## ACTION PLAN: HMIP REPORT

### ESTABLISHMENT: HMP SWALESIDE

1. Rec No	2. Concerns	3. Response Action Taken/Planned	4. Responsible Owner	5. Target Date
<b>Priority concerns</b>				
1	<b>Violence was very high, and many prisoners told us they felt unsafe.</b> There were insufficient consequences for poor behaviour and not enough was done to incentivise men to behave well.	<p>Two Safety floorwalkers have been appointed to increase staff knowledge, confidence and capability to improve the way vulnerable and violent prisoners are managed.</p> <p>The Safety Strategy has been reviewed, published and promoted across the establishment.</p> <p>The Safety Strategy will be embedded and outcomes monitored via the monthly tripartite meeting between Security, Safety and Drug Strategy as well as the local Safety action plan.</p> <p>A review will be undertaken of the gangs policy and opportunities considered for multi-agency support in developing a Gangs Intelligence Unit.</p> <p>The use of Challenge, Support and Intervention Plans will be improved to support violent prisoners.</p> <p>To tackle challenging behaviour, there has been a renewed focus on the adjudication process with further adjudication sessions now scheduled.</p> <p>A local incentives policy has been implemented to reward and incentivise positive behaviour as well as challenge acts of vandalism and poor behaviour.</p>	<p>Prison Group Director</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>September 2026</p> <p>July 2026</p> <p>June 2026</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
2	<b>The supply of illicit drugs was a significant threat to the prison.</b> Use of illicit substances was very high.	An additional 14 staff in key tactical roles will be appointed to bolster safety and security. This will include Dedicated Search Team Officers who will deliver a programme of searching to reduce the prevalence of weapons and other illicit items; General Purpose Dog Handlers who will provide support to security and stability; and Local Response Team (LRT) Specialist Officers who can intervene to end violent incidents.	Governor/Prison Group Director	December 2026



		<p>There will be a proactive and assertive posture that prevents and disrupts contraband ingress, particularly via drones, through enhanced intelligence, operational capability and partnership working.</p> <p>Safety and Security analysts are now co-located to strengthen intelligence sharing, coordination and delivery to effectively reduce the supply and demand of illicit substances.</p> <p>The installation of temporary window grilles has been completed where they were broken or missing, with further physical security measures in design to be delivered to prevent drone incursions, subject to funding allocations, including more robust grilles and wire/netting.</p> <p>Staff have been briefed and guidance has been issued on the role of Healthcare and operational staff during the supervision of medication issue to minimise the risk of diversion.</p> <p>A tripartite review of the 'Under the Influence' policy has been undertaken and the updated policy published.</p> <p>The 'Under the Influence' policy will be embedded to ensure that substance related incidents are identified, managed and reduced effectively.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>MOJ Property</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>September 2026</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>January 2027</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>September 2026</p>
3	<b>There was no coherent strategy to reduce the consistently high levels of self-harm.</b>	<p>Two safety floorwalkers have been appointed to increase staff knowledge, confidence and capability to improve the way vulnerable and violent prisoners are managed.</p> <p>The Safety Strategy will be embedded and outcomes monitored via the monthly tripartite meeting between Security, Safety and Drug Strategy as well as the local Safety action plan.</p> <p>Recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman have been reviewed and implemented to strengthen organisational accountability around self-harm.</p> <p>An additional two gated cells, including in the Care, Separation and Reintegration Unit (CSRU) will be provided to enable improved interaction, observation and support for prisoners under constant supervision.</p>	<p>Prison Group Director</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>MOJ Property</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>September 2026</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>July 2026</p>



