



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for
Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Stafford
54 Gaol Road
Stafford
ST16 3AW

MoJ ref: SUB129501

4 December 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP STAFFORD: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 MAY 2024 – 30 APRIL 2025**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Stafford which I have read with care. I understand that during the reporting year you were operating below the recommended complement of Board members, however despite this, you have managed to maintain regular visits to the prison which is impressive. Your hard work and dedication in producing this report is truly appreciated.

I was saddened to read that there were eleven deaths in custody during the reporting year. Whilst ten of these were expected due to natural causes, these deaths will have understandably impacted both staff and fellow prisoners and I offer my condolences to all their friends and family. I am reassured by your observations around the quality of care provided to the prisoners by the healthcare team.

I have previously acknowledged the Board's continued concerns about the presence of legionella within the water supply of the prison. I would like to assure the Board that the current areas with legionella do not impact on healthcare service, delivery or patient care and that a written plan for the control and mitigation of legionella is in place which includes quarterly testing.

I note that to date there has been significant capital investment of approximately £2m to mitigate the risk and improve water safety at the establishment, supported by a rigorous flushing system and temperate checks to maintain water safety standards. The final phase of works involves bypassing the water tanks on two wings and once this work is completed, these wings will operate on a mains water supply, significantly reducing the risk of future legionella contamination.

I acknowledge the Board's concerns regarding resettlement support for prisoners convicted of sexual offences (PCoSOs) and the application of Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL). While ROTL remains a key resettlement tool, its availability is determined by a prisoner's sentence type and assessed risk level. Most PCoSOs are subject to more restrictive ROTL arrangements due to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements eligibility, risk assessments, or sentence classification. I will continue to assess the impact of current policy frameworks and remain open to considering whether further examination of this area may be appropriate to support rehabilitation outcomes.

It is important that released prisoners have the best chance of reintegrating into society. Gaining employment is a key factor in reducing reoffending, but I recognise that this can be challenging. The HMPPS Creating Future Opportunities programme delivers additional resettlement services in custody and the community to support individuals into mainstream opportunities, particularly in relation to employment, training and education for those individuals who experience challenges or face barriers preventing them from successfully reintegrating into their local community.

Locally, HMP Stafford has been working with its Regional Employment Lead to welcome businesses to the prison to help break the stigma around PCOSOs and demonstrate the valuable skills, experience and positive work ethic they can offer. HMP Stafford will continue to commission qualifications and vocational skills through the new Prison Education Service contracts to help prisoners learn valuable skills and gain academic and vocational qualifications to improve their employment prospects. Additionally, I am pleased to report that HMP Stafford have engaged with the 'Entrepreneurs Unlocked' company, to explore how to support self-employment for PCOSOs.

I am pleased that the Board recognises the hard work of staff and prisoners in keeping the prison clean and tidy and that HMP Stafford remained a generally safe prison which was valued by prisoners. I was also pleased to read about the commitment from the Governor and Senior Leadership Team to equality, diversity and inclusion work which promotes a safer, respectful and effective environment.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I recognise the important contribution of Independent Monitoring Boards, and we really appreciate your ongoing commitment on behalf of HMP Stafford.

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

Prison Infrastructure

A number of improvements to the infrastructure at HMP Stafford have been completed including resurfacing roads and pathways and the replacement of plate exchangers on E and F wings. Work is also due to commence on replacing the roofing to the industries and estates complex and upgrading CCTV on D wing and in the Segregation Unit.

Additional funding has been requested to enable refurbishments to showers on E and F wings, one of the boiler houses and an aspirator system upgrade. Unfortunately, demands for maintenance are much greater than the available funding. Therefore, once a bid for a project is received, HMPPS has to prioritise works very carefully to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency.