



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Wandsworth
Heathfield Road
Wandsworth
London
SW18 3HS

MoJ ref: SUB129612

1 December 2025

Dear Chair,

**HMP WANDSWORTH: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1 JUNE 2024 – 31 MAY 2025**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Wandsworth. I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations, particularly as you were short of members and continued to operate with some vacancies.

I was saddened to hear that four prisoners had died during the reporting year in custody, one of which appeared to be from natural causes. I offer my condolences to all their friends and family. I note that there are still inquests outstanding but would like to reassure the Board that any recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman will be acted upon.

In respect of the Board's query about the improvements being made at HMP Wandsworth, I can confirm that as of 20 October 2025, £37.6 million has been committed to improvement work. This investment will support a programme of window replacements, major fire safety improvements, shower expansion and refurbishments as well as developing projects to replace the chapel roof and rebuild the recycling centre. The works are progressing according to the programme, having previously commenced in the roof spaces of the Trinity building before moving into the accommodation areas of K Wing in September 2025. The project to upgrade CCTV is scheduled to complete in April 2026.

The Board will be aware that HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has invested £5 million to create 84 specialist roles in prisons to speed up the removal of offenders with no legal right to remain in the UK. These specialists identify prisoners seeking voluntary departure and work with the Home Office to progress deportation cases quickly. Since April 2025, they have improved compliance, streamlined processes, and removed barriers to removal. At HMP Wandsworth, where the Foreign National Offender (FNO) population exceeds 200, two specialists have been deployed.

Specialists also support staff by providing expertise on FNO management, promoting translation services, and assisting with Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) reviews where immigration concerns affect risk. National policies ensure FNO needs are met, including free five-minute calls for prisoners without visits, flexible phone access for time zone differences, and essential information in multiple formats and languages during early days in custody.

The HMPPS FNO Information Hub provides guidance on immigration processes, translated resources, newsletters, and online surgeries for staff. Locally, HMP Wandsworth offers quarterly newsletters in key

languages, monthly language reviews for Radio Wanno and Wanno TV, translated posters, monthly FNO forums, and life skills training delivered by Catch 22, which was launched in September 2025.

I acknowledge your concerns about staffing. As outlined in my update to you, HMPPS is advancing workforce transformation through the Enable Programme, which strengthens training, support, and wellbeing for Prison Officers to improve retention and operational effectiveness. The Pentonville Academy Pilot introduced a 15-week in-prison training model for new Band 3 officers, blending classroom and on-wing experience to build confidence from day one, with early feedback showing high engagement and positive outcomes. Future plans include a scalable hybrid model. Nationally, Enable delivers a 12-month experiential Foundation Training Reform and Core Capability Packages for staff with 6–24 months' service, covering 16 essential skills. Locally, the Governor has committed to two monthly training shutdown mornings for targeted upskilling sessions and introduced a monthly training meeting to prioritise needs and coordinate delivery.

As previously outlined, HMPPS operates a centralised recruitment model for Band 3–5 prison officers to ensure consistent standards, meet high-volume demand, and support future estate expansion. HMP Berwyn piloted a two-stage local recruitment initiative to assess whether increased local autonomy improves candidate quality and retention. While the pilot enhanced candidate understanding and experience, it proved resource-intensive, delayed completion, and lacked robustness due to the omission of interactive assessments such as role play. It was concluded that the tested local models were unsustainable alongside operational duties. However, HMP Wandsworth has introduced "Taster Tours", offering applicants an insight into prison life. Delivered by New Colleague Mentors, these tours have been effective in helping candidates make informed decisions about continuing their application.

It was encouraging to receive your positive feedback on the Remand Project, which recommenced in October 2024. It is most impressive that in eight months, the team managed over 1,000 cases and closed 850, providing much needed support to remand prisoners. I was also pleased to note the establishment of the leavers' lounge in the reception area, providing a safe and supportive space for prison leavers. It is commendable that this has been recognised nationally as an example of good practice, promoting important collaboration between staff and prisoners to prepare for release.

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. 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 vital role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we appreciate your ongoing dedication on behalf of HMP Wandsworth.

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 WANDSWORTH: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2024 – 31 MAY 2025

HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

Urgent Notification (UN) and Independent Review of Progress

Progress has been made since invocation of the Urgent Notification with the Independent Review of Progress by HMI Prisons (April 2025) reporting improvements in all areas, notably reducing violence, self-harm, and drug access. We recognise that there is further work to do and since June 2025, HMP Wandsworth has been supported by the Prison Performance Support Programme (PPSP), with an on-site Improvement Lead delivering an 18-month plan focused on Decency, Safety, Security, Activity, People, and Culture. Progress is monitored monthly by a Local Improvement Board chaired by the Governor.

HMP Wandsworth also participates in the Sustained Improvement Support Programme, a three-to-five-year initiative for five prisons that provides ongoing central support, with progress reviewed bi-monthly by the London Area Executive Director.

Prisoners' Property

HMPPS acknowledges the Board's concerns regarding the management of prisoners' property and is actively addressing this issue. Careful consideration is being given to the findings of the IMB national thematic report on the impact of property loss on prisoners, as well as insights from Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations following their thematic review of property-related complaints over the past five years. In response to these reports, Governors and senior leaders have been reminded of key requirements for property handling, including strict adherence to volumetric control limits. Additionally, consultation is underway with prisons to explore further areas highlighted in the reports and identify opportunities for improvement.

Furthermore, HMP Wandsworth have implemented several measures to strengthen property management at HMP Wandsworth. These include:

- Strict compliance with cell clearance protocols – ensuring staff do not accept property from wings unless proper procedures are followed, improving accountability and reducing risk of misplacement.
- Accurate tagging and documentation – with all property clearly labelled with the prisoner's name and location, and property cards fully completed to maintain a reliable audit trail.
- Monthly Prison Council Meetings, providing prisoners with a forum to raise property-related concerns directly with managers.

Contractual Delays

Since 2023, replacement contracts have been subject to new UK legislation designed to streamline procurement, broaden market engagement — particularly with Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME's) — and strengthen public sector control over persistent poor performance. While complex procurements remain reliant on internal processes, MoJ Commercial has introduced a streamlined governance framework to reduce delays. Upcoming contracts will incorporate enhanced quality controls, supported by renewed local Quality Improvement Group meetings to ensure accountability and delivery standards.

Mental Health and Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT)

All people in prison, including those held on remand, have access to integrated mental health services commissioned by NHS England. This includes access to a range of treatments and interventions within

prison as set out in the national service specification for mental health care in prisons. Together with NHS England, we will continue to improve services in prison to ensure that people have access to timely and effective mental health care that is tailored to their needs.

HMPPS recognises that prisons are not appropriate settings for individuals with severe mental illness. The Mental Health Bill, now at Report Stage in the House of Commons, introduces a statutory 28-day limit for transferring patients with mental disorders from custody to hospital. This measure, alongside operational improvements, aims to reduce delays and provide faster access to treatment.

The Ministry of Justice is collaborating with DHSC, NHS England, the Welsh Government, the Home Office, and the Youth Custody Service to develop an implementation plan for these reforms, expected 18–24 months after Royal Assent. Additionally, the newly established Mental Health and Justice Strategic Advisory Group will enhance oversight of transfer processes by reviewing data, monitoring timeliness, and addressing systemic causes of delay.

While the increase in ACCT cases is concerning, it reflects improved awareness, early identification, and proactive intervention for individuals in distress. Efforts remain focused on strengthening early support and reducing repeat ACCT openings through enhanced multidisciplinary collaboration. Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust continues to work closely with HMP Wandsworth and NHS England to manage rising mental health caseloads and complex referrals. The Integrated Mental Health Team operates a multidisciplinary model including psychiatrists, psychologists, Registered Mental Health Nurse, occupational therapists, and Support, Time and Recovery (workers).

Additional investment has introduced the Enhanced Support Service and a Safer Custody Lead Nurse, who works alongside the Safer Custody team to support vulnerable individuals. Recent improvements to referral, triage, and assessment processes have enabled earlier access to mental health care and broadened support beyond severe and enduring mental illness.