4	<p><b>Time out of cell was wholly insufficient and did not give prisoners sufficient time to complete daily tasks, such as showering and outdoor exercise.</b> Poor regime reliability impacted on prisoners' attendance at work, education and health care appointments.</p>	<p>HMP Swaleside remains a priority site for recruitment at all grades and a resource management plan has been implemented to help recruit and retain other staff including Operational Support Grades and middle managers. Ongoing interventions include level transfers from other prisons, an alumni scheme returning former staff and First Deployment officers commencing their service at HMP Swaleside prior to duties elsewhere.</p> <p>The regime will continue to be revised through local engagement to ensure consistent delivery and access to purposeful activity, consistent with safety and security.</p>	<p>People &amp; Capability</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>May 2026</p> <p>September 2026</p>
5	<p><b>Leaders had not tackled prisoners' low and declining attendance at activities, reduced the number of prisoners who were unemployed or raised prisoners' interest and engagement in education, skills and work.</b> The allocations process was ineffective, and there were insufficient activity spaces for the substantial number of prisoners classified as a high security risk for workplaces.</p>	<p>An attendance and allocations plan has been introduced to improve participation across all activities and healthcare appointments at the prison.</p> <p>A robust assurance framework has been implemented to support new regime delivery, identify issues and drive improvements.</p> <p>A local incentives policy has been implemented to reward and incentivise positive behaviour as well as challenge acts of vandalism and poor behaviour.</p> <p>An improved process will be implemented to ensure that risk assessments for prisoners are completed to allow a smoother and more efficient allocation into purposeful activity.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>July 2026</p>
6	<p><b>There were not enough opportunities for prisoners to demonstrate a reduction in risk and progress in their sentence.</b> Too little structured offending behaviour work took place to challenge and address prisoners' attitudes, thinking and behaviour robustly. There were no accredited interventions for PCoSOs. Category C transfers took too long, and some would be released without the specific interventions they needed.</p>	<p>To reduce regime impact and meet treatment and public protection needs, prisoners convicted of sexual offences will be removed from the establishment when Long Term and High Security Estate capacity and configuration allow. Prisoners will be relocated to establishments better aligned with their risk profiles and rehabilitative needs.</p> <p>A recruitment and retention plan is in place for Probation Officer and Probation Service Officer staffing within the Kent Surrey Sussex Probation region; to support the staffing within regional prisons to prioritise public protection provision. This will include a new national marketing campaign and twice-yearly campaigns to recruit onto the probation qualification pipeline.</p>	<p>Prison Group Director</p> <p>Regional Probation Director Kent, Surrey &amp; Sussex</p>	<p>January 2027</p> <p>Completed</p>
<p><b>Key concerns</b></p>				



7	<p><b>Early days arrangements were unsafe.</b> In 2025, six different prisoners had been assaulted or stabbed on their first night.</p>	<p>A revised safety strategy and gang management plan has been launched to target current high levels of violence, reduce the impact of debt, tackle the illicit economy and improve safety during prisoners' early days in custody.</p> <p>There will be enhanced oversight by Safety and Security departments of new prisoners being transferred to the establishment. Custodial Capacity will be consulted with any concerns raised to ensure allocations are suitable.</p> <p>Safety interviews undertaken during the induction process will be summarised on electronic case notes, ensuring timely information sharing to support prisoner safety.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>July 2026</p> <p>July 2026</p>
8	<p><b>Levels of use of force were high, and oversight and governance was weak.</b> Scrutiny of high-level interventions lacked rigour, and nearly half of staff did not have up-to-date training.</p>	<p>An interim Use of Force Coordinator has been appointed, pending permanent recruitment, to oversee governance of the use of force. This includes improvements in control and incident management, the implementation of a revised scrutiny meeting and the reintroduction of strategic Use of Force Meetings.</p> <p>A full review of use of force assurance will be completed by the Operational Resilience and Response Unit (ORRU) to improve practices and provide better oversight.</p> <p>A monthly training meeting has been established which includes a forecast and schedule of ongoing training targets and needs, ensuring staff consistently receive the appropriate training required.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Operational Response and Resilience Unit</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>May 2026</p> <p>Completed</p>
9	<p><b>There was a lack of order and control.</b> Staff did not have sufficient confidence in challenging poor behaviour and lacked control on residential units at key times, such as the serving of meals and lock-up.</p>	<p>HMP Swaleside have prioritised the delivery of mandatory safety-critical training to reduce the back log that was present at the time of inspection.</p> <p>A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) has been complete. The TNA draws on inspection findings, Safety Strategy priorities, staff confidence data, and functional input to provide a clear assessment of current capability gaps.</p> <p>A structured two-year Learning &amp; Development Plan will be implemented, integrating mandatory training with targeted development to strengthen frontline competence, confidence and sustainability of improvement.</p>	<p>The Governor</p> <p>Improvement Support Group</p> <p>Improvement Support Group</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>March 2028</p>



		<p>A Senior Leadership development programme has been commissioned to foster a positive and supportive environment and to develop the capability and leadership of Senior Leaders. It will also introduce and embed a culture of psychological safety. This has begun and will be ongoing for a 12-month period.</p> <p>Incident management professional development will be supported through delivery of cold debriefs.</p> <p>A review of bronze commander training has been undertaken to ensure operational managers are trained.</p> <p>The governor has increased visible leadership by managers at key regime points such as movement times to support delivery and improve staff confidence. Governance is being provided via the local assurance framework, national audits and external inspections.</p> <p>A Senior Leadership Strategy will be developed and embedded, encompassing visibility to support delivery and improve staff confidence.</p>	<p>People &amp; Capability</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>January 2027</p> <p>July 2026</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>September 2026</p>
10	<p><b>Leaders had not promoted fair treatment, and the culture did not enable or nurture an inclusive ethos.</b> The lack of consultation and data interrogation left leaders poorly sighted on the experiences of those prisoners from minority groups.</p>	<p>The Governor had commissioned a Climate Assessment prior to the inspection to understand the lived experience of staff and inform local leadership decisions on workplace culture. This assessment has now been completed, and work is underway to act on the findings and implement identified actions to improve staff experience and culture.</p> <p>An effective Communication Strategy will be developed and embedded to ensure consistent and accessible communication for all.</p> <p>Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms are now permanently available on all wings and are replenished daily Monday to Friday. These deliveries are recorded in the wing diaries by the Business Hub.</p> <p>The new Head of Equalities will monitor trends, investigate findings and outcomes to allow improved evidence-based decisions and address any disproportionality. This will be supported by the introduction of a revised Equalities meeting agenda and monthly Equalities Performance Meetings.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>September 2026</p> <p>September 2026</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>July 2026</p>



		The structure of Prisoner Consultative Meetings has been revised and improved to ensure wider representation. These will be implemented alongside a scheduled programme of Equalities Forums.	Governor	September 2026
11	<b>Clinical oversight of key risks was insufficient.</b> Wound care did not meet expected guidelines, secondary dispensing was taking place and there was a lack of clinical oversight into cancelled hospital appointments.	<p>A review has been undertaken of those prisoners on supervised medication to improve safety, compliance and wellbeing, ensuring appropriate management and alignment with clinical and operational standards.</p> <p>A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed to formalise safe medication dispensing and administration processes, supported by improved secure storage.</p> <p>In possession medication risk assessments for all prisoners have been reviewed.</p> <p>Wound care processes have been enhanced using digital photography and body mapping on SystmOne to accurately record wound size, grade and location.</p> <p>Wound care will be added to the healthcare training needs analysis, and targeted training will be delivered to ensure staff are fully competent and confident in applying the required clinical guidelines.</p> <p>The Primary Care Lead and Head of Healthcare has introduced a process to review the wound care ledger daily to identify missed appointments and ensure timely follow-up or escalation.</p> <p>Attendance at external hospital appointments will be monitored and emerging trends discussed through the monthly Operational Healthcare Meeting. Leaders will take targeted actions in response to identified issues to improve continuity of care and operational efficiency.</p>	<p>Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>Governor/ Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>Governor/ Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>September 2026</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>July 2026</p>
12	<b>Patients who needed transfer to secure hospital under the Mental Health Act continued to wait far too long for a bed.</b>	It is recognised that vulnerable people in prison, who may require treatment in hospital under the Mental Health Act, continue to experience delays. The Mental Health Act 2025 introduces a new statutory time limit of 28 days for transfers from prison and other places of detention to hospital. This reform is	Ministry of Justice/NHS England	Legislation fully implemented by December 2027



