



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:

25th March 2026

Dear Andy,

**UPDATE ON THE PRISON, PROBATION, YOUTH JUSTICE AND COURT CUSTODY
SCRUTINY BODIES LANDSCAPE**

I previously wrote to you on the 16 September to inform the Committee that the Ministry of Justice would be carrying out an internal review of the prison, probation and court custody scrutiny bodies. These scrutiny bodies are HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation, the Independent Monitoring Boards, the Lay Observers, and the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

Following this review, the Department intends to combine HM Inspectorate of Prisons, the Independent Monitoring Boards and the Lay Observers into a single organisation, responsible for both monitoring and inspection, through legislation. This plan for reform will not remove or reduce the crucial scrutiny functions carried out by these bodies, but rather will mean that these scrutiny functions will sit under a single, combined organisation, strengthening consistency and scrutiny, and leading to stronger links between monitoring and inspection.

We are clear that legislation is needed to implement these changes and, as you will be aware, this will depend on when we can secure a suitable legislative vehicle, which may take some time.

This decision is the first step in a process for reform. The Department will now be working through what a future model will look like.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending