



# HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales

Annual Report 2025-26

HC 432



# **HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales**

## **Annual Report 2025-26**

For the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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Prison Act 1952

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# Introduction

by the Chief Inspector of Prisons

**This is the sixth and final annual report I have produced in my time as Chief Inspector of Prisons. I took up the role during the pandemic, when the determination of my predecessor and the dedication of the team meant that by April 2020 the Inspectorate was back in places of detention monitoring the treatment and conditions of prisoners and detainees.**

Depressingly, five years after the country emerged from the last COVID-19 lockdown, time out of cell for prisoners has still not recovered. In our survey, 34% of men and 15% of women reported spending more than 22 hours locked up on weekdays.

A lack of meaningful purposeful activity has been a consistent criticism by the Inspectorate since its foundation in 1982, particularly in the overcrowded, Victorian reception jails. In the last year however, we have reported a worrying deterioration in activity and levels of safety for prisoners in the long-term, high-secure estate (LTHSE) in which most men are serving long sentences. Inspections of Swaleside, Wakefield, Whitemoor, Lowdham Grange and Woodhill and, published after this reporting year, reports from

Manchester, the Isle of Wight and Long Lartin, revealed some appalling levels of time out of cell. We found few opportunities for men to demonstrate a reduction in their levels of risk or become involved in the sort of meaningful activity that would help them to resettle successfully and get work on release.

When there is little to keep prisoners occupied, they often turn to readily available drugs to pass the time. The ability of criminals to use drones to deliver contraband has transformed the drugs market within many prisons. The technology has become more advanced and the packages larger. This means as well as commonly used drugs such as spice, ketamine and cocaine, prisoners are now able to order cannabis and lifestyle drugs such as Ozempic, Minoxidil (for hair loss) and anabolic steroids as well as mobile phones, memory sticks and chargers. In the LTHSE we found worrying failings in security, with inadequate staff training, broken CCTV, netting that had not been replaced and windows that were easily breeched. In most of these prisons, there were frighteningly high levels of violence often fuelled by the illicit economy. In

our surveys at Swaleside and Wakefield, 75% of men said they had felt unsafe.

A failure across government to take this national security threat seriously means that many prisons are losing the fight against criminality. Senior figures in organised crime gangs seem to operate with impunity, building up successful prison networks that make enormous amounts of money. They exploit the many drug-addicted, mentally ill prisoners, whose families are often having to pay off substantial debts to prevent their son or partner from being assaulted.

It was mainly concerns over the safety of prisoners and staff that led me to issue Urgent Notifications for Swaleside, Woodhill and Pentonville.

Frustration, boredom and despair are driving the demand for drugs across the estate and yet the prison service has failed to reduce this demand. Apart from a handful of exceptions, incentivised substance free living (ISFL) wings, designed to support prisoners to remain drug-free, are rarely effective in supporting the recovery of the many addicts in jail. In some cases, ISFL wings are overrun by drugs and others

are populated by organised crime gang members who opt to live apart from the chaos they have created elsewhere in the prison. A large proportion of prisoners will not be able to break the cycle of crime and imprisonment if they are not offered a pathway to recovery.

In my time as Chief Inspector, I have repeatedly emphasised the importance of high-quality education and training in helping prisoners to become better equipped to cope with life inside and more importantly when they get out. Sadly, the prison service and the Ministry of Justice do not seem to have shared my ambition. Services have, in many jails, been brutally cut and many teachers made redundant. Attendance in education, training and work is often appalling and, with a few notable exceptions, it has not been sufficiently prioritised in most prisons. Working days are ludicrously short and workshops and classrooms often close before lunch on Fridays, leading to even longer lock up over the weekends.

More positively, our 'Reading for rehabilitation' thematic report, published in January 2026,

highlighted excellent work done by some prisons in every category to embed reading into prison life. In most jails however, the focus on reading is peripheral and there is not nearly enough attention to supporting those with the highest level of need. Far too many people leave prison still unable to read, a shocking waste of an opportunity to help prisoners turn their lives around.

Relationships remain central to the success of the best prisons. Our inspection of Magilligan prison with Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland was particularly impressive - staff-prisoner relationships were excellent and time out of cell was among the best that inspectors had seen in recent years.

Living conditions in many prisons have deteriorated where routine work has not been completed and much of the estate looks dilapidated and tired. Excruciating processes for procuring contractors to do essential works means it takes much too long to get even basic refurbishment done. A typical example was at Lincoln, where they had been waiting for seven years for new boilers while spending a fortune on hired equipment. At

Birmingham, a giant crane stood unused in the centre of the jail, a monument to the inability of the prison service to finish a project that was supposed to be completed years ago. At Manchester, it had taken far too long to get planning permission for new windows that were essential in the fight against drones.

Support for prisoners ahead of release was mixed, with too many leaving prison homeless. Maintaining good family contact is essential for children, parents and partners, and yet only a few prisons are really creative about the service they provide.

Meanwhile governors continue to spend much too much time on HR processes without adequate support and are still subjected to ludicrous rules that do not allow them to spend more than £500 on a single item without getting permission from senior HMPPS leaders. The gap between what governors ought to be doing, and the way in which they actually spend their time, is filled with piles of paperwork that include responding to the latest directive from the centre or to repeated requests for trivial data. Experienced governors have found ways to manage some of the

most irksome demands, but those who have recently started in the role have to plod through every painful process. Huge delays to vetting have affected the recruitment of officers and other staff, causing enormous frustration for governors, particularly in jails that already suffer from chronic staffing shortages.

Elsewhere some effective leadership in the women's estate has led to a better focus on the specific needs of the most vulnerable women. Despite this, levels of self-harm remain staggeringly high and cuts to education have created a narrower offer. Given the importance of family contact to women in prison, I would like to see a renewed focus on improving provision to the same standard as in the best men's prisons.

Apart from the well-run and effective young offender institution (YOI) at Parc, the rest of the youth estate remains too much too violent. While there have been some attempts to reduce the number of boys who are unable to mix with their peers, 'keep apart' restrictions continue to have a detrimental effect on regimes. Too many boys do not have enough time out of their cells on weekdays, and the education and training offer

is poor. A consistent failure by the Youth Custody Service (YCS) to manage behaviour effectively is affecting every function of the youth estate including education, health care and family visits. In what is the best-funded part of the prison estate, I have serious questions about the way in which resources are allocated, with a very large central team and very high manager-to-officer ratios in the YOIs. The introduction of PAVA incapacitant spray has given staff the ability to meet violence with greater force, but in most establishments there is none of the effective behaviour management or positive culture that we found at Parc YOI, where violence was lower and PAVA was not even available. As a result of serious safeguarding concerns, I issued an Urgent Notification at Oakhill Secure Training Centre.

Our inspections of the immigration estate have been more positive this year; treatment of detainees has generally been decent, although we have continued to be critical of the very prison-like conditions in which some are held. Our review at Harmondsworth revealed a well-led, much-improved institution and inspectors were impressed with what they found at Dungavel

and Derwentside immigration removal centres. Our inspections of deportation flights showed that the Home Office and its contractors have maintained improvements to the treatment of detainees.

Inspections of court custody continued to show better coordination between agencies and contractors. We frequently highlighted the high quality of care provided by staff to those in court cells, but conditions in many suites remained austere.

There are some reasons to be hopeful about the future. In recent months changes to sentencing policy have led to a substantial reduction in the prison population (although it will not solve the chronic overcrowding in many prisons). Data from the last set of quarterly statistics show a reduction in the number of assaults and our recent inspection scores have shown some welcome improvements. The prison service therefore has the opportunity to address many of the challenges highlighted in this report, before the population begins to grow again.

It was, however, disappointing that in the frantic response to the most recent prison population crisis

there was not nearly enough focus on the importance of effective rehabilitation in reducing the numbers coming to prison.

It is impossible not to retain some optimism when prisons like Rye Hill, Doncaster, Hatfield, Northumberland, Huntercombe, Send, Haverigg, Warren Hill and Lincoln show what is possible under the leadership of outstanding governors.

Sadly, HMPPS has not sought to understand the reasons for the success of the most effective jails in the private and public sectors or replicate them elsewhere, especially the far greater autonomy granted to directors in contracted prisons. At times, it has felt as though the prison service is more comfortable managing a crisis, than it is on relentlessly improving standards. The tenure of governors remains short compared to other professionals such as headteachers, and only a dozen governors are still running the same prison that they were when I began as Chief Inspector in 2020.

At a cost of £59k a year for each prison place the taxpayer has the right to expect more for their

money. The best prisons show us that if prisoners live in an environment with clear boundaries, where they are incentivised to behave, prepared to get work on release, given intensive support to recover from drug addiction and enabled to maintain strong ties with their families, it is possible to reduce the reoffending rate and crucially the number of victims of crime. The courageous men and women who work in our prisons deserve reciprocal courage from politicians and a relentless drive in Whitehall and from HMPPS to remove the barriers that are in the way of transformational leadership.

I wish to pay tribute to prison leaders, court staff and directors of immigration removal centres for the way in which they have engaged with the Inspectorate and me over the last five years. I know how deeply personal it is to be inspected, but even where governors have not agreed with our judgements they have always conducted themselves with great dignity, doing a job that rarely gets the public recognition it deserves. I also want thank staff for the good-natured way in which they have supported the work of the Inspectorate

despite being so busy, as well as the thousands of prisoners who have contributed to our judgments.

Finally, I want to thank my team at the Inspectorate of Prisons. I have been enormously privileged to lead such an outstanding, dedicated group of professionals over the last five-and-a-half years. As well as our inspectors, our brilliant research team and secretariat are essential to the success of the organisation, which I have no doubt will continue to thrive as a strong, independent and respected body under my successor.

**Charlie Taylor**

Chief Inspector of Prisons

# Who we are and what we do



## Our purpose

We are an independent inspectorate led by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons. We scrutinise the conditions for and treatment of prisoners and other detainees and report on our findings.

We help to make sure that detention is humane, safe, respectful and helps to prepare people for release ahead of their return to the community. We do that by carrying out independent inspections of prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres and courts in England and Wales and places of immigration detention across the UK.

We publish reports to let people know about our findings and hold the government, and those running places of detention, to account. We also identify and share examples of positive practice to support leaders in learning from other, comparable institutions.

Our role is to shine a light on what needs to change, but we cannot enforce it. It is up to leaders to consider the best way to respond to our concerns and use their resources and expertise to find solutions. HM Prison

and Probation Service (HMPPS), HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and the Home Office should work with establishments to support this progress.

## **Our Expectations and healthy establishment tests**

Our Expectations set out the criteria we use to inspect prisons and other forms of detention. They are based on international human rights standards and are used to examine all aspects of life in detention.

There is a different version of Expectations for each type of custody we inspect. However, our basic inspection methodology is consistent across all places of detention. It consists of a series of broad thematic judgements known as healthy establishment tests. The tests vary slightly but all have been developed from our four tests of a healthy prison, which are:

- **Safety:** prisoners, particularly the most vulnerable, are held safely.
- **Respect:** prisoners are treated with respect for their human dignity.
- **Purposeful activity:** prisoners are able, and

expected, to engage in activity that is likely to benefit them.

- **Preparation for release:** preparation for release is understood as a core function of the prison; prisoners are supported to maintain and develop relationships with their family and friends, are helped to reduce their likelihood of reoffending and have their risk of harm managed effectively, and are prepared for their release into the community.

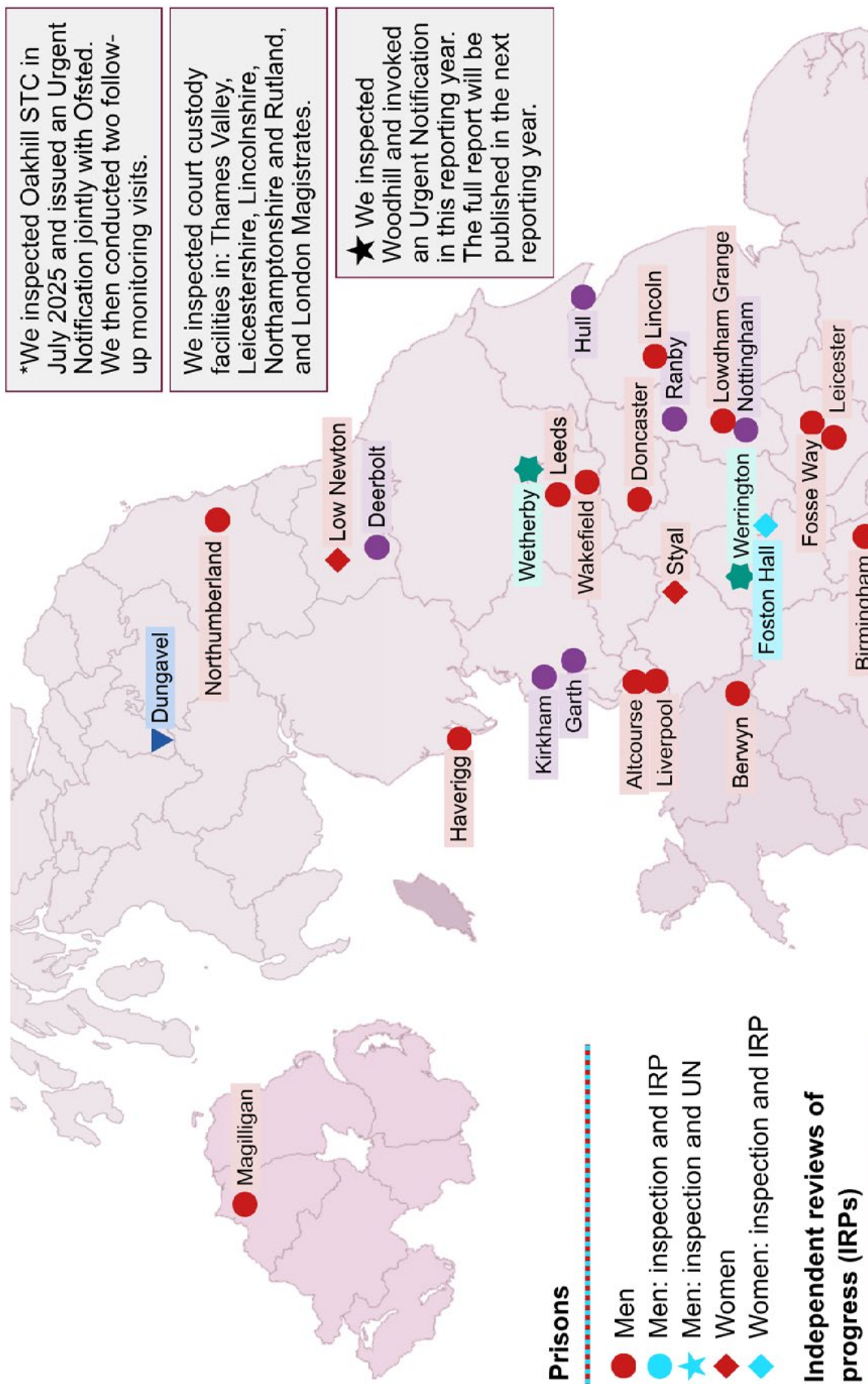
For more information about the work of the Inspectorate, as well as our international obligations, please visit our website:

[hmiprisons.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk](https://hmiprisons.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk)

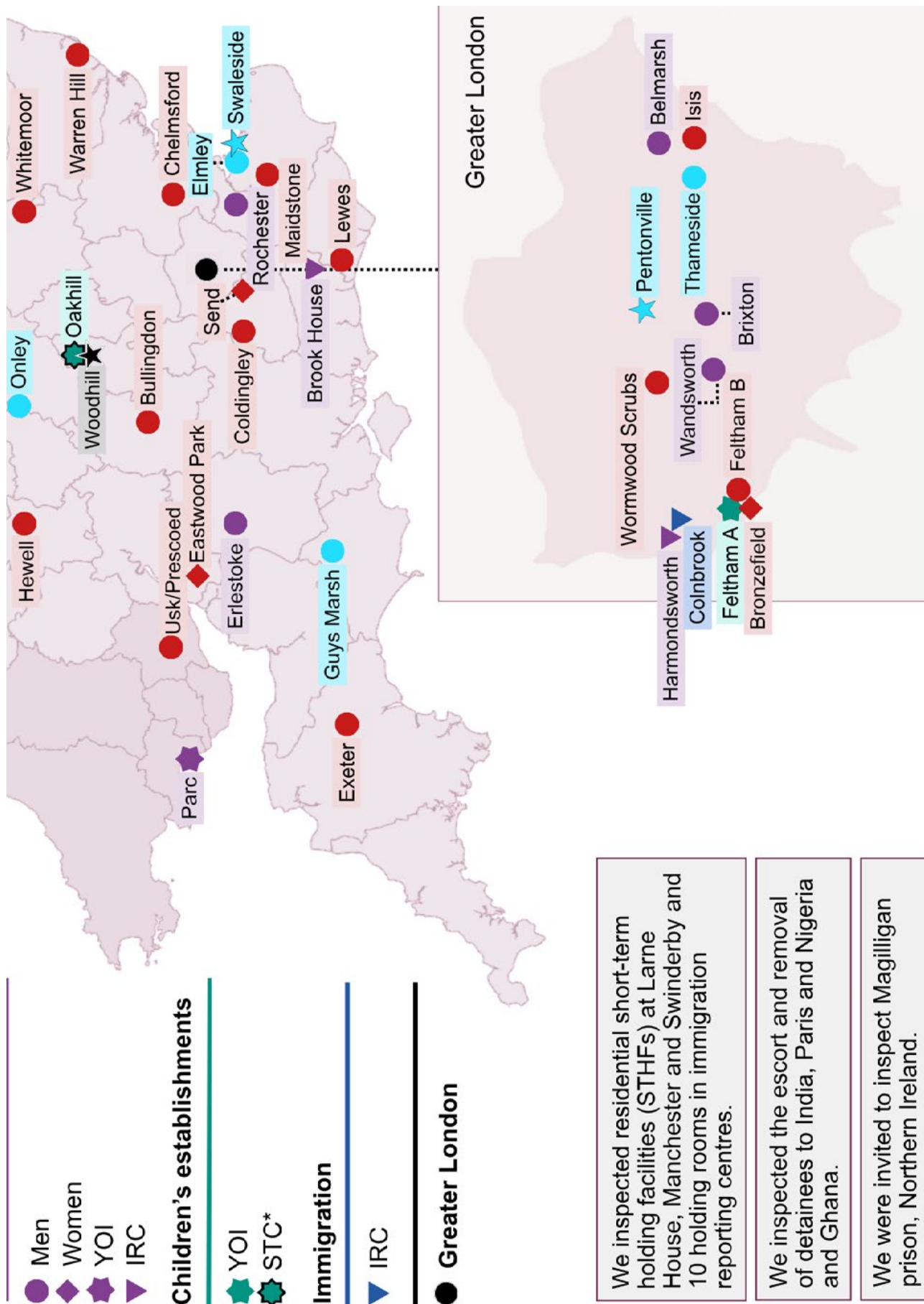
# The year in brief

**KEEP LOCKED**

## Inspection reports published - 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026



## Inspection reports published - 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 (cont)



We inspected residential short-term holding facilities (STHFs) at Larne House, Manchester and Swindon and 10 holding rooms in immigration reporting centres.

We inspected the escort and removal of detainees to India, Paris and Nigeria and Ghana.

We were invited to inspect Magilligan prison, Northern Ireland.

**Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, we published 84 inspection, independent review of progress and thematic reports.**

## **Court custody**

- Inspection of three court custody areas

## **Adult prisons (England and Wales)**

- Full inspections of 35 prisons holding men
- Full inspections of five prisons holding women
- Independent reviews of progress (IRPs) at 16 prisons holding men and one holding women

## **Establishments holding children and young people**

- Three full inspections of young offender institutions (YOIs) holding children under the age of 18
- One inspection of Oakhill Secure Training Centre (STC) jointly with Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- One monitoring visit of Oakhill STC jointly with

Ofsted and CQC

- One assurance inspection of Oakhill STC jointly with Ofsted and CQC

## **Immigration detention**

- Inspection of three immigration removal centres (IRCs)
- IRPs at two IRCs
- Two national inspections of short-term holding facilities (STHFs)
- Inspections of three overseas charter flight removals

## **Extra-jurisdiction**

- One inspection of an extra-jurisdiction prison

## **Other publications**

We also published the following publications:

- Building trust: the importance of positive relationships in young offender institutions
- Children in custody 2024-25
- ‘Just passing time’: A review of work and training

provision in adult prisons

- Reading for rehabilitation
- Unpacking prisoner property: A hidden source of conflict and complaint
- Safety, well-being and hope: The untapped potential of family contact in prisons
- ‘Everything is after sentencing’: The experiences of remand prisoners
- Hardly working out: barriers to physical education in prisons

## **Written submissions and oral evidence**

During the year we made the following written submissions to inquiries:

- Lords Select Committee Inquiry: The Autism Act 2009 Committee (June 2025)
- Justice Committee: Children and Young Adults in the Secure Estate (March 2026)

We gave oral evidence to:

- Justice Committee: Rehabilitation and Resettlement inquiry (May 2025)

- Welsh Affairs Committee: Prisons, Probation and Rehabilitation in Wales inquiry (May 2025)
- UK Covid-19 inquiry: Children and Young People (Module 8) (September 2025)
- UK Covid-19 inquiry: Impact on society (Module 10) (February 2026)

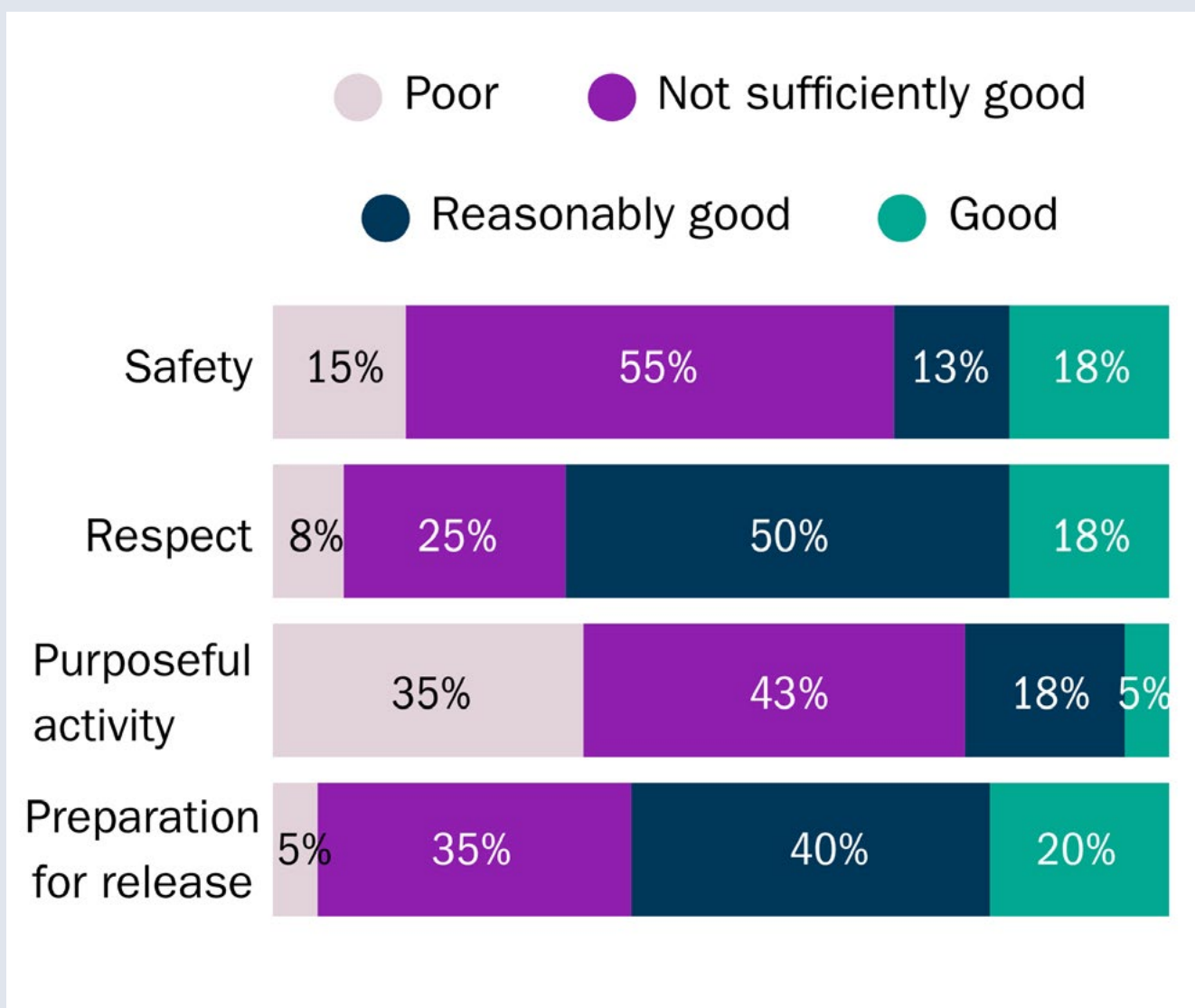
We presented at one All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG):

- APPG on Penal Affairs (Oct 2025)

## Our assessments

### Healthy prison assessment breakdown - men's and women's prisons

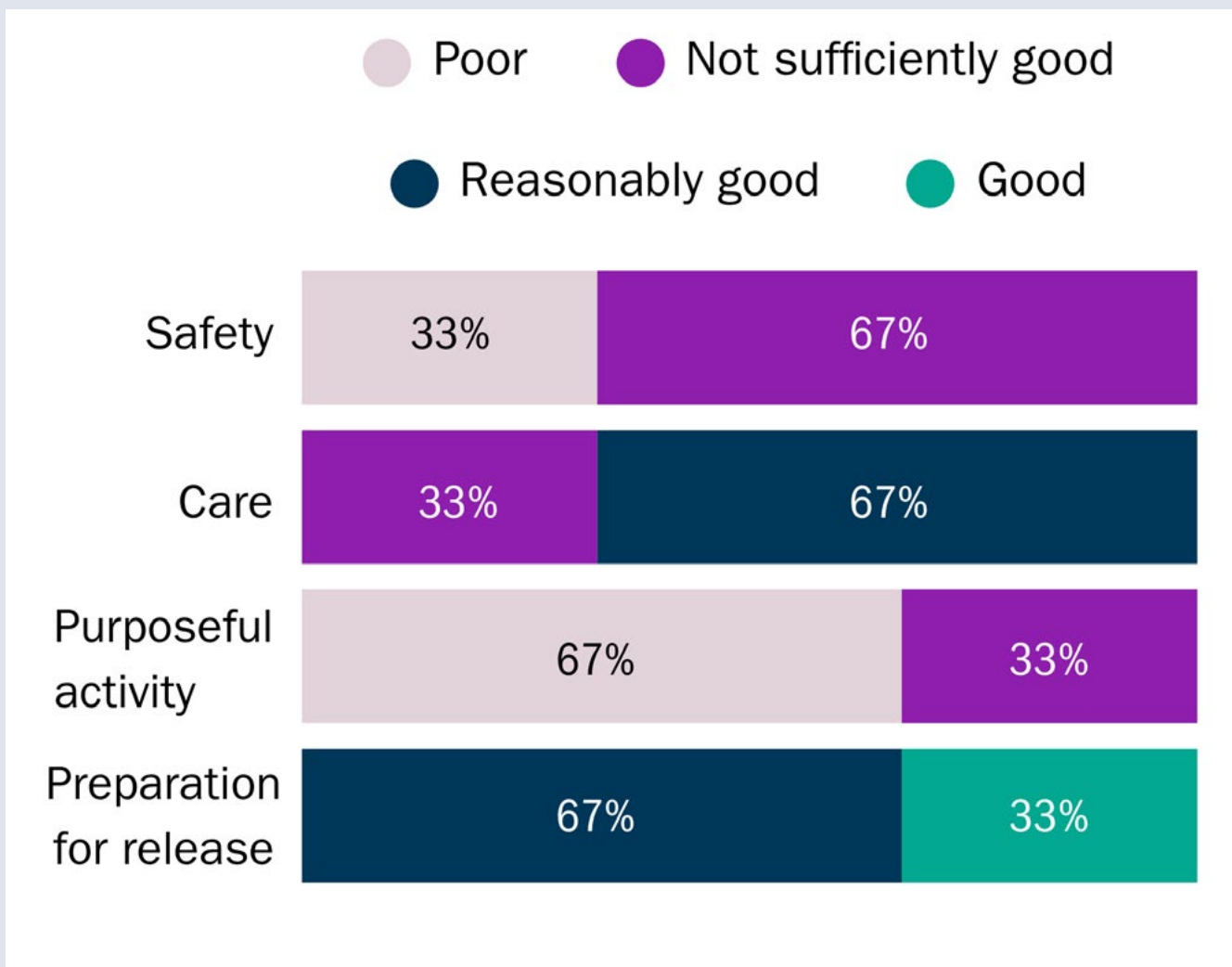
HMI Prisons inspections of adult men's and women's prisons (n=40) in England and Wales, 2025-26



Source: HMI Prisons inspection reports

### Healthy establishment assessment breakdown - YOIs

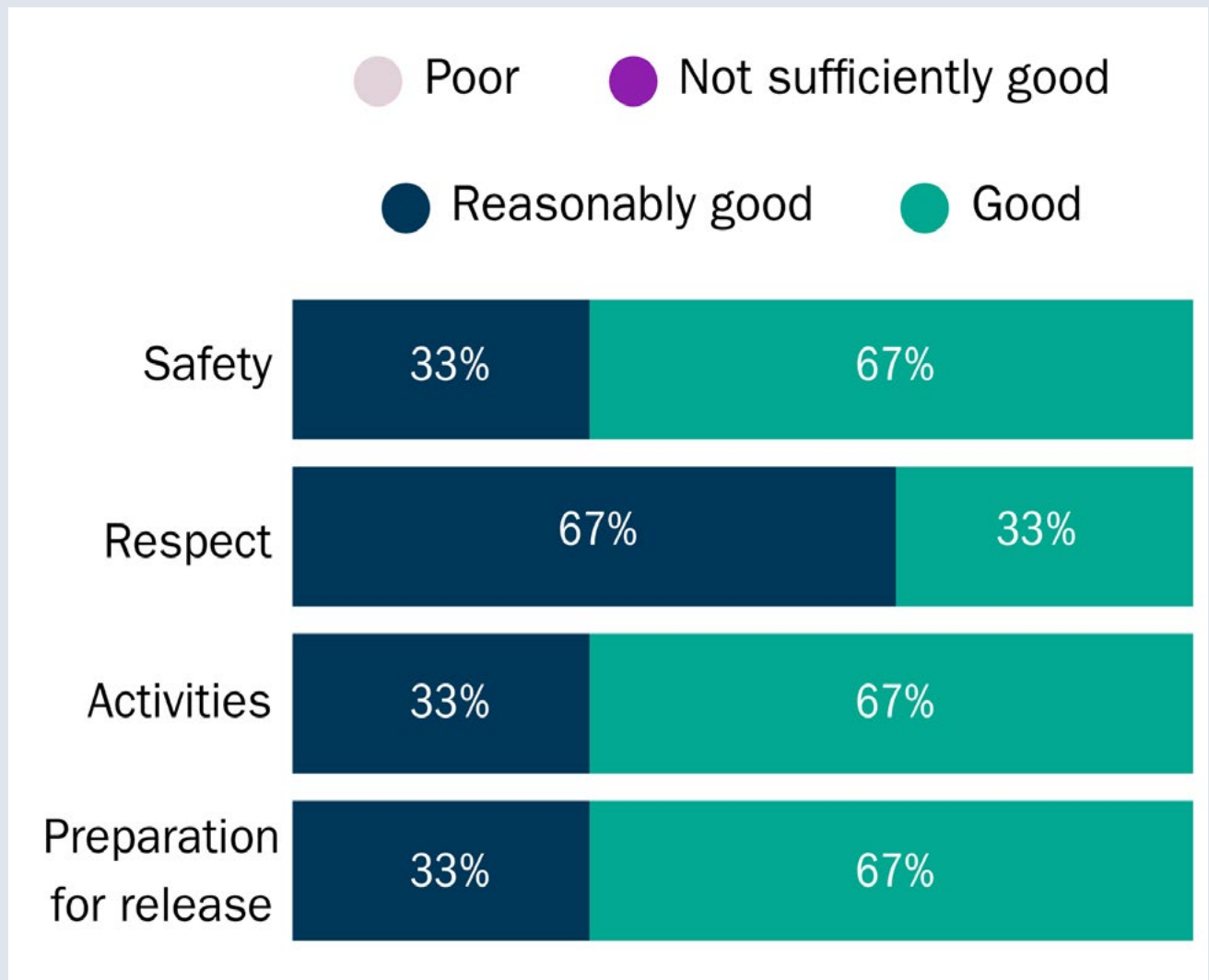
HMI Prisons inspections of children's establishments (n=3) in England and Wales, 2025-26



Source: HMI Prisons inspection reports

## Healthy establishment assessment breakdown - IRCs

HMI Prisons inspections of immigration removal centres (n=3) in England and Wales, 2025-26



Source: HMI Prisons inspection reports

## **Four Urgent Notifications issued**

In 2025-26, we were so concerned by what we found at our inspections of HMPs Pentonville, Swaleside and Woodhill in the adult estate, and Oakhill Secure Training Centre (STC) in the children's estate, that we invoked the Urgent Notification process. For each prison, the Secretary of State publicly responded to our concerns within 28 days with an action plan for improvement.

### **Woodhill - issued 19 March 2026**

This was the second UN for Woodhill which, despite the substantial support it has received, had deteriorated since our 2023 inspection. Rates of violence were very high, the rate of serious assaults on staff was the highest in the long-term high secure estate and drugs were far too easily available.

### **Oakhill STC - issued jointly with Ofsted on 30 July 2025**

Profoundly serious and systemic failures meant children had been and remained at risk of harm at the STC. Safeguarding systems were in disarray and staff conduct was of significant concern. Some

children had also been separated from their peers for lengthy periods.

### **Pentonville - issued 16 July 2025**

Leaders at Pentonville had insufficient grip of critical areas of delivery in the prison and were failing to make sure even the most basic standards were maintained. In the last six months, many prisoners had been illegally imprisoned beyond their release date and the care and support offered to new prisoners during their first few days in prison was wholly inadequate.

### **Swaleside - issued 15 December 2025**

The jail received our lowest scores in all four healthy prison tests and none of the concerns we raised at our 2023 inspection had been fully addressed. Very high levels of violence were affecting every aspect of prison life, drug taking was rife and there was a lack of order and control. Most wings were filthy and a newly introduced revised regime was severely restricting most prisoners' time out of cell.

You can find all of our healthy establishment assessments for 2025-26, the numbers of concerns accepted and addressed by establishments, and analyses of survey responses for adult men's and women's prisons, children's establishments and immigration removal centres on our website.

Other information available via our website includes notable positive practice collected throughout the year, as well as analyses of survey responses to our staff survey.

**[hmiprisons.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk](https://hmiprisons.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)**

One

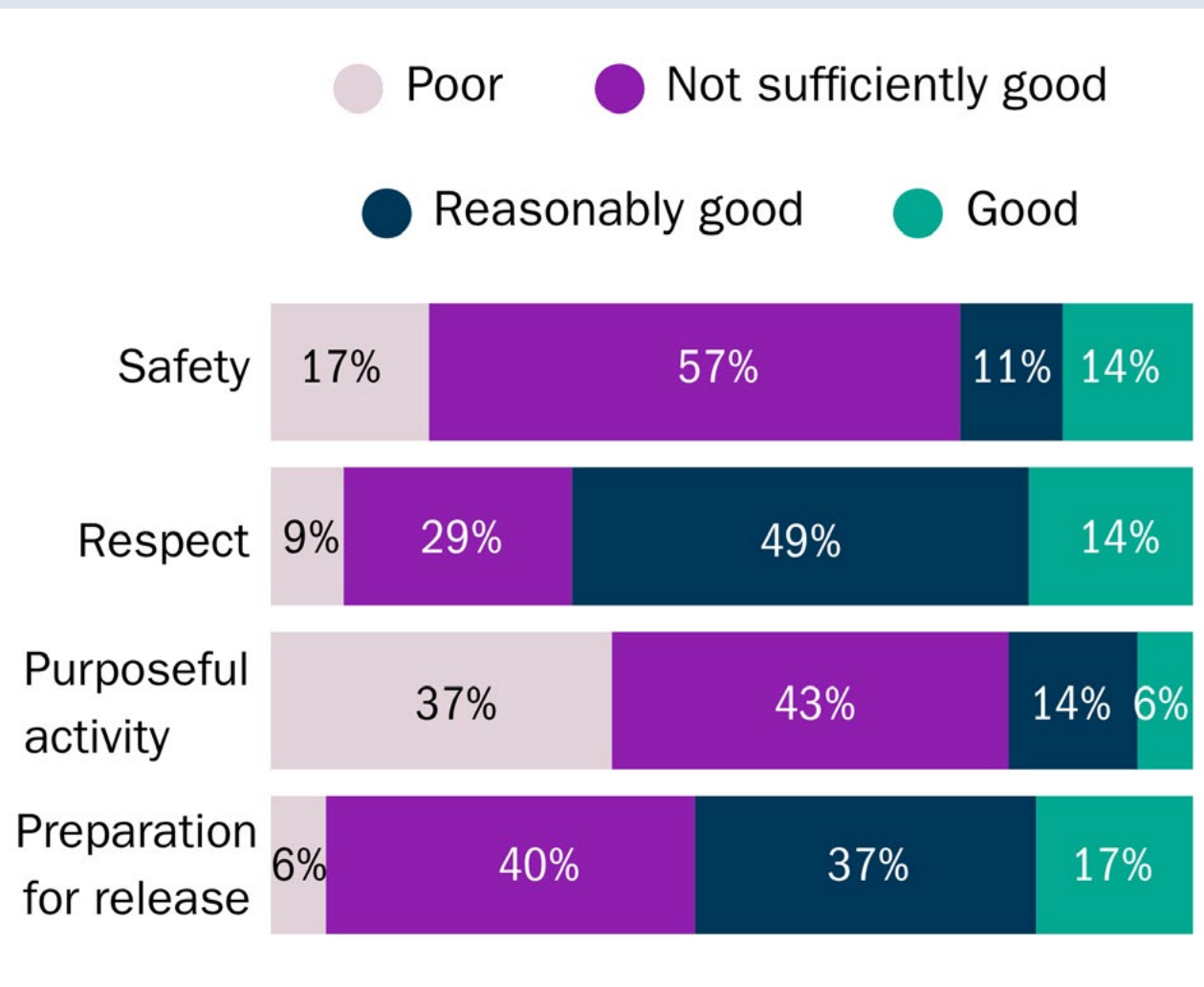
Men in prison



## Key statistics

### Healthy prison assessment breakdown

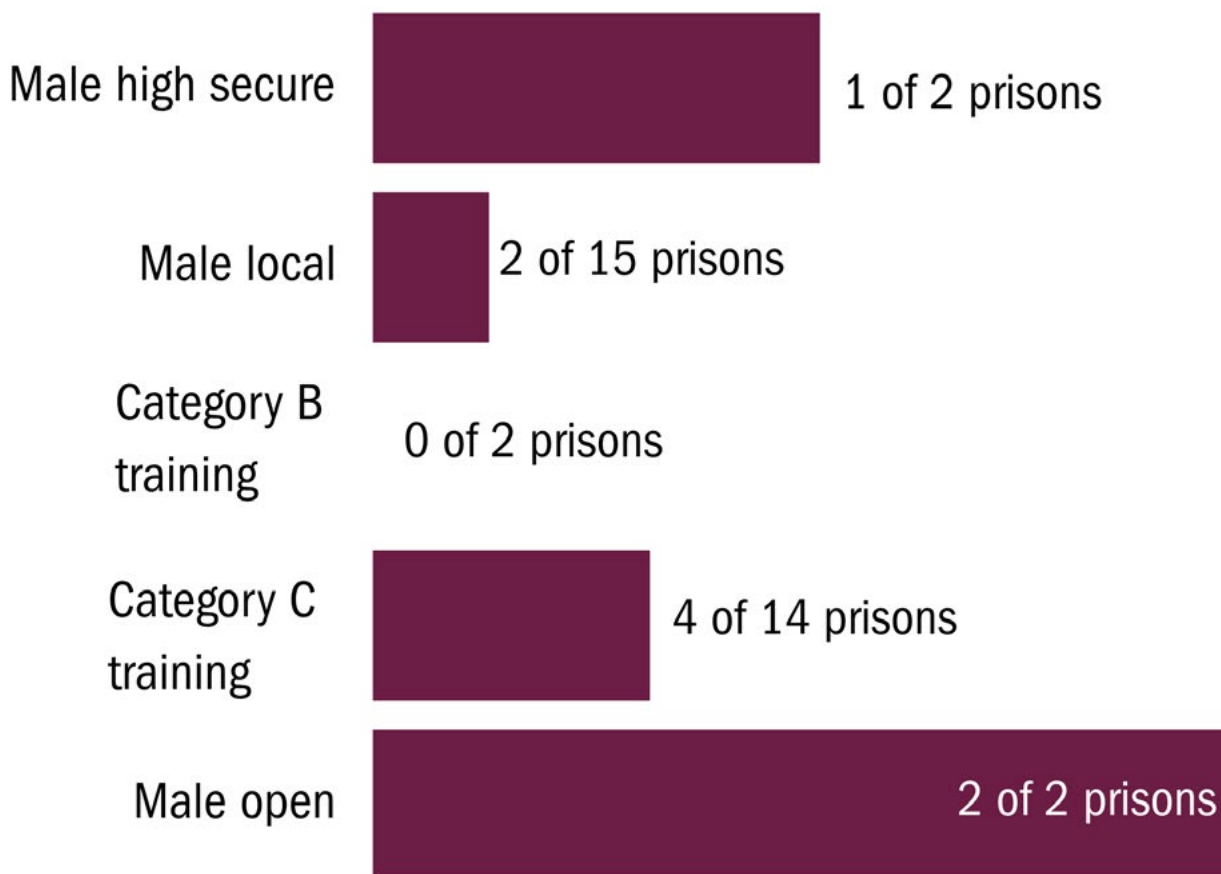
HMI Prisons inspections of adult men's prisons (n=35) in England and Wales, 2025-26



Source: HMI Prisons inspection reports

### Healthy prison assessments show local and training prisons have worse outcomes for prisoners

Proportion of adult men’s prisons (n=35) receiving ‘Good’ or ‘Reasonably good’ assessments in safety in England and Wales in, 2025-26.



Source: HMI Prisons inspection reports

## Drugs – a critical threat

- **Drugs undermined the safety of too many men's prisons, driving violence, bullying, debt, and self-harm.**
- **Leaders did not pay enough attention to key drivers of demand and positive, recovery-focused work was limited.**
- **Drugs placed additional pressures on health care staff.**

The availability of illicit drugs, often brought in by drones, remained the most significant threat to safety and stability across the adult male estate, particularly in category B and C jails. In our prisoner survey, 41% of respondents told us it was easy to get drugs in their jail, and the figure remained stubbornly high at 57% in category B training prisons. Mandatory drug testing rates (MDT) indicated an enormous problem; 46% of prisoners at Liverpool tested positive, among the highest of the reception prisons we inspected. At Swaleside the rate was 34%, but the number of prisoners who refused to be tested meant leaders estimated actual use was likely to be closer to 50%.

Despite the devastating impact of drugs on prison safety, some leaders had suspended testing and could not measure the extent of their problem. At Guys Marsh and Coldingley, testing had only restarted part way through the year before our visit. Concerningly, around 40% of prisoners tested positive at both sites. Local tactical assessments were often also generic and repetitive, leaving leaders blind to emerging risks. Despite a good flow of information from staff, backlogs in the analysis of reports and a lack of trained officers delayed searching and the prompt testing of prisoners suspected of taking drugs.

The consequences of drugs were stark, driving violence, bullying, debt and self-harm. In some prisons, including Parc and Birmingham, they had also led to several prisoner deaths since our last inspections (see p.46).

Technology played an important role in disrupting contraband, and we found good use of body scanners, CCTV, and drone countermeasures. However, progress was undermined by a lack of other physical security measures, including gate security, windows and netting.

Weaknesses in physical security allowed large quantities of illicit drugs to be delivered by drones. The availability of drugs was driving an increase in violence. The mandatory drug testing positive rate was among the highest for this type of prison.

### **Bullington**

Leaders were not always sufficiently focused on measures to reduce the demand for drugs, such as decent living conditions, purposeful regimes and meaningful relationships between staff and prisoners. Too often life in prison offered men little hope and few opportunities to help them change their behaviour. The quality of incentivised substance free living wings (ISFLs) varied. We reported positively on their impact at jails including Lewes, but at Leeds the ISFL wing was too large and population pressures meant that places were not limited to those who wished to live substance free.

Warren Hill, a category C prison to which long-serving prisoners can apply, bucked this trend with a strong rehabilitative ethos that supported men to make progress. There were also clear consequences for

poor behaviour which discouraged drug use. The MDT positive rate (3%) was the lowest among category C prisons, despite a third of the population being supported by drug recovery services.

We found positive, recovery-focused work at Featherstone, and at Doncaster, the appointment of a drug and alcohol recovery specialist (who had experience of addiction), strengthened demand-reduction work. Effective use of rehabilitative adjudications at Northumberland and Liverpool encouraged prisoners to seek help with their addictions.



Left to right: ISFL communal area and drug recovery programme display at Featherstone

In many prisons drugs were causing an increasing strain on health care staff who had to prioritise emergency responses to drug incidents and action to reduce harm for a growing number of regular users, as well as high numbers of prisoners on short recall. This reduced the time available to deliver interventions that would support long-term recovery and other routine medical appointments. The number of recovery wings was increasing, but most struggled to sustain a drug-free environment due to poor selection criteria, limited incentives and flawed drug testing processes. However, some units, such as at Featherstone, were working well.

More positively, we found an increase in the use of long-acting opiate substitution injections. These allowed prisoners to take part more effectively in activities and reduced the number of men queuing daily at medicine hatches and the diversion of drugs. However, in multiple prisons we continued to note inadequate supervision of these queues and a lack of medicines oversight. Positively, there was a significant increase in the use of Nalaxone which reverses the fatal effects of opiates and reduces the risk of overdose on release.

## Escalating violence and ineffective behaviour management

- **Violence had increased in two-thirds of the prisons inspected, but prison incentive schemes and adjudications processes were rarely effective.**

Violence had increased in two-thirds of the prisons we inspected, and serious assaults had risen in 40%. There had been a number of high-profile homicides during the reporting period, including at high-security prisons. It was no surprise therefore that one in four respondents to our prisoner survey told us they felt unsafe at the time of completing it.

In 2025, six different prisoners had been assaulted on their first night, and some had been stabbed during these incidents. The attacks were usually motivated by pre-existing conflicts. Some of the incidents had happened within minutes of the prisoner arriving on the wing, and some were large in scale; one man was targeted by 14 perpetrators.

Swaleside

Violence was primarily linked to the availability of illicit drugs and associated debt, gang-related issues, and boredom arising from restricted regimes. Responses included the use of segregation, adjudications, and challenge, support, and intervention plans (CSIP), the effectiveness of which varied across the estate.

The quality and impact of prison incentive schemes to motivate good behaviour were usually poor or non-existent. Too often there was little differentiation between the incentive levels, and rewards were neither meaningful nor applied consistently, so schemes had little credibility among prisoners. Positively, leaders at Lincoln had linked incentives to evening activities and enhanced family experiences, which prisoners valued, and at open prisons Prescoed and Haverigg, men were motivated by the opportunities for release on temporary licence (ROTL). At Isis, leaders were trying to tackle high levels of violence and keep apart lists through a new safety strategy. This included instant rewards for good behaviour, a well-run enhanced wing and a dedicated unit to manage the most violent prisoners through intervention and support.

In some of the most violent prisons, including Parc, we were concerned to find that adjudication hearings were frequently adjourned or discontinued. This undermined the deterrent effect of the process and in some cases left very serious breaches unpunished.

A considerable proportion of cases were either dismissed (17%) due to insufficient evidence or not proceeded with (26%) because of administrative errors or excessive delays. At the time of the inspection, there was a backlog of over 200 adjudications, half of which were with the police. As a result, only 42% of adjudications were found to be proven. **Pentonville**

Too often, violence reduction strategies did not focus on broader issues that had the potential to discourage poor behaviour, such as access to purposeful activity. Behaviour was better when there were clear consequences for breaking the rules, and meaningful rewards for those who behaved.

‘... leaders were aware of weaknesses with the incentives scheme and had implemented several new initiatives. These included the enhanced unit on Kingfisher, access to cooking facilities, the option to eat meals with their peers and incentivised substance free living (ISFL) units. Prisoners told us they valued these new incentives and leaders had well-developed plans to expand access.’ **Feltham B**

We identified positive practice to reduce violence in several prisons, including the use of conflict resolution, structured programmes targeted at prisoners in gangs, debt management schemes, and weapons amnesties. Well-managed peer support was also incorporated into the more effective safety strategies. At a minority of prisons, including Haverigg and Warren Hill, leaders offered a combination of interventions and incentives which were embedded within a wider culture that promoted community, responsibility and engagement. It was no surprise that these were the safest prisons we inspected.

### **Segregation rarely positive or rehabilitative**

In our prisoner survey, 19% of respondents had been segregated in the six months before our inspection. Although most stays were relatively short, the experience was rarely positive or rehabilitative and there was insufficient oversight from leaders to drive improvement.

Living conditions in most segregation units were poor and prisoners were locked up in stark, minimally furnished cells for over 23 hours a day. The regime offered little more than basic entitlements and we rarely found evidence of constructive work to help prisoners understand or address their behaviour. Plans to reintegrate prisoners onto mainstream wings were often generic and failed to tackle the underlying causes of poor behaviour.

We found more positive outcomes at Fosse Way and Doncaster, where psychology team involvement and support for staff was beneficial.

## **Use of force on the rise**

The use of force against prisoners continued to rise during 2025, most notably the deployment of PAVA incapacitant spray which increased by 13%.

There was strong oversight of force by leaders in just over half of the prisons we inspected, but we still found too many examples of poor practice which had not been identified or challenged. We found inappropriate use of PAVA at several prisons, although Berwyn, Ranby, and Bullingdon had identified and taken steps to address it.

We identified the poor use of body-worn video cameras in nearly half of our inspections, and this limited the evidence available to justify the use of force, although leaders at Pentonville and Liverpool were more proactive in tackling this problem.

Prisoners had been placed in special accommodation without appropriate authorisation in a third of the prisons inspected.

## Self-inflicted deaths and self-harm too prevalent

- **More deaths were associated with drugs, and there had been a rise in self-harm in just over a third of the prisons we inspected.**
- **Late arrivals from court and a high churn of prisoners were undermining safety in the early days.**

At most of the prisons we inspected, there had been at least one self-inflicted death since our previous inspection. In several reception jails there had been multiple suicides, including at Leeds where there had been 16 since we last inspected in 2023. Despite these alarming statistics, in half of the prisons where there had been a suicide we found they were providing poor oversight of the implementation of Prison and Probation Ombudsman recommendations to reduce the risk of further incidents.

We also reported on a growing number of fatalities associated with the use of illicit substances, including at Parc, where at least eight deaths since our 2022 inspection were suspected or confirmed as caused by drug misuse (see p.36).

Just over a third of the prisons we inspected reported a rise in self-harm rates, and many of them had experienced significant increases. At Guys Marsh the number of incidents had increased by 144% and at Northumberland they had doubled. In too many cases, leaders had either failed to investigate incidents of serious self-harm or conducted inadequate investigations which lacked sufficient depth to help staff understand the causes or prevent future incidents.

Prisoners who self-harmed continued to be supported through assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) case management, although the quality of the process and levels of care were still too variable. In a small number of prisons, leaders monitored the frequency and quality of welfare checks on vulnerable prisoners using wing CCTV.

Rates of self-harm were lower in prisons where leaders had created positive cultures, with good relationships, decent living conditions and access to work and education. Peer work was often a protective factor; in Ranby, mental health mentors provided good emotional

support to prisoners who were struggling to cope.

In most prisons the Listener scheme, where prisoners are trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential support to their peers, worked well. However, in a large minority leaders had not provided adequate support to make sure it operated effectively; too few prisoners were trained, the service was underused, and there was no dedicated space to facilitate private meetings when prisoners were in crisis.

Dedicated, adequately resourced safety teams and the use of appropriate spaces were making a difference in some prisons.

The new safer custody centre, which had been developed jointly by prison middle managers and the psychology team, offered a quiet space away from the main houseblocks for prisoners in crisis. Here they could access exercise equipment and art and creative sessions... Men who we spoke to were very positive about being able to use the facilities.

**Doncaster**

## **Early days in custody**

Safety in the early days of custody was too often undermined by late arrivals from court and the pressure of managing a large number of men transferring in and out of prison, which had intensified with additional measures to manage population levels (see p.76). This was a particular problem in busy reception prisons, where men were often locked up on their first night in dirty, poorly equipped cells without a shower, meal, or phone call home.

“The care and support offered to new prisoners during their first few days in prison was wholly inadequate. First night and induction arrangements were chaotic and even frightening. Men were held in dirty, ill-equipped cells which were missing key items, including bedding, furniture, telephones and pillows.” **Pentonville Urgent Notification**

Prisoners’ experience of their introduction to prison life was too variable and, in many cases, they did not receive an effective or comprehensive induction.

Regimes on induction units were poor in most prisons, leaving men locked up for more than 20 hours a day with little purposeful activity or contact with other prisoners. We frequently reported that prisoners waited too long to have telephone numbers approved, and limited access to prison shops to buy phone credit inevitably exacerbated feelings of isolation and fear.

Leaders in some prisons provided better oversight and understood the risks associated with the early days in custody. They had taken measures to reduce the pressure felt by new prisoners, for example issuing advances for shop purchases to stop them accruing debt and providing effective peer support systems.

## Far too little meaningful activity or rehabilitative work

- **Long lock up times led to frustration and isolation.**
- **Systemic issues created challenges with getting prisoners into education, skills and work.**
- **Despite the challenges, our thematic review of reading found some excellent examples of committed leaders embedding reading into their prison's culture.**

Purposeful activity continued to be the worst performing of our healthy prison tests, with 28 of the 35 adult male prisons we inspected in England and Wales judged to be 'not sufficiently good' or 'poor'. Scores in two-thirds of the prisons had remained unchanged or had declined since we last inspected them.

## Key statistics

### Healthy prison assessments show local and high secure prisons have worse outcomes for prisoners

Proportion of adult men's prisons (n=35) receiving 'Good' or 'Reasonably good' assessments in purposeful activity in England and Wales in, 2025-26.

Male high secure 0 of 2 prisons

Male local 1 of 15 prisons

Category B training 0 of 2 prisons

Category C training 4 of 14 prisons

Male open 2 of 2 prisons

Source: HMI Prisons inspection reports

Disappointingly, 12 out of the 16 category B and C training prisons we visited this year - which should have been supporting prisoners to progress through their sentence and develop skills that would help them resettle into the community on release - were judged to be poor or not sufficiently good in this area.

The only two prisons scored as 'good' were Usk and Haverigg, both of which held men convicted of sexual offences. At Usk, prisoners were unlocked for most of the day and were taking part in a range of work, education and training opportunities, while at Haverigg, we found that leaders had undertaken impressive work to tackle the limited employment opportunities for this group.

## **Long lock up times creating frustration and isolation**

Time out of cell remained much too low for most prisoners, driven by poor regimes and high levels of unemployment.

Those in reception prisons continued to be worst affected; in our survey almost half of the men in these

jails said they spent less than two hours a day out of their cells during the week. At Pentonville, for example, 59% of prisoners were unemployed and locked up for up to 22 hours a day.

It remained disappointing that outcomes for prisoners in many of the training prisons we visited - whose role is to educate and train men so they are ready for work on release - were seriously undermined by a lack of meaningful activity and poor time out of cell. At Onley, a quarter of prisoners were unemployed and spent as little as an hour a day unlocked, and we found too many prisoners locked up at Berwyn, Guys Marsh, Swaleside and Featherstone. In contrast, time out of cell at Warren Hill was far better than we usually see; almost all prisoners were in full-time purposeful activity, and were unlocked for up to 11 hours. Early indications from the 'longer working week' trial in the workshops at Ranby, where prisoners stayed unlocked at lunchtime, were encouraging.

Staff shortages and poorly designed regimes sometimes left prisoners having to choose which essential tasks they could carry out in their limited

time out of cell. At Wakefield, prisoners often missed time in the fresh air because they had to queue for their lunch or shower, at Guys Marsh association periods were held during the day so some workers missed them, and at Featherstone prisoners were locked up at 5pm, leaving too little time for them to shower, collect meals or queue for medication.

Few prisons offered evening association periods and, where they did, these were often limited to small numbers or cancelled at short notice. At Liverpool, full-time off-wing workers were disadvantaged by the frequent cancellation of their evening domestics period, which could leave them without time to have a shower, use the electronic kiosk, or socialise after work.

Weekend regimes were usually poor and often began on Fridays. In our survey, 41% of prisoners said they spent less than two hours out of their cell on Saturdays and Sundays. Prisoners at Northumberland, Fosse Way and Coldingley had better weekend regimes, spending 6.5 to eight hours out of their cells.

In many prisons, even when prisoners were unlocked, we found that they were bored and had little to do. Some prisoners told us that the lack of on-wing activities made them more likely to use illicit substances to pass the time. A number of prisons had attempted to develop an engaging programme of recreational and social activities, such as chess clubs, book groups and craft sessions, but these were often not well promoted and poorly attended.

The gym continued to be a popular way for prisoners to pass the time. Where prisons were able to run gym sessions, most had high levels of attendance and offered a range of PE activities to suit different needs.

### **Hardly working out: barriers to physical education in prisons**

This findings paper reviewed 38 inspection reports, as well as prisoner survey findings for the same period. Data from our survey supported the connection between regular exercise and positive behaviour. However, despite the known benefits of sport and exercise, some prisoners said that they could not go to the gym or play sports at all in a

normal week; this was highest in men's reception prisons (25%) and women's prisons (28%), with access generally poorer at weekends. Despite prisoners often telling us that improved access to the gym and other physical activities were what they would most like to see changed, prison facilities, staffing and restricted regimes often hindered their ability to engage in physically active lifestyles.

Prison libraries generally offered a reasonable service and welcoming environment, but limited opening hours or cancelled sessions hampered access in too many, including at Birmingham. It was particularly disappointing that brand new library facilities at Fosse Way were not suitable for the population.

