



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Coldingley
Shaftesbury Road
Bisley, Woking
GU24 9EX

MoJ ref: SUB129281

1 December 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP COLDINGLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 AUGUST 2024 – 31 JULY 2025**

Thank you for sharing your Board's annual report on HMP Coldingley. I have reviewed it with close attention and would like to extend my sincere appreciation to you and your fellow Board members for the thoughtful insights and the evident care taken in compiling the report. This is especially commendable given that the year began and ended with the Board operating below full complement.

I acknowledge the Board's concerns regarding the impact of population churn at HMP Coldingley and recognise the significant pressures this presents across the resettlement and training estate. Please be assured that prisoner categorisation continues to be based on robust risk assessments, drawing on intelligence from criminal justice agencies, policing, and other partners. Reviews ensure individuals are held in the lowest security conditions necessary to manage their identified risk, and categorisation decisions are not influenced by estate capacity.

To address the acute pressures facing the prison estate, as you know, a series of emergency measures have been implemented, which have helped ease population pressures and improve system flow. I do, however, acknowledge that these have placed considerable operational pressure on staff, and I commend HMP Coldingley's Offender Management Unit for their swift implementation of these changes. At establishment level, a recent transfer of a qualified Probation Officer has helped stabilise staffing levels and the recent appointment of a permanent Head of Offender Management Delivery. Additional support from the Surrey Probation Delivery Unit is also being explored to strengthen resettlement efforts. These steps will support continuity and operational resilience, though staffing targets may need to be revisited in light of wider estate pressures.

It is with deep regret that we continue to face challenges regarding in-cell sanitation at HMP Coldingley. The administration of ISG has had a far-reaching impact, significantly delaying the delivery of 53 capital maintenance projects across 33 prisons, including HMP Coldingley. The in-cell sanitation project at HMP Coldingley has since been re-tendered, and a new principal contractor is due to be appointed. They are currently validating the work of ISG and finalising delivery plans. A revised timetable for completion will be understood once this validation period is complete. It is important to note however, that, due to funding constraints, major capital projects across the MoJ have been paused until the next financial year.

I understand the Board's continued concern regarding prisoners serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences. This Government is determined to make further progress to support this cohort towards a safe and sustainable release, but this will not be in a way that compromises public

protection. Despite the challenges, our commitment to progressing IPP prisoners towards safe release has seen good progress. Since my response to last year's report, further legislative changes came into effect on 1 February 2025, reducing the qualifying period for licence termination referrals from ten years to three. This change resulted in approximately 600 individuals becoming eligible for referral to the Parole Board for consideration of licence termination. Additionally, the Secretary of State's new powers, including the ability to apply the Risk Assessed Recall Review process and to disapply the impact of recall during the two-year automatic period, became operational. These changes have so far reduced the number of people serving IPP sentences in the community by approximately 60%. As of 30 September 2025, there were 2,422 IPP offenders in custody, a decrease from 22,486 the previous year. Within this total, the number who had never been released fell to 946 from 978, while those recalled to custody declined to 1,476 from 1,508.

To support continued progress, a refreshed IPP Action Plan was published in the HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) IPP Annual Report on 17 July 2025. Building on the previous framework, the action plan now includes measurable targets to ensure transparency and accountability. It maintains a strong focus on effective frontline delivery in prisons and the Probation Service, ensuring robust sentence planning and appropriate prisoner placement to support rehabilitation and safe release. Locally, HMP Coldingley continues to support IPP prisoners through direct offender management delivered by Prison Offender Managers.

Regarding the recent changes to immigration regulations, please be assured that those impacted are being signposted to support services to assist with both immigration matters and wellbeing during this period of change. Staff are also being encouraged to seek independent legal advice to explore their visa options to maintain their right to work in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, the MoJ Resourcing team is working closely with HMPPS senior operational teams to monitor the impact of these changes on both the existing workforce and the recruitment pipeline. The department remains committed to ensuring the safety and security of our prison and probation services. Locally, HMP Coldingley has held staff forums specifically for colleagues affected by these changes. Personal support continues to be provided through line management, the local Care Team, and meetings with the Governor.

While the report acknowledges ongoing challenges, I was encouraged by several signs of progress. This includes roofing repairs enabling greater use of workshops, and staff availability reaching its highest level in over two years, positively impacting prisoner access to activities and escorting.

I note you have raised several local concerns in your report. The Governor will continue to keep you informed as progress is made on these matters. Responses from HMPPS to other issues raised are provided in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I are truly grateful for the vital role that Independent Monitoring Boards play across the estate. We extend our sincerest thanks to you and your team for your continued dedication and commitment to HMP Coldingley.

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 COLDINGLEY: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 AUGUST 2024 – 31 JULY 2025

HMPPS Comments on Matters Raised in the Report

Staff Retention

As noted by the Board, staff attrition rates have improved positively in the current reporting year compared to the previous year, and we are pleased to note that prisoners at HMP Coldingley have benefitted from increased staffing levels. That said, we acknowledge that further work is required to improve staff retention across the wider prison estate. To support this, HMPPS has developed a retention strategy aligned with broader initiatives focused on employee experience, lifecycle, and engagement. Accompanying this strategy is a retention toolkit that outlines Local, Regional, and National interventions targeting the key drivers of attrition. Establishments use this toolkit to embed tailored Retention Plans.

In 2021, a new exit interview process was introduced to facilitate in-depth conversations with departing staff, providing them with an opportunity to share their reasons for leaving. The interview questions are based on the ten drivers of attrition identified in the retention strategy and toolkit, enabling us to gather meaningful insights into employee satisfaction and experience. Feedback from the exit interviews helps to shape and determine interventions. In addition to exit interview data, the Retention Research Team, led by an Occupational Psychologist, conducts research into the drivers of attrition with the aim of identifying potential causes of resignations and support the subsequent design and implementation of interventions to address the issues. The research involves one-to-one interviews and focus groups with staff across various roles, using structured questions to explore their experiences and perceptions of factors contributing to attrition.

