



Ministry  
of Justice

Lord Timpson  
Minister of State for Justice

Chair,  
Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Risley  
Warrington Road  
Risley  
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22 September 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP RISLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Risley, which I have read with great care and attention. I recognise the challenges posed by limited capacity and a shortage of members and am grateful to you and your colleagues for producing this report and capturing such helpful observations. I commend the Board's efforts since the end of this reporting period to strengthen practices, increase capacity and establish a more robust approach.

I was deeply saddened to learn that six individuals died in custody during the reporting period, including one self-inflicted death and two that occurred within three months of release. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of those who have passed. Please be assured that the recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are treated with the utmost seriousness and are carefully considered. I acknowledge the concerns you raise around self-harm and wanted to offer assurance that this has been a focus for HMP Risley. Since the report, there have been a number of full establishment safety summits giving staff, prisoners and visitors the opportunity to share their views on how to make HMP Risley a safer place to live, work and visit.

In relation to the AMEY contracts, the Facilities Management (FM) contract has undergone changes since the time of your report, with some aspects of the work now being outsourced. Locally, the on-site FM team maintains a strong working relationship with the establishment. To improve contract management and efficiency, the Ministry of Justice holds weekly meetings with the site team to address ongoing and emerging issues. In addition, monthly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) meetings are conducted to review and validate performance alongside regular estates meetings to align with the establishment's priorities.

I fully recognise the concerns raised around maintaining and repairing the existing prison estate and would like to reassure the Board that concerted efforts have been taken locally to improve conditions at HMP Risley. The prison has taken practical steps to enhance key areas with significant refurbishments having been completed to the showers on A & D wings as well as the replacement of 212 cell floors across the site. The successful maintenance bid to replace the roof on B Wing, is also a major step forward.

More broadly, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) remains committed to improving living conditions across the estate. Several bids have been received for further improvement works at HMP Risley, including the rewiring of C and D Wings, CCTV upgrades, roof replacements for the

Reception and MDT buildings and the installation of new ventilation in the activities building. Additionally, HMPPS is restarting a major fire safety project, which includes a full cell call system replacement. This work was paused when the original contractor went into administration but is now being retendered as a priority, with a projected investment of around £23.3 million into the establishment. HMPPS continues to assess the condition of the estate through detailed surveys, which help shape long-term maintenance plans. Whilst funding is limited and must be prioritised carefully, I am confident that HMPPS is doing everything it can to ensure HMP Risley remains a safe, decent, and rehabilitative environment.

I note the Board's repeated concerns about the handling of prisoners' property. I would like to offer reassurance that HMPPS is giving careful consideration to the findings of the IMB national thematic report, which highlights the impact of property loss on prisoners. In parallel, insights from Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations, following a thematic review of property-related complaints over the past five years, are also under review. As the Board notes, a common issue arises when excess property is forwarded during prisoner transfers. To address this, ensuring compliance with volumetric control limits is essential, as only property within these limits will transfer with the prisoner. HMPPS is actively exploring ways to improve adherence to the Framework's requirements.

I am pleased to report that, since the Board's review, the process for distributing property received at the establishment has significantly improved. Prisoners now receive their property within seven days of its arrival, and there are no concerns regarding canteen deliveries. Whilst volumetric control remains a challenge, progress has been made, particularly with prisoners being supported to hand out property during visits.

It was encouraging to receive your comments about the Care and Separation Unit being both well-staffed and well-managed, with clear improvements to the environment. The prison's commitment to equality stood out, with regular forums and Equality Representatives on most wings. I was glad to see that feedback from these forums was being used constructively, with the Equalities Manager keen to turn concerns into staff training opportunities. Furthermore, it was reassuring to see improvements in resettlement planning, particularly through the introduction of weekly discharge boards involving multiple agencies.

I appreciate that you are in regular contact with the Governor and will continue to raise any concerns with him. HMPPS's responses to the other issues raised are detailed in the attached annex.

The Lord Chancellor and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards across the estate, and we are sincerely grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Risley despite the challenges you have faced.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

**Lord Timpson**  
**Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending**

## HMP RISLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2024

### **HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report**

#### **Work and Activity Space Availability**

HMPPS acknowledges the Board's concerns regarding the shortfall in activity spaces at HMP Risley. In response, local plans are underway to address this issue, including the reopening of a workshop space and the expansion of existing activity areas wherever possible. However, any further increase in workshop or education capacity would require the provision of additional activity buildings on site. In the meantime, the establishment is working to maximise the use of Tier 2 activities and develop peer-led provision to ensure that all prisoners have access to meaningful and purposeful activity. In parallel, education provision at HMP Risley is reviewed and replanned annually. Planning for the new Prisoner Education Service Delivery Plans is underway, and this may further influence how activity spaces are allocated and used.

Additionally, new Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) contracts have recently been introduced and are now mandated across all public prisons in England. These contracts provide prisoners with an initial induction to set career goals and assess prior learning, followed by regular reviews throughout their sentence. Complementing this, the introduction of new Core Education contracts brings a clearer specification for high-quality delivery. These contracts offer the Head of Education, Skills and Work greater flexibility to design a curriculum that meets the specific needs of the prison population. The use of common awarding organisations will also ensure consistency in qualifications and support the movement of learners between establishments.

#### **Staffing Provision**

We acknowledge that staff absences during the summer months have impacted access to workshops and the broader prison regime. In response, HMP Risley has successfully recruited to meet target staffing levels and will further recruit additional prison officers to support the delivery of internal projects. Alongside recruitment, the establishment has prioritised staff support services, professional development, and promotion opportunities. These efforts have contributed to a reduction in resignations among Bands 3 to 5 operational staff, positively impacting regime stability. In addition, Risley has begun transitioning to a population made up solely of People Convicted of Sexual Offences (PCoSOs), including Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) convicted of such offences, with the full transition expected to be completed later this year. In line with this change, a new regime has been introduced, offering increased time out of cell and expanded opportunities for purposeful activity for all prisoners. A new provider assumed responsibility for healthcare and substance use services in April 2024. They are aware of previous staffing challenges and are actively implementing a recruitment plan to strengthen the current staffing model.

#### **Resettlement Processes**

Effective resettlement of prison leavers is a core part of HMPPS's efforts to reduce reoffending, ensuring that individuals leaving custody have access to the key foundations of rehabilitation. This includes stable accommodation, employment, and access to essential support services. To support this, we are committed to developing robust, tailored pre-release plans for all individuals, including those assessed as posing a high risk of serious harm (RoSH), identifying needs early and coordinating support accordingly. Community Offender Managers (COMs), supported by pre-release teams, play a pivotal role in this process. Guided by the *Foreign National Offenders on Licence, PSS and IS91* policy framework, they work proactively with prisoners to address resettlement needs. Support is delivered through a

combination of prison-based teams and commissioned rehabilitative services, covering areas such as housing, employment, substance misuse recovery, personal wellbeing, and financial stability, both before and after release.

For individuals who present a high RoSH, the Offender Management in Custody framework provides enhanced handover arrangements. This handover process from Prison Offender Managers (POMs) to COMs begins 8.5 months before the confirmed release date. In cases involving short-term sentences, COMs are responsible for the management of the case from the outset. POMs and COMs are expected to complete detailed OASys (Offender Assessment System) assessments for those assessed as posing a high RoSH, including Foreign National Offenders (FNOs), ensuring that risk and needs are thoroughly understood and addressed. FNO cases can present complex challenges that can make release planning more difficult. However, the introduction of the regional concentrator model and the national FNO coordination hub has strengthened our ability to manage these complexities. These structures provide targeted support and coordination, helping to navigate the unique challenges FNOs face and to support their successful resettlement into the community.

Locally at HMP Risley, the Resettlement Team is now fully resourced, and collaboration with POMs and COMs has significantly improved across all cases. FNOs are fully included in pre-release planning and also benefit from the presence of the Home Office Immigration Enforcement Team, who are based on site to provide direct support.

### **Pay Structure for Prisoners**

Prisoner pay rates at HMP Risley are reviewed annually, and a recent review has resulted in an increase in pay for all prisoners. This reflects a continued commitment to supporting prisoner wellbeing, particularly considering the rising cost of living. To further support this, an additional £3 million in funding was allocated to prisoner earnings across public sector prisons in the 2024–25 financial year. As a result, the prisoner earnings budget at HMP Risley increased by over £43,000. In addition, HMPPS raised the daily food allowance to £3.01 per prisoner in 2024–25, up from £2.70 in 2023–24 and £2.15 in 2022–23. For HMP Risley, this equates to an approximate increase of £324,000 in the food budget, based on an average operational capacity of 1,035 prisoners. Furthermore, HMPPS also ensures that prices for goods on the National Product List do not exceed the Manufacturer's Recommended Retail Price (MRRP). Where possible, prices may be set lower, including for promotional items, helping to keep everyday costs manageable for prisoners.