



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Morton Hall
Eagle Road
Swinderby
Lincoln
LN6 9PT

August 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP MORTON HALL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JANUARY 2024 - 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Morton Hall, which I have read with care. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for the hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations, particularly as you have several vacancies and have lost two experienced IMB members this year due to retirement. I hope your recruitment campaign will prove successful in increasing your numbers to the recommended complement.

You have raised an important question regarding the increase in the number of prisoners at HMP Morton Hall who have declared a disability and how this may impact on prison resources. The increase in disability declaration rates stems from the increase in recording of a prisoner's neurodiversity and/or additional learning needs including in cases where there may be no formal medical diagnosis. There has therefore not been a substantial increase in demand to support disabled prisoners. The prison has responded positively by recruiting a new Neurodiversity Practitioner to the Healthcare Department who is able to both diagnose conditions and provide support to people with learning disabilities. This is also enabling the prison to maintain an overview of any increased demand.

I empathise with the Board's frustrations regarding the unacceptable levels of property losses or delays when a prisoner is transferred. It is an issue that is frequently raised across the prison estate and as such is something to which HMPPS is currently giving further attention. Careful consideration is being given to the findings in the IMB national thematic report on how property loss impacts on prisoners, as well as those received from Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations following a thematic review of the property complaints they have received in the last five years. Since receiving the reports, Governors and other senior leaders have been reminded of the most important property handling points. This includes the need to ensure compliance with volumetric control limits. HMP Morton Hall has recognised that it has not always effectively managed these previously and as such there have been delays as excess property has been sent separately. Within the last three months, new processes have been introduced to ensure prisoners only have the volume of property they are allowed and have been given options as to what to do with additional property to reduce the volume when they move on. The reception staff are building relationships with the escort contractor and receiving prisons to improve processes and are now following up missing property from the transferring establishment swiftly. These measures have resulted in HMP Morton Hall seeing a significant reduction in the number of complaints about follow on property for Q1 2025/26 compared to Q1 2024/25.

Regarding the question you raise in terms of Home Office processing, since my response to your last annual report in September 2024, the Government has laid legislation to expand the Early Removal Scheme (ERS). This will enable the deportation of Foreign National Offenders (FNO) sooner. It is estimated that this will reduce demand by up to 500 prison places per year based on current removal rates. HM Prison and Probation Service is investing £5 million for 82 new FNO specialist roles in prisons to both identify offenders who want to leave the UK and ensure the speedier deportation of prisoners who have no right to be in this country. The Government's sharpened focus on this issue is already making a difference in that we have seen a 10% increase in ERS returns between 5 July 2024 and 4 July 2025, compared to the same period 12 months prior.

I was most pleased to read your comments about the high levels of professionalism you observed from all staff at HMP Morton Hall, which is no doubt underpinned by the rehabilitative approach encouraged by the Governor and Senior Leadership Team. The supportive responses and actions taken by prison staff in their interactions with the men in their care are clearly paying dividends; the prison being compared favourably by prisoners with other prisons they have experienced. I was heartened to read your comments about the gym staff and the very successful 'Stoicism' courses, which you describe as excellent in encouraging prisoners to reflect on their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions.

The response of the healthcare staff and the residential team on the Windsor Unit who effectively treated a prisoner who had a cardiac arrest until an ambulance arrived is commendable. It was encouraging to read that they implemented appropriate action as a result of what you describe as their superb training and that the man in question was able to return to the unit.

Thank you for highlighting several local issues of concern in your report. The Governor will continue to keep you informed as work progresses in these areas. Comments from HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in response to other matters raised are included in the attached annex.

The Lord Chancellor and I continue to value the role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we extend our thanks for your ongoing dedication on behalf of HMP Morton 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 MORTON HALL: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JANUARY 2024 - 31 DECEMBER 2024

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Appliance Upgrades

Although funding is currently unavailable to improve the electrical network to allow for industrial machines to be installed, Ministry of Justice Property Services will complete survey work to inform a new capital bid for when additional funding becomes available. In the meantime, HMP Morton Hall have implemented a specific monitoring system of washers and dryers to identify items that need replacing and any areas where improvements can be made to the way in which appliances are managed to extend their life. This will also provide information for a business case should it be deemed value for money to upgrade the electrical supply.

A new walk-in refrigeration unit was installed in the main kitchen in July 2025, improving the space available to keep items cool and fresh. The current kitchen blast chiller, which is necessary for chilling food items within ninety minutes as per Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) is, despite being old, still serviceable and in good order. It has become more apparent during warmer months or periods of extreme heat that additional blast chiller space is required to ensure compliance does not slip. This will be sought when funding streams become available. As a contingency, HMP Morton Hall can hire equipment if repairs or replacements are not quickly available.

IMB e-Mail Communication With Prison Personnel

The CJSM webmail service is provided to IMBs to facilitate the communication of sensitive information in a secure manner. The service is owned and administered by the Ministry of Justice and was developed to allow official non-MoJ personnel to securely communicate directly with official email addresses.

The service is intentionally designed to restrict access and limit communication to specific email domains, ensuring a secure and closed network for handling sensitive information. Since CJSM is owned by the MoJ, the *@justice.gov.uk* domain used by staff is recognised as secure. This means those using CJSM accounts can send information to, and receive information from, HMPPS staff. The system is designed to ensure that IMB members working in HMPPS establishments can communicate effectively with staff within those sites. It functions successfully across all 107 other Boards operating in public sector HMPPS locations, where staff use the *@justice.gov.uk* email domain, a domain recognised as secure and compatible with CJSM. If there is a site-specific issue at HMP Morton Hall, the IMB Staff team will seek clarification on this.

Library Resources

A review of library services at HMP Morton is currently being undertaken by the functional head and contract holder. They are currently focusing on delivery, in particular staffing, in line with regime priorities and on maximising prisoner uptake and engagement. The current model of library staffing aligns with regime hours, which pulls prisoners away from education and work. A library service that operates in the evenings and at weekends, would optimise footfall and opportunity for library attendance away from the pull of regime demands, however this would involve identifying additional HMPPS staff for supervision. Staffing to cover annual leave is not costed within the contract, which does leave it closed for four weeks a year whilst annual leave is taken. With limited funds and potential budgetary streamlining in the future, a

staffing arrangement that involves more than one library staff member, working both part-time, and more flexibly (away from core regime hours) would be the ideal solution to this issue.