



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Andy Slaughter MP

Chair of the Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: SUB125919

22 July 2025

Dear Andy,

**JUSTICE SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRIES ON TACKLING DRUGS IN PRISON;
REHABILITATION AND RESETTLEMENT: ENDING THE CYCLE OF REOFFENDING**

I am writing following the evidence session for the Committee's inquiries into tackling drugs in prison and rehabilitation and resettlement on 8 July 2025, to provide some clarification on points raised during the session.

Purposeful Activity

On purposeful activity, I promised to respond to Warinder Juss MP on what we are doing to increase access to purposeful activity, and to provide the latest figures on access to purposeful activity.

As the Committee is aware, the picture we inherited was challenging, driven in no small part by the pressures the prison population was placing on prison operations. Due to the decisive action we have taken, population pressures should begin to ease. As they do, we will work with prisons to overcome barriers to providing purposeful activity, and share best practice from those who do it well. This will build upon existing work to improve purposeful activity, including the introduction of the National Regime Model in 2024, the introduction of specially trained Enrichment Officers through the Enable Programme who design and deliver purposeful activities for those who struggle to engage with the core regime, and work to improve reading and literacy, with every prison now having a reading strategy.

HMPPS measures purposeful activity by capturing the number of prisoners in at least half-time activity (between 4-8 activity sessions, which each last around 2-3 hours) per week. The latest available data from the year to March 31 2024 (under the last government) shows that on average, 67% of prisoners in adult public prisons were in at least half-time activity per week and we clearly need to do more. In different functions of prison, the average figures were:

- High security and long-term: 66%
- Reception: 58%
- Cat B: 65%
- Cat C trainer: 73%

- Cat C resettlement: 60%
- Open: 96%
- Women's: 80%

Accommodation

On accommodation, Pam Cox MP requested an update on work with the Office for Value for Money (OVfM) at HM Treasury. The OVfM has developed principles for a future approach to procuring short-term residential accommodation: moving towards greater local delivery to support integration and outcomes, with national planning and coordination to support a longer-term approach, underpinned by new procurement models and measures to support required capacity. HMT is working with MHCLG, MoJ and other relevant departments to build the evidence base and support implementation through partnership working with local government.

Accommodation is vital for robust management of offenders in the community and ensures that offenders can be tagged. To tackle reoffending and homelessness, we are part of the Deputy Prime Minister chaired Inter-Ministerial Group which is developing a cross-Government homelessness strategy to get back on track to ending homelessness. This includes close work with MHCLG to improve joint working across prisons, probation and local authorities to identify housing and support needs and an earlier stage, and to support prison leavers into settled accommodation.

As part of our collaborative approach, we will continue to work with the Welsh Government to ensure prison leavers in Wales can move-on into settled accommodation.

Rehabilitation and VAWG

On programmes for prisoners convicted of violence against women and girls (VAWG), I offered to write to respond to Sarah Russell MP's questions on this.

Over the past 30 years HMPPS has led the way in designing interventions that target problematic attitudes, thinking and behaviour. Our accredited programmes are designed in line with the latest international evidence of what works to reduce reoffending and play an important role in protecting the public. This work has resulted in a suite of group-based interventions developed to address different types of offending. However, those convicted of domestic abuse and sexual offences often have complex and overlapping histories of offending. To tackle the diversity of offending histories that we see with those convicted of VAWG-related offences, we have brought an important evolution in our approach. This involves moving away from multiple, offence-specific focused interventions, towards a streamlined, consolidated but person-centred approach to addressing attitudes, thinking and behaviour.

We have developed a new approach to programmes for our adult population which has been accredited following scrutiny from an independent panel of experts. The new offer, "Building Choices," brings an approach that enables better targeting of the range of offending behaviours that individuals present with. HMPPS also continues to provide specialist one-to-one provision as needed for those whose offending behaviour is specific to offence related sexual interests, via the Healthy Sex Programme (HSP) and for those who have committed extremist offending, via the Healthy Identity Intervention (HII). HSP is a follow-on programme where outstanding and specific needs are evident, rather than a separate alternative to Building Choices. Although HSP is accredited for both prisons and probation, it is currently delivered only in prisons, partly reflecting that those eligible for HSP are more likely to be given a custodial sentence.

For some people convicted of VAWG-related offences, specialist psychologically informed approaches are required. Higher risk individuals are likely to meet the clinical threshold for a diagnosis of 'personality disorder.' HMPPS delivers the Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) Pathway programme jointly with NHS England. This is a set of psychologically informed services operating across criminal justice and health, underpinned by a set of principles and quality standards. Using evidence-based relational and environmental approaches, it aims to reduce risk associated with serious reoffending and improve mental health.

We are also extending a feasibility pilot of Medication to Manage Problematic Sexual Arousal (MMPSA) in the South West to two further regions to develop this service, commissioned as an adjunct to the OPD Pathway. MMPSA can be used by offenders with ongoing clinical needs and must be used alongside psychological interventions in addition to accredited offending behaviour programmes, that target other causes of offending, and probation supervision.

Within the youth estate, the Youth Custody Service has an individualised, trauma-informed, multi-agency approach to the care and management of children and young people in custody, which is responsive to the needs of each child and young person. The Framework for Integrated Care (also known as 'SECURE STAIRS'), developed in partnership by NHS England, provides training of staff in the youth estate to deliver more developmentally attuned, psychologically informed care, based on comprehensive assessments to ensure that all children's and young people's needs are identified. Each child and young person in custody will have a case formulation plan, which is shaped by input from all agencies involved. This collaborative approach ensures all services are responsive to each child's needs, including any associated with clinical neurodiversity conditions.

To drive performance improvements in the YOIs, we developed roadmaps to effective practice which will focus on outcomes in areas such as safety, behaviour management support and education. YCS also has a suite of interventions which address a range of treatment needs associated with offending including violence. Whilst there is not a specific intervention for violence against women and girls, addressing use of violence would therefore also seek to address these issues.

I hope this additional information has been helpful. Should you require further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on these important issues and I hope you have a great summer recess.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending