



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

Action Plan: HMP & YOI Downview

Action Plan Submitted: 04 June 2026

A Response to the HMIP Inspection: 02-12 February 2026

Report Published: 18 May 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 & YOI DOWNVIEW

1. Rec No	2. Concerns	3. Response Action Taken/Planned	4. Responsible Owner	5. Target Date
<b>Priority concerns</b>				
1	<b>Some officers were abrupt and dismissive in their interactions and perceptions from women about inconsistencies in the application of rules led to feelings of unfair treatment.</b>	<p>The prison had already prepared to implement a management restructure prior to the inspection. This increases significantly the number of Custodial Managers (first line managers) at the establishment ensuring an increase in time to work in their functions and to challenge, coach and develop staff.</p> <p>This restructure went live in April, following an ambitious training programme being developed and delivered. There will be a formal review of the restructure in October 2026 and again in March 2027.</p> <p>This package of training developed for first line managers included focusing on leadership with an emphasis on the importance of Prison Vision, Values and Priorities; how the prison defines the core identity, direction and purpose; why values are different to culture and why aspects of the culture need to change. The training develops the role of first line management in making that change consistent, increasing visibility and to support key messages. Procedural justice and professional standards were also covered as part of the package. The training will continue to be evolved, and training and development opportunities will be delivered to best ensure success via the management restructure.</p> <p>Outcomes will be measured based around how good performance is being rewarded/praised and how effectively poor performance is being challenged. This will be monitored via monthly and quarterly bi-lateral meetings, with the required frequency and quality of staff performance meetings also being assured.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>March 2027</p> <p>March 2027</p> <p>March 2027</p>



		<p>Wing Custodial Managers will hold monthly wing forums to allow feedback to be given on where relationships could improve and what action can be taken.</p> <p>The formal prisoner consultation will be strengthened with the appointment of Deputy Specialist Peers with one based on each distinct wing/landing to work with the Specialist Peer Mentor and provide senior leaders with feedback on a wide range of areas including staff/prisoner relationships.</p> <p>The Senior Leadership Team will continue with their strategy of visibility – and this will be updated to ensure increased focus upon staff/prisoner interactions.</p> <p>The prison will review the local Incentives Policy (IP) to ensure community rules are simple and understood by all. IP forums will also be introduced alongside wing forums so feedback on fairness can be gained and responded to constructively.</p> <p>The prison will ensure all complaints, and subsequent responses, concerning the behaviour of officers and other staff are quality assured at Governor or Deputy Governor level. This governance will ensure that complaints are answered by the right person, to a good standard and any trends and learning opportunities are identified.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>August 2026</p> <p>June 2026</p> <p>June 2026</p> <p>September 2026</p> <p>June 2026</p>
2	<p><b>Patients needing treatment under the Mental Health Act waited too long to be transferred to hospital.</b> For example, one patient had waited 156 days.</p>	<p>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 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.</p> <p>The NHSE-led National Mental Health &amp; Justice Strategic Advisory Group (MHJSAG) has been established to oversee and monitor the transfer process</p>	<p>Ministry of Justice/NHS England</p>	<p>Legislation fully implemented by December 2027</p>



		<p>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.</p> <p>Regionally, NHS England has stood up a task and finish group which includes adult secure provider collaboratives, the four adult Psychiatric Intensive Care Units (PICU) and prison healthcare to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. Areas of focus that has been identified (but not limited to) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop clear escalation process for the South East region to overcome delays to the Mental Health Act assessment &amp; transfer process.</li> <li>• Facilitate adult secure provider collaboratives and the 4 adult PICU providers in the South East region to agree a standardised referral form to simplify the referral process and enable quicker referral of prisoners.</li> <li>• Facilitate prison healthcare, adult secure provider collaboratives and the 4 adult PICU providers in the South East region to develop a referral checklist to enable referrers to provide sufficient information to enable timely Mental Health Act assessments of prisoners.</li> </ul> <p>The national team (NHSE Mental Health/ Strategic commissioning and Health and Justice) have completed the scoping work to ensure clinical leadership throughout the clinical pathway from and to prison and Mental Health hospital. The Mental Health and Justice Strategic Advisory Group has now launched to assure the 28-day transfer process.</p> <p>A transfer and remissions coordinator for all prisons in Surrey will be implemented, with a view to ensure better oversight and efficiency of mental health transfers.</p>	<p>NHS England</p> <p>NHS England</p> <p>NHS England/ Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust</p>	<p>January 2027</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>April 2027</p>
3	<p><b>The management of long-term health conditions was unacceptable.</b> This included poor recording, little face-to-face care planning and the lack of a dedicated nurse.</p>	<p>A review of long-term conditions staffing, management and process(s) will take place. Once complete, recommendations from this review will be implemented and oversight will be maintained by NHS England through the Contract Review Management Process.</p>	<p>NHS England/ Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust</p>	<p>October 2026</p>



4	<p><b>Resettlement and offender management teams had too few staff.</b> This made the delivery of proactive support and practical help difficult.</p>	<p>Engagement with key prison stakeholders, including with HMP&amp;YOI Downview's Governor, Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) Womens lead and Head of Offender Management Delivery, continues to explore the current challenges and demand, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When should a review of planned staffing be undertaken and agree whether the prison has met any threshold for review that is in place,</li> <li>• Can a review of planned resources be undertaken.</li> <li>• When can staffing levels be expected to be as planned.</li> <li>• How the prison and probation can work best together in response to the staffing shortage and population challenges currently in place.</li> </ul> <p>London Probation recognises the staffing deficits across the region and has implemented the following interim mitigation measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The utilisation of the Case Management Support (CMS) offer. There is currently one CMS staff member in post and further funding is agreed.</li> <li>• London Probation have agreed to fund prison staff operating as POM support.</li> <li>• Agreement of overtime for probation practitioners.</li> <li>• Engagement with employment agencies will take place to identify suitable staff.</li> <li>• London Probation will also explore opportunities to temporarily second suitably experienced staff from other establishments across the region into an additional CMS role at HMP &amp; YOI Downview, subject to availability and operational impact elsewhere.</li> <li>• Explore induction briefing package for upskilling and consistent practice for POMs.</li> </ul> <p>Progress against these actions will continue to be periodically reviewed and closely monitored through established regional assurance arrangements and aligned with the outcomes of the Independent Sentencing Review and OMiC model review.</p> <p>In the interim, offender management activity within HMP &amp; YOI Downview continues to be prioritised to ensure that risk-critical work, including high-risk cases, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement eligible cases and those approaching release, is progressed. The impact of staffing constraints on</p>	Governor/ Regional Probation Director London	October 2026
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		statutory tasks and release planning is subject to regular regional oversight, with escalation in place where delays present a potential risk to public protection.		
5	<b>There was a lack of sustainable accommodation on release.</b> Some places in approved premises for those presenting a high risk of harm to themselves or others were withdrawn at the last minute.	<p>The recent introduction of a dedicated female Approved Premises (AP) Central Referral Unit (CRU) has strengthened oversight, assurance, escalation, and consistency in accommodation planning for women on release. The female CRU works proactively with AP to secure placements, including on an emergency basis. On rare occasions where referrals are withdrawn for clear operational or risk-related reasons, alternative accommodation is sought quickly to minimise disruption and risk.</p> <p>More broadly the Strategic Housing Specialist (SHS) at HMP &amp; YOI Downview works collaboratively with local authorities and SHS colleagues across South Central, Kent, Surrey and Sussex and London to help provide sustainable accommodation. This engagement includes attending local authority pre-release panels across regions to support earlier identification of housing need and intervention. Additionally, the SHS ensures the women's estate is represented by attending and engaging with regional and local housing forums, steering groups etc. The SHS at HMP &amp; YOI Downview has implemented a Renting Ready course, with the intention of providing skills to secure and maintain sustainable accommodation on release.</p>	Community Accommodation Services	Completed
6	<b>Incentives and rewards to promote good behaviour were limited.</b>	<p>The prison will collate views and ideas to expand on the current incentives and rewards. This will identify what incentives and rewards would be motivational to the population, and what works well in other prisons and organisations.</p> <p>Following the consultation a revised local IP will be introduced. This policy will consolidate rewards and incentives already on offer as well as those agreed for addition. Expansion to what is offered will include a monthly Reward and Recognition forum where nominations for prisoners can be made via staff or other prisoners and appropriate rewards given by the committee in response to commendable behaviour and/or progress. The current quarterly and annual awards will remain in place and the prison will seek to increase awareness, nominations and involvement for these events.</p>	Governor  Governor	September 2026  September 2026



