



Ministry of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall
Swinfen Hall
Lichfield
Staffordshire
WS14 9QS

MoJ ref: SUB128502

27 October 2025

Dear Chair,

HMP/YOI SWINFEN HALL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MAY 2024 – 30 APRIL 2025

Thank you for sharing your Board's annual report on HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall. I sincerely appreciate the commitment and effort you and your colleagues have invested in compiling these valuable insights, especially given the challenges posed by ongoing vacancies throughout the reporting period.

I have read your report with care, and I fully understand the frustrations that young adults may be experiencing due to limited access to digital tools that support communication and daily routines. Unfortunately, there are currently no immediate plans to introduce kiosks or laptops at HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall, although we remain committed to ensuring all prisons benefit from such technology as soon as funding allows.

In the meantime, please be assured that HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall continues to prioritise open dialogue and transparency through monthly wing forums and a Prisoner Council, which the Governor attends. These platforms are designed to give young adults a voice, keep them informed of developments, and provide a space to raise concerns.

Although your report raises a number of serious concerns, it was pleasing to note a few positive initiatives, which I hope will provide a foundation on which to further build. This included the marking of Care Experienced Week in October 2024 with a series of events tailored for care experienced young adults. This initiative not only celebrated their experiences but also successfully launched a forum to support those previously looked after by their local authority, a commendable step in fostering inclusion and support.

I was also deeply appreciative of the Chaplaincy team's continued commitment to supporting young adults during times of personal crisis, including bereavement. Their presence and compassion during such moments are invaluable and reflect the heart of what good care in custody should look like. I note that you have raised some local issues of concern in your report, which the Governor will continue to keep you informed about as work progresses. His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has provided comments in response to the matter raised in your report for its consideration, which are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I truly value the important work carried out by Independent Monitoring Boards across the estate. We will ensure these remain central to ongoing discussions aimed at improving

the lived experience across the establishment. Please accept our sincerest gratitude for your continued dedication on behalf of HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall.

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/YOI SWINFEN HALL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MAY 2024 – 30 APRIL 2025

HMPPS Comments on Matters Raised in the Report

Prison Officer Appointments

HMPPS acknowledges the Board's ongoing concerns regarding Prisoner Officer appointments. We recognise the significant value of early, proactive interaction between candidates and establishments prior to them taking up post. To support this, candidates are encouraged to attend welcome days and engage directly with experienced staff, helping to build familiarity and understanding before they begin their roles.

Our national, centralised recruitment approach ensures a consistent standard is applied in line with Civil Service recruitment principles, of fair and open competition, and selection on merit. This model allows us to recruit at scale whilst relieving Governors and operational managers of the substantial resource burden that local recruitment would place on frontline delivery. It also supports the mobility of prison officers across the estate by maintaining a uniform recruitment standard.

We are actively exploring ways to involve establishments more directly in the selection process. Valuable insights have been drawn from HMP Berwyn's two-stage localised recruitment pilot, which began in August 2022. The lessons learned are informing future developments in how local autonomy might contribute to improved candidate quality and retention.

Supporting the development of inexperienced staff remains a key priority for HMPPS. Our Enable Programme is a psychologically and operationally informed workforce transformation programme for prisons. It aims to transform prisons over the medium term through a series of workforce and regime changes that will reshape how HMPPS trains, develops, leads, and supports prison staff, ensuring they feel safe, supported, valued, and confident in their skills and their ability to make a difference.

In the longer term, the programme is reviewing the foundation training offer for new staff, with a focus on experiential learning over a 12-month period. In the interim, six core capability packages have been launched nationally in all public sector prisons for officers between 6 and 18 months into service, who have already completed foundation training and induction, to build their capability further in sixteen core areas. The remaining ten packages will be accessible by the end of 2025.

To assure the quality of training products, create a training performance measure, and support prisons with the quantity and quality of training delivery, we will be implementing a Capability Oversight Function later this year. This will be tested alongside a regional delivery model pilot in London and a site-by-site model in Enable early adopter prisons. Establishments will identify local capability priorities and develop tailored plans to support staff development. Scale-up will be dependent on the outcomes of this testing.

Locally at HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall, all new officers are supported by New Colleague Mentors who oversee an enhanced induction and provide mentoring during the probationary period. Additionally, the national Standards Coaching Team have been deployed for 16 weeks from 6th October 2025 to support staff with upskilling and confidence in priority areas, including individual coaching. Supervising Officers have also been introduced to provide daily leadership and help deliver a consistent regime, as well as support for Residential Officers.