



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Rye Hill
Willoughby
Rugby
CV23 8SZ

MoJ ref: SUB128307

21 October 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP RYE HILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Rye Hill, which I have read with care. I recognise that you continue to operate below your recommended complement of members so your hard work and dedication in producing this report is particularly appreciated.

I was saddened to read that there were five deaths in custody during the reporting period, all of which were of natural causes. I offer my condolences to all their friends and family and note the minor recommendations made, although not directly related to the deaths, I would like to reassure the Board that all such recommendations are taken very seriously.

I recognise the Board's continued concern regarding the challenges faced by those serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences. I remain committed to supporting this cohort through safe and sustainable pathways to release, without compromising public protection. The refreshed IPP Action Plan, published in July 2025 and available in the HMPPS Annual [HMPPS annual report on the IPP sentence 2024 to 25 - GOV.UK](#), places emphasis on effective frontline delivery, robust sentence planning, and appropriate prison placements. It also introduces measurable targets to ensure transparency and accountability. I commend the innovative work undertaken at HMP Rye Hill to implement Select Committee recommendations, including staff training, Prisoner Led Initiatives (PLI) training and progression boards. While the recent increase in IPP numbers is linked to the expansion of the prison, the establishment continues to support progression through initiatives such as the IPP PLI coordinator and successful parole outcomes. I recognise the complexity of this cohort, particularly those with histories of violence, self-harm, or neurodiversity needs, and I appreciate the establishment's continued commitment.

I understand the importance of meaningful employment opportunities for prisoners convicted of sexual offences (PCoSOs), both in custody and upon release. This issue continues to be raised and I recognise that employment rates for this group remain lower than for other offence types. His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) works with all prison leavers to support them into employment and the Department for Work and Pensions provides tailored support in the community, aligned to individual needs. Where available, the Creating Future Opportunities (CFO) programme delivers additional resettlement services in custody and post-release, particularly for individuals who face barriers to engaging with mainstream services. This includes those considered complex or at risk of disengagement, such as PCoSOs. While provision may be limited in some regions, information on delivery locations and

referral processes is available via the CFO Evolution website. I continue to support the development of national partnerships with employers and charities willing to engage with this cohort. These partnerships are essential to improving access to appropriate employment pathways and reducing the risk of reoffending. It is important that all prison leavers, regardless of offence type have access to meaningful rehabilitation and reintegration support.

I was encouraged to read your comments highlighting the significant reduction in acts of violence, falling from 43 to 27, and notably, that no prisoners chose to self-isolate during the reporting period. I also welcome the decline in the use of force with 74 recorded incidents compared to 181 the previous year and 145 the year prior. It was encouraging that you report that all incidents were appropriately recorded via body-worn video cameras or CCTV, with weekly reviews conducted by the Use of Force Committee. I was also pleased to read about the ongoing growth of Prisoner Lead Initiatives which has helped support a positive community ethos within the prison.

I note your positive comments around the support of category B prisoners in recategorisation to category C and the work of the Director and prisoners here is to be commended. You have also highlighted two local queries in your report which the Director will 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 value the role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we continue to be very grateful for your ongoing dedication on behalf of HMP Rye Hill.

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 RYE HILL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Compassionate Release Process

We recognise that there may be challenges in implementing the compassionate release policy and as such, keep it under continuous review. While guidance suggests applications are appropriate in the final months of life, each case is assessed individually. We are working to clarify that earlier referrals can be considered and to ensure a clear route exists when consultants are unable to provide necessary documentation. The Prison Director has confirmed that delays are not attributable to the establishment, and that paperwork is submitted promptly. Delays have primarily arisen from external healthcare providers, and this has been reflected in Prisons and Probation Ombudsman reports with subsequent recommendations being made to healthcare.

Hospital Escorts and Staffing Metrics

HMPPS acknowledges the concerns regarding hospital escort capacity in light of the ageing population at HMP Rye Hill. The current contract allows for 20 escorts per week, which is deemed sufficient if fully utilised. However, hospital availability often limits appointment fulfilment. Encouragingly, the healthcare provider is working to bring more services into the prison and coordinate appointment times with local hospitals. A joint NHS England/HMPPS review is underway to model optimal escort numbers, which will inform future planning. While staffing decisions remain within the Director's remit, the recent expansion at HMP Rye Hill may offer increased operational capacity to support medical escorts. We will continue to monitor this area and engage with NHS Commissioners regarding needs analysis.