



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Hull
Hedon
Hull
HU9 5LS

September 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP/YOI HULL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MARCH 2023 – 29 FEBRUARY 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Hull. I have read it with care and would like to express my sincere appreciation to you and your colleagues for the valuable insights, particularly given the considerable strain on the Board over the past year, with a significant reduction in active members and a sharp rise in prisoner applications. I recognise the impact this has had on your ability to carry out proactive monitoring and the pressure it places on those who remain. The resilience and dedication shown by the Board, especially in responding to applications and maintaining a presence in the Care and Separation Unit (CSU) is commendable. The concerns raised about the long-term viability of the Board are deeply concerning and I hope these have been raised to the IMB Staff to consider how they might be addressed.

I was truly saddened to learn of the six lives lost in custody during this reporting period. My thoughts are with their families, friends, and all those affected. I was also deeply regretful to note the concerning rise in incidents of self-harm and prisoner-on-prisoner assaults compared to the previous year. These figures are not just numbers, they represent real harm and distress experienced by both prisoners and staff, who continue to navigate incredibly challenging circumstances. Please be assured that the recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are treated with the utmost seriousness. We remain committed to learning from each case and taking meaningful, informed action to improve safety and wellbeing across the prison estate.

Regarding the Board's ongoing concerns around prison capacity and the continued use of double cells, I appreciate this must be frustrating and want to assure the Board that the challenges presented by the prison population are not taken lightly. This Government and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) are committed to delivering sustained improvement in living conditions and performance across the prison estate and addressing the population crisis it inherited from the previous Government. As outlined in the December 2024 10-Year Prison Capacity Strategy, the Government remains committed to delivering an additional 14,000 prison places by 2031. HMPPS's build programmes consist of constructing four new prisons, including the recently completed HMP Millsike, as well as expanding and refurbishing the existing estate. In her speech on 14 May, the Lord Chancellor announced a further investment of £4.7 billion over the spending review period to deliver these places. This also includes breaking ground on a new prison site near HMP Gartree later this year. HMPPS are also committed to

undertaking critical maintenance work and acquiring additional land to support future prison development if required.

To manage demand within the current estate and free up capacity, we are also implementing several reforms. Alongside the ongoing work to deliver the recommendations of the Independent Sentencing Review, which was published in May this year, we have extended the Home Detention Curfew from 6 to 12 months and reformed recall practices to address the unsustainable growth in the recall population. On 9 June, we laid the Fixed Term Recall Statutory Instrument, which stipulates that adult offenders serving standard determinate sentences (SDS) of less than four years will be returned to prison for a fixed 28-day period when recalled, before being automatically re-released (14 days for those serving sentences under 12 months). This change is expected to create approximately 1,400 additional prison places, with the first tranche of releases scheduled for September.

More specifically relating to HMP/YOI Hull, I am pleased to share with the Board the positive progress that has and continues to be made. In January 2025, HMPPS carried out a living conditions audit. Since then, the prison has taken proactive steps to further improve conditions, including the introduction of the Clean, Rehabilitative, Enabling and Decent (CRED) programme. These efforts have already shown positive results. In His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) July 2024 inspection, the score for respect improved from "not sufficiently good" to "reasonably good," reflecting the positive impact of efforts to enhance cleanliness and overall living conditions. During a follow-up Independent Review of Progress (IRP) inspection in April 2025, HMIP further noted that leadership had taken meaningful steps to ease the impact of cramped cell sharing by increasing time out of cell and enhancing the regime to support greater prisoner engagement.

I was pleased to read the Board's comments noting that positive relationships between prisoners and officers continue across the establishment. It was also heartening to observe officers demonstrating a detailed understanding of the individuals in their care, not only on the main wings, but also in the segregation and wellbeing units. Similarly, the improvements in healthcare were encouraging. The increased staff presence on the wings, along with the shift to a clinician-led wellbeing unit, appears to have made a meaningful difference, particularly for those with complex mental health needs. I was also encouraged to hear about the establishment's proactive efforts and some successes, in countering the use of drones to smuggle illicit items, a particularly difficult challenge faced by many prisons nationally.

I note you have raised some 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 sincerely appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP/YOI Hull, particularly given 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

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HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Capital Funding

Enhanced Gate Security (EGS) investment formed part of a fixed Spending Review (SR) programme that concluded in 2021. This initiative targeted designated sites where data indicated the greatest potential benefit in improving entry security, balanced against installation costs. For example, whilst some Victorian sites could have benefited, their layout and construction made installation too expensive. In terms of improving wider security, as you refer to in your report, work has been approved to install external window grilles and options are currently being developed. A comprehensive programme of fire safety improvements is also currently underway across the site, with completion anticipated by summer 2026. This represents a significant investment of approximately £23 million and aims to enhance safety and resilience across the establishment. Furthermore, several bids have been submitted, including proposals for refurbishment of the kitchen building fabric, cell door replacement, and installation of a new roof and windows on C & D Wings. Whilst all establishment requests are considered carefully, demand for maintenance significantly exceeds available funding. Therefore, once a bid is received, HMPPS must prioritise works based on risk to life, capacity, and decency, to ensure the most effective use of resources.

Prisoner Property Handling

HMPPS acknowledges the Board's repeated concerns regarding the handling of prisoners' property, an area to which we are currently giving increased attention. We are carefully considering the findings of the IMB national thematic report, which highlights the impact of property loss on prisoners. In addition, insights from Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations, following a thematic review of property-related complaints over the past five years, are being taken into account. In response to these findings, Governors and senior leaders have been reminded of key principles in property handling, including the importance of adhering to volumetric control limits. Ensuring compliance with these limits is essential, as only property within these limits will transfer with prisoners when they move between establishments. HMPPS is actively exploring ways to improve adherence to the Framework's requirements. Whilst HMP/YOI Hull does receive a number of property-related complaints, as is common across the estate, data from March 2023 to February 2024 indicates that the rate of such complaints is significantly lower than the average for its comparator group. Additionally, property complaints have markedly reduced between May 2024 and May 2025. These improvements reflect targeted efforts to address property-related issues, which had previously been identified as a leading cause of complaints. HMPPS notes and welcomes the Board's recognition of the prison's positive response to the local complaint analysis which has helped reduce the frustration of prisoners.

Catering Budget

The national daily catering allocation has steadily increased in recent years, from £2.16 in 2022–2023 to £3.01 in 2024–2025, and now to £3.12 for the current reporting year (2025–2026). As a result of these national uplifts, HMP/YOI Hull has not needed to redistribute local budgets to supplement the catering allocation. Governors retain flexibility to manage overall budgets according to the needs of their establishment, including the option to allocate additional funds to catering if required. HMP/YOI Hull continues to meet the requirements of Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 44/2010, Catering Meals for Prisoners, ensuring that food provided is wholesome, nutritious, well-prepared and served, reasonably

varied, sufficient in quantity, and reflective of the population mix. The 2024 HMIP inspection highlighted several positive aspects of the catering provision at the prison. Inspectors found that food quality was broadly in line with other establishments and highlighted the catering team's engagement with prisoners to shape their service. The provision of hot meals twice daily and the use of an on-site bakery were recognised as particularly commendable features.

HMPPS continues to work closely with catering managers to understand operational challenges and share good practice ideas with food suppliers. We are also collaborating with the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and other partners to promote healthy eating and support the ongoing development of nutritious menus for both prisoners and staff.

Probation Resourcing

The Board's repeated concern regarding resourcing challenges are duly noted. Recruitment and retention, including a focus on staff wellbeing, remain key priorities for the Probation Service (PS). A range of initiatives have been launched to strengthen supervision, expand staffing, and reduce caseloads. To accelerate recruitment, centralised campaigns for key grades have been extended to all regions, helping to reduce the time required to fill operational roles. To support retention, HMPPS continues to implement its Probation Recruitment and Retention Strategy (2021–2024), which includes a retention toolkit and exit interview process. These initiatives focus on sustainable workloads, diversity, wellbeing, and leadership, with targeted interventions and deep-dive research informing local and national action. A new overarching strategy is expected this year.

Between March 2024 and March 2025, the PS workforce grew by 610 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) (3.0%), including a 6% increase in POs (319 FTE). In the Yorkshire and the Humber region, staffing rose by 49 FTE (2.4%). Whilst PO resourcing in the region stands at 79% Staff in Post (SIP), Senior Probation Officers (SPOs) and Probation Services Officers (PSOs) are well resourced at 105.8% and 90% SIP respectively. Over the past 12 months, 4.5 FTE POs left their posts due to retirement, ill-health, or career progression. In response, several measures have been taken to support the team and mitigate risks to service delivery. The prison has deployed Prison Offender Managers (POMs) into the Offender Management Unit (OMU) to support POs. Although the use of agency staff was explored, it did not yield successful outcomes. Recruitment efforts have been ongoing, and the possibility of utilising Newly Qualified Officer (NQO) placements has been considered as a support measure. Temporary loan support has also been arranged with Governors at HMPs Leeds, Humber, and Full Sutton providing POs either in person or remotely. This arrangement is subject to regular review.

A new resettlement delivery model was piloted from May 2025 at HMP/YOI Hull (and HMP Humber). The model focuses on prisoners with 10 months or less remaining on their sentence, whilst maintaining business-as-usual practices in meeting their immediate and pre-release needs, ensuring relevant referrals are completed. Role duplication is being reduced through enhanced collaboration between OMUs. Closer working relationships are also being developed between the Heads of Offender Management Delivery and the Resettlement SPOs. Stronger links with partnership agencies are being built, and all staff within the pre-release team have been assigned Single Point of Contact (SPOC) roles for each of the seven pathways. The aim is for them to attend any relevant meetings associated with their SPOC roles to prevent duplication and promote closer working relationships, helping us better understand how to avoid overlapping responsibilities. All prisoners are also being tracked through to their final Court hearing to prevent homelessness for anyone who receives a Court walk-out. We are also prioritising short, fixed-term, and complex recalled prisoners, providing more intensive support around accommodation and ensuring that any continuity of care needs are supported.

Although the pilot is still in its early stages, we are already observing significant weekly progress, with involvement of several key partner agencies. We are also pleased to update the Board that there are no

current resourcing concerns within the Pre-Release team, with all vacancies having recently been successfully filled.