		<p>due to commence 18-24 months post Royal Assent, which was received on 18 December 2025, and health and justice partners remain committed to commencing this reform in the published timeframe. This time limit, together with operational improvements, aims to reduce unnecessary delays and deliver swifter access to treatment. The implementation of this reform will include a Statutory Notice Process, which will ensure that all responsible departments and agencies are notified when the time limit starts, and are aware of their duty to support a patient's timely transfer to hospital. The NHSE-led National Mental Health &amp; Justice Strategic Advisory Group (MHJSAG) has been established to oversee and monitor the transfer process from prison to hospital and seeks to ensure all transfers are completed within 28-days of referral for individuals who have been assessed as requiring detention under the Mental Health Act. Within the LTHSE estate, the Pathways to Progression framework continues to offer clinical planning support for complex men, including guidance on how establishments can maintain stability and appropriate care while an individual awaits transfer to hospital.</p>		
13	<p><b>There were significant gaps in the prison's management and oversight of public protection arrangements.</b></p>	<p>A recruitment and retention plan is in place for Probation Officer and Probation Service Officer staffing within the Kent Surrey Sussex Probation region; to support the staffing within regional prisons to prioritise public protection provision. This will include a new national marketing campaign and twice-yearly campaigns to recruit onto the probation qualification pipeline.</p> <p>The backlog of public protection screenings will be addressed using dedicated overtime resources.</p> <p>Public Protection Review Committee Meetings will take place every two weeks to address the backlog of communication monitoring and will remain at this frequency until the backlog is resolved.</p> <p>Interdepartmental Risk Management Meetings will also have the backlog as a standard agenda item to prioritise monitoring with the meeting moving location to improve accessibility and attendance. A standing agenda item providing an overview of high risk prisoners has been added.</p> <p>Monthly performance meetings will be held with Offender Management Unit managers to address any barriers.</p>	<p>Regional Probation Director Kent, Surrey &amp; Sussex</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>July 2026</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>May 2026</p> <p>May 2026</p>



14	<p><b>Leaders did not have accurate enough oversight of the quality and breadth of education, skills and work to be able to plan and implement improvements confidently.</b> Fundamentally, leaders did not offer an ambitious enough curriculum of courses or work opportunities that systematically developed prisoners' knowledge, skills and behaviours to gain employment on release or track the progress prisoners made in their development.</p>	<p>Monthly performance meetings have been introduced with Reducing Reoffending managers to review data and address any barriers to the implementation of improvements.</p> <p>A Head of Function support plan has been introduced to enable improvements in regime delivery, attendance, allocation and a whole prison approach to neurodiversity. This will be monitored through bi-lateral meetings and monthly Reducing Reoffending performance meetings.</p> <p>A needs analysis will be undertaken in preparation for the new annual delivery plan.</p> <p>The current offer of purposeful activity provided will be assessed and enhanced to increase the range of development opportunities available to prisoners.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>October 2026</p> <p>December 2026</p>
15	<p><b>Leaders had not made sure that prisoners who required additional support, including with reading or English for speakers of other languages or those with neurodivergent needs, had their needs met.</b></p>	<p>Allocations boards will include input from the Neurodiversity Lead to ensure needs are consistently met across education and purposeful activity.</p> <p>The training needs analysis will incorporate staff knowledge of neurodiversity, and targeted training will be delivered to strengthen staff confidence and capability in identifying and effectively supporting prisoners with neurodivergent needs.</p> <p>The reading strategy will be reviewed, published and promoted and will include a targeted approach for those whose first language is not English.</p> <p>The reading strategy will be embedded to ensure more effective support is offered to those who require additional help.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>July 2026</p> <p>December 2026</p> <p>June 2026</p> <p>September 2026</p>