		<p>The criteria for residence on D wing (Resettlement wing/independent living unit) have also been reviewed which will assist with making the progression pathway clearer.</p> <p>There will be a clear communications strategy in place for the local IP, with information included within the prisoner induction pack.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>September 2026</p>
<b>Key concerns</b>				
7	<b>The availability of illicit drugs, including the trading of prescribed medication, posed a risk to the stability of the prison and to women's health and well-being.</b>	<p>As part of the management restructure, Supervising Officers will be required to provide greater supervision and oversight at medication dispensing times.</p> <p>The searching and governance arrangements for Visits will be reviewed so that opportunities for continual improvement are better identified.</p> <p>The prison will introduce a revised security training/briefing package to assist the delivery of improved searching and supervision.</p> <p>Intelligence will continue to be used to task searching and suspicion drug testing. The prison will continue to work with the Substance Misuse Service provider to ensure the prisoner and staff group is aware of the risks with taking drugs/non prescribed medication, intervention and support is targeted at the prisoners with most need/risk, desistance is encouraged and supported with regular amnesty take place.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>September 2026</p> <p>September 2026</p> <p>September 2026</p> <p>Completed</p>
8	<b>The application system was unreliable.</b> Many simple requests did not get dealt with.	<p>A local Applications and Queries policy will be introduced which will clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How telephone applications should work and the quality assurance that will take place.</li> <li>• What paper applications can be submitted, how they will be tracked and what assurance will take place.</li> <li>• What role specialist peers/other prisoner workers will take with applications and queries.</li> <li>• Boundaries and expectations around queries to Officers and Keyworkers.</li> <li>• The communications strategy that supports this policy, so staff and prisoners are aware of expectations.</li> <li>• How applications and queries will be monitored via wing forums and the prisoner council.</li> </ul>	<p>Governor</p>	<p>September 2026</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What feedback will be given to senior leaders so that assurances can be gained that applications and queries are operating well.</li> </ul> <p>HMP &amp; YOI Downview will explore technological solutions and seek funding to improve the application process and ensure the most effective solution is in place.</p>	Governor	September 2026
9	<b>Most women were locked in their cell for too long on a Friday and over the weekend.</b>	<p>HMP &amp; YOI Downview is part of the Working Week project which is currently being prototyped in five prisons, extending the prison day to c.31 hours per week. By enabling more prisoners to work longer hours, the project is driving increased productivity, stronger employment prospects on release, and greater in-house savings and revenue generation to reinvest back into prison purposeful activity.</p> <p>The prison only completed a staff reprofile exercise in November 2025 to reflect the project so there are no immediate plans to complete a further review.</p>	Governor	Completed
10	<b>Women working on wings and in industries were not provided with meaningful targets relevant to their work or to help them progress.</b>	<p>A refreshed policy will be introduced that outlines an effective and well communicated process which assures the completion and monitoring of the 'progress in work' book. The policy will empower and support each prisoner to take responsibility for their progress in the workbook booklet and collating evidence.</p> <p>The Quality Improvement Group (QIG) meeting agenda will be updated to include the progress in the workbook and a skill tracker will be implemented to enable monitoring. The Head of Education Skills and work will oversee and carry out quality assurance which will be reported back through the QIG and disseminated to the relevant staff for ongoing development.</p> <p>Skills progress made in work areas such as the gardens, kitchens, and cleaning/wing work will be evidenced via the new skill trackers. External work placements will also measure, and record skills progress and evidence recorded via the skill tracker.</p> <p>Progress documented in the workbook trackers and skill sheets will be used by the Prison employment lead and prison offender managers to reflect on the skills and job opportunities available to prisoners on release.</p>	<p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Governor</p>	<p>January 2027</p> <p>January 2027</p> <p>January 2027</p> <p>January 2027</p>



