



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Liverpool
68 Hornby Road
Liverpool
L9 3DF

MoJ ref: SUB128304

21 October 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP LIVERPOOL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY 2024 – 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Liverpool, which I have read with care. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your continued dedication and insight into the challenges and progress made over the past year at HMP Liverpool. This is particularly impressive in the context of your ongoing membership issues. I hope that the recruitment of new members is successful and relieves the current pressure on the Board.

I was saddened to read that eight prisoners died during the reporting year. I recognise these will have impacted both staff and fellow prisoners and offer my condolences to all their friends and family. I appreciate the further context you have provided about those that died, and I am reassured that the Board is satisfied that Prisons and Probation Ombudsman recommendations thus far have been acted upon.

Whilst I appreciate you will be frustrated at again having to raise the relocation of prisoners with severe mental illness, I would like to reassure the Board that progress is being made. The Mental Health Bill, which completed Committee Stage in the House of Commons in June, is a positive step forward on how vulnerable prisoners can be properly supported. It will introduce a statutory 28-day time limit for transfers from prison to hospital, which will help ensure that those requiring specialist care receive it without unnecessary delay. It will also prevent courts from temporarily detaining people with severe mental illness in prison as a place of safety whilst awaiting a hospital bed for treatment or assessment under the Mental Health Act. In addition, the newly established Mental Health and Justice Strategic Advisory Group is bringing together key partners to improve oversight, share intelligence and identify practical solutions to reduce delays.

I acknowledge the challenges faced in managing prisoners with complex mental health needs. While the use of the Care and Separation Unit (CSU) is sometimes necessary to ensure safety, I am encouraged by the efforts to provide tailored regimes and regular engagement with mental health practitioners. The transfer of 16 patients in the past year, including six within the recommended timeframe, reflects a positive direction of travel. I also welcome the pilot scheme led by NHS England's Prospect Lead Provider Collaborative (LPC), which is enhancing the referral and remission process across Merseyside prisons. This initiative, alongside monthly escalation meetings, is helping to address systemic barriers and ensure that individuals receive care in the most appropriate setting.

It was encouraging to see the Board's recognition of the positive progress made across many areas of the prison's work over the past year and I welcome your comments that HMP Liverpool is now well-positioned to further strengthen its commitment to the fair and humane treatment of those in its care. I was particularly pleased to read of the improvements to neurodiversity support and the work of Partners of Prisoners to support family ties, which research shows is so important.

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex and the Governor will continue to keep you informed of progress at a local level.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate. We extend our gratitude to you for your ongoing dedication on behalf of HMP Liverpool.

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 LIVERPOOL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2024 – 31 DECEMBER 2024

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Refurbishment of G Wing and Workshops

As noted in your report, the collapse of the construction contractor in summer 2024 delayed the completion of G Wing and the new workshops. A bid has now been submitted for the external refurbishment of Workshops 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7. All requests are considered carefully, noting that demands for maintenance across the estate exceed available funding. HMPPS prioritises works based on risk to life, capacity and decency.

The Governor has confirmed that, unfortunately, the pause in construction has impacted the delivery of purposeful activity given the workshops were intended to support a range of rehabilitative functions. In the interim, the prison has increased part-time workspaces by reducing full-time allocations, ensuring sufficient activity for the current population.

Staff Absence and Attendance Management

Staff absence continues to present operational challenges. HMP Liverpool has appointed a senior manager as Attendance Lead, supported by weekly attendance management meetings involving Human Resources Business Partners and Human Resources Performance Managers. The first line managers have now completed the necessary and essential training to improve confidence and consistency in managing attendance. The site has applied for Human Resources Technical Consultancy support to assist with grievance and performance management and requested a dedicated case manager to further strengthen attendance processes.

A climate assessment is also underway, with findings to inform the local people plan and business strategy. Despite improvements earlier in the year, absence rates remain high. Average Working Days Lost (AWDL) decreased month-on-month until September 2024, before rising in March 2025. As of June, AWDL had reduced but there were high staff absences in August. The Governor continues to monitor long-term cases and is ensuring Formal Health and Attendance Review Meetings to support resolution.

Care and Segregation Unit (CSU) Conditions and Mental Health Resourcing

HMP Liverpool is staffed to the levels set for a Category B local prison and the CSU is managed appropriately. Prisoners with severe mental illness are occasionally located in the CSU when safety risks prevent placement on residential or healthcare units. Separate regimes are provided where possible and individuals are regularly seen by the Integrated Mental Health Team. NHS England continues to work with wider healthcare systems to secure timely placements. A temporary mental health team on site supports short-term risk management planning. While this is not a long-term solution, it reflects a collaborative approach to ensuring appropriate care. In the past year, 16 patients were transferred, six of whom were moved within the recommended 28-day timeframe.

