



HM Prison &
Probation Service



**HM PRISON
SERVICE**

Public Sector Prisons

HMPPS Submission to the Prison Service Pay Review Body

HMPPS (England & Wales) Evidence

2026/27



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Executive Summary	3
The Remit Group.....	5
Affordability	6
1: Pay Proposals 2026/27	9
Overview of Prison Service Pay Proposals 2026/27	9
Summary of Pay Proposals 2026/27	12
2: Evidence of key developments, priorities and areas of investment for the coming year and beyond	32
Introduction	32
Prison Workforce.....	51
Annex A: Additional Evidence Requests	88
Annex B: Exit Interview Methodology and Data Overview	94
Annex C: Pay Tables	100
Annex D: Prison Officer Recruitment Process	107



Introduction

Executive Summary

Government Evidence and PSPRB Remit

- a. This document sets out evidence from His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), provided to the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) to inform the 2026/27 pay round. HMPPS is an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) with responsibility for prisons and probation in England and Wales. HMPPS is also responsible for adult offender management services in the community and custody, and for youth custody across England and Wales, within the framework set by the Government.
- b. On 22nd July 2025, the Minister for Prisons issued a remit letter to the PSPRB to commence the 2026/27 pay round. The remit letter emphasised the continued ambition to accelerate the pay round timeline compared to previous years. This builds on the progress made in 2025/26, where the pay award was announced two months earlier than the previous year. The Government's intention is to deliver pay awards as close to the start of the pay year of 1st April as possible.
- c. The 2025/26 pay award represented a substantial increase of at least 4% to all frontline prison staff, delivering another real terms pay rise on top of the one provided in 2024/25. The continued acceleration of the PSPRB timetable means we have less time to assess the impact of the 2025/26 award, but we are tracking the early effects of the award and expect to see a positive impact on recruitment and retention. The overall resourcing across the prison workforce has continued to stabilise however, there are persistent recruitment and retention challenges in certain areas of the country, and specific parts of the estate. We remain committed to ensuring prisons are sufficiently resourced and that we retain and build levels of experience, both of which are fundamental to delivering quality outcomes in prisons.

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- d. HMPPS has asked that the PSPRB make affordability an important part of its consideration when making recommendations for the 2026/27 round, recognising the significant investment in pay in successive years. Our affordability position is set out in the below sections.

2026/27 Pay Proposals

- e. Our pay proposals for 2026/27 continue our objective to achieve a difficult balance between affordability and what HMPPS considers to be the best possible pay award for staff for the year ahead and to support recruitment and retention, in the context of the operational challenges for the Prison Service.
- f. Our proposals recommend a headline increase is applied to all Fair and Sustainable (F&S) staff. The increases set out in our pay proposals are mindful of the Department's overall affordability position and the need to manage pay bill growth. HMPPS also recommends additional targeting to Band 2 Operational Support Grades (OSG) – our lowest paid staff – and if required, will also apply an increase effective from 1 April 2026 to meet the National Living Wage if required.
- g. Continuing from the evidence provided in prior evidence submissions, HMPPS considers the continued use of Market Supplements to be an effective tool for investing in a minority of localised sites that experience acute recruitment and retention challenges. Throughout the 2025/26 round, HMPPS updated the PSPRB on our progress to introduce an evidence-based framework to support the long-term use of Market Supplements. This was introduced from 1st April 2025, and the first annual review of Market Supplement arrangements under the framework is planned for autumn 2025. We intend to update PSPRB on the review process throughout the 2026/27 round. This evidence submission also responds to a number of points raised by PSPRB regarding Market Supplements in their 2025/26 report.

Content of the evidence

- h. This document sets out our detailed pay proposals for 2026/27, as well as a range of evidence and information to assist with the PSPRB's work. This



includes the context on Government and Department affordability, strategic priorities, and details of operational and policy developments across the prison estate and priorities for prisons over the coming years.

- i. This document also provides the information requested by the PSPRB in its 2025/26 report. In some cases, where projects and policies are in development, HMPPS has committed to providing further information at oral evidence or later in the year. Where the data required needs to be shared on an Official-Sensitive basis, this will be done directly with the Office for Pay Review Bodies (OPRB).

- j. This document is comprised of two chapters:

Chapter 1: Pay Proposals – this chapter will set out our pay strategy and pay proposals for 2026/27.

Chapter 2: Evidence of key developments, priorities, and areas of investment for the coming year and beyond.

The Remit Group

- k. The PSPRB remit group comprises all Prison Governors, Operational Managers, Prison Officers and Operational Support Grades (OSGs), the vast majority of whom are employed on 'Fair & Sustainable' (F&S) terms. There are now 366 staff on 'closed terms' of which 102 (including 23 in operational roles) still do not benefit financially from opting into F&S. There is also a 'read across' to the vast majority of non-operational and semi-operational roles due to the common pay and grading structure within HMPPS. There is also a 'read across' to the vast majority of non-operational and semi-operational roles due to the common pay and grading structure within HMPPS.
- l. The costs presented in this evidence submission are for HMPPS. HMPPS currently manages His Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS), the Youth Custody Service (YCS) and the Probation Service. In addition, it oversees private sector provision for offenders, managing contracts for privately run prisons, youth custody facilities and prisoner escort services.

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- m. HMPPS works to protect the public and reduce reoffending by delivering the sentences and orders of the courts, supporting rehabilitation and helping offenders to reform their lives, whilst ensuring best value for money from public resources within a custodial setting.

Affordability

- n. The Government accepted the 13 recommendations made by the PSPRB in their 2025/26 report, at a significant cost. HMPPS estimated that the 2025/26 recommendations will cost MoJ £122m. This was significantly higher than the £79.9m affordability proposals set out by HMPPS in our written evidence to PSPRB for 2025/26. Despite this, the recommendations were accepted in order to support the improvement of public services, continue to stabilise our prison services and ensure prisons can recruit and retain the staff that they need. It recognised the unwavering commitment and dedication of prison staff who have continued to protect the public. However, to afford the award, tough decisions were made on spending and reprioritisation. No further central funding for the award was given, and MoJ/HMPPS made difficult decisions on funding by finding savings from elsewhere within budgets. It is hoped that the PSPRB's recommendations for 2026/27 will strike a balance between fair pay and value for money for the taxpayer.
- o. Following the PSPRB's 2025/26 recommendations, HMPPS uplifted the base salary of Band 3 Prison Officers (on the National rate, 39 hours with 20% unsocial hours) from £34,494 to £35,875. Our Band 2 OSGs received a 4% increase to the spot rate, in addition to the increase to the National Living Wage (NLW) which was applied from 1 April 2025. OSGs who work unsocial hours also received a temporary increase to the unsocial hours allowance from 20% to 25%, until 31 March 2027. This amounted to an increase of up to 10.1% for OSGs.
- p. Although still important to our staff, exit interview data shows that when staff are asked what the primary reason for their departure is, Pay and Reward no longer consistently features in the top 5 causes cited having dropped out in May 2023, and currently ranking 8th. This reflects the high level of pay awards



delivered in recent years, with above inflationary pay increases (5% and 4% respectively) awarded in successive years, recognised by the PSPRB in their intention to now maintain the improved market position of Prison Service pay. The overall funding and affordability picture remains challenging both for HMPPS and the Department, and future pay recommendations will be considered in that context.

- q. As set out in our remit letter to the PSPRB, the cost of future PSPRB recommendations will need to be balanced against other prison priorities including capacity through an increase to prison places, and to deliver reforms recommended through the Independent Sentencing Review, as well as wider pressures across MoJ/HMPPS including in the Probation Service.

Macroeconomic context

- r. The UK economy has shown resilience to economic uncertainty of global trade and volatility in domestic demand, emerging as the fastest-growing G7 economy cumulatively across the first half of the year. Looking ahead, expectations for 2026 have softened compared to the spring: the most recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast (July 2025) was unchanged at 1.4%, compared to 1.5% in January, while the latest Bank of England (August 2025) forecast was 1.25%, compared to 1.5% in February. There has been a persistent slowdown in UK productivity growth since the Global Financial Crisis, which has worsened since the Covid-19 pandemic as productivity growth has largely flatlined. Sustained productivity growth is required to support sustainable growth in real wages.
- s. Low and stable inflation is a key component of a stable macroeconomic environment and a prerequisite for sustainable economic growth and improved living standards. Headline Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation has risen over the past year to 3.8% in August – above the 2% target - primarily due to one-off factors such as a rise in global energy market prices and regulated water bills. Services inflation, an indicator of underlying inflationary pressure, has fallen by 1.0 ppts since the start of Q1 24-25. According to the Bank of England's August Monetary Policy Report, inflation is



expected to return sustainably to target in 2026/27. Overall, risks to inflation remain two-sided, reflecting domestic cost pressure from wage growth which has been a major factor in services inflation persistence, and prices as well as external pressures from energy markets and trade policy.

- t. The UK economy remains exposed to several risks, including potential global spillovers from new US trade tariffs, heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, the ongoing impact of Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Overall, risks to UK growth remain elevated and skewed to the downside.

Labour Market Context

- u. The unemployment rate has risen over the last year, reaching 4.7% in the three months to July 2025. Wider sources also suggest that the labour market has continued to loosen. Vacancy levels in the economy have fallen over the past three years, and Real Time Information (RTI) data on payrolled employees shows a gradual fall over the last seven months.
- v. Measures of average wage growth have historically been higher than median pay settlements, as they are affected by compositional changes in the labour force and factors such as changes to working hours. Settlement data are the most comparable data to PRB decisions, as they are a direct measure of consolidated pay awards, and are not directly affected by other factors such as changes to working hours or changes in the composition of employment. According to Brightmine, median settlements across the economy were 3% in Q1 and Q2 2025. Relative to this, the 2025/26 award of 4% for prison service staff should support an improvement in recruitment and retention.
- w. Average earnings growth is forecast to slow further over the coming months, with the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) expecting earnings growth to fall to 2.2% in 2026/27. The Government has brought forward the pay round again even further this year, which makes it particularly important that PRBs consider forecasts for wage growth.



1: Pay Proposals 2026/27

Key Strategic Objectives

- 1.1. This year's proposals focus on four clear strategic objectives:
- **Support retention and motivation** of both experienced and newly recruited operational staff across a challenging estate.
 - **Target investment to our lower paid staff**
 - **Invest in Fair and Sustainable only** to erode the remaining pay differential between F&S and Closed Grades and offer incentives for staff to "Opt-In".
 - Remain within the Department's **affordability envelope**.

Overview of Prison Service Pay Proposals 2026/27

- 1.2. HMPPS' proposals for 2026/27 builds on our work to support the motivation and retention of operational staff within the Agency's allocated funding, alongside maintaining the changes already undertaken in reforming the pay structures for the Officer and Managerial Grades.
- 1.3. **Recruitment and retention** – investing in a headline increase for all staff in F&S, with additional targeting at the Band 2 spot rate (our lowest paid staff).
- 1.4. At the time of submitting our evidence, the 2026 National Living Wage has not been confirmed. We are targeting additional investment to Band 2 in recognition of high levels of turnover at this grade and the OSG role being a gateway to becoming a Prison Officer. Evidence continues to show that if a member of staff has been an OSG before becoming a Prison Officer, they are more likely to remain in the role.
- 1.5. Applying the same headline increase across each of the Band 3 and above grades in F&S, maintains the existing differentials between the pay bands and continues to protect the promotion policy by ensuring staff receive a 10% pay



increase on promotion. It is key that the financial incentive is retained upon promotion, to strengthen our talent pipeline.

- 1.6. **Structural reforms** – maintaining the length of the existing pay bands for managerial grades, enabling progression through the pay ranges within 3 years.
- 1.7. Increasing the rate of Payment Plus, which has not been increased since 2016, whilst the work following Recommendation 14 from the PSPRB's 2024/25 report continues. HMPPS recognises the value of Payment Plus has eroded and wish for the value of Payment Plus to be at least the hourly rate for Band 3s, ensuring that staff are signing up for Payment Plus as required. This is an interim proposal for 2026/27 and we may return to PSPRB in 2027/28 with additional proposals on Payment Plus, in line with expected timelines to conclude work on Recommendation 14.
- 1.8. **By targeting investment in F&S pay**, there will be a continued positive pay differential in favour of the modernised F&S structures over the Closed Grades. Closing this gap between old and new rates and removing the two-tier workforce has been a long-term ambition of the Department. This gap has now been closed in the majority of instances, with F&S pay overtaking that of Closed Grade counterparts. This makes the pay structures more transparent and reduces the numbers of staff on outdated terms and conditions, with a single pay framework that is market facing.
- 1.9. The PSPRB recommendation for 2023/24 marked a watershed for F&S salaries in overtaking the majority of the Closed Grade pay rates and the PSPRB acknowledged that there will be no more pay awards recommended for those who would benefit from opting in. HMPPS will continue to make proposals only for those few remaining Closed Grades that do not yet benefit from opting in.
- 1.10. **Market Supplements** - HMPPS intends to maintain Market Supplements at their current levels of £2,000 for 'Red' sites and £3,500 for 'Red Plus' and HMPPS does not support any blanket national erosion of Market Supplements. While HMPPS continues to see overall improvements in



recruitment and retention nationally, concentrated challenges at specific sites remain. It is, therefore, critical that HMPPS maintains targeted Market Supplement payments to support operational capacity and stability where required. On this basis, and as communicated to the PSPRB in last year's evidence round, HMPPS has implemented an evidence-based framework from April 2025. The Framework introduces an annual review process to support the continued use of Market Supplements as an effective tool for managing acute recruitment and retention challenges within the Prison Officer role. The first annual review is expected to take place in autumn 2025. Where the annual review finds sustained recruitment and retention improvements at a prison receiving a Market Supplement, the framework allows for a gradual and targeted erosion of the payment without a decrease in staff take-home pay. Further information on the operation of the Framework and our continued use of Market Supplements is at paragraph 2.195.

- 1.11. We continue to track the impact of the 2025/26 pay award. The earlier publication of written evidence for 2026/27 means we have less time to assess the impact of the award, and its impact is not yet fully evident in centrally collated recruitment and retention data at the point of this publication. However, we expect to see a positive impact on recruitment and retention. Whilst the Prison Service has experienced recruitment and retention challenges in recent years and while challenges remain in a small number of sites, HMPPS has seen an improved and more stable national staffing picture. Early indications from exit interviews continue to show that Pay and Reward has become less likely to be the key factor for leaving and has not featured in the top 5 drivers of attrition since May 2023. Our proposals target specific aspects of the pay offer and negate any fundamental changes to allowances for 2026/27.
- 1.12. The pay proposals for 2026/27 and their estimated costs are summarised in Table 1. See further detail, including policy drivers and rationale in the following section.

Summary of Pay Proposals 2026/27

Table 1: 2026/27 Proposals – Summary with costs¹

Recruitment and Retention / Headline pay awards			Costs £m
1	Band 2	3% increase to spot rate, including additional targeting.	7.8
2	Bands 3 to 12	Headline percentage increase of 2.5% for all staff.	54.4
Affordability and Targeted Investment in F&S			Costs £m
5	Closed Grades	A non-consolidated award of 2.5% for staff who cannot opt into F&S.	<0.1
Ensure Progression from Minima to Maxima within 3 years			Costs £m
6	Bands 3 & 5	Progression of one pay point for those below maxima.	6.0
7	Bands 6 & 8 to 11	Progression of 3.33% (capped at maxima). No non-consolidated balance payments.	4.2
Affordability - other allowances			Costs £m
8	Payment Plus	Increase to £25.	4.9
Total cost			77.2

¹ Estimated cost figures for 1-7 are based on data as at 31st July 2025 and for 8 based on data from 2024/25 financial year. Costs are rounded, so figures may not sum due to rounding

Detailed Pay Proposals

1.13. This section sets out the detail of the above proposals which are grouped around specific strategic headlines, as previously set out at paragraph 1.1.

Support Recruitment and Retention

We propose for F&S Bands 2-5 and Bands 6-12:

Proposal 1: Uplift the Band 2 spot rate by 3.0%.

1.14. **Proposal 2:** A headline increase for all staff (Bands 3 to 12) as a fixed percentage value of 2.5%.

1.15. **Proposal 3:** The headline increase of 2.5% will be applied to all spot rates (Band 4, 7 and 12).

1.16. **Proposal 4:** The headline increase of 2.5% will be applied to each pay point in Bands 3 and 5.

1.17. **Proposal 5:** The headline increase of 2.5% will be applied to the pay band minimum and maximum in Bands 6, 8 and 11.

Additional Rationale and Key Drivers

1.18. Applying the same percentage universally to all grades, except for additional targeting at Band 2, means that the existing pay range lengths and differentials between the pay bands will be maintained.

1.19. HMPPS has seen significant investment in pay in recent years; another round of high investment is not affordable or sustainable. If the headline pay award values are higher for Band 3 than above, it will significantly lessen the financial incentive for promotion and potentially re-introduce pay band overlaps that we have invested heavily into F&S to avoid in previous years. It particularly remains important that increases at Band 3 are not worth more than the bands above it (as a result of the significant increase to Band 3 in 2022/23), which would have a particular impact on promotion to Band 4 at sites with Market Supplements.

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- 1.20. HMPPS views the OSG role as a gateway to being a Prison Officer and recognises that retention remains challenging for Band 2 OSGs compared to other operational grades. The proposed targeting provides higher increases to address this, whilst also continuing to maintain headroom between the NLW and Band 2 spot rate which aligns with our strategic objective of targeting the lowest paid staff. It is important to balance additional targeting to the Band 2s whilst also ensuring there is a promotion incentive to Band 3, particularly with the 5% temporary uplift to the Unsocial Working Hours allowance for Band 2 OSGs as a result of the acceptance of Recommendation 11 from the PSPRB's 2025/26 report.
- 1.21. Once the 2026 National Living Wage (NLW) rate has been confirmed, HMPPS will uplift the Band 2 spot rate (and any other Closed Grade salaries still in payment) from 1 April 2026 if required to ensure they meet the NLW. Subject to any contrary recommendation from the PSPRB being accepted, this group of staff will not get the recommended increase (if higher than the National Living Wage) on top of any National Living Wage increase received in April 2026, instead the pay award will 'top-up' the overall increase.

Structural Reforms

We propose:

- 1.22. **Proposal 3** – to increase existing National to London differentials in line with the percentage headline increase as set out in **Table 2**. To increase the fixed cash pay differentials for the Fair and Sustainable Inner and Outer London zones by 2.5% and continue to be applied consistently across all bands. This will position the maxima at £3,398 and £5,167 respectively above the 37 hour National maxima.

Table 2: National to Outer London / Inner London Differentials

Available Band	Like for Like Weekly Hours Work Pattern	Differential on Maxima
		National / Inner London
2 to 5 & 7 to 11	37 hours base pay	5,167
2 to 5 & 7 to 11	37 hours Inc. 20% UHW* / RHA**	6,200
2	37 hours Inc. 25% UHW	6,459
3	38 hours Inc. ACH**** & 20% UHW	6,402
3	39 hour Inc. ACHP***	5,446
2 to 5	39 hours Inc. ACHP & 20% UHW	6,535
2	39 hours Inc. ACHP & 25% UHW	6,808
3	39 hours Inc. ACH & 20% UHW	6,602
3	40 hours Inc. ACH & 20% UHW	6,804
3	41 hours Inc. ACH & 20% UHW	7,004
		National / Outer London
2 to 5 & 7 to 9 & 11	37 hours base pay	3,398
2 to 5 & 7 to 9 & 11	37 hours Inc. 20% UHW / RHA	4,078
2	37 hours Inc. 25% UHW	4,248
3	38 hours Inc. ACH & 20% UHW	4,210
3	39 hour Inc. ACHP	3,582
2 to 5	39 hours Inc. ACHP & 20% UHW	4,298
2	39 hours Inc. ACHP & 25% UHW	4,478
3	39 hours Inc. ACH & 20% UHW	4,342
3	40 hours Inc. ACH & 20% UHW	4,475
3	41 hours Inc. ACH & 20% UHW	4,607

*Unsocial Hours Working

**Required Hours Addition

***Additional Committed Hours Pensionable

****Additional Committed Hours

Additional Rationale and Key Drivers

- 1.23. Shorter pay ranges have addressed pay range overlaps, where staff from the lower band overtake staff in the band above them on promotion.
- 1.24. On the pay structure for Operational Managers, HMPPS is content there is a 10% differential between the minimum and maximum for each pay band. This aligns with HMPPS' view that it should take 3 years to progress from the minimum to the maximum of the pay range. HMPPS are therefore not making any recommendation to change the length of the pay bands or any structural changes.

Targeted investment in F&S only and incentives for staff to 'opt-in'

We propose:

- 1.25. **Proposal 4** – a non-consolidated award for staff who cannot opt into F&S, with the value to be determined by the PSPRB.
- 1.26. There are 102 staff on Closed Grade terms, and in receipt of Closed Grade allowances, for whom it was not financially beneficial to opt into F&S terms in 2025/26. For this exceptional group a non-consolidated and non-pensionable award is proposed. This award will be paid only to those who would still be unable to opt into F&S without financial detriment after the 2026 pay award has been calculated. The PSPRB is invited to consider the value of the non-consolidated award proposed for this group of staff.
- 1.27. HMPPS wishes to maintain the PSPRB's approach in prior reports that no pay award be made to Closed Grade staff who would benefit financially from their F&S equivalent rate to incentivise more staff to opt into F&S.

Additional Rationale and Key Drivers

- 1.28. The proposed increase to the F&S pay scale maximum in 2026/27 may enable more staff remaining on closed terms to opt into F&S, which will be identified following implementation of the 2026 pay award.

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- 1.29. Enabling more Closed Grade staff to be in scope for being able to financially benefit from opting into F&S through an increase to F&S pay scales will also bring them into scope for future increases in F&S, removing the need for further investment in Closed Grades. HMPPS continues to have no plans to submit proposals to invest in Closed Grades in future years.

Closed Grades – Uniformed staff and Phase One Operational Managers on closed (pre-F&S) pay arrangements

We propose:

- 1.30. HMPPS proposes no pay award for Uniformed staff and Phase One Operational Managers on closed (pre-F&S) terms who would benefit financially from opting into F&S. This position supported the 2025/26 PSPRB recommendations for Closed Grade staff to be rewarded by opting into F&S terms which will enable them to receive a pay rise. HMPPS proposes making a non-consolidated award – with the value to be determined by the PSPRB – to any Closed Grade staff who would not benefit financially from opting into their F&S equivalent band following implementation of the 2026/27 pay award.
- 1.31. HMPPS continues to only focus on investment for employees on F&S terms and will no longer consider investment in Closed Grades. Employees will not be compelled to move into F&S, but HMPPS will not be investing outside of the F&S pay framework. For those limited number of Closed Grades where it would not be financially beneficial to opt-in, they will receive the non-consolidated award detailed in proposal 4.

Additional Rationale and Key Drivers

- 1.32. HMPPS recognised the significant contribution of Closed Grades with their F&S colleagues in all custodial settings. However, by making pay awards available by joining the F&S pay scales, HMPPS is signalling its investment in F&S scales and encouraging staff who wish to receive consolidated awards to opt into F&S terms.

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- 1.33. The PSPRB will be aware that all staff on closed terms and F&S work to the same job description. There is no difference in duties.
- 1.34. HMPPS will remain compliant where necessary with the Government's National Living Wage in the Closed Grades. Any Closed Grade that falls below the National Living Wage will be increased as necessary in April as required each year.

2026-27 Opt-In exercise

We propose:

- 1.35. Following the 2025/26 pay award there were 366 staff remaining in the Closed Grades. Of these, 239 (65.3%) Closed Grade staff could financially benefit from opting into F&S in 2025. The 2025/26 opt-in exercise is ongoing, and the outcome will not be known until late October. HMPPS expects to be able to provide further information about the 2025/26 opt-in exercise and the number of Closed Grade staff remaining during oral evidence.
- 1.36. During the annual opt-in exercise, a discretionary non-pensionable lump sum, calculated using the difference between Closed Grade pay and F&S pay from 1 April 2026 and the date they opt into F&S, will be paid to those who gain financially as a result of opting in.
- 1.37. Our proposal not to invest in the Closed Grades in 2026 is to further the progress made in the last 2 years in enabling more Closed Grade staff to opt into F&S. However, HMPPS proposes the same approach of no further investment in the other Closed Grades, for whom opt-in may also be financially viable, but where staff, for whatever reason, have not yet chosen to do so.
- 1.38. If the volume of staff opting in during the 2025/26 exercise is low, HMPPS will investigate whether there are any barriers or concerns that might be preventing staff from opting in.

Affordability – Pay Progression in F&S

We propose:

- 1.39. **Proposal 5** – Eligible staff in Bands 3 and 5, who are not subject to formal poor performance measures, will progress to the next pay point following pay point uplifts effective 1 April 2026.
- 1.40. **Proposal 6** – Eligible staff in Bands 8 to 11, who are not subject to formal poor performance measures, will progress by increasing pay by a further 3.33% (subject to maxima) in addition to headline percentage increases.
- 1.41. There is no progression at Bands 2, 4, 7 or 12, as these pay bands are spot rates.
- 1.42. HMPPS proposes that staff who are subject to formal performance measures will not receive pay progression. This cohort of staff are those who have received a formal written warning in relation to their performance. This will have followed prior conversations and attempts by management to support improved performance.
- 1.43. Despite no longer having a system in which pay progression is linked to end of year performance markings, HMPPS remains of the belief that performance issues having escalated to this stage is a clear marker that these staff are not meeting the expected standards and/or competence in their role to progress towards the maximum of the band.

Additional Rationale and Key Drivers

- 1.44. 3.33% progression supports HMPPS' aim for staff to reach the pay band maxima within three years, reflecting full competence within a role and mitigates any potential equal pay risk attached to paying staff below the maximum 'rate for the job' to which colleagues have already progressed.
- 1.45. HMPPS expects most staff to be fully competent within their role within three years. This is the same expectation at Bands 3 and 5 where a 3 pay point progression system already exists.

Maintaining a targeted approach to the use of Market Supplements

We propose:

- 1.46. HMPPS proposes maintaining Market Supplements at their current levels of £2,000 for 'Red' sites and £3,500 for 'Red Plus' sites.

Additional Rationale and Key Drivers

- 1.47. There remains a clear need for Market Supplements, given capacity pressures and staffing challenges at specific sites. Market Supplements are an effective tool for addressing recruitment and retention challenges at specific prisons, delivering targeted value for money. HMPPS intends to continue to use Market Supplements as a part of the long-term strategy for pay and does not support any national erosion of Market Supplements for the 2026/27 pay round.
- 1.48. As outlined to PSPRB in the 2025/26 evidence round, we have delivered an evidence-based framework from April 2025 to support the ongoing and long-term use of Market Supplements. Further detail regarding the operation of the Framework is at paragraph 2.195.

Allowances

On-call

We propose:

- 1.49. HMPPS proposes no increase to the on-call allowance in 2026/27.

Additional rationale and key drivers

- 1.50. The on-call allowance is not used commonly across the estate and, where on-call is in use, this is often linked with a rota system with no establishments reporting of issues with getting staff to volunteer. We are not aware of the on-call allowance being used to address recruitment and retention issues at a local level.

- 1.51. HMPPS' view is that the current rates of the on-call allowance are competitive and in line with wider public sector on-call rates.

Background

- 1.52. Governors may authorise payment of an on-call allowance to staff (excluding those in Bands 6 to 11 who are already in receipt of Required Hours Addition allowances (RHA) and anyone in Band 12) who have a rostered commitment to remain continuously and immediately available outside normal work hours for a period of more than 12 hours for operational reasons and are specifically required to be on-call when an operational need arises.
- 1.53. On-call allowances are not payable during normal working hours and cannot be claimed retrospectively (i.e. authorised after a period of on-call has been undertaken). Where the minimum 12 hours cannot be achieved (e.g. if placed on-call at the end of a long shift with duty the next day), the Governor may authorise payment of the full rate of weekday on-call allowance.
- 1.54. With the introduction of F&S pay structures, the decision was taken to simplify the on-call arrangements so that they were aligned with the F&S overtime policy. There are therefore 2 payment rates for on-call – one for weekdays / working days (£9.00 per 12-hour period) and a second rate for weekends / rest days (£25.00 per 24-hour period or £1.04 per hour for periods of less than 24 hours). Hours worked when called in to attend the establishment may then attract further payment through overtime.

Unsocial Hours Allowance and Required Hours Addition

We propose:

- 1.55. HMPPS proposes no increase to the Unsocial Hours allowance or RHA in 2026/27.

Additional rationale and key drivers

- 1.56. In line with there being no uplifts in 2025/26, except for the acceptance of Recommendation 11 for Band 2 OSGs in the PSPRB's 2025/26 report, we



assess that there is no new evidence to support the further increase of these allowances following uplifts in 2022/23.

- 1.57. In making that assessment, HMPPS is cognisant of equality implications and the need to ensure that the level of Unsocial Hours allowance does not exceed what can be justified as a proportionate recompense for the level of unsocial hours being worked by operational staff.
- 1.58. As part of the ongoing work in response to Recommendation 14, HMPPS will consider any impact on the Unsocial Hours allowance more widely and subsequently, RHA.

Background

- 1.59. Unsocial Hours allowance is paid in recognition that some staff are expected to regularly work unsocial hours as part of their rostered shift pattern. It is calculated at 20% of contracted hours worked and is pensionable.
- 1.60. Payment of RHA is for roles in Bands 6 to 11, where the role requires the incumbent to regularly work unpredictable and unsocial hours, and be on call to attend their office or establishment at any time, when required. Band 12 roles are not eligible for the RHA payment as the Band 12 spot rate is considered to be inclusive of RHA. It is calculated at 20% of base pay and is pensionable.

Payment Plus, OSG Overtime and OSG Unsocial Hours working

- 1.61. **Proposal 8:** HMPPS proposes a £3 increase to the rate of Payment Plus from £22 to £25, with no changes to the rate of OSG overtime and OSG Unsocial Hours working following the acceptance of Recommendation 11 in the PSPRB's 2025/26 report.

Additional rationale and key drivers

- 1.62. HMPPS continues work to fulfil the requirements of 'Recommendation 14' from 2024/25 which reads:



“Recommendation 14: We recommend that, prior to the end of October 2024, His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service provides us with an overview of the pilot schemes and new initiatives it is running in relation to the reduction in the use of Payment Plus and Operational Support Grade overtime. We also request data on the percentage of hours being worked unsocially by Operational Support Grades nationally and broken down by establishment. We further recommend that His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service provides information in its written evidence on discussions with the unions it has had on Payment Plus, Operational Support Grade overtime and Operational Support Grade unsocial hours, along with a clear rationale for what it is proposing, even if no changes are being requested.”

- 1.63. HMPPS continues to collect and analyse a large volume of data and assess what this indicates across the prison estate. We will keep PSPRB updated on progress. The accelerated nature of the 2026/27 round has meant that HMPPS has not had the time required to fulfil all of the necessary analysis required for Payment Plus, OSG Overtime and OSG Unsociable Hours working, but the progress that HMPPS has made is set out below.
- 1.64. In our 2025/26 written evidence to the PSPRB, HMPPS delivered the request to provide an overview of the pilot schemes and new initiatives being run in relation to the reduction in the use of Payment Plus and OSG overtime. Furthermore, in July 2025, we shared data with PSPRB and the Prison Officers’ Association (POA) regarding the proportion of hours being worked unsocially by Band 2 OSGs, by prison.
- 1.65. Following initial engagement with POA in July 2025 regarding unsocial hours working by operational prison staff, we have agreed to undertake a review of night working in prisons. The purpose of the review is to identify the drivers behind the current distribution of unsocial and nights working, and to consider whether alternative approaches could meet our nights commitment and either a) more evenly distribute nights across the workforce, b) re-target nights working to specific roles, or c) provide alternative compensation to those working them.

- 1.66. HMPPS will continue to update the PSPRB at oral evidence stage on progress. The approach will be to continue to share data with our recognised unions and discuss our early findings.

Payment plus

We propose:

- 1.67. HMPPS proposes a £3 per hour increase to Payment Plus, whilst HMPPS continues to review Payment Plus in response to Recommendation 14.
- 1.68. Analysis shows that the value of Payment Plus has fallen below 2016 levels and is below the current hourly rate for some Band 3s, depending on location. Band 3 Prison Officers account for most Payment Plus expenditure, with data showing that over 80% of Payment Plus costs is attributed to this group.
- 1.69. HMPPS recognise the value of Payment Plus has eroded and propose that Payment Plus be increased so that it is high enough to encourage Prison Officers to volunteer to take on those extra hours as required. As above, we propose to increase the rate of Payment Plus to £25 per hour whilst continuing to review the operation, scope, and uptake of Payment Plus as part of our ongoing work to respond to Recommendation 14. We are aware that PSPRB also intends to review Payment Plus as part of this year's pay round.

Background

- 1.70. Payment Plus was introduced in 2008 to replace all other additional hours and ex gratia payment schemes. It recognises that specific demands made on staff time in a prison can be unpredictable and required at short notice, outside of planned shifts.
- 1.71. According to policy, the Payment Plus rate will only be paid for additional hours working in the following circumstances:
- To staff a bedwatch
 - To staff a constant observation

- To staff a Category A escort over and above the profiled staffing level
- To staff new accommodation and to cover temporary staff in post vacancies against the Target Staffing figure, where authorised by the Area Manager.

1.72. Payment Plus is intended only to be utilised in accordance with the criteria set out above. Volunteers will always be sought in the first instance, but where insufficient volunteers are available, Bulletin 8 procedures will apply. Bulletin 8 arrangements (Bulletin 8, paragraph 17) remain in place whereby staff may be asked on occasion to work more than their average weekly hours.

1.73. In August 2016 the rate of Payment Plus was increased from £17 per hour to £22 per hour and this rate is still in place. This increase was introduced to encourage more staff volunteers and, therefore, improve staff availability in support of prison stability and safety.

Review of Escort, Bedwatch and Constant Supervision

1.74. A review of Escort, Bedwatch and Constant Supervision (EBCS) was commissioned by the Health, Social Care and Justice Operational Delivery Board in 2024 as a joint HMPPS / NHS England (NHSE) venture and is due to be completed in April 2026. The main ambitions are to:

- Improve prisoner access to health services
- Reduce the demand for medical escorts and bedwatches where possible
- Develop sustainable cross-charging tariffs between HMPPS and NHSE

1.75. In relation to reducing expenditure on Payment Plus, it is important to note that, in principle, the vast majority of Payment Plus associated with covering bedwatches (for prisons in England) should be funded by NHSE. The initial cost should be met by HMPPS, with this cost then being recovered by way of cross-charging between the agencies. The cross-charging tariffs for escorts or bedwatches have not been reviewed or uplifted, however, since 2014, and a gap between actual cost and cost-recovery has emerged during that time.



Recommendations for addressing this issue will include a renegotiation of the tariff rates between HMPPS and NHSE/DHSC.

- 1.76. The EBCS project has several workstreams underway, with others scheduled to start before the end of 2025. One of the workstreams is considering how the use of digital and technical innovation can support better on-site health delivery and reduce the reliance on external appointments. This is likely to reduce the number of planned medical escorts, which aren't generally resourced with Payment Plus, but there may be a longer-term reduction in bedwatches if the treatment and monitoring that prisoners receive when admitted to hospital can be safely replicated within a prison.
- 1.77. Another workstream hopes to see a reduction in the number of prolonged bedwatches by improving access to adapted accommodation. The initial focus is on establishing a centrally managed allocation for adapted cells in privately managed prisons, which would allow prisoners with the greatest need (across HMPPS) to access accommodation and treatment where they might otherwise have required a prolonged hospital stay.
- 1.78. The project also hopes to develop a definition of 'clinical' and 'non-clinical' in relation to the reasons for constant supervision being initiated. This shouldn't have an impact on the instances of constant supervision but should help prisons and healthcare providers establish upfront how constant supervision will be funded, and therefore whether Payment Plus is the appropriate payment mechanism.
- 1.79. The project team have offered to work with the POA (at their request) to develop a working hours agreement, which might reflect a joint position on principles such as the level of additional hours that can be volunteered for, or requested of staff, or how travel time (as part of duties) might be managed most effectively.
- 1.80. The approach to delivering the Escort, Bedwatch and Constant Supervision review has been to develop workstreams that address pre-established and documented problems, responding to recommendations or observations from internal reviews, research, or scrutiny bodies. Each workstream has been



lodged within a group or directorate that has the skills, expertise, prerogative, and influence to deliver the work successfully. The work has been sequenced in collaboration with the host group and is likely in some cases to continue beyond the life of the EBCS project itself. Each workstream has both NHSE and HMPPS participation and once started, may utilise different governance and escalation mechanisms. For this reason, some milestones and timelines have yet to be defined.

1.81. Timeline / milestones:

- October 2025 – Multi-agency (Q3) data capture exercise begins.
- December 2025 – Constant supervision workstream commences.
- February 2026 – Recommendations on escort and bedwatch cross-charge tariffs will be made.
- April 2026 – EBCS project to wind-down, with future deliverables adopted by relevant business owners in HMPPS / NHSE.

OSG overtime

1.82. HMPPS proposes no changes to the rate of OSG overtime whilst work continues to progress 'Recommendation 14' from the PSPRB in 2024.

1.83. There is no current evidence that the enhanced rates in payment are not attractive and there continues to be a plentiful supply of volunteers. The rate for OSG overtime is competitive.

Background

1.84. Overtime for OSGs is 1.3 times the standard hourly base pay rate for weekday working (between 07:00 and 19:00) and 1.75 times the standard hourly base pay rate for weekend and public holiday working between 19:00 and 07:00. Since 2016, a £5 per hour addition is also paid on top of both overtime rates. HMPPS considers that the levels of OSG overtime are therefore competitive with external comparators.

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- 1.85. The cash value for OSG overtime rates increases each year in line with the overall pay award because overtime is a multiplier of base pay.
- 1.86. With the investment into NLW on top of headline pay increases and proposed targeting to the lowest paid, this contributes to increases in OSG overtime.

OSG Unsocial Hours working

- 1.87. HMPPS proposes no change to the rate of OSG Unsocial Hours working, following the acceptance of Recommendation 11 from 2025 on a temporary basis, whilst work continues to progress on Recommendation 14 from the PSPRB in 2024.
- 1.88. HMPPS has shared with PSPRB the evidence showing the levels of unsocial hours worked by Band 2 OSG staff, by establishment. HMPPS have held a “without prejudice” discussion with the POA and will continue to engage with the POA on our findings and proposals as these are developed. As above, we have commenced a review of night working in prisons, to identify the drivers behind the current distribution of unsocial and nights working, and to consider whether alternative approaches could meet our nights commitment.

Background

- 1.89. Working unsocial hours is remunerated through the Unsocial Hours payment for Bands 2 to 5.
- 1.90. Unsocial Hours was last reviewed in 2022 as part of the PSPRB’s rolling review of allowances, when it was increased from 17% to 20% of base pay for all eligible bands and applied to all contracted hours.
- 1.91. With effect from 1 April 2025, following the acceptance of Recommendation 11 in the PSPRB’s 2025/26 report, the Unsocial Hours working payment for Band 2 OSGs was temporarily increased from 20% to 25% for all contracted hours for a limited period of two years, on the basis that OSG staff were regularly working more than 20% to 30% of their hours unsocially.

Forward Look

- 1.92. HMPPS is seeking to review areas within HMPPS policy, subject to trade union consultation, that will impact staff in both the remit and non-remit group which we want to inform PSPRB of.

Recruitment and Retention Payments (RRPs)

- 1.93. HMPPS is aware of Recruitment and Retention issues for specific groups of operational and non-operational staff, such as for Governors (see paragraph. 1.99), Psychologists, Specialist Instructional Officers and staff in the Offender Management Unit (OMU). Within existing policy, HMPPS does not currently have sufficient flexibility to attract, retain and reward existing staff in difficult to recruit and retain roles.
- 1.94. There is a provision for RRP set out in the Pay Manual, which are time-limited and evidenced payments intended to address recruitment and retention issues, allowing for a sum of money to be paid to individual members of staff. The value of RRP are determined after consideration of a set of criteria, including recruitment and retention challenges, comparable workforce data and benchmarking. Consideration for RRP are only made where the problem cannot be resolved through the total benefits and reward package available and should be reviewed regularly.
- 1.95. Per current policy, payment of RRP are only applicable to external applicants and made as either a non-consolidated non-pensionable lump sum to address short term recruitment issues; or targeted 12 monthly non-pensionable payments to address specific retention issues.
- 1.96. As RRP are currently only applicable to external applicants, HMPPS wishes to explore extending RRP to existing staff (remit and non-remit) to address acute recruitment and retention issues. Extending the eligibility to existing staff would also be in line with the policy used in wider MoJ. This would require a change in Pay Policy and be subject to consultation with trade unions.

Temporary Cover Payments

- 1.97. HMPPS is aware of an issue whereby staff on temporary promotion can receive higher pay than substantive postholders. This is due to how temporary cover payments are calculated, with staff retaining their substantive allowances in addition to a percentage temporary cover uplift. Addressing this would require a change in temporary cover allowance policy and be subject to consultation with trade unions. HMPPS has engaged with the PGA on this issue, as set out in paragraph 1.100.

Joint evidence with the Prison Governors Association (PGA)

- 1.98. We are pleased to inform the PSPRB that following constructive engagement with the PGA, we have agreed with them general principles and areas that we want to review together and provide PSPRB early sight on.

Enhanced Flexibility for recruitment of Governor Roles

- 1.99. Recruitment and retention of Governors, particularly in larger, more complex, or high-profile prisons—remains challenging. Geographic mobility is also limited, with current incentives such as public interest transfers, excess fares, and ad hoc bonuses applied inconsistently and without a transparent framework. We jointly propose to work to explore the scope for the development of tailored contracts for Governor's appointments which could clearly outline applicable incentives, improve transparency and target recruitment more effectively. This resolution can also be achieved outside of a formal Job Evaluation Scheme (JES) review.

Temporary Cover Payments

- 1.100. We have jointly committed to resolving the issue where temporary cover payments result in higher pay than that received by substantive post holders. While we acknowledge the complexity of this issue, we remain committed to finding a solution. This resolution can also be achieved outside of a formal JES review.



Accreditation Utilisation Payments – Licence to Operate

1.101. We propose to jointly explore the introduction of utilisation payments for accredited roles including Head of Function, Deputy Governor Assessment Centre, Governor Assessment Centre, and Gold Commander. These payments would reinforce the value of frontline leadership roles and support the development of a professional register and licence to operate for accredited post holders. This proposal is also intended to be progressed independently of any wider JES review.

Summary

1.102. In closing this chapter, HMPPS considers the proposals above maintain a balance between allowing the PSPRB the freedoms to make genuine considerations for the remit group, and achieving departmental strategic objectives, with the need to manage overall affordability and pay bill growth. HMPPS asks that the PSPRB approach their considerations in the same way.



2: Evidence of key developments, priorities and areas of investment for the coming year and beyond

Introduction

- 2.1. Significant investment in pay has supported an improved and more stable national staffing picture. As at June 2025, there are currently 22,702 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers in post. Our current national resourcing context is much stronger in comparison to September 2022, when there were 21,617 FTE Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers in post. Despite this, recruitment and retention challenges remain and we have a staff group where significant numbers of Prison Officers have been recruited relatively recently and so lack experience. We remain committed to ensuring prisons are sufficiently resourced and that we retain and build levels of experience, both of which are fundamental to delivering quality outcomes in prisons.
- 2.2. A fair pay settlement continues to be a priority for the Department and this section of the written evidence outlines wider key developments, priorities and investment for 2026/27 and into the future. This builds on progress set out in HMPPS' previous written evidence and updates on:
- The prison environment, including safety and security,
 - Delivery of purposeful activity,
 - Improving technology,
 - Wider updates in relation to the prison workforce, including support available to staff and localised interventions,

- Other major areas of workplace investment including non-salary-based investments from throughout 2025/26.

Prison Environment

Prison Capacity and Expansion

- 2.3. From the period February 2023 to September 2024, the adult male prison estate operated at more than 99% capacity. To manage the capacity crisis, HMPPS deployed several mechanisms such as Operation Early Dawn and Standard Determinate Sentence 40 (SDS40). In October 2024, the Lord Chancellor announced that further bridging measures would be required to ensure the prison population remained stable. These measures consisted of changes to the recall mechanism, extension of Home Detention Curfew and accelerating removals of Foreign National Offenders.
- 2.4. The Lord Chancellor subsequently announced a number of measures to manage capacity pressures in the longer-term. The 10-Year Capacity Strategy was published in December 2024, outlining our commitment to increase the capacity of our prison estate by building 14,000 new prison places and aiming to do so by 2031. It also outlined reforms to the planning system to reduce delays for future prison builds and acquire more land for future prisons should they be needed.
- 2.5. On 11 June, the Chancellor announced the Spending Review which included £4.7 billion from 2026-2027 to 2029-2030 to support the delivery of the 14,000 new prison places.
- 2.6. As part of our plans to deliver 14,000 places, HMPPS will deliver c.6,500 places by building four new prisons, such as our first all-electric prison in Yorkshire, HMP Millsike, which accepted first prisoners in April 2025. Another c.6,400 places will be created through houseblocks at existing sites while also refurbishing residential units, facilities and ancillaries across the estate; and through an additional c.1,000 Rapid Deployment Cells. This Government has already added c.2,500 places since coming to office.

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- 2.7. However, we recognise that we cannot build our way out of prison capacity challenges. We introduced the Sentencing Bill on 2nd September to take forward many of the core recommendations made from the Independent Sentencing Review (ISR) that require primary legislation. The Bill represents an ambitious package of reforms that aim to place the prison system on a more sustainable footing going forwards.
- 2.8. In addition, the Lord Chancellor announced the publication of an Annual Statement to provide additional transparency by holding this Government and future Governments to account on long-term planning to ensure that decisions on prison demand and supply are balanced. On 11 December 2024, we published the first of these Annual Statements on prison capacity. To guarantee this additional transparency is upheld in the future, this Government has committed to legislating to make laying this statement each year a statutory requirement. This will be done when Parliamentary time allows.

Maintenance

- 2.9. The prison estate is ageing and dilapidated, requiring major repair and replacement. Over half of prisons in the estate were opened more than 50 years ago, and over 25% of prisons were opened in the Victorian era or earlier. The low standard of accommodation in some places is making the Prison Service vulnerable to sudden losses of capacity and we have a growing backlog of critical work.
- 2.10. Under the previous Government, general maintenance projects were paused due to the increase in prison population. This meant that only the essential maintenance works took place.
- 2.11. This Government is investing up to £300m in prison and probation maintenance for 2025-26, to keep the estate safe and secure. This is an increase in spending on 2024-25, which will support essential repairs, ongoing maintenance, and efforts to minimise future cell losses.

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- 2.12. Furthermore, the Prison Estate Condition Survey Programme (PECSP) was undertaken from December 2021 to November 2023 and enables us to better understand the quality of the current estate. The survey has given us a powerful tool to predict the needed spend on maintenance over the next few years. We now know more about the condition of our estate than we ever have, and we are using that data to plan and prioritise future maintenance work.

Prison Safety

- 2.13. Safety in prisons is a key priority, and HMPPS is working hard to make prisons safer for prisoners and staff. Safe prisons are vital to enable prisoners to engage in rehabilitative activities that reduce reoffending. Poor safety outcomes negatively impact staff wellbeing and retention, stability and order across the prison estate, as well as prisoner health, progression and rehabilitation.
- 2.14. Every death in custody is a tragedy and HMPPS continues to do all it can to improve the safety of prisoners. Actions to improve safety focus on supporting prisons to maintain effective case management for individuals who are violent or at risk of self-harm and suicide and providing Prison Officers with the right support, training and tools to empower them to do their jobs. Ongoing work to improve safety includes introducing more ligature-resistant cells and continuing the removal of wet shave razors and the rollout of electric shavers, which are now in 31 prisons and will be rolled out to the rest of the public adult male closed estate, commencing later this year. By the end of September, mandatory Protective Body Armour will be rolled out for use in Close Supervision Centres, Separation Centres, and Segregation Units in the Long-Term High Security Estate, where we see some of our highest risks.
- 2.15. The safety of all staff is of crucial importance, and HMPPS cannot expect prison staff to carry out their roles to the best of their abilities or remain in the Prison Service if they do not feel safe at work. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 increased the maximum penalty from 12 months to up to two years' imprisonment for those who assault emergency workers, including



Prison Officers, and there are higher maximum penalties in place for more serious offences including actual bodily harm (ABH), grievous bodily harm (GBH) and sexual assault.

- 2.16. A range of factors contribute to self-harm and violence in prisons. These include personal characteristics such as a history of violence/self-harm, substance misuse, and traumatic life experiences. The increase in some of these personal characteristics within the wider community in recent years - such as an increase in violent offences, increased self-harm and more acute mental health needs - is likely to be filtering through into the prisoner community.
- 2.17. Prison safety can also be affected by the prison environment, in particular:
- **Prison capacity:** analysis published in June 2025 has identified a relationship between violence and overcrowding in prison. In addition, some prisoners have been known to take extreme measures, including damaging accommodation or committing a serious assault in acts of protest. This can take cells out of use in a vicious cycle.
 - **Prison security:** where criminality is allowed to continue in prisons it undermines our efforts to rehabilitate prisoners. Availability of drugs poses a risk to the stability of prisons, exacerbates violence and self-harm and is directly linked to prison debt and serious and organised crime.
 - **Prison healthcare:** offenders are more likely to misuse drugs, suffer mental health problems, self-harm, attempt suicide and die prematurely compared to the general population.

Self-inflicted deaths

- 2.18. There were 86 apparent self-inflicted deaths in the 12 months to June 2025 (a rate of 1.0 per 1,000 prisoners), a decrease of 8% in the number of self-inflicted deaths from 93 in the previous 12 months.
- 2.19. The rate of self-inflicted deaths has remained broadly stable at around 1.0 per 1,000 prisoners since the 12 months to June 2018.

Self-harm

2.20. There were 77,898 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to March 2025, a 6% increase from the previous 12 months (a 5% increase in male establishments and a 7% increase in female establishments). Over the same period the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners increased by 5% in male establishments and increased by 6% in female establishments. The rate of incidents in the latest 12 months increased from the previous 12 months, and both the number and rate of self-harm incidents are now at their highest level in the time series.

Assaults

Total assaults

2.21. In the 12 months to March 2025, assault incidents increased by 9% to 30,846 (a rate of 356 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) from 28,290 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in the latest 12 months was 9% higher than in the previous 12 months.

Serious assaults

2.22. In the 12 months to March 2025, there were 3,402 serious assaults (a rate of 39 per 1,000 prisoners), a 6% increase from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults in the latest 12 months was 6% higher than in the previous 12 months. Both the number and rate of serious assaults peaked in the latest 12 months in female establishments, and the rate was higher in female establishments than male establishments for the second year in a row after being higher for the first time in the previous 12 months.

Assaults on staff

2.23. There were 10,568 assaults on staff in the 12 months to March 2025 (a rate of 122 per 1,000 prisoners), an increase of 7% from the 9,847 assaults in the previous 12 months and a new peak in the time series. The rate of assaults on staff in the latest 12 months was 7% higher than in the previous 12 months. Both the number of incidents and the rate reached a new peak.

Longer-term trends

- 2.24. The number of assault incidents is now higher than in the 12 months to March 2020 (prior to the pandemic), but still lower than the peak in the 12 months to March 2019. The rate of assault incidents matched levels immediately pre-pandemic, with the rate of assault incidents in the latest year being just 0.2% higher than the rate of assaults in the 12 months to March 2020, but remained 9% lower than the peak in the 12 months to March 2019.

Violence Reduction

- 2.25. HMPPS supports prisoners at a raised risk of being violent through the Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan (CSIP), a case management approach that is centred around the individual and addressing the underlying causes of their violence, including specific risk factors and needs, to help them manage and move away from violent behaviours.
- 2.26. A Violence Reduction training module is available to all staff to help them better understand the drivers of violence and how to mitigate and manage these risks, including using the case management model for those at a raised risk of being violent.
- 2.27. A training module is being rolled out to improve prison staff's awareness of Gangs and Harmful Group Behaviour within their establishments.

Use of Force and personal safety training

- 2.28. HMPPS has introduced a new policy framework and overhauled its training in personal safety, conflict resolution and physical control and restraint techniques. The new personal safety package incorporates psychological coaching and teaching of instinctive physical responses and easily learned skills that are widely used by law enforcement agencies. A professional standard for use of force (UoF) has been implemented, which equips staff to make use of interpersonal skills, apply judgement in decision making and use physical restraint techniques when necessary. The policy enabling the use of rigid bar handcuffs and PAVA spray has been extended. Both are easy to use



and effective in resolving incidents. All staff in operational Bands 3 to 5 in the adult estate now carry this equipment.

- 2.29. HMPPS fully recognises the value of interpersonal skills and how important these have been during this challenging time; PAVA is not intended to undermine this, and it remains the case that it should absolutely only ever be the last available option. The continuing provision of Five Minute Intervention training and the active promotion of the skills it provides help to enhance the interpersonal skills of our staff and support positive staff-prisoner relationships.

Body Worn Video Cameras

- 2.30. The next generation of Body Worn Video Cameras have been rolled out across the adult estate in public sector prisons; this equates to over 13,000 cameras in total. This means that every Band 3 to 5 Prison Officer has access to a camera whilst on shift. These aid the de-escalation of violent incidents and provide high-quality evidence to support prosecutions against prisoners who commit assaults and will help to ensure that challenging situations are dealt with in a fair and just way. All cameras have pre-record capability which will help capture the lead up to events.

Alternatives to wet-shave razors

- 2.31. HMPPS is continuing to remove wet shave razors, which can be used as weapons. 31 prisons have electric razors, and these will be rolled out to the rest of the public adult male closed estate, commencing later this year.

Suicide Prevention – Postvention support and cluster deaths

- 2.32. HMPPS provides individualised support through a case management process for people assessed as being at risk of suicide and self-harm. This approach places a strong emphasis on identifying individual risks, triggers and protective factors and having effective care plans in place to record, address and mitigate risks.

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- 2.33. Work is continuing with the Samaritans to provide support in the period following a self-inflicted death, which has been proven to help reduce the risk of further deaths and support the wellbeing of staff and prisoners. Delivery of the Listener scheme also continues, through which selected prisoners are trained to provide emotional support to their fellow prisoners.
- 2.34. HMPPS is providing additional support to establishments that have had a cluster of self-inflicted deaths. Based on Public Health England guidance, a cluster is defined as: two self-inflicted deaths within eight weeks; and/or three self-inflicted deaths within twelve months.
- 2.35. HMPPS has recently completed a peer support pilot in six reception prisons, which included emotional resilience training for early days in custody and training prisoners to provide peer support to their fellow prisoners as they complete their sentence. The pilot concluded at the end of March 2025, and its evaluation report is complete and currently going through standard clearance processes.

Training and Staff Support

- 2.36. HMPPS has Wellbeing and Support leads who maintain a strong focus on wellbeing of staff following an incident in the workplace. The Safety Group works in partnership with these leads to provide post incident care. Guidance and support around PPO and Coroners processes will be made available to staff involved in the response to a death in custody where there is a need for this.
- 2.37. HMPPS has delivered Trauma Risk Management training (TRiM), a peer-led support scheme for frontline staff who have experienced a traumatic event, in all establishments. As of June 2025, there are 1,703 TRiM trained staff of which 321 are TRiM Managers in Prisons.
- 2.38. All new members of staff with prisoner contact receive training on suicide and self-harm prevention, and violence reduction. All staff who undertake key roles relating to risk assessment and case management also receive specific training relating to these roles.

Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) and key work

- 2.39. Delivery and quality of key work remains a priority for HMPPS. All male closed prisons and women's prisons have been resourced to deliver one key work session per week to eligible prisoners. Any reduction of the resourced delivery of one session per week should only be considered in line with existing policy as part of the local Regime Management Planning process and balanced alongside other local risks and priorities. Where prisons are balancing priorities in this way, Governors are encouraged wherever possible to deliver at least two key work sessions per prisoner over the course of a four-week period.
- 2.40. There is an OMiC Key Work Audit in place that assesses compliance with a prison's agreed Regime Plan and quality of key work delivery. There is a plan to audit all prisons that deliver key work over the next two to three years.
- 2.41. A national quality performance measure for key work went live in 2023. The measure has been refreshed for 2025/26, using a machine learning algorithm, developed by the MoJ Prisons Data Science Team. This is now used to assess the quality of each key work session case note to determine the case note's quality score. The new measure will improve consistency in scoring case notes and means that all case notes will be scored rather than just a sample. In addition, key work quality scores will be statistically valid on a monthly basis. Both the quality performance measure and the audit are part of the Prison Performance Tool.
- 2.42. The National OMiC and Pre-Release team are providing ongoing direct support to prisons on delivery to ensure that there is a focus on consistency and quality and the best use of the resources available.
- 2.43. A national review of pre-release is currently being carried out. This was launched to assess and improve service delivery for individuals preparing to leave custody. The review aims to define core activities, evaluate team structures and resources, and identify gaps and opportunities in service delivery.

Prison Security

- 2.44. The security challenges faced by prison staff are increasingly complex with criminals constantly seeking novel opportunities to undermine our countermeasures and destabilise prisons. Prison staff work closely with our partners in law enforcement to uphold prison security and seek prosecution for those involved in orchestrating crime from within the prison walls that affects prisons and also extends into the community.
- 2.45. Prison staff play a key role in protecting the public and to ensuring that prisons remain safe and stable environments which enable rehabilitation. HMPPS also recognises that our staff are looking for development opportunities to build a long, successful career. Investing in capability building for staff, equipping them with the best possible security skills and practices is a priority.

Contraband in Prison

- 2.46. We have specialist staff and equipment to combat the smuggling of contraband in prisons – such as drugs, weapons and mobile phones – which can fuel violence and create instability.
- 2.47. In recent years, prisons have expanded the use of physical security measures to tackle the smuggling of contraband such as mobile phones and drugs, including X-ray body scanners, airport-style Enhanced Gate Security, and X-ray baggage scanners.
- 2.48. There were 12,166 incidents where phones were found in the 12 months to March 2025. This is a 14% increase from 10,669 incidents in the previous 12-month period.
- 2.49. Drugs pose one of the most serious challenges to prison security due to the risks they pose to prisoners' safety. HMPPS knows that there are unacceptable levels of drugs in our prisons, highlighted by HM Inspectorate of Prisons reporting.

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- 2.50. There were 26,348 incidents of drug finds in the 12 months to March 2025. This is a 25% increase from 21,145 find incidents in the previous 12-month period.
- 2.51. Psychoactive Substances (PS) were included in 26% of drug find incidents in the 12 months to March 2025. This has increased from 23% in the previous 12 months to March 2024. PS are predominantly soaked into paper or fibres making them easier to smuggle.

Serious and Organised Crime (SOC)

- 2.52. HMPPS takes the threat of SOC incredibly seriously and we are working across Government to bear down on organised criminals running their networks from within the prison estate, as well as managing their risk when released into the community.
- 2.53. We assess that c.9% of the total prison population have connections to SOC. This figure is c.6% for those managed by probation in the community.
- 2.54. We have a range of capabilities and tactical services aimed at disrupting SOC in prisons and probation, which have expanded in recent years. These include:
- The SOC Co-ordination Centre, which develops tools to understand where the SOC risk sits across the custodial estate and probation regions.
 - SOC Operations, who work closely with law enforcement partners to pursue and prevent serious criminality by those serving in prison or on probation. Effective collaboration has enabled successful multi-agency operations which have resulted in criminal justice outcomes.
 - The National Intelligence Unit, which collects and analyses intelligence on SOC threats, including through data extracted from seized devices.



Drones

- 2.55. Drone incidents around prisons in England and Wales increased by 43% from 1,196 in the year ending March 2024 to a new peak of 1,712 in the year ending March 2025.
- 2.56. Drone sightings around prisons in England and Wales pose a major threat to prison security. We are working hard to deter, detect and disrupt the use of illegal drones. This includes working across Government and international partners on this global issue.
- 2.57. HMPPS uses targeted countermeasures such as improvements to windows, specialist netting and grilles to stop drones successfully delivering contraband.

Incident Response

- 2.58. Prison staff are responding to an increasing number of serious incidents across the estate. The Operational Response and Resilience Unit (ORRU) are deployed nationally to handle complex situations that local prison staff are not trained for, including hostage situations and working at height.
- 2.59. In the 12 months to March 2025, the number of incidents at height, and of prisoners using barricades or preventing access, increased by 9% and 7% respectively.
- 2.60. In the 12 months to March 2025 there were 52 incidents where prisoners took someone hostage, a decrease of 10% from 58 in the previous 12 months.

Key Developments

- 2.61. This year we are investing over £40m in physical security across 34 prisons. This includes c.£10m on anti-drone measures, including window replacements, external window grilles and netting across 15 priority prisons. We are currently trialling a prototype anti-drone wire solution to tackle drone incursions.

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- 2.62. By the end of September, mandatory Protective Body Armour (PBA) will be rolled out for use in Close Supervision Centres, Separation Centres and Segregation Units in the Long-Term High Security Estate. These units hold some of the most dangerous and challenging prisoners.
- 2.63. This summer, we are trialling the use of Conductive Energy Devices, known as “tasers”, by specialist staff to assist them in dealing with the most serious incidents in adult male prisons. The findings from this trial will inform future decisions around the use of tasers in the prison estate.

Restricted Fly Zones

- 2.64. Restricted Flight Zones (RFZs) were introduced over 12 months ago around prisons in England and Wales. These restrictions make all unauthorised drone incursions a crime and support police and prison collaboration to help ensure meaningful operational responses. These restrictions are in operation as intended.
- 2.65. RFZs enable prisons to treat any unauthorised drones as potential crimes in progress. This allows for the development of local response and contingency plans according to the likelihood that the drone is being used for illicit purposes.

Trace Detection Machines

- 2.66. To prevent the smuggling of drugs such as psychoactive substances through prison mail, we have 165 drug trace detection machines across the estate.

New Digital Forensic Lab

- 2.67. A new Digital Forensic Laboratory has become operational which further enhances our capability to interrogate mobile phones smuggled into jails. It will produce improved evidence which is more likely to bring a successful prosecution in court.



Delivering more purposeful activity

2.68. HMPPS is committed to continuing to improve offenders' access to purposeful activity. HMPPS defines purposeful activity as that which contributes to one or more of the following:

- Addressing risks or needs related to risk of reoffending or a resettlement objective.
- Enhancement of personal wellbeing, physical or mental health.
- Enhancement of inter-personal, social or life skills.

2.69. The delivery of purposeful activity in prisons contributes to effective rehabilitation and reduces the chance of future offending. Alongside this, purposeful activity is a significant enabler of broader positive outcomes for prisons, such as a reduction in prisoner violence and self-harm.

2.70. Improving our purposeful activity offer is one of the most transformative things we could do to reduce reoffending. However, improving the quantity and quality of activity on offer in our prisons is not enough to achieve the desired outcomes. The quality of the prison culture and the contributions our staff make to this and the interactions that they have with prisoners and their colleagues are fundamental to improving our purposeful activity offer and reducing re-offending.

2.71. It is important that we recognise our staff's contribution to enabling a positive rehabilitative culture and the importance of them being able to deliver rehabilitative, meaningful and purposeful interactions in everything they do, creating time in the regime to support this. Without attending to this and building staff capability, we risk undermining the value the activity has to offer, even before it has been delivered.

2.72. We know that the provision of purposeful activity can help to enable safe and decent prisons and have a transformative effect on reoffending rates, with in-prison education and finding employment after release both known to reduce the chance of reoffending by up to 9%. This is why the Government



committed to working with prisons to improve access to purposeful activity (such as learning) in its manifesto and is actively exploring the best approaches to do so.

- 2.73. We recognise the challenges prisons are facing in providing purposeful activity. The capacity crisis in the prison estate has had an impact on the ability of many prisons to support purposeful activity but despite this we have been working to address this.
- 2.74. We have been working with prisons to increase attendance at education in workshops and have seen some improvements in this respect. We have also seen investment in the repair of buildings to enable workshops, including at the five sites that will be prototyping the new working week so that we can understand how we best maximise attendance at workshops and increase capacity.
- 2.75. Improving reading and literacy rates is a key priority, and every prison now has a reading strategy and we continue to look at the ways we can improve outcomes in this respect. Achievement rates for qualifications in English and maths has increased from previous years, with the percentage of learners who achieved a qualification between April-June 2024 at 77.94% for English and 74.53% for Maths, compared to 73% for English and 68% for Maths in April-June 2023.
- 2.76. We have continued to utilise key employment roles across all 93 resettlement prisons to prepare prisoners for work on release, match them to jobs and provide critical ID documents to secure work and a home and seen outcomes stabilising at over 30% in employment 6 months post release. Prisoners are now able to access an apprenticeship programme which is now available in both the open and closed prison estate, and we are working to look at how numbers can be increased. We have also been testing the Future Skills Programme in a number of prisons to look further at improving employment outcomes.
- 2.77. In January 2025, we also launched regional Employment Councils, which for the first time brings businesses together with prisons, probation and the



Department of Work and Pensions to support offenders in the community. This builds on the work of Employment Advisory Boards, linking prisons with business leaders to ensure prisoners have the skills and training employers need to meet labour market demands.

- 2.78. We will also see new prison education contracts go live in October this year, and have already implemented the new Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance contracts across the estate.

Improving Technology

- 2.79. Digital tools and technology are transformational for our staff, regimes, and people in our care across prisons. HMPPS is investing in digital services and technology across the estate and is improving:
- productivity: by ensuring our systems and services meet the needs of frontline staff, streamline administrative processes, reduce paperwork, and automate routine tasks, allowing staff to focus their time and resources more effectively.
 - data-driven decision-making: by connecting data across systems, making vital information more accessible to staff to support good decision-making.
 - offender/child outcomes: by providing tools to aid rehabilitation, resettlement, and safety.
- 2.80. HMPPS will continue to invest in digital services and infrastructure, and build on the opportunities to go further.
- 2.81. Replacing outdated data systems remains key to providing better services. HMPPS continues to develop Digital Prison Services (DPS), replacing the National Offender Management Information System (NOMIS), the outdated legacy system staff use to manage and record data on offenders. DPS provides a single platform for a new set of modern digital services, with a consistent look and feel, and which enables staff to input information at the right time, intuitively, accurately, and more quickly. DPS shares data between different services and agencies, is safer and more secure, and more adaptable to keep pace with policy and operational changes. It is saving staff



time and giving them confidence in the digital tools they use, reducing frustrations and empowering staff to use their time more effectively. Effective reporting and data sharing between digital services is also improving front-line and organisational decision-making and planning.

- 2.82. We have made strong progress developing DPS since the last publication to assist our staff with the delivery of services. Several DPS services have now been delivered nationally, such as those which allow staff to calculate release dates, to create Challenge, Support and Intervention Plans (CSIPs), and to create an education, skills and work path for prisoners through their custodial journey. Alerts and case notes are now managed through DPS and the corresponding NOMIS function has been switched off. We are also continuing to expand new services to manage activities and appointments (now in over half of all prisons) and to manage prison visits (now in over 80 prisons). These services are significantly reducing the administrative burden on staff, speeding up processes, and improving data and decision-making. Expanding and improving DPS services will remain a top priority for the Prison Service over the coming years.
- 2.83. Our Launchpad Programme has now delivered in-cell technology in 19 public sector prisons and Young Offender Institutions (YOIs), reaching a total of c.12,900 prisoners and children (c.70% of children in custody), and we are exploring the opportunities for further expansion. Launchpad is modernising the prison estate, improving efficiency, processes and communication across the prison. It improves staff productivity through digitising resource-intensive administrative tasks, with estimated time savings for Residential Wing Officers of 5-10%, allowing staff to better invest their time on more meaningful activities such as spending more time on the landing, running the regime, undertaking wing duties, having more meaningful interactions, and engaging with the people in our care. The laptops also give prisoners and children the digital tools and technology to help maintain relationships, support health and wellbeing, and support their rehabilitation, including through improving digital literacy and digital confidence.

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- 2.84. The installation of WiFi, as part of the Launchpad Programme, is improving productivity and staff satisfaction. We are running a number of proofs of concept to explore how we can maximise the benefits of WiFi, where available, aimed at unlocking opportunities to provide staff with access to systems and information more flexibly and on-the go, and to open the opportunity for third party organisations, such as the NHS, to utilise our network to better deliver services and improve collaboration.
- 2.85. All prisons now have some official prison video capability to support official consultations, including legal, parole, and probation, and court hearings when required. HMPPS has invested in 17 state of the art Video Conferencing Centres in prisons that serve the courts and are investing in a further two this financial year. Rapid growth in demand for video indicates that an effective video link is increasingly a preferred option for court hearings and criminal justice professionals.
- 2.86. Where appropriate, this is reducing the need for physical attendance which in turn increases productivity (across courts, prisons and probation), reduces costs involved in travel and has a positive impact on decency and managing the prison population. Video usage in 2024/25 was up 17% on 2023/24 with 440,000 calls taking place; around 48% of which is by the courts, 27% legal professionals and 17% probation.
- 2.87. Official prison video benefits are underpinned by the Book a Video Link Service (BVLS), which is a custom-made, easy-to-use digital booking service for courts, probation and prisons, replacing the inconsistent and time-consuming manual administration of video links. So far, 18 prisons, 31 probation teams and 434 courts (including Crime, Civil, Family and Tribunal) use BVLS, and HMPPS is working to expand access further.
- 2.88. Beyond these digital initiatives we are already delivering, we are also committed to investigating cutting-edge technologies which can be applied within our prison estate to enhance security, safety, and rehabilitation. At the start of July, seven top technology companies pitched their ideas to the Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending, James



Timpson, as part of a Dragon's Den style pitch, after being whittled down from over 90 submissions. Pitches included technology which will help deliver enhanced surveillance and detect the use of drugs, such as Spice or Fentanyl, offering prison and probation a swift way to detect drugs and boost staff safety. Successful businesses will have their proposals considered for pilot rollouts, helping staff on the front line to tackle violence in prison and monitor offenders.

Prison Workforce

- 2.89. The overall resourcing across the prison workforce continues to stabilise. However, there are some challenges with staff experience at a national level, as well as persistent recruitment and retention challenges in certain areas of the country, and specific parts of the estate. In recent years, we have recruited a high number of new staff, meaning we have a relatively inexperienced Band 3 to 5 Prison Officer cohort: as of 30 June 2025, 37.3% of Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers have less than three years' experience. Our focus is now on retaining newly recruited staff and increasing levels of experience, whilst providing targeted support to establishments where required (which is explored further under *Challenges in the Long Term High Security Estate*).
- 2.90. The Government has made changes to Immigration rules to reduce net migration. We will seek to support any of our existing staff who may be affected by those changes, while continuing to remain committed to ensuring prisons are sufficiently resourced.
- 2.91. We have high recruitment targets each year to account for natural attrition, as well as recruitment required for future expansion. Between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, a total of 2,453 Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers were appointed, underscoring the necessity of our current recruitment approach for Prison Officers. We operate a centralised recruitment model for Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers to maintain consistent standards throughout the recruitment process and to meet the required need (which is further explained under *Streamlining the recruitment process*).



- 2.92. In recent years, HMPPS has bolstered this national process with recruitment strategies to address staffing gaps through initiatives that aim to attract wider candidates to the role and strengthen experience. Initiatives include:
- The Prison Officer Alumni Scheme, which enables former colleagues to return via a fast-tracked process.
 - A streamlined fast-track route for existing Operational Support Grades (OSGs) to progress into Prison Officer roles, strengthening the pipeline of experienced staff.
 - The 'Extraordinary Jobs' campaign, designed to raise awareness of and interest in the Prison Officer profession.
- 2.93. To address recruitment and retention challenges in specific regions, HMPPS deliberately over-recruited at prisons with strong recruitment performance throughout 2023 and 2024. This enabled the temporary deployment of staff to other establishments - a standard operational practice. Over the course of this year, we have actively reduced the number of surplus staff at these sites while permanently filling vacancies at locations in need of resourcing support. As of the end of June 2025, the national staffing level for Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers stands at 1,046 full-time equivalent (FTE) below the Target Staffing Figure, adjusted for hours.
- 2.94. As has been referenced in previous evidence submissions, we monitor exit interview data on the top 10 main drivers of staff attrition, and we use this data to inform national interventions to improve morale and retention. The top drivers of attrition for Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers are currently Career Progression and Leadership.
- 2.95. While retention efforts will help retain experience within the workforce, our organisational focus is increasingly shifting towards enhancing the capability of all staff - both new and experienced and ensuring that those in leadership roles are equipped to effectively support and develop their teams.



2.96. The recent substantial pay increases have contributed, along with other interventions, to the improved resourcing context. The 2025/26 pay award delivered an increase of at least 4% for all frontline prison staff, providing a further above inflationary pay increase following the 2024/25 award. The impact of the most recent pay award is yet to be reflected in quarterly workforce statistics and exit interview data. It would be premature to continue to invest heavily in pay without identifying the impact of the previous awards, especially given that Pay and Reward already stands at only the eighth overall main driver of attrition.

The Enable Programme

2.97. The 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 change how HMPPS trains, develops, leads and supports prison staff to ensure that they feel safe, supported, valued and confident in their skills and their ability to make a difference.

2.98. The Enable Programme has four thematic areas of focus:

- Building Capability – The Enable Programme is considering both what and how Prison Officers learn from the start of their career and develop throughout it. Through the activities of the programme, we will enhance the skills of our prison staff by improving the offer of continuous professional development from the time they join and throughout their careers.
- Supporting Our People – The Enable Programme is exploring ways to enhance support for our staff by introducing peer support initiatives and developing new frameworks for structured reflection and assistance.
- Strengthening Leadership – The Enable Programme will enhance leadership across the Prison Service by setting clearer expectations for leaders and improving development pathways and succession planning for key leadership roles.

- Improving Working Environments – The Enable Programme will transform the environment that our staff work within and their sense of purpose by creating more opportunities for staff-led activities within improved and personalised regimes and supporting the development of enabling environments within prisons.

2.99. The Enable Programme will be implemented in a phased approach. Testing and refinement of initial products has begun in a small number of sites such that learning can be collated and products refined before being scaled nationally. Some initial products have also now been made nationally available and testing of a regional delivery model is expected to begin in October 2025.

2.100. The core capability packages are a package of learning intended primarily for Prison Officers between 6 and 18 months into service who have already completed foundation training and induction. The packages will enhance opportunities to learn, develop, build confidence and capability, and feel valued; ultimately developing the core skills required in the Prison Officer role. As of July 2025, 6 of the 16 packages are nationally available, with the remaining 10 to be made accessible by the end of 2025.

2.101. The Capability Oversight Function will be a new central infrastructure to assure the quality of training products, create a training performance measure, and support prisons with the quantity and quality of training delivery. This will be in place by October 2025 and will be tested alongside a regional delivery model pilot in London to test the viability of a regional approach to developing capability, in parallel to testing a site-by-site model in Enable early adopter prisons.

Challenges in the Long-Term High Security Estate

2.102. Staffing remains a particular challenge within the Long-Term High Security Estate (LTHSE), this is attributed to some candidates not meeting the residency requirement of Counter Terrorist Checks, poor transport links to rural locations and the increased media reporting of the high-profile assaults.



2.103. In addition to national recruitment interventions, we are currently employing a suite of interventions in the LTHSE, to support stability. This includes:

- An LTHSE specific Prison Officer Alumni Scheme.
- A dedicated joint campaign specifically recruiting candidates into the LTHSE.
- A First Deployment scheme specifically for LTHSE sites.
- Frontloading: where HMPPS recruits above required staffing levels in certain prisons or regions to give greater, system-wide resilience through the use of national detached duty whereby staff are deployed from one prison to another. This is standard practice.

Recruitment

Overview of recruitment outlook and headline staffing position

2.104. While HMPPS has maintained overall stability in national prison staffing, the number of Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers have decreased over the last year - since June 2024, there has been a reduction of 889 FTE Prison Officers (3.8%) and a further reduction of 14 FTE (0.1%) since March 2025. These figures are influenced by the addition of 254 FTE Prison Officers at HMP Lowdham Grange in August 2024 and by HMPPS actively reducing surplus staff at previously over-recruited, sites, whilst maintaining to address vacancies elsewhere.

2.105. Localised challenges continue to be addressed through specific interventions, including Market Supplements and targeted recruitment activity. As previously mentioned in paragraph 2.103, we have a range of targeted recruitment activities which help to bolster recruitment efforts.

Streamlining the recruitment process

2.106. HMPPS continues to recruit across all prisons where vacancies exist or are anticipated, including those undergoing expansion. Staffing requirements for these expansion projects - whether new builds or smaller-scale developments - are assessed and incorporated into workforce planning up to 18 months in



advance. This ensures timely recruitment, and the development of experience needed to sustain safe and secure regimes. In parallel, HMPPS works closely with partner organisations to ensure sufficient capacity across other key workforce groups within prisons, including education and healthcare roles.

2.107. HMPPS continues to enhance the recruitment process by ensuring that those we attract, and recruit have the relevant skills and attributes needed to meet the demands and expectations of the Prison Officer role, aligning to the Enable Programme. This includes ensuring our assessment tools wherever possible provide a realistic job preview, remove unsuitable applicants at the earliest stage, allowing only the most suitable applicants to progress to the latter stages. Work is in progress to implement a redesign of our assessments. These changes will be phased in during 2025/26.

2.108. In addition, HMPPS continues to invest in the adoption of new technology, such as the Avature Applicant Tracking System. This system has been designed to streamline onboarding processes and provide valuable data to support more effective workforce planning.

Initiatives to bolster recruitment

2.109. HMPPS has applied a number of interventions at national and individual prison level to help improve the staffing position.

2.110. HMPPS launched the Prison Officer & Youth Justice Worker Alumni network and National Returners Scheme in 2023, which provides HMPPS with a mechanism to capture, communicate, and encourage the return of former Prison Officers back to the service bringing with them previous skills and levels of experience. HMPPS continues to see the valuable benefit that former colleagues can bring to the workforce, often returning with new skills and experience. The scheme aims to re-appoint individuals to the harder-to-recruit sites wherever possible.

2.111. The National First Deployment Scheme, when advertised, is open to new applicants to the Prison Service who are willing to relocate to prisons experiencing acute staffing shortages. It offers a comprehensive remuneration



package to cover accommodation and other associated expenses, for their first 23 months in service whilst deployed to a 'host' prison. On completion of the scheme, Prison Officers return to a prison within reasonable travel of their permanent home location.

2.112. The **Advance into Justice (AiJ) scheme** is a fast-track initiative designed to support Armed Forces service leavers and veterans into frontline prison roles. As part of the MoJ's ongoing commitment, AiJ has been expanded to include the key positions of Prison Officer and OSG. The scheme is open to all veterans and service leavers, regardless of how long they've been out of service, and now also welcomes those currently in employment, along with their spouses and partners.

Recruitment Marketing and Increasing Candidate Engagement

2.113. As noted in previous evidence submissions, the lack of awareness of the Prison Officer role, coupled with largely negative perceptions around it, has led to challenges with recruiting into the Service.

2.114. The 'Extraordinary Jobs' HMPPS campaign launched in September 2023, with a second and third burst in January 2024 and January 2025. The campaign aims to drive awareness and consideration in the Prison Officer role; challenging misconceptions associated with working in this role and accentuating the motivational aspects of the job. HMPPS believes that the campaign will encourage more people to consider a career in the Service. Results have been positive, and the most recent campaign activity, January to March 2025, resulted in web searches for 'prison jobs' increasing by 47% and a 53% increase in people visiting the Prison and Probation Jobs website (PPJ). Prison Officer and OSG applications also increased while the campaign was live.

2.115. In addition to the Extraordinary Jobs campaign, we are continuing to expand our no-cost communications and marketing efforts to boost candidate attraction and engagement. These include:

- Targeted PR campaigns to raise awareness of key roles such as Prison Officer, OSG, and other essential positions within the Prison Service, with a focus on national media and regions with the greatest need.
- Acquisition-driven advertising, leveraging job boards and paid search.
- The launch of the new 'Match-Me Tool', designed to help individuals explore which of the 11 roles featured on the PPJ website best align with their skills and interests.
- Consideration-building initiatives, including collaborations with paid influencers and a strategic media brand partnership to enhance visibility and engagement.

2.116. The Resourcing Team has developed a self-service outreach app to be used at recruitment events. Featuring videos on a range of topics such as the skills and qualities needed and an overview of Prison Officer shift patterns, plus an online Register Your Interest form, the app aims to give candidates richer insights into the Prison Officer and OSG roles.

Local Recruitment Innovations

2.117. HMP Berwyn began a localised recruitment initiative in August 2022 to test the hypothesis that increased autonomy locally would deliver better results with respect to the quality of candidates and improved retention rates. Phase 2 of the pilot was launched in February 2024, with all elements of the assessment centre delivered on site and by colleagues from HMP Berwyn. The pilot ended in July 2024: HMPPS has taken learning from the local recruitment pilot and are using these to inform future recruitment strategies on how to further involve establishments in the process of selecting Officers, whilst maintaining national standards and minimising the administrative burden on prisons.

2.118. HMPPS continues to encourage prisons to support the early onboarding of new colleagues by taking greater ownership of their applicant pipelines. Local familiarisation visits are in operation in a number of prisons, allowing



applicants to visit their assigned prison before their start date. These visits aim to boost engagement, offer insight into the role, and help applicants assess whether a career as a Prison Officer is right for them. This early interaction provides a chance to raise concerns and either confirm their commitment or withdraw before formal training begins. By offering a realistic preview of the role, this approach is aimed at reducing early attrition and better prepare new recruits for the challenges of working in a prison.

Diversity in recruitment and improvements to the recruitment process

2.119. The MoJ Occupational Psychology Centre of Expertise team conducts monitoring and evaluation of the Prison Officer recruitment process to ensure that it aligns with best-practice standards, the Equality Act 2010 and the Civil Service Recruitment Principles. This analysis includes reviewing the performance of protected candidate groups and outcomes at each assessment stage, to ensure standards and fairness within the process. Our latest analysis has shown no adverse impact in relation to gender at sift stage (Scenario-Based Test) and for the Online Assessment Centre (OAC). Statistically there were also no significant differences in overall OAC performance between the Male and Female groups.

2.120. The selection process for Prison Officers is continually improved to ensure it represents the needs of HMPPS, changes to the role and future requirements. We will continue to monitor impacts, as standard on protected characteristic groups, as the process evolves.

2.121. We continue to recruit Prison Officers and tailor our marketing and attraction to increase diversity of applications.

2.122. HMPPS is focusing on prisons where there is underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff compared to the local working population, using an enhanced, community-driven recruitment approach. This includes attending local events and open days, delivering webinars and workshops for prospective candidates, partnering with community organisations and leaders to co-design initiatives, and developing case studies to highlight the success stories of individuals who have thrived within the MoJ and HMPPS.

Improving Retention and Building Capability

2.123. This year, the overall leaving rate among Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers has reduced, with a rate of 11.6.% (for the 12 months ending 30 June 2025). This is a slight decrease of 0.8% compared to the year ending 31 March 2025. The resignation rate among Band 3 to 5 Officers as of the latest published data stands at 7.7% (12 months ending 30 June 2025), which is a decrease of 0.6% since 31 March 2025. Pay awards have played a role in stabilising resourcing, alongside other measures such as new recruitment pathways and enhancements to the onboarding process. However, the impact of the most recent significant pay award is not yet reflected in the quarterly workforce statistics. As such, it may be premature to make substantial further investment in pay without first understanding its effectiveness.

2.124. Due to the large intake of new staff, many colleagues lack experience – with 37.3% of Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers having less than 3 years of experience, as of March 2025. Organisationally, our priority is to build the capability and experience of new staff by improving retention. We recognise that retaining staff and enhancing their early career experience requires strong leadership, a robust training offer, and clear opportunities for career progression. These areas align closely with the main factors influencing staff attrition - particularly 'Leadership', 'Learning and Development', and 'Career Progression'. Our key initiatives to address these drivers are detailed in the sections below on:

- Enhancing Learning and Development
- Developing Effective Leaders
- Supporting Career Progression

2.125. We have also provided information on the other important drivers of staff attrition, for which the method by which we developed them is detailed in the next paragraph. The most recent ordering of the top 3 drivers, as well as Pay and Reward, is detailed in paragraph 2.127. A full breakdown of drivers of attrition methodology and data is provided in Annex B.



2.126. As referenced in previous submissions, research conducted as part of the 2017/18 Prison Officer Retention Strategy and Framework identified ten primary reasons why staff voluntarily leave HMPPS. These drivers are reviewed and revalidated annually to ensure they remain relevant, with further insights gathered through an enhanced exit interview process. In 2022, 'retirement' was added as an additional category for cases where none of the original ten drivers apply. If retirement is prompted by one of the existing drivers, that factor is recorded as the primary driver during the exit interview.

2.127. In the year ending June 2025, using analysis of exit interview data, HMPPS has determined that the top 3 drivers of attrition amongst Band 3 to 5 Officers are, Career Progression, Leadership and Ways of Working (this has changed from Career Progression, Health & Wellbeing and Ways of Working in year ending December 2024). Pay and Reward stands as the 8th main driver for why Band 3 to 5 Officers are leaving the service and has not featured in the top five since May 2023. Although still significant to staff, this demonstrates there are other, more immediate issues for our workforce, and that the competitiveness of our pay offer must be balanced with value for money and competing investment priorities elsewhere in the workforce.

Enhancing Learning and Development

2.128. The opportunity to learn and develop new skills is a key motivator in any role. Conversely, limited access to learning and development can lead to disengagement and may influence decisions to leave. Alongside the career progression pathways and leadership and management training already outlined, all staff have access to a range of options to enhance their Prison Service skills, deepen their knowledge and experience, and support their growth within their current roles. These learning and development options include:

2.129. **Apprenticeships** – HMPPS employees have access to MoJ learning programmes, including apprenticeships. Apprenticeships remain a key capability building tool and those below level 7 are fully funded through the apprenticeship levy. The Employee Capability Team are working with



profession leads and commercial colleagues to establish a framework agreement that will enable all MoJ staff, including HMPPS operational colleagues, to access relevant, high-quality apprenticeships from spring 2026. We are also working closely with the Operational Delivery Profession to raise awareness of their learning offer across the MoJ. Colleagues in Wales, where levy funding is not available, are funded internally to ensure parity.

2.130. The **MoJ Coaching and Mentoring Platform** was launched in June 2024, providing all MoJ colleagues with access to an inspiring, professional coaching and mentoring offer. The provision complements existing local coaching and mentoring provision and will build incrementally over the next 3 years. Between June and March 2025, over 350 HMPPS users registered on the platform, 110 of them as coaches/mentors.

2.131. HMPPS staff also have access to a wealth of learning resources through MyLearning, including bespoke role-specific eLearning, MoJ leadership learning, and access to the Civil Service Learning/Government Skills Campus catalogue. This allows staff to learn flexibly in and around their role, learn new skills, and develop their knowledge across a broad variety of topics.

Developing Effective Leaders

2.132. **Leadership:** All leaders impact the culture and behaviours that staff experience and therefore have a huge impact on increasing their motivation and understanding their sense of value.

2.133. The **Future Prison Leaders Programme** launched on 4 April 2025 and aims to recruit and train the next generation of prison leaders. The three-year programme will recruit 35 talented individuals from diverse backgrounds, including successful graduates and career changers, and offers a clear career pathway to a senior leadership position in prisons.

2.134. Following a competitive selection process, successful candidates will serve as Prison Officers learning the full range of operational duties on the wings, before progressing to custodial manager in year two, when they will manage a team of Prison Officers. In their third year they will undertake a head of



function management role, taking responsibility across a prison in areas such as security, operations, drug strategy, residency and staffing. Upon completion, participants will be prepared to undertake assessments to become Deputy Governors with accountability for providing leadership and direction, making strategic decisions and managing risks in a prison. This programme will help us recruit a new generation of leaders and support our vision to transform HMPPS into a world-class service.

2.135. **HMPPS Leadership and Management Offer** – following the completion and evaluation of The Leadership Journey pilot, a new strategic approach for leadership and management has been developed for all leaders in HMPPS. This new approach moves to role-based packages for all leaders across Prisons, Probation, and YCS. The offer addresses management capability and all elements of leadership, as articulated in the HMPPS People Manager Handbook and the newly refreshed Leadership Code, meeting role and context-specific needs pertinent to the unique environments of HMPPS, embedding psychologically informed practice throughout.

2.136. Five modules (Performance Management, Attendance Management, Conduct and Grievance, Investigations and Quality Conversations) have been designed to date and include a face-to-face and digital option. Delivery across HMPPS commenced in June 2024 and to April 2025; 3376 people have attended 329 learning sessions and these have received a rating of 94% for the relevance of the content.

2.137. The **Custodial Manager Programme** is an essential initiative within HMPPS aimed at developing the skills and competencies of Custodial Managers (CMs), including a bespoke leadership development offer to address any gaps. The programme includes four phases: Phase 1 focuses on relational practice, security, and safety; Phase 2 covers defensible decision-making, procedural justice, leadership, and decency; Phase 3 includes people and incident management, rehabilitation and performance and strategy, and Phase 4, delivered digitally, addresses policy, simple enquires and regime management. Phases 1 and 2 have already been piloted at several



establishments, while testing for Phases 3 and 4 is scheduled for 2025. A national rollout of the first module is planned for 2026.

- 2.138. The **Head of Function Programme** will follow this and be a high-quality leadership offer for Heads of Function that meets their needs and is relevant to their role, with the objective of building leadership capability in the Prison Service and supporting this group to develop confidence, demonstrate excellent leadership, and model the behaviours required of leaders in Prisons.
- 2.139. **Leadership School** – each year in June and October, MoJ runs two Leadership Schools to inspire and develop our employees. For 2025/26 we are trialling targeting specific groups for each School enabling participants learn with their peers. 400 participants (~50% from HMPPS) hear from internal and external experts in leadership, have time to identify and reflect on their own leadership style, and focus on what leadership behaviours they excel at and role model, as well as explore those to enhance their impact.
- 2.140. The MoJ Line Manager Capability Approach has now been formally launched across all business areas. This new approach provides a clear, practical path for every line manager to reflect on their strengths, build new skills, and develop as leaders. The approach seeks to integrate centrally available Civil-Service-wide line manager development products (e.g. Line Manager Induction, Line Management Standards and the Line Manager Development Tool) with existing departmental products (e.g. Line Manager Handbooks and People Management Essential modules) to provide a coherent approach to line management across the organisation. The outputs of this approach and its constituent parts will support line managers to improve: their capability – the skills, knowledge, and behaviours to manage effectively; their confidence – to make decisions, handle challenges, and inspire teams; and their consistency – aligned with shared expectations for how we manage people, lead change, and deliver results.

Supporting Career Progression

- 2.141. Opportunities for progression and development are key motivators for many staff. It is essential that HMPPS continues to invest in and broaden its development offer to align with staff aspirations, ensuring that limited career progression is not perceived as a reason to leave the organisation.
- 2.142. **Career Pathways Framework** – as noted in previous evidence, in February 2023, HMPPS launched an interactive Career Pathways Framework, designed to give all staff visibility of the career opportunities available across Prisons, Probation, Youth Custody, and Headquarters. The framework includes resources on learning and development, as well as a self-assessment tool to help individuals identify the support available to achieve their career goals. Since its launch, the framework has continued to evolve, with updates issued as new content becomes available.
- 2.143. **National Level Transfer** - In autumn 2023, HMPPS launched a pilot for a national-level transfer scheme, enabling Band 3 Prison Officers to voluntarily apply for transfers to other establishments across the adult estate. The scheme was designed to support personal development and respond to changes in personal circumstances, without requiring reciprocal exchanges or alignment with staffing priorities. Following the success of the pilot, the Prison Officer Level Transfer (POLT) scheme opened for applications on 10 July and remained open for four weeks. The scheme is intended to run annually.
- 2.144. **Spark Custodial** - The fast-track talent scheme aligns with the objectives of both the Career Pathway and the Race Action Plan. It is open to operational staff (Bands 3 and 4), non-operational staff (up to and including Band 6), and OSGs, and is designed for individuals with high potential to progress to operational Head of Function roles within three years. The scheme aims for at least 40% of participants to come from underrepresented groups, supporting diversity in leadership. It focuses on developing the leadership capabilities and behaviours of those identified as future leaders. Since its launch in 2021, the scheme has enrolled multiple cohorts of up to 16 participants. The



scheme is part of a broader effort to strengthen the leadership pipeline and improve workforce diversity within HMPPS.

2.145. **Spark Advance** - this scheme will develop non-operational leaders to become high quality operational Heads of Function in the Prison Service. The scheme complements Spark Custodial, providing more development routes for non-operational colleagues at other Bands.

2.146. **Other talent offers** - The wider talent offer includes several targeted development programmes designed to support underrepresented groups and those facing barriers to progression. **Launch** is an 18-month internship programme specifically designed for care leavers, offering structured support and development opportunities to help them build a career within the Civil Service. The **Ethnic Minority Development Grant (EMDG)** is a funding scheme that enables ethnic minority colleagues (up to and including Grade 6) to access bespoke learning and development opportunities - such as courses or conferences - to support their career progression and leadership development. **Catapult Mentoring Programme** supporting staff from less privileged backgrounds to build confidence, aspiration and support progression.

Additional Interventions to Support Retention – National

2.147. HMPPS has interventions in place to address each of the other ten drivers of attrition.

Ways of Working

2.148. Limited flexibility in working patterns can significantly disrupt employees' personal lives and is a contributing factor in decisions to leave the Service. Competing employers often present a more appealing offer by providing greater flexibility, family-friendly working arrangements, and a wider range of options that support a sustainable work-life balance.

2.149. A new digital rostering solution has been piloted across two prisons and 24 approved premises. Feedback was positive, with clear indications that staff



valued the increased autonomy and flexibility to manage their own working schedules. The outcomes of this proof of concept are forming a critical part of the business case for securing funding to support a national rollout.

- 2.150. HMPPS remains committed to fostering modern, inclusive workplaces that support flexible working arrangements aligned with operational needs. In April 2024, the flexible working policy was updated to reflect legislative changes. Under the revised policy, all employees - regardless of their length of service - are entitled to request flexible working. Staff may now submit up to two statutory flexible working requests within any 12-month period. These changes aim to enhance work-life balance and wellbeing while supporting recruitment and retention effort.
- 2.151. While we do not currently hold centralised data on all flexible working arrangements, future improvements to technology and systems (i.e. Synergy) will allow us to better monitor flexible working across the MoJ
- 2.152. The Shaping A New Employee Offer (SANE0) programme has now formally closed, but it successfully delivered guidance to support the introduction of flexible working arrangements. While SANE0 aimed to increase awareness and adoption of these practices, enabled by rostering technology, funding was not available. HR Business Partners and the Resource Management Support Team are equipped to help staff and managers understand the different flexible working options available. We would expect this to contribute to reducing reliance on Payment Plus.
- 2.153. HMPPS continues to support working parents through a comprehensive package of family leave benefits. This includes up to 52 weeks of maternity and adoption leave, with up to 26 weeks at contractual pay; shared parental leave, which allows eligible staff to share leave entitlements with their partners; and maternity support (paternity) leave, offering up to two weeks at contractual pay. In line with legislative changes introduced in April 2024, all relevant policies have been reviewed and updated to ensure compliance and continued support for staff needs.

Health and Wellbeing

2.154. HMPPS continues to enhance its commitment to staff wellbeing by expanding its portfolio of services, peer support networks, and volunteer-led initiatives. A key development has been the introduction of a new **Area Staff Support and Wellbeing Model**, launched on 1 October 2024, which marks a significant step forward in delivering targeted and coordinated wellbeing support across the organisation.

2.155. Under this model, nine full-time Staff Support and Wellbeing Leads (SSWLs) have been embedded within each Area Executive Director (AED) team. These leads are responsible for:

- Coordinating and promoting wellbeing services tailored to the needs of frontline staff
- Supporting the development and delivery of area-level wellbeing strategies in collaboration with Area Directors
- Overseeing volunteer-led services such as care teams, TRiM practitioners, mental health allies, and wellbeing champions
- Raising awareness of available support and ensuring staff know how to access it, including increased line manager capability in supporting wellbeing
- Feeding local insights into national initiatives to ensure services are responsive and relevant
- Collaborating with HR and other stakeholders to embed wellbeing as a shared organisational priority

2.156. The central HMPPS Wellbeing Team continues to provide strategic oversight, ensuring alignment with the **2024–26 HMPPS Wellbeing Priorities**, which were developed in consultation with key stakeholders and reflect the organisation's evolving structure and inclusion goals.

2.157. This person-centred approach aims to foster a workplace that supports individual health and wellbeing, in line with the wider MoJ People Strategy. It



recognises that a good workplace, focussed on the five evidenced based drivers of workplace wellbeing, contributes to improved retention, reduced absence, and greater pride in working for HMPPS.

2.158. The Peer Support Programme Refresh follows a service review of existing peer support across HMPPS and responds to rising levels of trauma exposure and violence. It aims to unify and strengthen peer support models under a trauma-informed framework, while also improving the support, supervision, and training available to the peer supporters themselves.

Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) provision

2.159. The area Staff Support and Wellbeing Leads play a pivotal role in coordinating, promoting and increasing confidence in the use of wellbeing services across their regions, ensuring frontline staff have access to targeted support and that local needs are reflected in national initiatives.

2.160. HMPPS' Occupational Health (OH) provision offers a range of proactive easy access services for employees:

- The OH Provider now has a dedicated neurodiversity assessment team. Following a line manager referral via the OH portal, a triage call will lead to neurodiversity cases being assessed timely for support and workplace adjustments.
- **Fast-track referrals** are available for workplace trauma-related cases, ensuring timely access to support.
- The OH provider employs **dedicated Mental Health Advisors** to manage referrals linked to mental ill-health.
- As HMPPS' OH provider offers a self-service technology-based musculoskeletal health intervention. The tool enables employees to gain fast-track virtual physiotherapy intervention, which bridges the gap between onset of musculoskeletal symptoms and the need for face-to-face physiotherapy.

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- 2.161. To support safe and sustainable recruitment, a **new pre-employment health screening questionnaire** was introduced in early 2024 for Prison Officer candidates and was revised in April 2025 to assist and enhance the vetting process. This bespoke tool includes enhanced clinical questions and provides a realistic overview of the role, helping to reduce early attrition linked to health and wellbeing concerns.
- 2.162. **OH Line Manager training** - Ensuring that line manager capability is built and sustained in making OH referrals, particularly because mental ill health accounts for the most common reason for referrals. Monthly 1-hour Teams training sessions started in October 2023 and are ongoing. Attendance rates continue to be high, averaging around 100 attendees per session.
- 2.163. **EAP** – Staff continue to have access to a 24-hour/365 days a year confidential counselling telephone helpline EAP, and where clinically indicated, online Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.
- 2.164. **Trauma and Critical Incident Support** – Group or one-to-one Trauma debriefing delivered by qualified counsellors to provide emotional support in the aftermath of violent or traumatic incidents across the prison and probation estate.
- 2.165. **Reflective sessions (RS)** are available to all HMPPS contracted staff. The aim of the sessions is to prevent adverse mental health experiences. They are a preventative and proactive mental ill health intervention. The provider is engaging prisons with lowest utilisation to encourage participation with this beneficial preventative intervention. RS virtual awareness sessions for HMPPS staff/managers (via MS Teams) commenced in May 2024 and are co-delivered with the MoJ EAP Clinical Lead and EAP provider.

Environment

- 2.166. Prisons can present challenging working conditions, which may contribute to staff choosing to leave the Service. Research highlights that ‘environment’ encompasses not only the physical safety of the workplace, but also the local culture and the quality of day-to-day facilities available to staff. HMPPS



acknowledges that the physical working environment plays a critical role in shaping mental wellbeing and is actively exploring improvements to staff facilities as part of its wider retention and wellbeing strategy.

2.167. **Staff Facilities Improvements** – HMPPS is working collaboratively across Departments to define a consistent standard for what constitutes decent staff facilities. This work builds on previous initiatives led by the Ways of Working team and aims to ensure that all staff have access to safe, functional, and supportive environments.

2.168. As part of this effort, HMPPS is expanding the use of the prisoner workforce to deliver improvements to staff facilities. This model involves supervision by a dedicated member of staff from Government Facility Services Limited (GFSL), ensuring that work is carried out safely and to a high standard. The approach is designed to deliver multiple benefits: cost savings, enhanced staff environments, and meaningful rehabilitative opportunities for prisoners involved in the work.

Staffing

2.169. Staffing pressures - particularly shortages at managerial grades and the high proportion of newly recruited, less experienced staff - continue to affect the wider workforce and operational environment across the prison estate, and higher vacancy rates persist at some sites. These challenges can impact team stability, leadership capacity, and the overall staff experience.

2.170. Compounding this are elevated 'non-effective' rates in some establishments. These refer to staff who are counted in headcount figures but are temporarily unavailable for operational duties due to factors such as annual leave, training, or sickness. In some sites, these rates exceed the typical allowance, placing additional strain on available resources and contributing to operational instability. A recent review of resourcing across adult public sector prisons has identified the need to reconsider the current assumptions about Band 3 Prison Officer availability and look at increasing the allowance for unavailability in our staffing model, due to a range of reasons, from 20% to 24%. To undertake this change, we have had to make changes to the frequency of key work in some



areas of the estate; this would require a c.25% reduction in key work resource to fund it and it would be completed as part of the key work refresh. This change would be more aligned to actual staff absences at this grade and is currently at the implementation planning stage but remains subject to affordability decisions.

Roles and Responsibilities

2.171. All staff should have a clear understanding of how their role contributes to the broader objectives of HMPPS, while consistently demonstrating Civil Service behaviours and upholding HMPPS values. To support this, a combination of structured training, a standardised induction process, and the support of New Colleague Mentors ensures that staff are well-prepared to understand and carry out their responsibilities effectively. These elements are designed to build confidence, competence, and a sense of belonging from the outset.

2.172. In addition, peer-developed staff guides have been introduced to help colleagues meet the expectations of their roles. While these guides do not replace formal policy, they provide accessible summaries of key responsibilities and standards, offering practical insight into what good performance looks like in day-to-day practice.

Induction

2.173. The induction process plays a vital role in setting new Prison Officers up for success and supporting long-term retention within HMPPS. To ensure consistency and quality, Prison Learning Delivery (PLD) has introduced a standardised, mandatory training package for all new Prison Officers. This is complemented by the introduction of New Colleague Mentors, who provide peer support during the critical early weeks at an establishment.

2.174. To further enhance the onboarding experience, HMPPS is developing a comprehensive two-week induction programme for both operational and non-operational staff. This programme will include a structured welcome to the prison community and orientation sessions covering key themes such as safety, security, respect, regimes, and reducing reoffending. The aim is to



foster a strong sense of belonging and alignment with HMPPS values from the outset.

Retention Oversight Process

2.175. Attrition rates vary significantly across the prison estate, influenced by local operational challenges and labour market conditions.

2.176. To address this, HMPPS continues to implement the **Retention Oversight Process (ROP)** using a data led approach in establishments with the highest levels of attrition. This process includes in-depth research - led by the Retention Research Team and Occupational Psychologists - to explore the lived experiences of staff and identify the underlying causes of resignations. Structured interviews are conducted with a cross-section of staff to gather qualitative insights, which inform tailored interventions.

2.177. In parallel, HMPPS also conducts deep dives in prisons with low attrition to identify effective practices that can be shared more widely. Since its inception, the ROP has been deployed in **24 high-attrition sites** and **3 low-attrition sites**, with findings contributing to both local and national workforce strategies.

2.178. The process is evolving to include **thematic deep dives**, focusing on specific issues derived from data and insight or to understand issues for particular groups such as early-career Officers, while continuing to monitor a “watchlist” of establishments at risk of rising attrition. This hybrid approach enables HMPPS to respond proactively to emerging trends and ensure that interventions are both targeted and evidence-based.

2.179. In 2023, HMPPS also introduced **retention check ins** with sites identified through monitoring of the watchlist. These sessions assess the effectiveness of local retention practices and offer recommendations for improvement, helping to enhance the overall employee experience and reduce turnover.

2.180. We are continuing to conduct thematic retention deep dives at prisons where attrition of Prison Officers remains a concern. Here we want to understand the



reasons why we are experiencing a higher volume of leavers in Prison Officer grades from those with under two years' service. Given that the process has been operating for over three years, we are revisiting prisons where the full process was previously implemented but sustainable change has not yet been achieved (2 sites). In addition, we also plan to return to prisons that have shown significant improvement, to understand what has worked well there and identify best practices we can share more widely.

Physical Education Instructors (PEIs)

Retention Challenges

2.181. PEI retention remains a challenge, despite a strong training pipeline. Vacancy rates have remained high, with several contributing factors. Firstly, PEIs operate in a uniquely specialised role within the custodial environment. They are recruited from a narrow talent pool with specific qualifications and experience required i.e. must have passed probation, been a Prison Officer and passed a 13-week PE Foundation course. Due to the physical requirements of the Foundation Training, a higher level of fitness (compared to the Prison Officer role) is also required on recruitment. Experience from our PE operational visits is that local planning arrangements often do not consider the development period required for succession/recruitment of PEI's.

2.182. In addition, there can be regional disparities in cost of living and higher-earning opportunities with other Government Departments i.e. Border Force. A significant proportion of the workforce are aged 50+, presenting a long-term retirement challenge. The legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic has also impacted on staff morale and career progression.

Recruitment Initiatives

2.183. We have a targeted PR campaign with HMPPS' Prison Resourcing and Recruitment and Retention Communications team, aligned with National Fitness Day planned for September 2025, featuring high-profile advocates to raise awareness of the PEI career pathway. Recent figures show measurable



progress in PEI vacancies over the past year, demonstrating progress in recruitment efforts.

2.184. The training pipeline is successfully preparing new candidates to fill vacancies, with projections indicating further improvement in staffing levels over the coming months. However, the persistent challenge is not the availability of training spaces, but rather retaining qualified staff, as attrition continues to impact overall workforce stability.

Strategic Transition of the National Training Centre for PE & Physical Activity

2.185. In October 2024, the PE Learning and Development function transitioned from MoJ to HMPPS. This move was designed to:

- Give HMPPS the opportunity to modernise the PE offer, from staff training to physical activity and education provision.
- Improve connectivity between prisons, probation, and community services.
- Address recruitment and retention challenges.
- Enable the National Physical Activity and Education (NPAE) team to address a range of key areas, including increasing training options, revising curricula to better serve diverse prisoner cohorts, defining the physical activity career pathway, and encouraging diversity.

Training Structure and Career Pathways

2.186. The NPAE has begun exploring and developing a new framework for PEI training to offer staff greater flexibility and clearer routes for career progression. Plans for these changes are moving through internal processes, with implementation expected in spring 2026.

Improving PE Leadership

2.187. We introduced discretionary Band 5 PE Staff Support Managers (PESSM – Custodial Manager) in September 2024. These roles support succession and training planning at a local level, helping to stabilise staffing and improve retention. There has been an improvement in vacancy rates at sites which



have a PESSM (based on empirical evidence from PE operational visits). There has been a growing uptake in this discretionary role, with around a third of prisons implementing the role since its introduction.

Closer monitoring of the Training Pipeline

2.188. A quarterly PEI Training Pipeline Report was developed by the NPAE team and MoJ Data and Analysis – Modelling Hub in collaboration with HMPPS Workforce and Pay Modelling, with the first version dated 1 January 2025 and updated on 26 March 2025. This report provides a comprehensive view of PEI staffing levels, vacancies, and training pipeline projections. The report is shared with the HMPPS HR community to support strategic and local workforce planning and inform pay and recruitment policy decisions. The report identifies establishments with high vacancy rates and monitors training throughput.

Market Supplements

- 2.189. A form of Market Supplements have been used since 2017 to support recruitment and retention in a small number of prisons with acute staffing challenges. They are non-consolidated payments made exclusively to Band 3 Prison Officers. Similar measures to uplift pay for roles where staffing challenges exist are normal practice in many workforces across other sectors.
- 2.190. As outlined in evidence for the 2025/26 PSPRB round, a Market Supplements Framework was introduced from April 2025. The framework establishes an evidence-based annual review process of ongoing Market Supplement use, to provide greater transparency, and an effective mechanism for their gradual erosion in the case of improved recruitment and retention in specific prisons.
- 2.191. Market Supplements are currently paid to staff across 19 prisons - including to staff previously employed at HMYOI Cookham Wood, who are currently experiencing erosion of their Market Supplement following the prison's reroll into part of HMP Rochester in June 2024. There remains a clear need for a targeted use of Market Supplements given capacity pressures and staffing challenges at specific sites. HMPPS intends to continue to use Market



Supplements as a part of the long-term strategy for pay and does not support any erosion of Market Supplements for the 2026/27 pay round.

2.192. In the 2021/22 pay round, HMPPS accepted a PSPRB recommendation for £3,000 of Market Supplement value to be consolidated into base pay, which effectively eroded the former Amber and OSG Market Supplements and reduced the value of 'Red' and 'Red Plus' Market Supplements to £2,000 and £3,500 respectively. A further national erosion exercise to reduce Market Supplement use, which are in place at only a small number of prisons, would be extremely challenging for HMPPS. This approach would not take into account local staffing levels and deliver poor value for money within the current fiscal context on the grounds of affordability.

2.193. HMPPS agrees with PSPRB's assessment that Band 3 Prison Officer pay is now market aligned. This follows significant investment in salaries in recent years, and successive above inflationary pay increases in the last two years. In this context, continued targeting of Market Supplements is a more effective way of increasing Prison Officer pay to supporting localised staffing challenges. The framework will ensure supplements are targeted in a data-led way.

2.194. Previously, the use of Market Supplements has not routinely been subject to evidence-based reviews, and we did not have a robust mechanism to remove a supplement when it was assessed that recruitment and retention had improved locally to the point that it was no longer required. In previous Pay Review rounds, PSPRB and recognised trade unions noted these limitations to historic use of Market Supplements. HMPPS recognised these challenges and has sought to address a number of these concerns through the development and implementation of the Market Supplement Framework - while facilitating a targeted approach to responding to emerging staffing challenges through the introduction of the new annual review process.

2.195. The Market Supplement Framework will manage the assessment of prisons to identify where Market Supplements should be implemented, increased, reduced, or removed to support both local and wider recruitment and retention



challenges. It does so through evidence-based decision-making which blends qualitative and quantitative data to ensure decisions are evidence led and feed into a longer-term strategy for the use of Market Supplements in HMPPS. It also improves communication regarding Market Supplement use with staff and Trade Unions.

2.196. The framework operates under the following key principles:

- An annual review process led by HMPPS official-level governance to make data-led decisions regarding turning on and off, and amending the level, of Market Supplements at specific prisons. This replaces the previous annual cross-government approval process needed to continue Market Supplement payments.
- A tiering system for all prisons measuring performance based on National Staffing projection Data, Retention, and Stability metrics to inform decisions regarding turning on.
- A dashboard incorporating the above metrics to inform decisions regarding turning off.
- Qualitative data assurances and operational leader inputs to allow informed evidence-based decisions regarding Market Supplements.
- A gradual erosion process to withdraw Market Supplements, with no drop in take-home pay. Market Supplements will be eroded gradually following payment of the annual pay award to offset.

2.197. There are three categories of data used in the criteria-based assessment to identify prisons where current Market Supplements arrangements will be subject to review through the annual review process. These are:

- Staffing Forecasts – the forecast percentage of staff in post (SiP) compared to the Target Staffing Figure (TSF) by prison over a 6-month period. Planned expansions to establishments are also factored into this data.



- Staff Retention – measured as a Wastage Rate informed by Prison Officer attrition to resignation, retirement, transfer or having deceased.
- Stability – considers Detached Duty Provision at the Prison; an assessment of current stability of prison rated low/medium/high based on internal monthly reporting; and regime delivery as rated through monthly internal reporting.

2.198. During the review process, qualitative local data insights are also considered in decision making to ensure operational reality and potential impact on recruitment and retention performance is considered. These insights include:

- Safety and security insights
- Scrutiny body insights (including Urgent Notifications)
- Other staffing interventions in use at the prison
- Market Supplement use at prisons locally
- Local insights and labour market information

2.199. Where a Market Supplement is implemented or increased, it will be maintained for a minimum of two years to allow time for the intervention to deliver the necessary impact to recruitment and retention, and avoid the adverse effects associated with frequent staff pay fluctuations. This minimum period of application also helps mitigate against Market Supplements being implemented to address short term staffing challenges where other interventions may be more appropriate.

2.200. Where a Market Supplement is removed or reduced from a specific prison, the value of the Market Supplement payable will be eroded each year by a portion of the pay increase delivered through that year's pay award. The amount by which Market Supplements are eroded will be dependent on the outcomes of future pay awards made in light of PSPRB recommendations. For that reason, the amount by which the Market Supplement is to be eroded in any year may vary, as may the length of time which it takes for the Market Supplement to be fully eroded and consolidated into base pay.



2.201. In years which see lower pay growth, the erosion process may be paused to ensure that staff continue to receive some form of pay increase to mitigate against a reversion of staffing challenges.

2.202. In eroding a Market Supplement, HMPPS will adopt the following approach:

- In setting the amount by which the Market Supplement will be eroded each year HMPPS will ensure that staff do not experience a decrease in take home pay.
- The amount by which the Market Supplement will be eroded each year will be dependent on the terms of the pay award introduced following recommendations made by the PSPRB.
- New Band 3 Prison Officers joining the prison during the erosion process will be treated the same as existing staff and are entitled to a consistent rate of Market Supplement as the wider Band 3 Prison Officer group.
- The Market Supplement will no longer be paid to an individual if they move to a non-qualifying prison or if change roles to a role which does not attract the Market Supplement.

2.203. We intend to complete this year's review of Market Supplement use in the autumn, with any changes to take effect from April 2026. Following direct notification to impacted staff and prisons, and updates to trade union stakeholders, we intend to update the PSPRB on the results of the review.

The Staff Experience

Sickness Absence

2.204. A new Supporting Attendance policy was introduced in September 2024. In the year ending 31 March 2025, HMPPS staff lost an average of 11.9 working days to sickness absence. This is an increase from 11.1 average working days lost (AWDL) for the year ending 31 March 2024, and an increase of 1.6 days compared to the predominantly COVID-19 free year ending 31 March 2020.

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- 2.205. Youth Custody Service (YCS) staff had the highest sickness absence rate at 17.7 AWDL, followed by the Probation Service (13.3 AWDL), public sector prisons (11.7 AWDL), and HQ and Frontline Support (6.6 AWDL). Compared to the year ending 31 March 2024, these represent an increase of 0.7 days for YCS, an increase of 0.7 days for Probation Service, an increase of 0.8 days for public sector prisons, and an increase of 0.6 days for HQ and Frontline Support staff.
- 2.206. For HMPPS, overall the most common category of sickness absence in terms of days lost was mental ill health, corresponding to 40.3% of working days lost in the past year. The category that accounted for the second largest proportion of working days lost was musculoskeletal system (18.2%). Together the top two categories accounted for 58.5% of all working days lost.
- 2.207. Significant focus has been given to achieving reduction in absence rates across HMPPS over the past 2 years. HR colleagues continue to work with managers at local, regional and national levels to review levels of sickness absence to take actions under relevant policies to provide support to staff and, where possible, return staff to work. HR Casework has been deployed to support managers to tackle long term absence, with dedicated casework support for specific prison and probation sites continuing to be delivered.
- 2.208. To support the Area Executive Director (AED) structure, a revised regional wellbeing model has been introduced, strengthening the focus on staff wellbeing across both Prison and Probation services. Dedicated wellbeing leads are now in place, actively coordinating wellbeing initiatives and peer support networks. They work in close partnership with HR and other key stakeholders to embed wellbeing as a shared organisational priority.
- 2.209. Existing support for staff wellbeing includes access to a range of mechanisms, including our Occupational Health provider, our Employee Assistance Programme, HMPPS' Mental Health Allies, The Charity for Civil Servants, our in-house Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours Unit (TUBU), Staff Support Leads and Trauma Risk Management teams (TRiM). HR colleagues are working



closely with senior leaders in refining and communicating the wellbeing offer available for staff.

2.210. Occupational Health (OH) services to address mental ill health and to promote mental wellbeing include fast track referrals for trauma cases, and our OH provider employs Mental Health Advisors to solely address mental ill health referrals. As musculoskeletal ill health is the second highest reason for referral to OH, as well as the second highest sickness absence reason, HMPPS embedded the self-service technology-based musculoskeletal health intervention. The same technology is being explored to support other health conditions such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension and menopause.

2.211. To mitigate absence caused by seasonal flu, HMPPS continues to deliver onsite flu vaccination clinics in prisons, and the digital flu voucher scheme is being offered pan-MoJ for a third year, allowing employees to obtain their free flu vaccines at over 4,000 pharmacies.

2.212. In the employee assistance programme (EAP) space, Reflective Sessions (RS) are a preventative and proactive mental ill health intervention. The sessions will focus on the impact of delivering the work on an employee's professional life and assist them to develop further coping strategies for managing stressors and mitigating the professional impact of working with people in HMPPS. Strategies to promote and increase usage include working with the RS provider on analysing management information to detect establishments that are low users of RS. This allows us to take steps to target these areas as well as engaging with AEDs to continue to promote the Governor-specific RS services. HMPPS continues to provide not only counselling but computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Where this is clinically appropriate, it is available for non-work-related cases.

2.213. For HMPPS staff who require blood tests as a follow-up to body fluid exposure, HMPPS has collaborated with our OH provider to extend the number of clinical sites using NHS Open Spaces to offer additional appointments over a larger geographical space.

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- 2.214. A Workplace Post Incident Trauma Support (WPITS) User Guide provides guidance to support all employees who are at risk of, and have been affected by, a potentially traumatic workplace event. This guide supports the overarching Workplace Post Incident Trauma Support Policy Framework. Principally, the guidance describes what constitutes a potentially traumatic/traumatic workplace event, and what steps to take in the event of a critical incident. Additionally, it provides information on the formal MoJ and HMPPS OH and EAP services, as well as recommended best practice use of the peer-to-peer support programmes that are in place.
- 2.215. Work is ongoing to redesign a bespoke Prison Officer OH pre-employment health screening questionnaire with enhanced clinical questions, conveying a realistic picture of the role, enabling safe recruitment yet not deterring applicants.
- 2.216. The OH Workplace Adjustment Guidance for front-line prison and probation continues to be used by HR professionals, managers and OH clinicians, building their confidence and capability to support workability and attendance. This forms a key educational component of the OH line manager training programme, which is continuing to be delivered monthly since October 2023.
- 2.217. Further work is being undertaken to better understand correlations, causes and impacts between staff sickness absence and other workforce issues such as staff retention, demographics, and geographical diversity. This will help identify future interventions to reduce further absence rates within HMPPS.
- 2.218. Through our OH and EAP package, HMPPS will continue to deliver the following key priorities over the next 12 months:
- Contract retender for OH, EAP and Reflective Sessions services.
 - Ensuring that OH and EAP key performance indicators (KPIs) are met. Across the UK OH and EAP supplier industries, there are shortages of OH clinicians and counsellors.

- Ensuring that HMPPS employees have access to appointments and support within contractually agreed timeframes.
- Ensuring that line manager capability is built and sustained in making OH referrals. Monthly 1-hour Teams training sessions include issuing a feedback questionnaire to attendees and this is evaluated for content quality and relevance.
- The OH and EAP policy does not have a direct impact on pay. However, OH provides formal advice on whether Ill Health Retirement is suitable and whether Sick Leave Excusal will apply when requested formally by a referring line manager. The OH and EAP policy interacts in a manner which aims to keep employees healthy and safe in the workplace, by providing the OH and EAP contracted services.

2.219. The People Management Essentials training includes a dedicated module on managing absence and has been implemented across the estate, with a particular emphasis on first-line managers. To date, over 443 modules have been delivered to 4,498 managers. The rollout is ongoing, with continued collaboration with AEDs to align training delivery with their specific priorities and operational needs.

2.220. We are currently reviewing Sickness Absence policy application and available support for managers across the estate. This will include providing recommendations for upskilling to improve capability and consistency when applying the policy. This will be available for prisons as well as probation and HQ. The policy frameworks are available to staff internally and can be shared with the PSPRB on an Official-Sensitive basis if required.

Workforce Culture

2.221. MoJ People and Capability Group are currently reviewing a suite of policies covering Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and Victimisation (BHDV), Grievance, Conduct, and Discipline along with key stakeholders. This work is tied into the HMPPS Professional Standard Review and will be driven by outputs and agreements from the recommendations. This work forms part of



the broader policy harmonisation work to simplify the policy landscape across MoJ, HMPPS and other Agencies and Arms-Length Bodies (ALBs) to improve policy useability for the end-user.

2.222. *Rademaker Review* - In October 2023, Jennifer Rademaker (Non-Executive Director) was commissioned by HMPPS to conduct a review and identify any specific recommendations and improvements to deliver positive change in how HMPPS addresses bullying, harassment, and discrimination. This work was conducted in early 2024 and the report published in May 2025. Twelve recommendations were made in relation to policy, procedures and operation delivery.

2.223. All twelve recommendations were accepted by HMPPS and include setting up a new independent unit to handle all BHDV complaints, a review of Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms (DIRF), review of workplace adjustments, bolstering current sexual harassment guidance and a better and more comprehensive approach to data recording. A project board has been established to oversee the delivery of each of the recommendations and schedules around delivery targets remain on track. Engagement with all Trade Unions and significant stakeholders is underway, particularly where key policy updates are required, namely the grievance and conduct and discipline policy.

The People Survey and core themes, motivation, and morale

2.224. The People Survey for 2025 is scheduled to begin in September and end in October, results are expected to be available to HMPPS by mid-November.

2.225. The Pay Award was implemented in July 2025, with the People Survey set to begin in September. This timeline limits the opportunity to assess the award's impact before the publication of written evidence. Furthermore, as the written evidence for 2026/27 will be published earlier than in previous years, the People Survey results for 2025 will not yet be available. Once these results become available, which is anticipated for late November 2025, a comprehensive overview report will be submitted to PSPRB on an Official – Sensitive basis.

Performance Management

2.226. Regular, open and honest conversations between line managers and employees are core to the performance management approach in the MoJ. Regular conversations are expected to take place every eight weeks (flexibility allowed in specific circumstances) and the expectation is that a quarterly review process is carried out by managers to ensure consistency and fairness. There are no box markings and consequently no related end of year performance markings. However, work is underway to consider elements of Performance Management and Managing Poor Performance policies to encourage a high-performance culture.

2.227. Where there are concerns about an individual's performance, additional support is put in place by the manager. Where support has failed to result in performance at the required standard, the formal Managing Poor Performance policy is utilised, with a focus on encouraging improvement within a set period, though if performance does not improve, under-performing employees can be dismissed.

Review of Prison complexity model and Job Evaluation System guidance

2.228. HMPPS conducts systematic reviews of complexity levels across the prison estate, applying one of four standardised categories: *Standard*, *Standard Plus*, *Complex* and *Complex and Diverse*. Each level is underpinned by defined minimum senior operational staffing requirements, ensuring appropriate leadership capacity is maintained in line with the complexity of the establishment.

2.229. Prisons are typically reviewed on a biennial basis to assess their complexity levels. However, urgent reviews may be requested outside of this cycle where operational circumstances warrant immediate reassessment.

2.230. In addition to exceptional reviews, HMPPS maintains a forward-looking schedule informed by comparable establishments and evolving business needs. Reviews may be triggered by planned capacity expansion programme,



changes to prisoner population type/categorisation or a commitment to revisit a previous panel decision.

2.231. All reviews are conducted in alignment with the financial year and follow a standardised scoring mechanism and criteria. This structured approach ensures consistency, transparency, and responsiveness to operational developments across the prison estate.

2.232. HMPPS continues to adhere to the refreshed operational 'Fair and Sustainable' guidance on how to operate the job evaluation scheme (JES) and associated processes.

Annex A: Additional Evidence Requests

The table below summarises the evidence requests raised by PSPRB in its 2025 report.

Evidence requests from PSPRB 2025/26 report:	Response:
We will review unsocial hours payments for the whole remit group in two years' time, in our 2027 Report, as scheduled under our rolling review of allowances. We ask both HMPPS and the POA to present proposals to us for that report along with rationales and reasoning on the appropriate payment rates for each grade. We ask that data collected by HMPPS are in a format that is shareable with the trade unions. Our preference would be for joint proposals from HMPPS and the POA for us to consider for our 2027 Report.	We have acknowledged this request and are working to address it. We have provided an update on our progress on this issue and our upcoming Nights Review at para 1.65. We have shared data on Unsocial Hours Working by OSGs with the PSPRB and POA.
We do expect information from HMPPS on OSG overtime for our next round in 2026, and we will reconsider this in our 2028 Report as scheduled in our rolling review.	We have addressed this issue in our evidence above (para 1.82).
We request an update on the Escort, Bedwatch and Constant Supervision Review, the outcome of that review and how this is expected to reduce expenditure on Payment Plus. We also wish to know how the results of the review have or will be applied, along with clearly set out and measurable milestones and timeframes.	An update on the EBCS Review is provided above (para 1.74).
We note that the HMPPS written evidence included Shaping A New Employee Offer (SANEO) as a means of reducing Payment Plus by having a more flexible staffing pool. However, as	An update on the SANEO programme is provided above (para 2.152).

noted in Chapter 3 and later in this chapter, we understand that aspects of the SANEO programme may not be funded. We would therefore welcome an update on the SANEO programme generally, and how it is now expected to reduce the expenditure on Payment Plus.	
We ask that HMPPS continues to collate the data that we have requested by prison and nationally on the hours that OSGs are detailed/scheduled to work unsocially as an average percentage of their weekly hours. If we receive those data in time, we will revisit the issue of Band 2 UWH payments in our 2026 Report. We will review unsocial hours payments for the whole remit group in two years' time, in our 2027 Report, as scheduled under our rolling review of allowances. We ask both HMPPS and the POA to present proposals to us for that report along with rationales and reasoning on the appropriate payment rates for each grade. We ask that data collected by HMPPS are in a format that is shareable with the trade unions.	These data have now been provided to the PSPRB and the POA. We provide a further update on our work to address Recommendation 14 from 2024/25 in the evidence above (para 1.62).
We note that separate data [on the gender pay gap] for our remit group are not published, but we continue to request this information from HMPPS.	We have acknowledged this request. Data for individual remit groups is not something we currently produce, but we note the interest in this and will consider options for future sharing.
As we have highlighted in previous reports we would like to receive the following information from the parties: the intended purposes of On-Call payments; information on any recruitment and retention difficulties, including any plans for improvement; impact on family life and in particular on those with caring responsibilities; and finally, any external comparator information that may be available. We would also like to receive information on the yearly cost to the Service of the three rates of Fair and Sustainable on-call (home) allowances and how many	We have included information above in relation to the purpose of on-call payments, rationale for the rate, recruitment and retention and our assessment of the allowance in relation to comparators (para 1.49). We will respond with data on the number of staff in receipt and yearly cost of the on-call allowances outside of Written Evidence.

staff on average a year are receiving these payments. Again, if one of the parties is requesting no uplift, we wish to receive the rationale and reasoning for this proposal. We would also welcome any agreements HMPPS and the POA might be able to reach on these on-call (home) payments. Follow up request: A brief background on how the allowance rate was reached and the rationale	
We ask HMPPS and the POA to provide us with evidence next year on any initiatives to attract new applicants as PEIs, the progress being made on the recruitment of PEIs, along with information on retention. We would like to receive shareable and publishable data on the number of PEIs in post versus the target, broken down by establishment and protected characteristics, along with information on any individual prisons or areas that are having particular difficulties in recruiting to the PEI role. We would also find it useful to hear some of the reasons why PEIs leave that specialism and to be informed about the impact on recruitment and retention of the reorganisation of responsibilities within HMPPS headquarters described in this year's written submission from HMPPS.	We have included information above on recruitment and retention of PEIs, including initiatives to improve this, and internal reforms (para 2.181) We will share data on staff in post, by establishment and by protected characteristic, outside of Written Evidence.
We would like to receive data on which prisons, run by the public sector, will be expanding and how many additional staff at all Operational Grades will be needed in the next three to five years.	We are unable to share a complete list of 20k projects and their staffing needs in this period, as these are subject to change, for example due to constraints on spending or deliverability challenges.
We understand that a new resource model is being developed by HMPPS/Ministry of Justice and we would welcome an update on the implications of this.	Following over 2 years of research and operational engagement HMPPS has developed a new staff resource model for prisons. The model gives us the ability to analyse current Target Staffing Figures against a set of consistent assumptions to ensure that resources

	are optimised across the estate and prioritised towards business need. Full implementation of the model remains subject to decision making and affordability, but if implemented would effectively inform staffing budgets rather than determine local working practice.
HMPPS stated in 2024 and 2025 that it was reconsidering its non-effective levels [...] We would therefore like to hear from HMPPS how a move to a higher non-effectives percentage will be managed and if without additional staffing, which it intimated in oral evidence, how this is expected to work.	We have provided information on work to review non-effective rates above. (para 2.170).
HMPPS said it had developed a new annual internal review of Market Supplements rather than negotiating with HMT each year. We would therefore like to receive an overview of what the process is, along with information and data on the outcome for each Market Supplement site. We would also be interested in HMPPS' approach should it be planning to remove a particular Market Supplement from an establishment.	We have addressed this request in our evidence above (para 2.189).
We welcome the useful information HMPPS provides on the numbers of staff opting in to Fair and Sustainable broken down by grade, and request that this continues for our next report.	Due to the timing of the Written Evidence submission relative to the F&S opt-in exercise, we are unable to provide this data at present. It will be shared when it becomes available.
Lord Timpson said he was keen to see initial Band 3 Prison Officer recruitment training increase from the current seven weeks to around 15 weeks, with on-going support provided for the first 12 months of service. We would like to be kept informed on how this develops, including any early feedback or analysis that might be available. [...] In addition, we would like to hear of any plans HMPPS has for improving the pipeline and quality of junior and senior leadership across the Service,	Improvements to training and the leadership pipeline are covered above under the Enable Programme (para 2.97).

something the Minister said he was eager to see. [...] Linked to improved training was the professionalisation of the Prison Officer role which the Minister said was an important part of his focus on developing staff. [...] We would like to hear more about these plans as they develop.	
We have noted in past reports that HMPPS has cited several initiatives related to our remit around recruitment and retention, or which might affect that remit. [...] We request an overview of initiatives that impact on our remit and terms of reference, to help us understand what initiatives are underway, what evaluations have been carried out or are planned, and how any new initiatives will be evaluated in the future.	Initiatives to address recruitment and retention are covered above (see para 2.183 - 2.184 for recruitment initiatives, and 2.124 for retention initiatives).
We would therefore like to hear from HMPPS on how it is going to monitor the progress of its flexible working policy service-wide, and how it will ensure consistency of approach whilst allowing sufficient latitude for tailored solutions to local problems.	An update on the flexible working policy is provided above (para 2.150).
We would therefore ask HMPPS to provide data on those in receipt of allowances broken down by all protected characteristics.	We have acknowledged this request and will provide data on allowances by protected characteristics outside of Written Evidence.
In oral evidence, HMPPS stated that the Service needed to do more to tackle racism, misogyny, sexism and homophobia, indicating that there needed to be a shift in culture. [...] It is positive that HMPPS had identified that it needs to do more in these areas. We would like to hear for our next report what the Service has been doing, and what progress it has made in tackling these kinds of unacceptable behaviours.	An update on activity relating to culture and unacceptable behaviours is provided in our Workforce Culture section (see para 2.221 onward).

We have also noted that ethnic minority applicants for Bands 2 and 3 posts have lower acceptance rates than their white counterparts. Additionally, female applicants for Band 3 roles seem to be less successful in the recruitment process than male applicants. We would like to understand why this is happening, so ask HMPPS if it has conducted any analysis leading to an explanation of these differences in outcomes.	We have addressed this issue in our evidence above, under 'Diversity in recruitment and improvements to the recruitment process' (para 2.119)
Requested by email: Any feedback on the increase to the ORRU on-call allowance	The continued acceleration of the PSPRB timetable means we have less time to assess the impact of the 2025/26 award, but we are tracking the early effects of the award and expect to see a positive impact on recruitment and retention.
Requested by email: An overview of the process and data outcomes for each Market Supplement site as per HMPPS' new internal review mechanism for Market Supplements	The Market Supplements review mechanism is described above (para 2.195). This year's review has not yet concluded so we are unable to provide data outcomes at present. These will be provided to the PSPRB once affected staff have been informed of review outcomes.



Annex B: Exit Interview

Methodology and Data Overview

Methodology

The exit interview process was introduced in August 2021 and was designed to enable individual establishments to identify why operational and non-operational staff are leaving. HR Business Partners (HRBP) have been trained to undertake the exit interviews with specific questions focused on the 10 drivers of attrition outlined in the table below. The interview is designed to focus on the following:

- To fully understand the reasons why a staff member has resigned – linked to the Drivers of Attrition.
- To find out if anything could have prevented their resignation.
- To identify if there are any patterns in who is leaving.
- To understand what is working well in the establishment.
- To use negative feedback and suggestions for change to make improvements.
- To enable leavers to have their say and end on a positive note.
- To build a national picture of who is leaving and why.

Once an interview is completed the HRBP then uploads the responses from the questions to a centralised database with all identifying factors removed. This information then forms the insights which is used to identify national, regional and local trends which enable HR to identify suitable interventions to help improve retention. Whilst all staff are offered an Exit Interview, it is not a mandated process so the data below does not reflect the views of all leavers. The tables below are collated from employee exit interviews and highlight the specific primary driver that influenced their decision to leave the organisation.

Data Overview – Primary Driver for Leaving All Staff

Prisons	Aug 23 - Jul 24	Sep 23 - Aug 24	Oct 23 - Sep 24	Nov 23 - Oct 24	Dec 23 - Nov 24	Jan 24 - Dec 24	Feb 24 - Jan 25	Mar 24 - Feb 25	Apr 24 - Mar 25	May 24 - Apr 25	Jun 24 - May 25	Jul 24 - Jun 25
Career Progression	23.74%	24.84%	24.63%	23.73%	23.41%	23.62%	22.78%	23.21%	23.62%	23.52%	22.61%	23.44%
Environment	5.13%	4.81%	4.77%	4.72%	3.82%	3.22%	3.38%	3.30%	3.04%	3.25%	2.98%	2.46%
Health & Wellbeing	14.01%	14.11%	14.76%	14.99%	15.78%	16.38%	16.32%	16.05%	15.80%	15.09%	15.23%	15.08%
Induction	0.64%	0.66%	0.68%	0.71%	0.64%	0.67%	0.70%	0.57%	0.58%	0.44%	0.31%	0.16%
Leadership	14.65%	14.99%	15.21%	15.58%	15.78%	15.70%	15.89%	16.05%	16.23%	15.98%	16.80%	16.72%
Learning & Development	1.28%	1.42%	1.36%	1.53%	1.27%	1.34%	1.55%	1.43%	1.16%	1.04%	0.94%	1.31%
Pay & Reward	4.60%	4.27%	3.97%	4.25%	4.33%	4.56%	4.36%	4.01%	4.20%	4.29%	4.08%	3.93%
Retirement	11.87%	11.82%	12.15%	12.87%	13.36%	13.56%	14.35%	14.90%	14.78%	15.53%	17.74%	17.70%
Role & Responsibility	3.64%	3.06%	2.84%	2.95%	3.05%	3.09%	2.81%	2.72%	2.46%	2.22%	1.88%	2.30%
Staffing	3.42%	3.28%	3.06%	2.60%	2.67%	2.95%	3.09%	2.72%	2.75%	3.25%	3.14%	3.44%
Ways of Working	17.01%	16.74%	16.57%	16.06%	15.90%	14.90%	14.77%	15.04%	15.36%	15.38%	14.29%	13.44%
Number of interviews	935	914	881	847	786	745	711	698	690	676	637	610
Leavers	4363	4397	4311	4232	4165	4138	4086	4026	3978	3916	3811	3693
Transfers	756	759	776	741	738	725	707	694	724	731	726	716
Leavers & Transfers	5,119	5156	5087	4973	4903	4863	4793	4720	4702	4647	4537	4409
Response Rate	18.27%	17.73%	17.32%	17.03%	16.03%	15.32%	14.83%	14.79%	14.67%	14.55%	14.04%	13.84%

Prisoner Officer Band 3 to 5 – Primary Driver for Leaving

Prisons	Aug 23 - Jul 24	Sep 23 - Aug 24	Oct 23 - Sep 24	Nov 23 - Oct 24	Dec 23 - Nov 24	Jan 24 - Dec 24	Feb 24 - Jan 25	Mar 24 - Feb 25	Apr 24 - Mar 25	May 24 - Apr 25	Jun 24 - May 25	Jul 24 - Jun 25
Career Progression	20.71%	21.02%	21.19%	20.69%	20.38%	21.61%	20.25%	19.87%	20.00%	19.75%	19.39%	18.71%
Environment	5.79%	5.31%	5.00%	4.93%	3.80%	3.46%	4.29%	4.10%	3.55%	3.82%	3.06%	2.52%
Health & Wellbeing	16.70%	16.63%	17.38%	18.97%	19.84%	20.75%	20.55%	21.14%	19.35%	18.15%	18.71%	17.99%
Induction	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Leadership	16.70%	18.01%	19.05%	17.98%	17.66%	17.29%	17.18%	17.35%	18.06%	17.83%	18.71%	18.71%
Learning & Development	0.67%	0.92%	0.95%	1.48%	1.36%	1.44%	1.84%	1.89%	1.61%	1.59%	1.36%	1.44%
Pay & Reward	4.68%	4.39%	3.81%	4.19%	3.80%	3.75%	3.37%	2.84%	3.23%	3.18%	3.06%	3.24%
Retirement	8.02%	7.39%	7.14%	6.90%	7.07%	6.63%	7.36%	7.89%	8.39%	8.92%	10.20%	11.15%
Role & Responsibility	1.78%	1.39%	1.43%	1.48%	1.90%	2.02%	1.53%	1.58%	1.61%	1.91%	1.70%	1.80%
Staffing	4.01%	4.16%	3.81%	3.45%	3.26%	4.03%	4.29%	4.10%	4.19%	5.10%	5.44%	6.47%
Ways of Working	20.94%	20.79%	20.24%	19.95%	20.92%	19.02%	19.33%	19.24%	20.00%	19.75%	18.37%	17.99%
Number of interviews	449	433	420	406	368	347	326	317	310	314	294	278
Leavers	2614	2618	2558	2513	2474	2461	2432	2392	2367	2331	2266	2175
Transfers	388	387	394	367	367	359	351	346	369	385	390	387
Leavers & Transfers	3002	3005	2952	2880	2841	2820	2783	2738	2736	2716	2656	2562
Response Rate	14.96%	14.41%	14.23%	14.10%	12.95%	12.30%	11.71%	11.58%	11.33%	11.56%	11.07%	10.85%

Prisoner Officer – Operational Support Grade – Primary Driver for Leaving

Prisons	Aug 23 - Jul 24	Sep 23 - Aug 24	Oct 23 - Sep 24	Nov 23 - Oct 24	Dec 23 - Nov 24	Jan 24 - Dec 24	Feb 24 - Jan 25	Mar 24 - Feb 25	Apr 24 - Mar 25	May 24 - Apr 25	Jun 24 - May 25	Jul 24 - Jun 25
Career Progression	16.07%	16.22%	17.43%	14.85%	14.58%	12.50%	12.64%	15.12%	16.47%	18.75%	20.55%	25.00%
Environment	6.25%	6.31%	7.34%	5.94%	4.17%	3.41%	2.30%	2.33%	3.53%	3.75%	4.11%	4.17%
Health & Wellbeing	6.25%	5.41%	7.34%	7.92%	10.42%	11.36%	11.49%	11.63%	11.76%	13.75%	12.33%	12.50%
Induction	2.68%	2.70%	2.75%	2.97%	3.13%	3.41%	3.45%	2.33%	2.35%	1.25%	1.37%	0.00%
Leadership	13.39%	12.61%	11.93%	12.87%	13.54%	11.36%	12.64%	9.30%	9.41%	6.25%	4.11%	4.17%
Learning & Development	2.68%	3.60%	3.67%	3.96%	4.17%	4.55%	4.60%	4.65%	3.53%	2.50%	2.74%	4.17%
Pay & Reward	4.46%	4.50%	2.75%	2.97%	3.13%	3.41%	3.45%	3.49%	4.71%	5.00%	5.48%	4.17%
Retirement	15.18%	16.22%	15.60%	19.80%	20.83%	21.59%	22.99%	24.42%	22.35%	22.50%	24.66%	23.61%
Role & Responsibility	4.46%	3.60%	3.67%	1.98%	1.04%	2.27%	2.30%	2.33%	1.18%	1.25%	1.37%	2.78%
Staffing	4.46%	4.50%	4.59%	3.96%	5.21%	5.68%	6.90%	5.81%	5.88%	6.25%	5.48%	4.17%
Ways of Working	24.11%	24.32%	22.94%	22.77%	19.79%	20.45%	17.24%	18.60%	18.82%	18.75%	17.81%	15.28%
Number of interviews	112	111	109	101	96	88	87	86	85	80	73	72
Leavers	830	843	829	812	808	789	772	747	725	714	705	687
Transfers	39	40	40	36	37	34	34	30	29	28	30	29
Leavers & Transfers	869	883	869	848	845	823	806	777	754	742	735	716
Response Rate	12.89%	12.57%	12.54%	11.91%	11.36%	10.69%	10.79%	11.07%	11.27%	10.78%	9.93%	10.06%

Band 7 – 11 Managers (Op & Non-Op) – Primary Driver for Leaving

Prisons	Aug 23 - Jul 24	Sep 23 - Aug 24	Oct 23 - Sep 24	Nov 23 - Oct 24	Dec 23 - Nov 24	Jan 24 - Dec 24	Feb 24 - Jan 25	Mar 24 - Feb 25	Apr 24 - Mar 25	May 24 - Apr 25	Jun 24 - May 25	Jul 24 - Jun 25
Career Progression	35.29%	38.24%	36.36%	36.67%	37.04%	37.04%	40.74%	37.93%	38.46%	33.33%	25.00%	26.67%
Environment	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Health & Wellbeing	8.82%	8.82%	15.15%	16.67%	14.81%	14.81%	11.11%	10.34%	15.38%	16.67%	14.29%	13.33%
Induction	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Leadership	11.76%	11.76%	12.12%	10.00%	11.11%	11.11%	7.41%	3.45%	7.69%	8.33%	3.57%	3.33%
Learning & Development	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.33%
Pay & Reward	2.94%	2.94%	3.03%	3.33%	3.70%	3.70%	3.70%	3.45%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Retirement	26.47%	26.47%	24.24%	26.67%	25.93%	25.93%	29.63%	34.48%	30.77%	33.33%	39.29%	36.67%
Role & Responsibility	5.88%	2.94%	3.03%	3.33%	3.70%	3.70%	3.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Staffing	2.94%	2.94%	3.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ways of Working	5.88%	5.88%	3.03%	3.33%	3.70%	3.70%	3.70%	10.34%	7.69%	8.33%	17.86%	16.67%
Number of interviews	34	34	33	30	27	27	27	29	26	24	28	30
Leavers	69	75	74	72	67	68	68	68	70	68	67	69
Transfers	124	120	131	127	124	126	116	114	112	113	112	116
Leavers & Transfers	193	195	205	199	191	194	184	182	182	181	179	185
Response Rate	17.62%	17.44%	16.10%	15.08%	14.14%	13.92%	14.67%	15.93%	14.29%	13.26%	15.64%	16.22%

Band 2 – 6 Non-Op Staff – Primary Driver for Leaving

Prisons	Aug 23 - Jul 24	Sep 23 - Aug 24	Oct 23 - Sep 24	Nov 23 - Oct 24	Dec 23 - Nov 24	Jan 24 - Dec 24	Feb 24 - Jan 25	Mar 24 - Feb 25	Apr 24 - Mar 25	May 24 - Apr 25	Jun 24 - May 25	Jul 24 - Jun 25
Career Progression	28.57%	30.93%	30.06%	28.99%	28.42%	27.76%	26.77%	27.65%	28.09%	28.40%	26.56%	27.95%
Environment	4.46%	4.20%	4.11%	4.56%	4.11%	3.20%	2.97%	3.03%	2.62%	2.72%	2.90%	2.18%
Health & Wellbeing	13.69%	14.41%	13.92%	12.05%	12.67%	12.81%	13.38%	12.12%	13.11%	11.67%	12.03%	12.66%
Induction	0.89%	0.90%	0.95%	0.98%	0.68%	0.71%	0.74%	0.76%	0.75%	0.78%	0.41%	0.44%
Leadership	12.50%	12.01%	11.39%	13.68%	14.38%	15.66%	16.36%	18.18%	17.23%	17.51%	19.92%	20.09%
Learning & Development	1.79%	1.50%	1.27%	0.98%	0.34%	0.36%	0.37%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Pay & Reward	4.76%	4.20%	4.75%	4.89%	5.48%	6.05%	5.95%	5.68%	5.62%	5.84%	5.39%	5.24%
Retirement	14.58%	14.71%	16.46%	17.26%	17.81%	18.51%	18.59%	18.18%	18.35%	19.84%	22.41%	21.40%
Role & Responsibility	5.65%	5.11%	4.43%	5.21%	5.14%	4.63%	4.46%	4.55%	4.12%	3.11%	2.49%	3.06%
Staffing	2.38%	1.80%	1.58%	1.30%	1.37%	1.07%	0.74%	0.38%	0.37%	0.39%	0.00%	0.00%
Ways of Working	10.71%	10.21%	11.08%	10.10%	9.59%	9.25%	9.67%	9.47%	9.74%	9.73%	7.88%	6.99%
Number of interviews	336	333	316	307	292	281	269	264	267	257	241	229
Leavers	850	861	850	835	816	820	814	819	816	803	773	762
Transfers	205	212	211	211	210	206	206	204	214	205	194	184
Leavers & Transfers	1,055	1073	1061	1046	1026	1026	1020	1023	1030	1008	967	946
Response Rate	31.85%	31.03%	29.78%	29.35%	28.46%	27.39%	26.37%	25.81%	25.92%	25.50%	24.92%	24.21%

Annex C: Pay Tables

F&S Band pay ranges 2025/26 and proposed 2026/27

			Pay Effective 1 April 2025		Pay Effective 1 April 2026	
			Pay Points / Range: 01 Apr 25 - 31 Mar 26		Pay Points / Range: 01 Apr 26 - 31 Mar 27	
BAND 2	National	37 Hour Base Pay	Spot		Spot	
		39 hour inc ACHP	£24,527		£25,263	
		37 hour inc 20% Unsocial	£25,853		£26,629	
		37 hour inc 25% Unsocial	£29,432		£30,316	
		39 hour inc ACHP and 20% Unsocial	£30,659		£31,579	
		39 hour inc ACHP and 25% Unsocial	£31,024		£31,955	
			£32,316		£33,286	
	Outer London	37 Hour base pay	£27,842		£28,661	
		39 hour inc ACHP	£29,347		£30,210	
		37 hour inc 20% Unsocial	£33,411		£34,393	
		37 hour inc 25% Unsocial	£34,803		£35,826	
		39 hour inc ACHP and 20% Unsocial	£35,217		£36,252	
		39 hour inc ACHP and 25% Unsocial	£36,684		£37,763	
	Inner London	37 Hour base pay	£29,568		£30,430	
		39 hour inc ACHP	£31,166		£32,075	
		37 hour inc 20% Unsocial	£35,483		£36,516	
		37 hour inc 25% Unsocial	£36,960		£38,038	
		39 hour inc ACHP and 20% Unsocial	£37,400		£38,490	
		39 hour inc ACHP and 25% Unsocial	£38,958		£40,094	

F&S Band pay ranges 2025/26 and proposed 2026/27

			Pay Effective 1 April 2025			Pay Effective 1 April 2026		
			Pay Points / Range: 01 Apr 25 - 31 Mar 26			Pay Points / Range: 01 Apr 26 - 31 Mar 27		
			1	2	3	1	2	3
BAND 3	National	37 hour Base Pay	£28,122	£29,106	£29,611	£28,825	£29,834	£30,351
		39 hour inc ACHP	£29,642	£30,679	£31,212	£30,383	£31,447	£31,992
		37 hour inc 20% unsocial	£33,746	£34,927	£35,533	£34,590	£35,801	£36,421
		38 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£34,810	£36,029	£36,654	£35,681	£36,930	£37,570
		39 hour inc ACHP & 20% unsocial	£35,571	£36,815	£37,454	£36,460	£37,736	£38,390
		39 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£35,875	£37,130	£37,774	£36,771	£38,059	£38,718
		40 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£36,939	£38,231	£38,894	£37,862	£39,187	£39,866
		41 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£38,003	£39,333	£40,015	£38,953	£40,316	£41,015
	Outer London	37 hour Base Pay	£31,271	£32,365	£32,926	£32,223	£33,232	£33,749
		39 hour inc ACHP	£32,961	£34,114	£34,706	£33,965	£35,028	£35,573
		37 hour inc 20% unsocial	£37,525	£38,838	£39,511	£38,667	£39,878	£40,499
		38 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£38,708	£40,063	£40,757	£39,887	£41,136	£41,776
		39 hour inc ACHP & 20% unsocial	£39,554	£40,937	£41,647	£42,325	£36,460	£37,094
		39 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£39,892	£41,287	£42,003	£41,106	£42,393	£43,053
		40 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£41,075	£42,512	£43,249	£42,325	£43,651	£44,330
		41 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£42,258	£43,736	£44,495	£43,544	£44,908	£45,607
	Inner London	37 hour Base Pay	£32,911	£34,062	£34,652	£33,992	£35,001	£35,518
		39 hour inc ACHP	£34,690	£35,903	£36,525	£35,829	£36,893	£37,438
		37 hour inc 20% unsocial	£39,493	£40,874	£41,582	£40,790	£42,001	£42,622
		38 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£40,738	£42,163	£42,894	£42,077	£43,326	£43,966
		39 hour inc ACHP & 20% unsocial	£41,628	£43,084	£43,830	£44,649	£36,460	£37,094
		39 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£41,984	£43,452	£44,205	£43,363	£44,650	£45,309
		40 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£43,229	£44,741	£45,516	£44,649	£45,974	£46,653
		41 hour inc ACH & 20% unsocial	£44,474	£46,030	£46,827	£45,935	£47,299	£47,997

F&S Band pay ranges 2025/26 and proposed 2026/27

			Pay Effective 1 April 2025			Pay Effective 1 April 2026		
			Pay Points / Range: 01 Apr 25 - 31 Mar 26			Pay Points / Range: 01 Apr 26 - 31 Mar 27		
BAND 4	National	37 Hour Base Pay	Spot			Spot		
		39 hour inc ACHP	£33,275			£34,107		
		37 hour inc 20% Unsocial	£35,074			£35,951		
		39 hour inc ACHP and 20% Unsocial	£39,930			£40,928		
	Outer London	37 Hour base pay	£42,088			£43,141		
		39 hour inc ACHP	£36,590			£37,505		
		37 hour inc 20% Unsocial	£38,568			£39,532		
		39 hour inc ACHP and 20% Unsocial	£43,908			£45,006		
	Inner London	37 Hour base pay	£46,281			£47,439		
		39 hour inc ACHP	£38,316			£39,274		
		37 hour inc 20% Unsocial	£40,387			£41,397		
		39 hour inc ACHP and 20% Unsocial	£45,979			£47,129		
			£48,465			£49,676		
BAND 5	National	37 Hour Base Pay	1	2	3	1	2	3
		39 hour inc ACHP	£36,151	£37,009	£37,887	£37,055	£37,934	£38,834
		37 hour inc 20% Unsocial	£38,105	£39,009	£39,935	£39,058	£39,984	£40,933
		39 hour inc ACHP and 20% Unsocial	£43,381	£44,411	£45,464	£44,466	£45,521	£46,601
	Outer London	37 Hour base pay	£45,726	£46,811	£47,922	£46,870	£47,981	£49,120
		39 hour inc ACHP	£39,315	£40,248	£41,202	£42,713	£41,332	£42,232
		37 hour inc 20% Unsocial	£41,440	£42,424	£43,429	£45,022	£43,566	£44,515
		39 hour inc ACHP and 20% Unsocial	£47,178	£48,298	£49,442	£51,255	£49,598	£50,678
	Inner London	37 Hour base pay	£49,278	£50,908	£52,115	£54,026	£52,279	£53,418
		39 hour inc ACHP	£40,962	£41,934	£42,928	£46,129	£43,101	£44,001
		37 hour inc 20% Unsocial	£43,176	£44,201	£45,248	£48,622	£45,431	£46,379
		39 hour inc ACHP and 20% Unsocial	£49,154	£50,321	£51,514	£55,355	£51,721	£52,801
			£51,811	£53,041	£54,298	£58,347	£54,517	£55,655

F&S Band pay ranges 2025/26 and proposed 2026/27

			Pay Effective 1 April 2025		Pay Effective 1 April 2026	
			Pay Range: 01 Apr 25 - 31 Mar 26		Pay Range: 01 Apr 26 - 31 Mar 27	
			Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
BAND 6	National	37 hour base pay	£39,803	£43,783	£40,799	£44,878
		37 hour inc RHA	£47,764	£52,540	£48,959	£53,854
	Outer London	37 hour base pay	£42,817	£47,098	£44,197	£48,276
		37 hour inc RHA	£51,380	£56,518	£53,036	£57,931
	Inner London	37 hour base pay	£44,386	£48,824	£45,966	£50,045
		37 hour inc RHA	£53,263	£58,589	£55,159	£60,054
BAND 7	National	37 hour base pay		Spot		Spot
		37 hour inc RHA		£52,316		£53,624
				£62,779		£64,349
	Outer London	37 hour base pay		£55,631		£57,022
		37 hour inc RHA		£66,757		£68,426
	Inner London	37 hour base pay		£57,357		£58,791
		37 hour inc RHA		£68,828		£70,549
			Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
BAND 8	National	37 hour base pay	£55,457	£61,003	£56,844	£62,529
		37 hour inc RHA	£66,548	£73,204	£68,213	£75,035
	Outer London	37 hour base pay	£58,471	£64,318	£60,242	£65,927
		37 hour inc RHA	£70,165	£77,182	£72,290	£79,112
	Inner London	37 hour base pay	£60,040	£66,044	£62,011	£67,696
		37 hour inc RHA	£72,048	£79,253	£74,413	£81,235

F&S Band pay ranges 2025/26 and proposed 2026/27

			Pay Effective 1 April 2025		Pay Effective 1 April 2026	
			Pay Range: 01 Apr 25 - 31 Mar 26		Pay Range: 01 Apr 26 - 31 Mar 27	
			Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
BAND 9	National	37 hour base pay	£71,027	£78,129	£72,803	£80,083
		37 hour inc RHA	£85,232	£93,755	£87,364	£96,100
	Outer London	37 hour base pay	£74,041	£81,444	£76,201	£83,481
		37 hour inc RHA	£88,849	£97,733	£91,441	£100,177
	Inner London	37 hour base pay	£75,610	£83,170	£77,970	£85,250
		37 hour inc RHA	£90,732	£99,804	£93,564	£102,300
BAND 10	National	37 hour base pay	£78,587	£86,446	£80,552	£88,608
		37 hour inc RHA	£94,305	£103,735	£96,662	£106,330
	Outer London	37 hour base pay	£81,601	£89,761	£83,950	£92,006
		37 hour inc RHA	£97,921	£107,713	£100,740	£110,407
	Inner London	37 hour base pay	£83,170	£91,487	£85,719	£93,775
		37 hour inc RHA	£99,804	£109,784	£102,863	£112,530
BAND 11	National	37 hour base pay	£88,444	£97,288	£90,656	£99,721
		37 hour inc RHA	£106,133	£116,746	£108,787	£119,665
	Outer London	37 hour base pay	£91,458	£100,603	£94,054	£103,119
		37 hour inc RHA	£109,750	£120,724	£112,865	£123,743
	Inner London	37 hour base pay	£93,027	£102,329	£95,823	£104,888
		37 hour inc RHA	£111,632	£122,795	£114,988	£125,866
BAND 12	National	37 hour base pay inc RHA	Spot		Spot	
	Outer London	37 hour base pay inc RHA	£121,644		£124,686	
	Inner London	37 hour base pay inc RHA	£124,959		£128,084	
			£126,685		£129,853	

Closed Uniformed Grades pay scales 2025/26 and proposed 2026/27²

Grade	Pay Point	2025	2026 ³
Principal Officer	Single Rate	£38,087	£38,087
Senior Officer	Single Rate	£35,429	£35,429
OSG	Single Rate	£24,858	£24,858

Grade	Pay Point	2025	2026 ⁴
Prison Officer	Maximum	£32,915	£32,915
Prison Auxiliary (closed)	Maximum	£24,858	£24,858
G4S Security Officer (SO)	Maximum	£24,858	£24,858

² All Closed Grade staff are now at maximum.

³ 2026 figures are subject to any increases to the 2026 National Living Wage.

⁴ 2026 figures are subject to any increases to the 2026 National Living Wage.

Closed Operational Phase One Manager pay scales 2025/26 and proposed 2026/27⁵

Effective From	Including RHA			Excluding RHA	
	01-Apr-25	01-Apr-26		01-Apr-25	01-Apr-26
Senior Manager A	£94,896	£94,896	Senior Manager D	£70,003	£70,003
Senior Manager B	£92,110	£92,110	From 23 July 2009		
Senior Manager C	£82,953	£82,953	Manager E	£52,691	£52,691
Senior Manager D	£76,209	£76,209	Manager F	£44,697	£44,697
Senior Manager D	£70,003 *	£70,003 *	Manager G	£36,794	£36,794
(Inc RHA closed 22 July 2009)			RHA	£6,206	£6,206

* The 2009 maximum value on the all-inclusive RHA Senior Manager D pay scale was retained as an additional pay point. This is the maximum available for those individuals in non-qualifying roles who chose to remain on this closed scale.

⁵ All Closed Grade staff are now at maximum

Annex D: Prison Officer Recruitment Process

Prison Officer/YJW Recruitment Process



