



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Dame Meg Hillier MP
Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts
House of Commons
Palace of Westminster
SW1A0AA

By email: meghilliermp@parliament.uk

Amy Rees
Chief Executive
HM Prison and Probation
Service
3rd Floor Churchill House
Churchill way
Cardiff
CF10 2HH
Email:
DGCEOHMPPS@justice.gov.uk

10 May 2024

Dear Chair,

RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT FOR PRISON LEAVERS

Further to the Committee's Seventy-Eighth Report of Session 2022-23, 'Resettlement Support for Prison Leavers', I am writing to you in response to recommendations 1b and 6.

Recommendation 1b of the report states:

'Within six months, HMPPS should write to the Committee setting out an action plan for improved support for those who leave the prison system, including clear steps towards its intended approach of an adequate and consistent resettlement service for all prison leavers.'

Recommendation 6 of the report states:

'The Ministry of Justice should write to us within six months with its latest 5 to 10 year projections for:

- its prison population and its safe prison capacity;
- bringing six new prisons online; and
- the level of demand for resettlement services.'

On recommendation 1b, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) have developed an action plan for a strategic approach to resettlement (see Annex A). This sets out the clear steps HMPPS will take to ensure an improved, consistent approach to resettlement. We want to ensure that we target our resources to best effect, with

clear accountabilities so that we can improve outcomes for people leaving prison and returning to the community.

The steps we are taking in this action plan are designed to support an improvement in resettlement performance by spring 2025, ensuring an adequate and consistent resettlement service is in place. This will set the foundations for continued improvement in resettlement provision over the longer term.

On recommendation 6, the Ministry of Justice published the [2023 to 2028 prison population projections](#) in February 2024. This presents three plausible scenarios for the prison population projection to March 2028. The prison population is projected to increase to between 94,600 and 114,800 by March 2028, with a central estimate of 105,800 (see Annex B), driven by an increase in the population serving determinate sentences.

As these additional prisoners progress through their sentences, there will be higher demand for resettlement services. The support needed to aid someone's resettlement will vary depending on the person, which is why we are working to improve assessment and planning processes to prepare more effectively for resettlement. While projections are uncertain, the central estimate of the caseload of prison leavers on licence in the community suggests that the Probation Service may need to supervise around 72,000 prison leavers by March 2028, around one-fifth more than the caseload in December 2023. This is in addition to other individuals under Probation Service supervision, such as those on community sentences.

Last October, the Lord Chancellor committed to Parliament that the Government would lay an annual statement of prison capacity before both Houses. That is to include a clear statement of current prison capacity, future demand, the range of system costs that will be incurred under different scenarios and our forward pipeline of prison build. This is intended to bring greater transparency to our plans and the progress being made.

Recommendation 6 also requests projections on bringing our six new prisons online. Our new prisons are a flagship commitment, delivering c.10,000 places between them. Their innovative, green design brings benefits to the local community; however, they are complex capital projects which are being delivered within challenging market conditions.

Despite challenges, we delivered both HMP Five Wells and HMP Fosse Way on time in 2022 and 2023 respectively. We are on track to deliver c.1,500 places at our first all-electric prison, HMP Millsike, at Full Sutton in Yorkshire, due to open in Spring 2025.

We have secured outline planning permission for our fourth c.1,700 place new prison, near the existing HMP Gartree in Leicestershire, and for our fifth c.1,500 new prison, near the existing HMP Grendon in Buckinghamshire. We will now seek full planning permission so we can deliver those new places as quickly as possible.

An appeal against a planning refusal was submitted for our sixth c.1,700 place prison in Lancashire, to meet the pressing demand for prison places. This appeal is awaiting

an outcome, to be decided by Secretary of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. We will need to model delivery timescales once that outcome is known.

I hope this letter provides the Committee with appropriate assurance that we are committed to ensure there is an adequate and consistent resettlement service for all prison leavers.

Yours sincerely / Yn gywir

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'A. Rees'.

Amy Rees,

Chief Executive, HM Prison and Probation Service

Prif Weithredwr, Gwasanaeth Carchardai a Phrawf EF

Annex A: Action Plan

Pillar	Action	Description	Target Date
A coherent single national approach with agreed regional flexibility	Communicate one single consistent and coherent articulation of “resettlement”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and embed clear messages on the current model of resettlement and the roles and responsibilities of various teams and partners to ensure understanding and promote accountability. 	Dec 2024 and ongoing
	Set clear expectations for delivery whilst enabling local decision-making and flexibility based on local need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower regions to deliver resettlement provision which is tailored to local need, in the context of increased regional accountability and the introduction of Area Executive Directors (AED); Set clear expectations for “minimum” resettlement provision nationally in order to improve performance and consistency of resettlement provision regionally and nationally. 	Spring 2025
	Develop and communicate best practice to encourage stronger delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and distribute examples of regional best practice to celebrate and inspire good delivery; Provide tools and inspiration to support regions to go beyond the “minimum” resettlement provisions, where possible. 	Spring 2025 and ongoing
An agreed understanding of what good quality resettlement is and how best to measure it	Develop an organisation-wide approach to monitoring performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish organisation-wide resettlement outcomes and success measures in order to ensure a shared understanding of success for resettlement and a process for monitoring progress against it; Consider how best to effectively monitor delivery of the outcomes across prison and probation to promote accountability and enable continuous improvement. 	Spring 2025
	Cohere and hold the whole system to account for resettlement outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold the system to account to deliver agreed resettlement outcomes by developing a clear accountability structure across internal and external partners. Effective resettlement delivery relies on a number of internal and external partners collaborating and working together to achieve more than the sum of their parts. 	Spring 2025

Ability to plan and deploy resettlement resources effectively	Improve understanding of costs of resettlement delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a robust estimate of the cost of resettlement delivery for 23/24, laying the foundations for the organisation to provide future resettlement demand cost estimates based on prison population projections. 	Dec 2024
	Improve understanding of changing demand for resettlement services and how our resources can be used flexibly to meet demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure an accurate evidence-base and improved visibility on staff deployment on resettlement work in both prison and probation in order to maximise the use of resource to deliver resettlement outcomes. Empower regions to make local decisions about resource and deployment aligned with prison and probation demand as well as local capacity and capability. 	Spring 2025
	Joined up approach to digital enablement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure digital services enable the delivery of resettlement provision. These will organise, plan and record relevant information around the resettlement pathways of mental health, drugs, education, skills, work, accommodation and family ties to address drivers of repeat offending and ensure a smooth transition into the community. This will lead to improved information sharing; improved coordination, sequencing and oversight of resettlement activity; and empowering prison leavers to better engage with services. 	Spring 2025

Annex B: Projected Prison Population (end of March figures)

Date	Low	Central	High
March 2024	88,700	89,800	90,900
March 2025	92,100	96,200	99,600
March 2026	94,400	101,000	106,800
March 2027	95,800	103,800	111,700
March 2028	94,600	105,800	114,800

Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100