Illicit Items and Drone Activity

HMP Liverpool is working in close partnership with Merseyside Police, Probation Services, Serious and Organised Crime Team (SOCT), North West Regional Organised Crime Unit (NWROCU) and the National Drone Team to address the threat of illicit items, particularly those linked to drone-based conveyance. A quarterly multi-agency problem-solving forum and monthly drone-specific meetings have led to joint operations and community arrests. Within the prison, known drone-linked individuals are proactively targeted through intelligence-led searches. Over the past 12 months, 106 drone sightings

were recorded, with 30 parcels successfully intercepted. Suspected areas and cells are isolated and searched at the earliest opportunity. Physical security enhancements have been made to windows and a funding bid has been submitted to install protective netting in high-risk areas.

Nationally, HMPPS is investing over £40 million in physical security across 34 prisons, including anti-drone measures at 15 priority sites. A trial of anti-drone wire solutions is underway in the Long-Term High Security Estate (LTHSE). HMP Liverpool continues to receive support through vulnerability assessments, contingency planning and guidance.

Complaints Handling and Escalation

The Prisoner Complaints Policy Framework (PCPF) mandates that monitoring data be collected locally to drive performance and identify weaknesses. Where agreement cannot be reached between establishments, complaints must be escalated to the relevant Prison Group Director (PGD) or Director's line manager. HMP Liverpool currently has no outstanding complaints from other prisons. The site has implemented a robust escalation process whereby unresolved complaints are referred via the Deputy Governor to the relevant counterpart. There has been no need to escalate beyond this level in recent months.

Privately managed prisons are also required to meet response timelines, monitored by contract management teams. While most contracts do not include financial penalties for late responses, commercial levers may be used to improve performance where serious concerns arise. The Performance, Assurance and Risk group in HMPPS provides second-line assurance through audits and surveys, but compliance with complaints policy is monitored locally within operational reporting lines.

Prisoners' Property During Transfers

HMPPS continues to give attention to the handling of prisoner's property as we recognise that this continues to be an issue. Over the past year, only one complaint regarding lost property from HMP Liverpool was submitted to the contractor. If volumetric limits are exceeded and there is insufficient space on the escort vehicle, responsibility for transferring remaining items rests with the sending prison.

Locally, HMP Liverpool conducts cell clearances promptly and uses body-worn video to record property. Where prisoners are restrained, staff are encouraged to pack belongings in their presence. Property held in reception is stored securely and sent to the receiving establishment by courier or internal transport. Prisoners may also receive property during visits and within their first month at the establishment. The prison responds to exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Nationally, HMPPS is reviewing thematic reports and consulting with prisons to improve compliance and reduce loss.

Maintenance Responsiveness and Oversight

Amey UK is the facilities management provider for HMP Liverpool. A structured hierarchy is in place to oversee service delivery, including the Area Property Operations Manager (APOM), Regional Property Operations Manager and Head of Property Operations, the APOM post, previously vacant, has now been filled. Performance is managed through weekly site meetings and monthly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reviews. Where service failures occur, a Performance Improvement Plan is implemented, and contractual penalties may apply.

KPIs cover 16 areas, including reactive maintenance, planned preventative maintenance, health and safety and stock management. Value for money is ensured through fixed-rate contracts, quote comparisons and scrutiny by property services and the Ministry of Justice Commercial team. Additional works above £750 require APOM approval and those exceeding £10,000 require three quotes. Monthly KPI moderation ensures transparency and accountability. Recent investment includes a flooring replacement project in the Weights Room and a feasibility study for window grilles on the F Wing. All

future proposals will be informed by recent condition surveys, which assessed infrastructure across the estate. A refresh team has been introduced to improve decency across the site, although facilities management remains a concern.

CCTV System Performance

The CCTV system at HMP Liverpool is now fully operational following sustained investment of over £200,000 in the past two years. Monthly site-wide health checks are conducted and shared with the APOM. Amey has appointed a mobile CCTV expert to support ongoing servicing and repairs. Sub-contractor engagement has been strengthened to ensure timely resolution of issues. The system is now functioning as expected and appropriate mechanisms are in place to maintain it at a usable monitoring standard. If issues arise, they are resolved promptly and that the system is now reliable for operational use.