



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Lowdham Grange
Lowdham Grange
Nottingham
NG14 7DA

August 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP LOWDHAM GRANGE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 FEBRUARY 2024 – 31 JANUARY 2025**

Thank you for submitting the Independent Monitoring Board's annual report on HMP Lowdham Grange. I am grateful to you and your fellow Board members for the dedication in carrying out your statutory responsibilities with reduced members. Your independent oversight plays a vital role, particularly during a time of significant operational change at the prison.

I note many positives in your report connected to the transfer of the prison to HMPPS direct operation and I hope to visit the prison in the coming months to see and hear from the Governor, staff and the Board about the progress the prison is making. I would though like to acknowledge your concerns that the Board has not always been informed of serious incidents. I have assurance from the Governor that all staff responsible for the management of incidents have been reminded to inform the IMB and that local assurance checks to pick this up are now in place.

It is deeply concerning that six individuals have died in custody since your previous report. I extend my heartfelt sympathies to their families and friends, and to the staff managing these tragic incidents. Each case will be subject to independent review. I note your comments around past failings that have contributed to previous deaths and hope these are now being addressed. I want to assure you that His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) takes every such incident extremely seriously and remains committed to learning lessons to improve safety and prevent future harm.

Please be assured that reducing reoffending remains a core priority for the Government. Our strategy is based on delivering the right support to the right individual at the right time, helping people to turn their lives through a combination of targeted services and effective release planning. HMPPS is developing a national core offer to align services with individuals' needs and risks. It is also piloting a new digital release planning tool, which will enable staff to organise and track resettlement arrangements such as accommodation, healthcare, benefits, employment and education. In recognition that reoffending is twice as high among those released homeless, compared to those released to accommodation, HMPPS is expanding its community accommodation service and working closely with other government departments on a new cross-government strategy. Employment support is also being enhanced through the creation of regional Employment Councils, which bring together employers, prisons and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to build employment pathways.

Locally, rehabilitation and resettlement work has been strengthened at HMP Lowdham Grange through increased probation staffing. The target number of Probation Officers was raised from nine to twelve for 2025/26. Three new officers have been appointed and are expected to be in post by September 2025. The prison's Offender Management Unit also includes dedicated staff focused on resettlement, working with national partners including the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) and the DWP. Although HMP Lowdham Grange is not formally designated as a resettlement prison, pre-release checklists are now in use for individuals within four months of release, supported by assurance processes.

I acknowledge your concerns around those still subject to Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP), the Government remains committed to supporting these individuals to progress safely towards release, where appropriate. We are determined to improve outcomes without compromising public protection. HMPPS recently published its latest annual report on the IPP sentence which sets out the action taken across HMPPS during 2024/25 to support those serving an IPP sentence in prison to work towards a safe release. This includes a refreshed IPP action plan, which incorporates several measurable targets to ensure transparency about the progress being made. It also includes a greater focus on actions that will see measurable changes to the number of people serving the IPP sentence and plans to improve communication with those serving IPP sentences. All regions across England and Wales have also now developed and begun implementing local delivery plans to ensure consistency in operational practice.

I recognise that enabling Governors to take more local ownership is vital to delivering improved outcomes for the individuals in our care. HMPPS will continue to support the Governor through the Long Term and High Security Estate (LTHSE) and I am personally taking a close interest in supporting prisons in the LTHSE to progress. The intention is to continue building a culture of devolved leadership that empowers local innovation while maintaining consistency across the estate.

I am pleased to note the Board's recognition of recent steps taken to improve safety at HMP Lowdham Grange, recognising that there remain areas of concern. I was also encouraged to read of the successful delivery of social care over the reporting year and the positive impacts that this had had in responding to prisoners with challenging healthcare needs.

The matters raised in your report for the attention of HMPPS are addressed in the attached annex. I note that you have raised one local issue, which the Governor will keep you updated on.

The Lord Chancellor and I recognise the important role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate. Once again, we extend our appreciation for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Lowdham Grange.

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

Prisoner Property

We understand the frustration caused when personal property does not accompany prisoners during transfers, whether between cells or between establishments. HMPPS continues to reinforce the importance of compliance with volumetric control limits, which are designed to ensure property can travel with prisoners safely and securely.

The current Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) contract, introduced in 2020, includes enhanced vehicle capacity to accommodate additional personal items. The introduction of the digitally recorded Prisoner Escort Record (dPER), which logs sealed property items at each stage of transfer, has significantly improved the accuracy and transparency of property handling between different agencies.

No complaints relating to property loss during escort have been recorded at HMP Lowdham Grange in the past 12 months. The prison is also taking steps to improve local assurance, encouraging prisoners to manage property volumes responsibly and reviewing cell clearance processes to prevent avoidable loss or delay.

Mental Health Provision

Access to timely and appropriate mental health care remains a key priority. The healthcare provider in place at the time of your last report has now exited the contract and a new provider commenced services in July 2025 following a structured handover process. Psychology staffing has improved with full-time clinicians now on site and the range of services available includes cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and one-to-one counselling. During the transition, support was provided by regional teams and by staff from HMP Fosse Way to ensure continuity of care. NHS England also commissioned temporary additional staffing to bridge any shortfalls.

At a national level, the Mental Health Bill introduces a new statutory time limit of 28 days for transfers from prison to hospital under the Mental Health Act. Implementation planning is underway and will be supported by the newly established Mental Health and Justice Strategic Advisory Group, which brings together operational partners to address barriers and improve oversight. Locally, HMP Lowdham Grange is maintaining joint governance arrangements and holding weekly operational meetings to monitor caseloads and waiting times to ensure timely escalation and coordination of care.

Transfers of Category C and D Prisoners

We remain committed to ensuring that individuals are held in establishments that reflect their current risk and sentence progression needs. The Population Management Unit (PMU), supported by the LTHSE and the Offender Flows team, continues to prioritise the progressive transfer of prisoners who have been re-categorised as Category C or D. Despite pressures on capacity, there has been a sustained reduction in the number of lower-category prisoners held at HMP Lowdham Grange. The prison has recently received a significant allocation of Category C spaces, which has enabled further transfers to be carried out. We will continue to monitor progress and ensure that transfers take place in a timely and appropriate manner, wherever possible.