



Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

By email only

10 February 2026

Dear Lord Timpson,

**Ending the cycle of reoffending – part one: rehabilitation in prisons:
Government Response**

Thank you for providing the Committee with the Government's response to our report; Ending the cycle of reoffending – part one: rehabilitation in prisons. Whilst there were some promising developments outlined, overall, it was unfortunately a disappointing response.

On prison education, we welcome confirmation that there will be a national reduction of around 20-25%. However, we are deeply concerned by this news, given that the department itself acknowledges in the response the positive link between prison education and reducing reoffending. Furthermore, in our report we clearly set out evidence regarding the low quality of prison education for those that do access it, therefore, it is simply not acceptable that the prospects for prisoners to access good quality educational programmes are to diminish further. You stated that the reduction is subject to final analysis, when will this be complete and when will HMPPS let prisons and prison education contractors know the outcome of this? We expect to be kept informed as this progresses. In addition, you said you are developing a strategy to evaluate prison education to inform future delivery plans and that you would welcome our engagement as insights emerge. We would happily take part in any such work, and we urge the Government to include engagement with the sector more widely as the department continues this work. These plans should show how the department will ensure equality of access for all who need it.

On the Earned Progression Model, we acknowledge the Government's publication of the progression measures factsheet in November 2025. However, it is regrettable to learn that the model will focus on preventing bad behaviour, as opposed to incentivising constructive engagement with the regime. Given that the Sentencing Act is now in place, we would welcome prompt clarification as to how the Government plans to implement the scheme and ensure this Earned Progression Model does not instead become an 'Earned Regression Model', where the focus is not on reducing time served for engaging constructively in rehabilitative activities. Otherwise, the department must provide clear confirmation that this will not be a part of the regime as originally intended by the Independent Sentencing Review.



Furthermore, whilst the Government accepted or partially accepted many of our recommendations, your responses detail existing work programmes, and very little new work has been committed to as a result of the evidence set out by our report. Furthermore, details at this time are vague, and the Government has rarely given timelines for when it anticipates work will be carried out by, nor does the department endeavour to update the Committee as work progresses. We would therefore like to seek clarification to a number of questions:

1. On training for staff, can you provide further details on what the Comprehensive Induction Process includes, and when HMPPS plans to implement the Workforce Planning Guide? (Paragraph 4).
2. Thank you for setting out what work is already being undertaken to improve training for staff. Why is it not feasible for the implementation of this work to be completed within 12 months? When does HMPPS anticipate this will be completed by instead? Additionally, the department confirmed a new governance function to oversee the capability programmes, but it is yet to be established. When will this be established and will you write to the Committee with its initial progress in 6 months' time? (Paragraph 7-12).
3. On prison maintenance, when do you expect funding allocations to be confirmed for the next period, and will you write to the Committee following the outcome of this allocations process? (Paragraph 26).
4. On Governor autonomy, we asked for an update on the review the Government committed to in response to the Lords Inquiry, to which you said the review is ongoing. There was no further detail given, nor a commitment to update the Committee on when it will be completed by. We do not deem this to be sufficient detail provided for it to be an accepted recommendation. When does the department expect to complete this review by, and will the department write to us with its findings? (Paragraph 29-30).
5. Additionally on governor autonomy, whilst we understand that public sector Governors must adhere to civil service guidelines, it must not be ignored that some private sector prisons are currently performing better than their public service counterparts. This was evident during our recent visit to HMP Bronzefield, and HMP Oakwood is regularly identified as a high-performing prison. Can you set out how you plan to mitigate this disparity in service provision going forward? (paragraphs 35-37).
6. On contract management, could you set out when the new 'self-service' programme is due to be introduced, and write to the Committee in 12 months' time following this date with an update on how successful the implementation process has been? (Paragraph 40).
7. We welcome the renewed focus on measuring time spent in rehabilitative activities and purposeful activity. To confirm, will this be via the Digital Prisons Service Activities and Appointments tool? If so, why will it take until year end 2027/28 for this tool to be rolled out across the prison estate? (Paragraphs 50-51).
8. When a prison is identified as struggling with its delivery offer via Prison Performance Ratings, what process is in place for the provision of targeted specialist support through regional improvement teams? We welcome further



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detail on the remit of this team and how is success measured following support (paragraph 52).

9. On Release on Temporary License (ROTL), we accept that the Government keeps the policy and operational framework under constant review. However, the Committee asked the department to specifically undertake a review due to concerns heard throughout our inquiry regarding inconsistent use. Furthermore, detail is lacking on the work that is set out. You said you are focusing on practical improvements through operational pilots and targeted actions, what are they? You recognise improving public understanding of ROTL is important but did not set out how you plan to address this. Again, this is a recommendation you have accepted, but we do not deem it so. We reiterate our call for a review of the operational framework for ROTL (Paragraphs 58-63).
10. As the department will be aware, we have begun an inquiry on Children and Young Adults in the Secure Estate, which will consider the issues relating to the Youth Custody Service in greater detail that were considered in this report such as time out of cell, access to purposeful activity and education, and violence and disorder. In the meantime, it would be useful to understand why the site-specific action plans are not able to be shared in the public domain? To allow for effective scrutiny, it would be useful if the Department would give the Committee sight of these plans in confidence (Paragraph 76).
11. On prison education, you stated that the reduction is subject to final analysis, when will this be complete and when will HMPPS let prisons and prison education contractors know the outcome of this? (Paragraph 89).
12. At the time of writing, there is still no published update to the neurodiversity action plan. What is the reason for the delay and when will you commit to publishing by? (Paragraph 99).
13. On access to higher education, the response said the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education will review the recommendation on access to student finance for prisoners. When will the Government commit to undertaking this review by and will you update both this Committee and the Education Committee on its findings? (Paragraph 107).
14. In our report, we requested further details on how the Government aims to end the practice of prisons being used as a place of safety in the Mental Health Bill (original report, paragraph 110). This was not responded to. We therefore reiterate this request.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Slaughter MP
Chair
Justice Committee