### **Reading for rehabilitation**

This thematic review focused on examples of positive practice where committed leaders had embedded reading into their prison's culture. Prisons such as Frankland, Rye Hill, Chelmsford and Ranby prioritised literacy through visible leadership, regular cross-departmental meetings, and clear accountability. They screened all prisoners, tracked progress, and

provided structured interventions, including phonics-based teaching alongside peer mentoring. Libraries played an important role.

Where reading was championed, prisoners gained confidence, improved skills, and strengthened family ties.

## **Too many prisoners are unemployed**

In many prisons there were insufficient activity spaces, resulting in too many prisoners unemployed and underoccupied. At Onley and Feltham B, we found that as well as there not being enough activity spaces, processes for allocating prisoners to the spaces available were inefficient and poorly planned.

Attendance and punctuality at activities was often poor, raised as a concern by Ofsted at 22 prisons in England. At Bullingdon, fewer than half of the planned education and vocational training activity spaces had been used over the past year due to poor attendance and staff absence.

Often, the curriculum in reception prisons did not prepare prisoners for their next steps. Lincoln,

however, had adapted to the needs of its population by providing short courses, accredited qualifications and sensible pathways for those with shorter stays.

The quality of teaching was too variable, although in the strongest examples (such as at Lincoln and Haverigg) Ofsted found that lessons were well-planned, ambitious and tailored to prisoners' individual needs.

We remain concerned about elements associated with the transition from the Prison Education Framework (PEF) to the Prison Education Service (PES), which risk worsening an already underperforming area. Substantial real-term cuts to education provision, a loss of specialist teaching staff and disruption to prisoners' learning all threaten to undermine efforts to improve literacy, skills and employability. Without adequate resourcing, these changes are likely to leave prisoners without the essential skills needed for successful resettlement and will do little to affect their likelihood of reoffending on release.

## **Just passing time: A review of work and training provision in adult prisons**

In October we published this thematic review of work and training provision in 13 training prisons. We found that systemic issues created routine challenges for getting prisoners into purposeful activity; working days were too short and attendance was poor, at an average of just 67% in the prisons we visited.

Prisoners and staff described challenges in moving men to and from activity, and there were not enough full-time work spaces available to meet demand.

The quality of opportunities was also inconsistent; too often, workshops offered no formal qualifications and limited opportunities for progression. Outside employer engagement was limited, and many workshops run by external employers were not providing prisoners with opportunities for work on release. Some effective training courses were being delivered in specific sectors, but these were not available to most prisoners.

## Mixed treatment and conditions, and frequent frustration

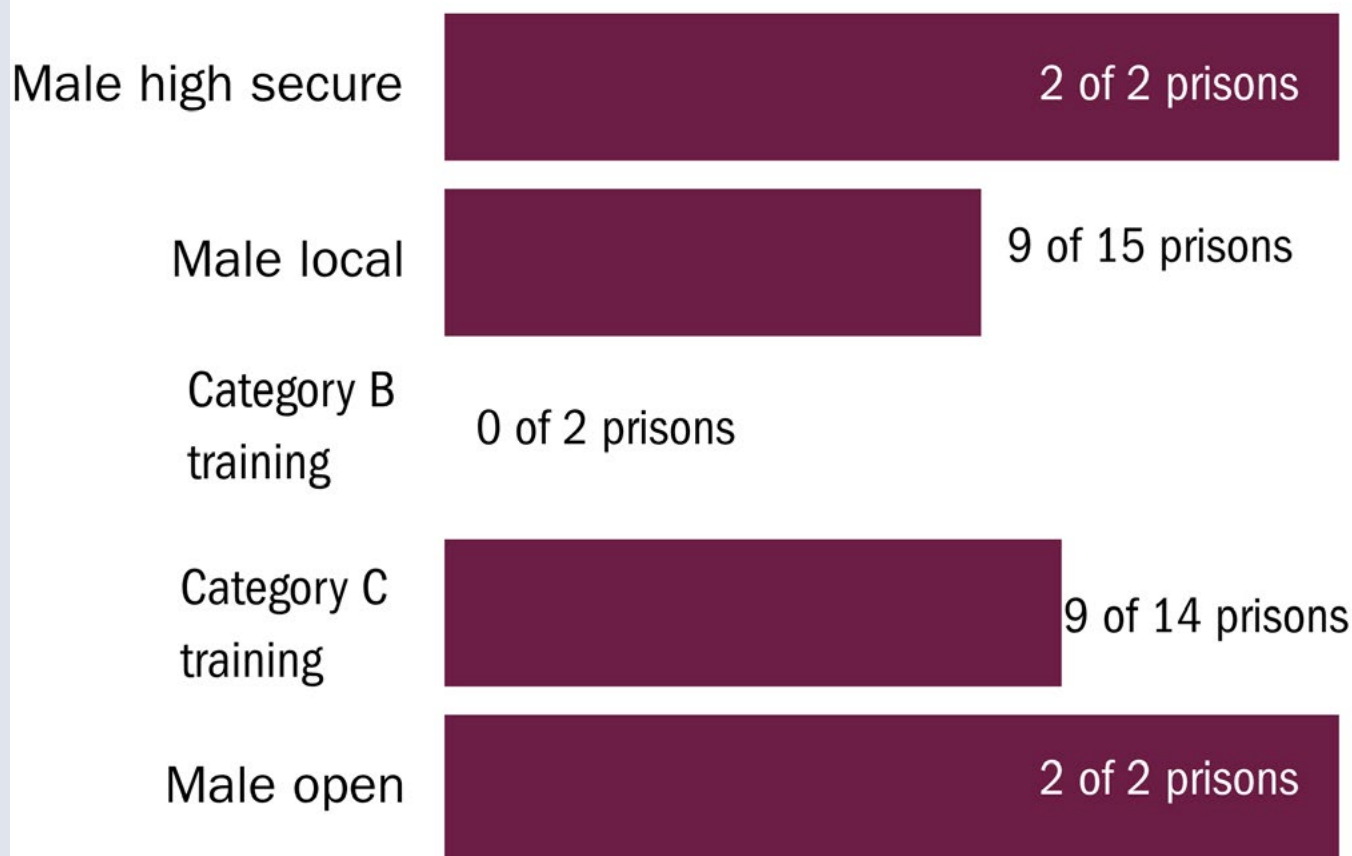
- **Overcrowding continued to pose fundamental challenges and living conditions had deteriorated in a number of prisons.**
- **Staff-prisoner relationships not always good enough and fair treatment and inclusion were rarely prioritised.**

Outcomes in respect continued to be weak across the men's estate. Only three of the 34 prisons inspected in England and Wales showed improvement this year compared with our previous inspection, and over a third were judged to be not sufficiently good or poor.

## Key statistics

### Healthy prison assessments show local and training prisons have worse outcomes for prisoners

Proportion of adult men's prisons (n=35) receiving 'Good' or 'Reasonably good' assessments in respect in England and Wales in, 2025-26.



Source: HMI Prisons inspection reports

## **Deteriorating living conditions, ageing infrastructure and overcrowding**

Overcrowding persisted and posed acute challenges, particularly in reception prisons. At Birmingham, prisoners shared cells designed for one and were using bed sheets and other makeshift curtains to screen the toilet to create a degree of privacy. Cramped conditions were made worse in some prisons by long periods of lock up, with limited access to activity or fresh air. Conditions tended to be better at more modern sites, in particular where prisoners had their own cell which included a shower.

Living conditions continued to deteriorate, often as a result of ageing buildings, unreliable infrastructure and the time it took to carry out repairs. Longstanding failures remained unresolved. Prisons such as Lincoln were still reliant on temporary boilers years after permanent systems had failed, and leaks at Guys Marsh had caused frequent power cuts. Even where refurbishment work had begun, progress was sometimes stalled by major contractor failures, leading to costly delays and prolonged disruption, for example at Birmingham.



**Left to right: temporary lighting in showers at Guys Marsh and damaged shower in Birmingham**

A lack of effective maintenance from the facilities contractor was also delaying refurbishment work at Liverpool, but here, and at Lincoln, leaders had managed to maintain cleanliness despite ageing infrastructure. However, at many other jails cells and communal areas were often grubby. At Birmingham, standards of cleanliness had slipped since our last inspection and at Pentonville, many staircases and communal areas needed deep cleaning. Poor cleanliness often led to vermin such as cockroaches at Leicester and rats at Swaleside.

Food remained an area of considerable dissatisfaction with only 36% of prisoners saying it was very or quite good. Outdated, broken kitchen equipment at some sites made it difficult to provide meals of sufficient quality and hardly any prisons had been equipped with self-catering equipment.



**Left to right: litter outside at Leicester and in the grounds at Swaleside**

More positively, the introduction of in-cell technology (known as ‘Launchpad’) was welcomed by prisoners at sites such as Doncaster, Altcourse, Bullingdon and Berwyn. This was an excellent resource that gave prisoners greater control over their daily lives, for example allowing them to view appointments and access information about services at the prison.

## Staff-prisoner relationships not always good enough

Most prisoners this year told us staff treated them with respect (70%) and that there were staff at their prison they could turn to if they had a problem (69%). However, prisoners often described frustration with staff who they described as dismissive or antagonistic. We frequently saw officers lacking the confidence to challenge low-level poor behaviour and remaining in the office rather than talking to prisoners on the wing. In prisons providing more time out of cell, we received more positive comments about meaningful relationships with staff who tried to be helpful. However, the delivery of key work at most sites was inconsistent and there was variable quality of contact between staff and prisoners.

In some jails, prisoner peer workers were used well to help support and represent other prisoners. Consultation was generally most effective when council meetings were chaired by the governor or another senior leader, with input from prisoner

representatives from all wings and visible ways of communicating outcomes to their peers.

At many sites, especially those with paper-based systems, prisoners were frustrated by how long it took to resolve applications, and there was often a lack of confidence in the complaints system. Only 30% of men who had made a complaint this year told us they felt it was handled fairly and just 26% said the problem had been dealt with within seven days.

### **Unpacking prisoner property: A hidden source of conflict and complaint**

This key findings paper found that too few prisoners reported receiving their property within the first few days of arriving in jail (63%), leaving many unable to access important items such as clothing, shoes, books and photographs. The report highlighted the impact of these delays: frequently increasing prisoners' sense of vulnerability at a stressful time, leading them to believe they were being treated unfairly, and making it far more difficult to build positive, trusting relationships with staff.

## **Magilligan Prison**

In September 2025 we inspected Magilligan Prison with Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland. This was an impressive inspection where the governor's leadership had led to a range of improvements. Excellent staff-prisoner relationships underpinned much of the good work being done across the jail and levels of violence and use of force were lower than in similar prisons in England and Wales. The amount of time prisoners could spend out of their cells was among the best that Inspectors had seen in recent years.

## **Fair treatment and inclusion often neglected by leaders**

In many prisons, leaders did not give sufficient priority to fair treatment and inclusion. Oversight was often weak, consultation tokenistic, and data rarely used effectively to improve outcomes. A small number of prisons demonstrated what could be achieved. At Isis, leaders promoted inclusion through educational and celebratory events, a diverse workforce, mentoring and

training. However, this was the exception rather than the norm. Even in prisons where data was collected and used to identify disproportionate outcomes, there was often little action taken to improve them. Confidence in the discrimination reporting system was lacking at too many prisons.

Across the estate, minority ethnic prisoners and Muslim men consistently reported poorer experiences. The Heritage Hub at Isis and The Black Hero's Journey at Wormwood Scrubs were positive initiatives, but these were not common.

Prisoners who were under 25 were more negative in our surveys, particularly regarding early days, relationships with staff and the amount of time out of cell. Older prisoners often lacked tailored support, but we found positive initiatives at some sites such as Haverigg, which ran regular coffee mornings, bowls and art groups.

Access for those with reduced mobility remained poor in some prisons; at Leeds, for example, wheelchair users could not get to classrooms or workshops and wheelchairs were too wide for the cell doors. More

positively, Hewell had established a unit specifically for disabled men.

Professional interpreting services were not always used when needed. At some sites, staff inappropriately relied on other prisoners to interpret key work sessions and even sites with electronic kiosks on the wings did not provide enough information in languages other than English. We found better provision at Doncaster, where foreign national prisoners were provided with an additional £10 of phone credit to help mitigate the cost of international calls. Some prisons were benefitting from the new Foreign National Officer (FNO) role.

Two foreign national offender specialists were making a difference to prisoners' experiences. They were beginning to address some broader welfare concerns alongside their work to assist the Home Office with deportation. For example, they had considered where foreign nationals were located in the prison so they could live alongside peers who shared their language or culture. **Wormwood Scrubs**

## Poor access to mental health services

- **Patients faced excessively long waits for mental health assessments and therapy.**
- **Waiting times for transfers to secure hospitals continued to be far too long.**
- **Increased numbers of mentally unwell prisoners were being remanded to prison and there was insufficient mental health training for prison staff.**

Mental health services were repeatedly constrained by staffing shortages, leading to poor access and excessively long waits for assessment and therapy. There was insufficient psychological provision and/or long waiting lists at a number of prisons, including Ranby, Elmley and Fosse Way. This increased prisoners' clinical risk, prolonged their distress, and was contributing to a potential deterioration in their mental health. Our surveys showed that 61% of prisoners said they had a mental health problem and only 14% of prisoners felt their mental health had improved in prison.

Outcomes for patients requiring specialist care and treatment in secure hospitals continued to be extremely poor, with patients facing long waits to access beds as their condition went untreated and their health deteriorated. We often found highly disturbed patients isolated in segregation units. At Swaleside one patient waited an unprecedented 711 days, an unacceptable failure. We remain gravely concerned that these patients continue to experience wholly avoidable harm.

This year, we also saw an increase in the number of mentally unwell prisoners being remanded to prison due to the absence or failure of suitable diversion. Courts in London and Leicestershire were not doing enough to make sure people with serious mental illness were appropriately diverted from custody to receive treatment. Reception prisons such as Hewell, Birmingham and Leeds had received increased numbers of highly disturbed men because there were no community alternatives.

Most prisons had not invested in mental health training for prison staff who had to support distressed men

on a daily basis. It was therefore refreshing to see the psychology team at Isis regularly engaging with officers to improve their understanding, confidence in building relationships, and ability to identify individuals who might need support.

## Health care leadership, partnership and oversight concerns

- **Leaders did not always understand or manage health risks appropriately.**
- **There were frequently too few officers to escort patients to health appointments or to supervise the administration of medicine.**

Pressures from the early release schemes, the need to move prisoners around the estate to free up space and difficulties trying to recruit were impacting the delivery of health care provision. NHS England had commissioned a suitable level of care for most sites, but access to dental care was not always good enough and a small number of prisons did not have an adequate understanding of their current health needs. Inconsistent leadership and inadequate oversight were often at the root of poor services: some prisons struggled to retain senior health managers which meant that health staff experienced frequent change, felt unsupported, and sometimes felt unsafe.

Some leaders struggled to understand or manage health risks adequately. We raised concerns about

leadership and risk management 22 times this year. At Thameside a lack of oversight had created very poor outcomes for patients. However, when we returned in January 2026, we saw significant improvement, which demonstrated an effective prioritisation and focus on leadership. Nottinghamshire NHS Foundation Trust withdrew from the offender health market, resulting in the transfer of seven prison health care services to new providers.

We saw some very good relationships between health care teams, prison leaders and health commissioners, but too many partnership boards had not addressed longstanding risks which required action. At Warren Hill there were not enough prison radios to make sure nurses could be summoned to emergency calls; this was raised as a risk after one incident, but four months later it had yet to be resolved. A continued lack of clinical space, coupled with poor maintenance, created unsafe practices and wasted time in many prisons; at Bullingdon the lack of space had been a problem for nine years.

Numerous prisons were failing to provide enough officers to escort patients to their health appointments or to supervise medicine administration queues. The lack of focus on medicines diversion was concerning, particularly as a high proportion (39%) of prisoners told us that it was easy to get hold of medication not prescribed to them. Thameside and Coldingley, however, had prioritised staffing in these areas.

Patients did not always get the medication they needed at the correct time; 63% of prisoners told us they experienced delays accessing their medication on arrival, and only 40% said it was easy to see a pharmacist.

There were good or reasonable improvements at many of the prisons to which we returned for IRPs. However, Rochester, Onley and Deerbolt were all found to have ongoing risks.

## Significant pressures affecting prisoner progress and preparation for release

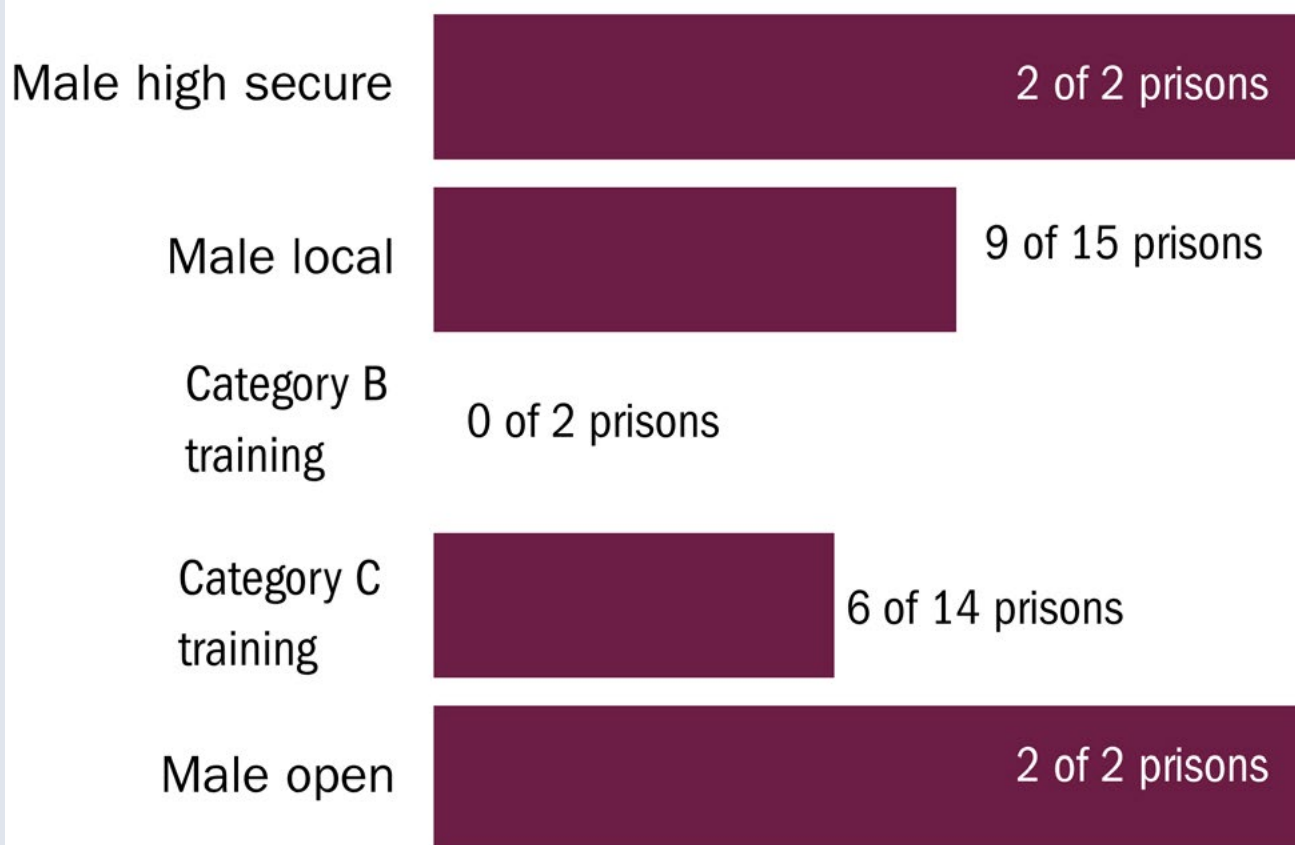
- **Population pressures hindered sentence progression and well planned release.**
- **Many offender management units were failing to deliver consistent work to reduce reoffending or protect the public.**
- **Local prisons struggled to meet the needs of high numbers on recall and remand.**
- **Our thematic review of family work found inconsistent understanding of the importance of family contact.**

In preparation for release, 54% of prisons inspected in England and Wales (19 of 35) were assessed as good or reasonably good

## Key statistics

### Healthy prison assessments show local and training prisons have worse outcomes for prisoners

Proportion of adult men's prisons (n=35) receiving 'Good' or 'Reasonably good' assessments in preparation for release in England and Wales in, 2025-26.



Source: HMI Prisons inspection reports

## Insufficient support for progression and release

The implementation of early release schemes and changes to recall policy had reduced the time that generally understaffed offender management units (OMUs) could spend supporting prisoners and managing risk.

While we saw some well-performing OMUs - for example, at Doncaster, which had a strong and effective team - the most prominent theme was a lack of prison offender managers (POMs) and excessive caseloads. Uniformed POMs were often diverted to operational duties because of a general shortage of prison staff. At Fosse Way, many POMs were managing over 100 prisoners.

All the POMs we spoke to said that their work was largely driven by timebound tasks, such as re-categorisation reviews and progressing home detention curfew (HDC), which left little time for more meaningful ongoing contact with prisoners.

**Fosse Way**

The lack of contact between POMs and prisoners meant there was often very little meaningful one-to-one work focused on reducing risk. The exceptions stood out, such as at Usk, where 71% of prisoners said that there were staff who were supporting them to achieve the objectives in their sentence plan and prisoners spoke highly of their POMs.

Few prisons prioritised key work sessions. Where sessions did take place, they were usually too infrequent to build a productive relationship and were rarely linked to sentence plans.

In our surveys, only 54% of respondents said they had a sentence plan, leaving them unable to demonstrate progress against their goals. Even when plans existed, too few opportunities were available to complete accredited programmes designed to reduce risk. This reporting year has coincided with the suspension of all existing accredited programmes and the phased introduction of a single new programme, 'Building Choices'; only small numbers were able to undertake the course by the end of the reporting period.

Some prisons had introduced short term mitigations. At Ranby, POMs created interim sentence plans with basic targets, while the probation and education teams had developed short courses on topics such as drug and alcohol awareness, relationships, conflict management and budgeting.

Overcrowding meant that prisoners were typically transferred to wherever space existed, rather than to prisons suited to their needs or close to family.

Even when prisoners had achieved their category C classification, very few were able to move to a low security prison because of population pressures and nearly 10% of prisoners were designated category C at the time of the inspection. **Lowdham Grange**

Support for prisoners serving indeterminate sentences was inconsistent and often insufficient. At Lowdham Grange, for the 43% of men serving a life or indeterminate sentence, there was little dedicated support or opportunity to demonstrate progression. In fact, many prisoners relied on peers for clear information about their sentence.

IPP (imprisonment for public protection) prisoners continued to report frustration and distress at ongoing detention beyond their minimum tariff, but there was evidence of improving support in several prisons. At Haverigg, which had 47 IPP prisoners:

The recent introduction of additional local 'progression panels' to assess individual IPP prisoners' needs, share expertise and troubleshoot complex cases was positive... The prison had recently organised an information event for some IPP prisoners to meet with representatives from the parole board... and learn more about the parole process and what to expect during a hearing.

**Haverigg**

## **Patchy oversight of public protection risks**

Prisoners' risk of harm to others should be identified and minimised as far as possible to support the safety of potential dependents, victims and the general public. A few prisons, including Berwyn, Fosse Way and Haverigg, were delivering effective public protection work, typically because they had resourced

it well with dedicated, experienced staff. However, the volume of arrivals, releases, recalls and short stays of high-risk prisoners were major challenges for reception prisons. Recalled prisoners often stayed for fewer than 14 days, leaving little time to develop an effective risk management plan.

Similarly, while every prisoner must be screened for risk on arrival, high numbers and a lack of administrative staff led to backlogs in approving contact and in applying the necessary restrictions. This meant that in some prisons, key safeguards were not in place to protect victims or the public.

### **Rise in remand prisoners and poor attention to their needs**

The proportion of remand prisoners in England and Wales has nearly doubled in the last six years - from 11% in 2019 to 19% in 2026. Our 'Everything is after sentencing' findings paper found that HMPPS had not adapted quickly enough to meet their needs. Remand prisoners were more likely to be held in double cells, miss their visit entitlements and have limited access to purposeful activity. They were

often excluded from pre-release services, and housing support remained inconsistent. These prisoners were not allocated a POM, and most were held in overcrowded reception prisons, where their needs were more easily overlooked.

## Ongoing problems with homelessness on release

Homelessness on release remained stubbornly high. Many prisons reported that 20-30% of prisoners had no settled address, with many more relying on short-term accommodation. Prisons did not hold housing data for the increasing numbers released directly from court, creating a significant information gap for establishments such as Wormwood Scrubs, where this group made up about a third of releases. No duty-to-refer referrals were completed for homeless prisoners on remand.

Based on prison data, 70% of men released in the previous 12 months did not have sustainable accommodation and 20% of those were released completely homeless. **Birmingham**

Short sentences and recalls - often lasting just 14 days - made housing planning difficult. Chronic shortages of social housing and oversubscribed approved premises created bottlenecks. There were high levels of overall homelessness in some regions and prisoners were returning to areas far from the prison, which made it difficult to coordinate services. Many men were not referred to local authorities or housing workers in good time, and limited staffing and resources among housing providers led to high caseloads and missed opportunities for support.

There were some commendable examples of positive practice. The appointment of strategic housing specialists across the country was improving planning and liaison with local authorities. For example, at Northumberland we noted that this role had made good use of data to analyse outcomes for prisoners and there was evidence of good, creative work to build links in the community.

Multi-agency release boards and pre-release panels also improved coordination of support. In some prisons, the expansion of housing support to people on remand was helping prisoners to maintain tenancies and reduce their risk of homelessness.

### **The critical importance of family contact**

Our thematic review, ‘Safety, well-being and hope: The untapped potential of family contact in prisons’, found that strong family provision contributed to a more positive and motivating culture. We heard numerous accounts of how families supported mental and physical well-being, gave prisoners a sense of purpose and encouraged a desire to change. However, the role of families in promoting safety was poorly understood, and they were rarely involved in supporting prisoners at risk of self harm or violence.

While we found many examples of good practice, provision was often fragile and inconsistent. Family work was frequently seen as the responsibility of the contracted family provider, rather than a shared endeavour with the prison, and services were overly reliant on goodwill and volunteers. Initiatives aimed

at supporting families did not reach enough prisoners and there were weaknesses in basic provision such as inadequate social video call times, broken phones and persistent problems with social visits.



**Two**

**Women in prison**

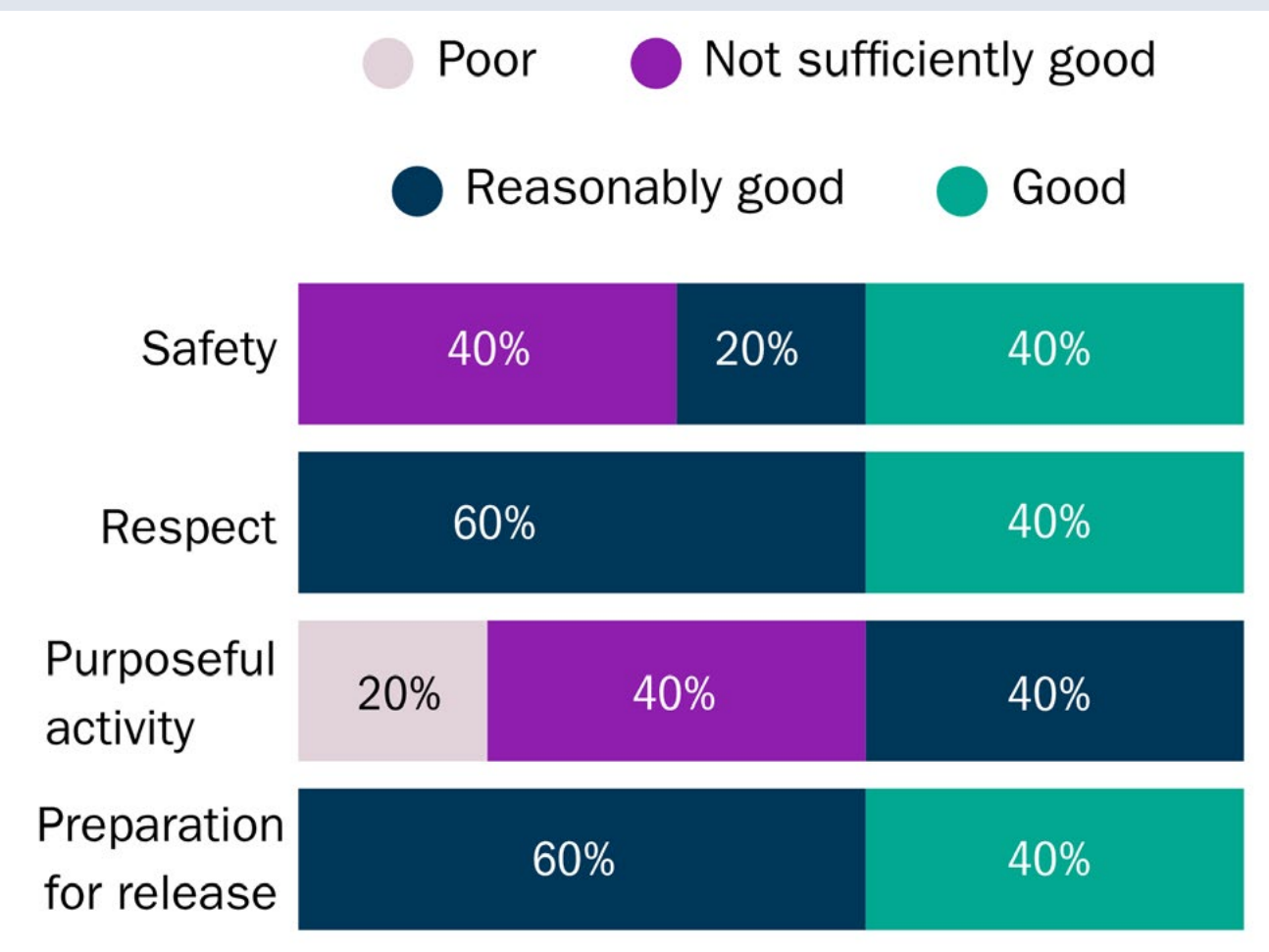
- **We continued to find high levels of self-harm and mental health need in women's prisons.**
- **Positive relationships with staff and dedicated family work made a difference.**
- **Time out of cell was mixed and many women did not get the help they needed on release, especially those on recall.**

This section draws on the findings from inspections of five women's prisons - Foston Hall, Send, Eastwood Park, Bronzefield and Low Newton - and one IRP of Foston Hall.

## Key statistics

### Healthy prison assessment breakdown

HMI Prisons inspections of adult women's prisons (n=35) in England and Wales, 2025-26



Source: HMI Prisons inspection reports

### High levels of self-harm and mental health need

Women with acute mental health problems were still being sent to prison, but data was poor so it was difficult to evidence the true scale of this problem.

Prison was simply not the right place for these women; officers are not mental health professionals, and these prisoners often experienced long-term segregation due to their behaviour.

Self-harm rates remained eight times higher in women's prisons than men's and inconsistent ACCT case management, as well as limited access to Listeners, persisted. However, HMPPS had taken the concerns raised in our 'Time to care' thematic review (published in February 2025) seriously and there were encouraging signs of progress, including redesigned training for new officers, awareness-raising events for staff about the effect of life experiences on behaviour, and signs of a changing culture, with a shift away from using punitive measures against women in crisis. The use of anti-rip clothing, for example, had reduced significantly from 491 instances in 2024 to 55 in 2025.

Support through the delivery of key work sessions was still not good enough, but our survey results showed that most women (80%) felt they had somebody to turn to if they had a problem.

We saw some positive examples of respectful, caring and compassionate interactions between staff and prisoners. One woman said:

I've been vile and then the next day they've been amazing, they don't give up on me. [Low Newton](#)

## More work needed to reduce violence and drug use

Rates of violence had increased at most prisons, although few incidents were serious. As with self-harm, a small number of women were responsible for a large proportion of the violence. Challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs, see Glossary) were often of little use as they failed to include specific actions, and staff did not always use them proactively. However, peer support and mediation were used well overall to support women and to help resolve conflict.

The rate of positive results from random mandatory drug testing was low in comparison to many men's jails, but 38% of women said it was easy to get illicit drugs and 44% said it was easy to get medication not prescribed to them. After many years of not being

allowed to use body scanners on women in prison, HMPPS now had permission to install them but had not implemented robust searching of staff and visitors as they entered the prisons we inspected. Other improvements to security arrangements included better management of those deemed high risk of serious harm, and more consideration of decency when escorting pregnant women to hospital.

### **Positive relationships making a difference in some prisons**

At Low Newton, we noted that particularly strong staff-prisoner relationships and better time out of cell helped to overcome the problems that some women faced in making applications and sorting out basic requests. At our review of progress at Foston Hall, many women were complimentary about the respect shown by staff and said that officers helped them to get simple, day-to-day things done, which was a sign of an improving culture. Only one prison inspected this year had electronic kiosks on the wings to help women make applications and in the others,

paper-based systems for making requests were not always effective.

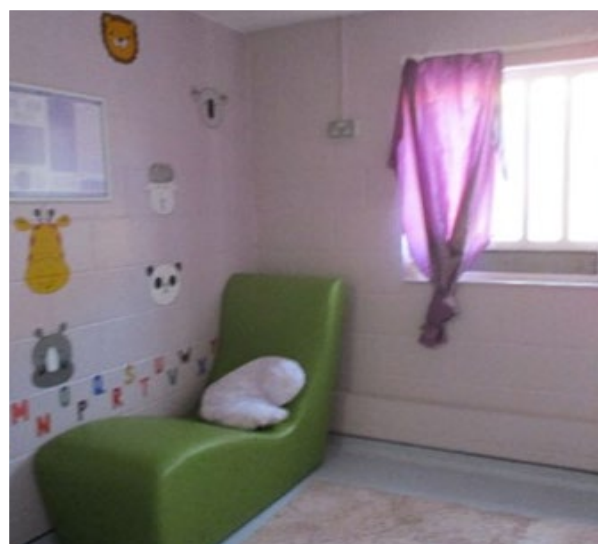
Rules preventing women from washing their underwear in communal machines had been removed and hygiene products were now readily available at Eastwood Park, Low Newton, and Send. However, in three of the five published reports we noted that women were still not able to get their hair cut.

Data analysis to identify disproportionality in outcomes was limited and even when there was evidence of a problem (such as in complaints or use of force at Bronzefield), leaders rarely took action. Support for neurodivergent women was improving, with initiatives like Low Newton's 'Bounce Back' gym sessions to boost confidence and self-esteem. However, provision for non-English speakers was poor, with examples of interpretation services not being used when needed and very little translated material available.

Our prisoner survey for the 'Time to care' thematic showed that women thought that keeping in touch with family was the most important element in being able to cope in prison. However, ROTL was not

often available to women and delays in adding phone numbers, difficulties in booking visits, and limited access to video calling hindered family contact. Some positive examples from the year included on-site social workers at Bronzefield, Send and Eastwood Park; dedicated family and addiction support workers at Low Newton; and mothers being able to join school parents' evenings via video calling from Eastwood Park.

Mother and baby units at Eastwood Park and Bronzefield provided good support. However, delays in the completion of assessments by some local authority children's services prolonged the time mothers and babies spent apart.



Left to right: outside area at the mother and baby unit at Eastwood Park and mother and pregnancy room at Bronzefield

## **A mixed picture for time out of cell**

At Foston Hall, Send and Low Newton, time unlocked was good or had improved since our last inspections. At Low Newton, leaders actively encouraged women to engage in purposeful activity. In our roll checks at the five prisons we visited, the percentage of women off the wings and taking part in work, training or education ranged from 33% at Foston Hall to 54% at Send.

At Eastwood Park and Bronzefield, the daily regime during the week was often curtailed and, at most sites, this was particularly evident over some weekends. More positively, there was good use of evening association at three prisons and encouraging provision of recreational and social activities at Low Newton and Send.

## **Key needs on release not meaningfully addressed**

The level of need among women remained very high. Forty-seven per cent of women told us that they had a drug or alcohol problem and 82% said they had a mental health problem. Many women due to be released in the next three months had specific needs:

73% said they would require help with accommodation, and 60% had needs around previous or ongoing trauma (such as domestic violence). In addition, the number of women remanded or subject to very short, fixed-term recalls had increased significantly, and they were often trapped in a pattern of homelessness, substance addiction, and poor mental health. One woman told us:

I'm constantly [homeless] on the streets... being homeless is the main reason I keep coming back.

Eastwood Park

Many prisons had been slow to adjust their provision to meet the needs of remanded and recalled women. However, Bronzefield and Low Newton had started allocating them to a prison offender manager to provide additional help and Foston Hall had recently appointed a dedicated officer role to support those on recall.

Sentenced women tended to have more regular contact with their prison offender manager and Send had an overwhelmingly rehabilitative ethos

that was particularly impressive. We continued to find impressive interventions for women with personality disorders, such as the CAMEO service at Foston Hall and the psychologically informed planned environments (PIPEs) at Eastwood Park, Send and Low Newton, which were an asset for longer-staying women. There was more frequent use of a programme to help those who would find it difficult to cope in prison, and it was positive to see help given to women to deal with trauma, although this was not delivered at a scale which could meet demand. We were concerned to find some women had been refused a place in probation-approved premises on release, sometimes at the last minute, despite this being deemed essential to protect the public.

Except for at Low Newton, use of ROTL was very limited, which was a missed opportunity for women to maintain contact with their families and address their own resettlement needs.

Data from the prisons we inspected showed that only about a third of women had sustainable accommodation on the day of their release and at

Bronzefield, which released many women to London, a quarter were faced with sleeping on the streets.

There was often nowhere for women to wait outside the prison, which meant they were unable to seek advice from staff, charge their mobile phone or meet support workers. Few prisons provided women with help to get to the nearest bus or railway station.

# Three

## Children in custody



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

**PROVE  
BEFORE  
YOU  
MOVE**



**PROVE THAT  
GATES ARE  
SECURE BEFORE  
WALKING AWAY**

**DO NOT LEAVE  
GATES OPEN  
FOR OTHERS**

- **Problems with violence, access to education and keep-apart lists continued to affect children's establishments.**
- **We issued an Urgent Notification for Oakhill Secure Training Centre.**

The children's estate continued to grapple with violence, limited access to education, poor relationships with staff and problematic keep-apart lists.

There had been progress in some areas since our last inspection at Wetherby YOI. Children benefitted from a well-resourced resettlement team which worked collaboratively with other departments and the community; ROTL was used effectively to maintain family ties and support reintegration; and most children had accommodation arranged in good time before release. However, significant weaknesses remained, particularly in safety and education.

At Werrington YOI we found a more stable leadership team and improved safeguarding procedures, but relationships between staff and children were weak and the average time out of cell was just 3.5 hours.

Feltham YOI remained a troubled institution that was still not safe enough.

Our inspection of Oakhill Secure Training Centre in July resulted in an Urgent Notification (see p.29). Children were at risk of harm, and safeguarding systems were in disarray.

A full commentary of our inspection findings, survey analysis and thematic reports will be available in our forthcoming 'Children in Custody 2025-26' report.

**Building trust: the importance of positive relationships in young offender institutions**

Relationships between authoritative, well-trained and well-supported frontline staff and children, in settings with clear rules, sanctions and incentives, are fundamental to delivering the safe establishments in which children can continue their education and start to address their offending behaviour.

However, our 'Building trust' thematic review found that the limited time children spent out of their cells meant there were few opportunities to build

trusting relationships with staff. In addition, systems designed to support good relationships were poorly implemented and, in practice, often did not include frontline staff who worked directly with children. Custody support plan officers for example, who were meant to know children best, rarely attended meetings and were often unaware of the contents of individual formulations or plans. Many frontline residential staff did not receive regular support and supervision from line managers to enable them to develop their skills.



# Four

## Court custody

- **Weak coordination between agencies affected outcomes for detainees.**
- **Detainees regularly spent too long in custody facilities, which were often dirty and poorly maintained.**
- **Care for detainees, in particular for those who were acutely mentally unwell, was inconsistent.**
- **Poor release planning meant detainees frequently left custody without receiving basic support.**

This section draws on the findings from inspections of custody facilities across three court areas: Thames Valley, London magistrates' courts (both of which had escort and custody services provided by Serco), and Lincolnshire, Leicestershire & Rutland and Northamptonshire, where GEOAmey provided escort and custody services.

All three were busy clusters: nearly 50,000 detainees had passed through London magistrates' courts alone in the previous year. However, a lack of coordinated action between responsible agencies was failing to ensure consistently safe and decent custody.

At London magistrates' courts, less than 60% of our previous concerns had been fully or partially addressed.

### **Detainees often spent too long in custody**

Detainees often arrived late to court, generally because of delays in collections from prison or police custody, inefficient routes, a lack of appropriately sized vehicles, and queues to get into custody and alight from vehicles. When they arrived at court, they were often not dealt with promptly, which meant many spent longer than necessary in custody.

### **Dirty and poorly maintained custody facilities**



Left to right: London magistrate's court custody, offensive graffiti at Reading crown court, poor conditions at Northampton crown court

We were repeatedly told that cleaning and maintenance regimes were inefficient and funding for even minor improvements was scarce or overly complicated. Facilities were too often dirty, and many cells contained offensive graffiti, were uncomfortable, and were poorly maintained. Inadequate toilets and a lack of private interview spaces frequently compromised detainee dignity.

### **Variable care for detainees**

Court custody staff demonstrated professionalism, compassion and resilience, managing conflict effectively and supporting vulnerable detainees well. Staff handled behavioural and mental health needs with patience, even under sustained operational pressure. Health care provision had improved and body-worn cameras and safeguarding awareness contributed to safe practice.

However, staff did not always receive adequate briefings, digital escort records frequently lacked important information, and detainees were not always checked when needed. Routine searching and handcuffing in some facilities illustrated weak risk

assessment and undermined the good rapport and care provided by custody staff.

Facilities and support for detainees with disabilities and/or neurodivergence remained far too limited and staff did not consistently use telephone interpreting services. The few children held in custody were too often locked in cells for extended periods without justification, appropriate facilities, engagement or care, sometimes even when they were escorted by specially trained staff.

### **Inadequate support for acutely mentally unwell people**

While NHS Liaison and Diversion teams provided valuable support to detainees with acute mental illness in many facilities, some waited too long for Mental Health Act assessments or specialist beds. Shortages of secure mental health placements meant some very unwell people were remanded to prison, which was not conducive to appropriate, individualised care.

## Poor release planning

Immediate risks, such as homelessness, were not always identified during release interviews, and some detainees left court custody without sufficient means to return home. Administrative delays meant some prisoners released by the courts had to wait hours before they could leave, and too many men and women returning to prison often arrived very late. This reduced the time available for them to settle in and for prison staff to complete vital safety processes.

# Five

## Immigration detention



- **Positive efforts to raise standards following previous poor inspections of IRCs had been driven by investment in infrastructure and staffing.**
- **There were persistent weaknesses in detention screening and in processes for identifying and responding to vulnerability.**
- **Detainees in STHFs received reasonable care, but too many were held for excessive periods.**
- **Overseas escort arrangements were generally managed well.**

## **Notable improvements following critical inspections**

This section draws on three full inspections, at Colnbrook, Dungavel and Derwentside IRCs, and the first two independent reviews of progress in the immigration detention estate at Brook House and Harmondsworth IRCs.

At Brook House and Harmondsworth, inspectors found substantial improvements in treatment and conditions. Progress at Harmondsworth was particularly striking, given that it had previously received the worst inspection outcomes of any IRC.

We found that there had been an exceptional response to our negative inspection findings, resulting in good progress in 11 of our 14 areas of concern, including all the priorities that we set out at the full inspection. [Harmondsworth](#)



**Left to right: refurbished cell, the cell at the previous inspection and a refurbished shower at Harmondsworth**

There had been significant investment in staffing at both sites. At Harmondsworth, staff numbers had doubled, with improved management support and supervision on the units. At Brook House, detainee custody officers and frontline managers were more visible on the wings, and leadership had strengthened across key functions including health care, reception,

and welfare services. The centres had also undergone substantial refurbishment, although longstanding problems, such as poor ventilation and a lack of open, green activity space, remained unresolved.

During the inspection of Derwentside, inspectors found an impressive and systematic response to earlier concerns. Leaders had addressed deficiencies in governance, particularly in the oversight of use of force. Derwentside was also notably less prison-like than other IRCs, with good efforts to soften the environment.

However, too few female staff were available to support the women held at Derwentside. At Dungavel, we had ongoing concerns about the situation of the small number of women detained there:

... women continued to receive unequal treatment. Leaders acknowledged this but had taken too little action to address the shortfalls, which included restricted movement, limited access to the regime, and less contact than their male counterparts with professionals such as the welfare team and Home Office staff. **Dungavel**

At Colnbrook, while significant ongoing concerns included the centre's prison-like design and a lack of capability among many staff, we also saw good leadership and improvements that included an expanded welfare service and better overall staffing levels.

### **Ongoing concerns for vulnerable detainees**

The Home Office Detention Engagement Teams (DETs) were accessible and met regularly with detainees. However, too many detainees continued to be held for excessive periods, and Rule 35 (see Glossary) safeguards remained weak. Rule 35 appointments often took too long, with three week waits at Brook House and two weeks at Harmondsworth. Very few Rule 35(2) reports (risk of suicide) were submitted, despite clear indicators of need. For instance, only eight reports were completed at Harmondsworth in the six months before our visit, despite 28 people being placed on constant watch because of an imminent risk of self-harm in the same period. At Dungavel, just three reports were submitted in the preceding six months, despite 36 constant watches, and at Colnbrook, only five were submitted despite 37 constant watches.

In our review of recent cases, we found two examples of health care staff failing to submit a Rule 35 report when it was required for suicidal intention, despite the staff considering in one of these cases that there was a high risk the detainee would take his life. **Colnbrook**

In too many cases, detention decisions had not taken sufficient account of mental ill-health, trauma histories, trafficking indicators, or self-harm risk.

In one case we reviewed, the decision-maker said a detainee had no known vulnerabilities, despite him telling immigration staff that he had a brain injury, depression and PTSD, and medical records confirming that he had been assessed with a learning difficulty and was prescribed medication for depression. **Brook House**

At Dungavel, a woman had been described by the Home Office's arresting officer as severely malnourished and struggling to communicate. She was eventually assessed as lacking mental capacity and hospitalised under the Mental Health Act. However,

on the day of her detention, the Detention Gatekeeper had authorised detention following receipt of a referral which stated that that she was ‘in good general health with no vulnerability concerns’. Similarly, at Derwentside, some women were detained despite clear indicators such as serious mental illness, pregnancy, or a history of gender-based violence.

### **Reasonable care in short-term holding facilities**

Inspectors conducted two national inspections of short-term holding facilities (STHFs), covering three residential sites and 10 holding rooms in immigration reporting centres.

Residential STHFs were generally calm and well managed, and detainees spoke highly of the care they received. Staffing levels were good, and officers were readily available to help detainees and answer questions. At Larne, we were particularly impressed by the support the experienced and capable staff group gave to detainees. Violence and self-harm were rare. Swinderby had a welcoming setting with good open spaces, but some areas of Larne and Manchester remained austere.

Too many had been detained in breach of time limits. For example, at Larne, 16 people – including one woman detained in error – had been held for over five days, with no indication that any were imminently to be removed. Women were not always adequately separated from men, creating potential safeguarding risks, and there were delays in issuing essential medication.

We also found generally good treatment of detainees in reporting centres but there was no access to fresh air or natural light in most locations. In some, there was a lack of space or privacy for searches and interviews. Facilities for women were particularly poor in some locations, including Loughborough, where toilets were shared and women were held with unrelated men. Across all STHFs, detainees continued to have no access to the internet, and the use of professional interpretation was too limited.

### **Overseas escorts generally managed well**

We inspected three overseas removal flights – to India, Nigeria and Ghana, and France – and found that each was well-organised and conducted with care. Most staff interactions were professional, courteous and

respectful. There was little use of force but while waist restraint belts were generally applied appropriately, they were not always removed promptly for compliant detainees.

The flight to France was the first inspection of 'one-in, one-out' removals involving people who had recently arrived at the Kent coast. This flight stood out for its complexity. Detainees spoke multiple languages but interpreting was inadequate, leaving many unable to ask questions or understand the process. Almost no information was provided about what awaited them on arrival, heightening their anxiety. We also noted some unprofessional staff behaviour on this removal.

On the India and Nigeria and Ghana flights, women did not have easy access to menstrual products. Mobile phones were also removed too early, limiting detainees' ability to stay in touch with family and legal advisers.



**Six**

**Income and expenditure**

**PROVE  
BEFORE  
YOU  
MOVE**

PROVE THAT  
GATES ARE  
SECURE BEFORE  
WALKING AWAY  
  
DO NOT LEAVE  
GATES OPEN  
FOR OTHERS

## Income and expenditure - 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>
MoJ (prisons and court cells)	<b>5,429,000</b>
Home Office (immigration detention)	<b>454,339</b>
Youth Justice Board/Youth Justice Commissioning Team (YJCT) (children's custody)	<b>167,444</b>
Other income (partner organisations)	<b>12,127</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,062,910</b>

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<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>%</b>
Staff costs <sup>1</sup>	<b>5,439,016</b>	<b>89%</b>
Travel and subsistence	<b>530,296</b>	<b>9%</b>
Printing and stationery	<b>17,609</b>	<b>0.29%</b>
Information technology and telecommunications <sup>2</sup>	<b>14,433</b>	<b>0.24%</b>
Translators	<b>21,000</b>	<b>0.35%</b>
Training and development	<b>20,456</b>	<b>0.34%</b>
Other costs (including recruitment costs, conferences and professional memberships) <sup>3</sup>	<b>43,630</b>	<b>0.72%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,086,440*</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Staff costs includes: fee-paid inspectors, HMPPS staff on loan and joint inspection/partner organisations costs, e.g. General Pharmaceutical Council and contribution to secretariat support of the Joint Criminal Justice Inspection Chief Inspectors Group.

<sup>2</sup> IT costs includes: renewing scanning hardware and licenses to software (SPSS and SNAP - used by researchers to process and analyse survey data).

<sup>3</sup> Other costs includes: legal fees incurred on public inquiries into Covid-19 and Manston Short-Term Holding Facility

# Seven Appendices

**COMPLAINTS**

Welcome to  
**HIMP Norwich**  
*at your local level*



**THE FOLLOWING FORMS CAN BE PLACED IN THIS BOX**

- Complaints
- IMB
- Nomis Visitors Lists
- Newspaper Requests
- DIRF Forms
- Pin Phone Apps (when Signed by Office- first)

Form with fields: **Name**, **Phone number**, **Date received**

Form with fields: **TS/NO**, **YES/NO**, **YES/NO**, **YES/NO**

Form with text: **I would like a copy of the IMB...**, **Characterised? YES/NO**, **Resolved? YES/NO**

## Appendix one

### Inspection reports published 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

Establishment	Inspection period	Date published
Nottingham - IRP	24-26 February 2025	7 April 2025
Harmondsworth - IRP	17-19 February 2025	8 April 2025
Guys Marsh	6-16 January 2025	15 April 2025
Brixton - IRP	3-5 March 2025	22 April 2025
Parc	6-17 January 2025	23 April 2025
Foston Hall	13-30 January 2025	29 April 2025
Berwyn	27 January - 7 February 2025	6 May 2025
Thames Valley court custody	3-15 March 2025	6 May 2025
Colnbrook IRC	20 January - 6 February 2025	12 May 2025

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<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Inspection period</b>	<b>Date published</b>
Thameside	3-13 February 2025	12 May 2025
Wandsworth - IRP	31 March - 2 April 2025	12 May 2025
Ranby	10-20 February 2025	19 May 2025
Belmarsh - IRP	7-9 April 2025	19 May 2025
Hull - IRP	14-16 April 2025	27 May 2025
Erlestoke - IRP	22-24 April 2025	2 June 2025
Warren Hill	3-21 February 2025	3 June 2025
Fosse Way	10-20 March 2025	9 June 2025
Elmley	26-27 February and 10-13 March 2025	16 June 2025
Garth - IRP	12-14 May 2025	16 June 2025
Lowdham Grange	3-14 March 2025	17 June 2025
India escort and removals	25 and 26 March 2025	23 June 2025

# HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2025-26

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Inspection period</b>	<b>Date published</b>
Send	17 March - 3 April 2025	1 July 2025
Haverigg	31 March - 10 April 2025	15 July 2025
Pentonville - Urgent Notification	30 June - 10 July 2025	18 July 2025
Rochester - IRP	2-4 June 2025	21 July 2025
Nigeria and Ghana escort and removals	24-25 April 2025	21 July 2025
Werrington YOI	15 April - 2 May 2025	28 July 2025
Oakhill Secure Training Centre - Urgent Notification	21-25 July 2025	31 July 2025
Lincoln	28 April - 15 May 2025	4 August 2025
Onley	6-22 May 2025	4 August 2025
Usk/Prescoed	12-22 May 2025	12 August 2025

# HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2025-26

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Inspection period</b>	<b>Date published</b>
Feltham A YOI	20 May - 5 June 2025	26 August 2025
Kirkham - IRP	28-30 July 2025	1 September 2025
Brook House - IRP	29-31 July 2025	1 September 2025
Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Rutland court custody	23 June - 5 July 2025	1 September 2025
Oakhill Secure Training Centre	21-25 July 2025	3 September 2025
Wormwood Scrubs	9-19 June 2025	8 September 2025
Lewes	9-19 June 2025	8 September 2025
Hewell	2-12 June 2025	15 September 2025
Eastwood Park	17 June - 3 July 2025	22 September 2025

# HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2025-26

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Inspection period</b>	<b>Date published</b>
Wakefield	30 June - 10 July 2025	29 September 2025
Residential short-term holding facilities at Larne House, Manchester and Swinderby	7-11 July 2025	29 September 2025
Pentonville	30 June - 10 July 2025	30 September 2025
Altcourse	7-18 July 2025	6 October 2025
Oakhill Secure Training Centre	9-10 September 2025	14 October 2025
Leeds	14-24 July 2025	21 October 2025
Bullingdon	28 July - 7 August 2025	27 October 2025
Bronzefield	4-14 August 2025	3 November 2025
Liverpool	11-21 August 2025	10 November 2025

# HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2025-26

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Inspection period</b>	<b>Date published</b>
Leicester	5 and 18-25 August 2025	17 November 2025
Deerbolt - IRP	13-15 October 2025	17 November 2025
Ranby - IRP	20-22 October 2025	24 November 2025
Dungavel IRC	18-21 August and 1-4 September 2025	1 December 2025
Feltham B	1-11 September 2025	1 December 2025
Northumberland	27 August - 12 September 2025	2 December 2025
Doncaster	8-18 September 2025	8 December 2025
Guys Marsh - IRP	3-5 November 2025	8 December 2025
Derwentside IRC	15 September - 3 October 2025	6 January 2026

# HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2025-26

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Inspection period</b>	<b>Date published</b>
Featherstone	23 September - 9 October 2025	12 January 2026
Birmingham	6-16 October 2025	19 January 2026
Immigration reporting centres	20-29 October 2025	19 January 2026
Foston Hall - IRP	8-10 December 2025	26 January 2026
Whitemoor	13-23 October 2025	2 February 2026
Wetherby YOI	27 October - 6 November 2025	9 February 2026
Paris escort and removals	12 November 2025	9 February 2026
Parc IRP	5-7 January 2026	16 February 2026
Onley IRP	6-8 January 2026	16 February 2026
London Magistrates' court custody	17 November - 6 December 2025	16 February 2026

# HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2025-26

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Inspection period</b>	<b>Date published</b>
Thameside - IRP	12-14 January 2026	23 February 2026
Coldingley	10-20 November 2025	23 February 2026
Low Newton	10-20 November 2025	24 February 2026
Isis	18 November - 4 December 2025	9 March 2026
Exeter	18 November - 4 December 2025	9 March 2026
Oakhill Secure Training Centre	3-4 February 2026	10 March 2026
Woodhill - Urgent Notification	2-12 March 2026	19 March 2026
Swaleside	1-11 December 2025	19 March 2026
Maidstone	1-11 December 2025	23 March 2026
Magilligan	9-26 September 2025	26 March 2026
Elmley - IRP	16-18 February 2026	30 March 2026

## Appendix two

### Further resources and references

All HM Inspectorate of Prisons reports published in 2025-26, Expectations and inspection methodology are published on our website.

Healthy establishment assessments, the numbers of concerns accepted and addressed by establishments, and analyses of survey responses for adult men's and women's prisons, children's establishments and immigration removal centres to accompany this report are also available on our website:

**[hmiprisons.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)**

HM Prison and Probation Service safety in custody statistics can be found at:

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics>**

## Appendix three

### Glossary

#### ACCT

Assessment, care in custody and teamwork; case management for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm.

#### Care Quality Commission

CQC is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. It monitors, inspects and regulates services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety. For information on CQC's standards of care and the action it takes to improve services, please visit: <http://www.cqc.org.uk>

#### Challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP)

HMPPS system used by all adult prisons to manage prisoners who are violent or pose a heightened risk of being violent. These prisoners are managed and supported on a plan with individualised targets and regular reviews. Not everyone who is violent is case managed on CSIP. Some prisons also use the CSIP framework to support victims of violence.

**HMCTS**

His Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service.

**HMPPS**

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

**Independent review of progress (IRP)**

A short follow-up visit to provide independent evidence about how much progress has been made in improving the treatment and conditions for prisoners following concerns from previous inspections.

**IRC**

Immigration removal centre.

**Leader**

Anyone with leadership or management responsibility.

**Ofsted**

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

**POM**

Prison offender manager.

## **Remand prisoners**

Prisoners who have not yet been tried and are therefore unconvicted. If there are no security concerns, a remand prisoner will have a number of special rights and privileges, including receiving additional letters and visits, not having to share a cell with a convicted prisoner and not working unless they choose to. Remand prisoners are normally held in local category B prisons.

## **Rule 35 of Detention Centre Rules**

Requires notification to Home Office Immigration and Enforcement if a detainee's health is likely to be injuriously affected by detention, including if they may have been the victim of torture.

## **STC**

Secure training centre.

## **STHF**

Short-term holding facility.

## **Time out of cell**

Time out of cell, in addition to formal 'purposeful activity', includes any time prisoners are out of their

cells to associate or use communal facilities to take showers or make telephone calls.

### **Urgent Notification**

Where an inspection identifies significant concerns about the treatment and conditions of detainees, the Chief Inspector may issue an Urgent Notification to the Secretary of State within seven calendar days stating the reasons for concerns and identifying issues that require improvement. The Secretary of State commits to respond publicly to the concerns raised within 28 calendar days.

### **YOI**

Young offender institution.

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