Since the launch of the retention strategy, toolkit and exit interview process in 2021, a new retention oversight process was introduced in August 2022. This process targets priority sites, including those with the highest attrition rates or rising concerns. Other factors, such as attendance and assaults on staff, also inform prioritisation. All establishments are reviewed monthly and brought into scope based on need. HMP Coldingley underwent a retention deep dive in early 2024, followed by a retention review conversation in November 2024.

HMPPS remains committed to strengthening the support, training, and value it provides to Prison Officers, recognising that these elements are essential to improving staff retention. At the heart of this commitment is the Enable Programme, a psychologically and operationally informed workforce transformation initiative. Enable is designed to reshape how we train, develop, lead, and support prison staff, with the ultimate goal of creating safer, more supportive working environments where staff feel valued and empowered.

By investing in staff development and wellbeing, Enable aims to ensure that officers are confident in their skills and equipped to make a meaningful difference in their roles. This approach not only enhances operational effectiveness but also contributes to a more positive and sustainable working culture, one where staff are more likely to stay and thrive. A key part of this transformation is the Foundation Training Reform, a long-term review of the initial training offer for Prison Officers. The future model will focus on experiential learning delivered over a 12-month period, ensuring new officers are better supported from the outset of their careers. This extended and immersive approach is designed to build confidence, competence, and a stronger sense of belonging.

To support officers beyond their initial induction, Enable has introduced Core Capability Packages. These are targeted at staff with 6–24 months of service and cover 16 essential capability areas. The packages are designed to reinforce skills, boost confidence, and demonstrate continued investment in staff development. Prisons also have the flexibility to deliver these packages more widely, tailoring support to local needs.

Locally, HMP Coldingley continues to work diligently to support staff and improve retention, through a range of initiatives focused on management, communication, safety and wellbeing.

Prisoner Property

HMPPS acknowledges the Board's concerns regarding the management of prisoners' property, an area to which we are currently giving increased attention. We are carefully considering the findings of the IMB national thematic report, which highlights the impact of property loss on prisoners. In addition, insights from Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations, following a thematic review of property-related complaints over the past five years, are being taken into account. In response to these findings, Governors and senior leaders have been reminded of key principles in property handling, including the importance of adhering to volumetric control limits. Ensuring compliance with these limits is essential, as only property within these limits will transfer with prisoners when they move between establishments. Further consultation with prisons is underway to address additional issues raised in the reports.

Locally, HMP Coldingley has implemented measures to strengthen its systems. This includes actively promoting the use of Body Worn Video Cameras during the opening of parcels in Reception and in response to incidents, enhancing transparency and accountability. The prison also remains committed to treating all property with dignity and respect, particularly during transfer and will continue to work closely with sending prisons to ensure property is appropriately managed and transferred.

Mental Health Transfers

HMPPS recognise that prisons and other places of detention are not the right environment for individuals with severe mental illness and are committed to ensuring that people in contact with the Criminal Justice System can access appropriate and timely support to meet their needs. The Mental Health Bill, now in its final stages, introduces a new statutory time limit of 28-days for the transfer of patients with a mental disorder from prison and other places of detention to hospital. This time limit, together with operational improvements, aims to reduce unnecessary delays and deliver swifter access to treatment.

The MoJ are working with the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England (NHSE), the Welsh Government, the Home Office and the Youth Custody Service to create an implementation plan which sets out the operational improvements necessary to fulfil our commitment to implementing these reforms 18-24 months post Royal Assent. The MoJ are also working closely with Health and Justice partners to support the development of the recently established Mental Health and Justice Strategic Advisory Group. This group will improve oversight of the transfer process by bringing together key partners across operational delivery to scrutinise data and intelligence on transfer timeliness and identify and deliver solutions to address common causes of delays.

At a local level, NHSE commissioned a health needs assessment at HMP Coldingley. Following this review, Central and North West London (CNWL) NHS Foundation Trust has been tasked with evaluating the services and support they can provide within their delivery model for the Care and Separation Unit (CSU). This work is ongoing and will be monitored through contract review meetings. In parallel, NHSE is leading a regional programme focused on mental health transfers and remissions in prison, aimed at improving timeliness of access and reducing delays in transfer to meet the new statutory 28-day timeframe.

Replacement for the Sycamore Tree Restorative Justice Programme

The Sycamore Tree programme was withdrawn nationally following a review under the National Framework for Interventions, which sets evidence-based standards for all rehabilitative interventions. Both the internal panel and the Independent Correctional Service Advice and Accreditation Panel concluded that the programme did not meet the minimum threshold for approval. This decision was not linked to funding. HMPPS nonetheless recognises the valuable role played by Prison Fellowship in supporting those in custody and looks forward to continuing the partnership through activities outside the Sycamore Tree programme.

Currently, there is no direct national replacement for Sycamore Tree, as programmes primarily focused on victim empathy have not been shown to reduce reoffending. However, if prisons identify a gap in provision supported by population needs data, they may explore local options, provided these meet the national standards set out in the policy Framework. HMPPS offers a broad rehabilitation provision, including but not limited to, Accredited Programmes and Restorative Justice. Where appropriate, based on risk level and criminogenic needs, individuals can be directed to these existing options to meet those needs and/or engage in restorative practices. Chaplaincy also continues to offer a range of faith and belief-based services for those wishing to engage with them.

Locally, HMP Coldingley continues to support prisoners through key work and Prison Offender Manager (POM) engagement. In 2026, the prison will also commence delivering the Building Choices accredited intervention.