

The Rt Hon. the Lord Foster of Bath
Chair, Justice and Home Affairs Committee

28 May 2026

IMPRISONMENT FOR PUBLIC PROTECTION

I am writing to provide an update on the implementation of measures in the Sentencing Act 2026 regarding the Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentence.

Legislative changes we implemented as part of the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 have so far reduced the number of people serving IPP sentences in the community by over two-thirds, to 891 as of 31 December 2025. We have gone further with the measures in the Sentencing Act 2026, which will be implemented on 1 June 2026. These will:

- Further reduce the qualifying period for referring an IPP licence to the Parole Board to consider licence termination from three years after first release from prison to two years;
- Allow offenders serving an IPP or DPP sentence whose licence is not terminated by the Parole Board at the end of the qualifying period to apply for another review one year after the end of the qualifying period. Currently, they are required to wait two years for their licence to be terminated automatically.

The Government is determined to support those in prison to achieve safe and sustainable releases, and to support those in the community to have their licences terminated, but not in a way that undermines public protection. For that reason, we are firmly of the view that those serving the IPP sentence in prison must satisfy the statutory release test before they are released.

As of 31 March 2026, the number of people serving an IPP sentence in prison was 2,329. Of those, 896 had never been released (a reduction of 11% from the previous year) and 1,433 had been recalled (a reduction of 6% from the previous year).

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is currently updating the IPP Action Plan for 2026/27, which is due to be published alongside the IPP Annual Report before Summer Recess. The revised Plan will ensure a continued operational focus on supporting those serving the sentence and build on last year's progress including through published targets.

I meet regularly with Members of both Houses and other stakeholders on this important issue, and hold quarterly IPP Roundtables with interested Peers. On 14 April, the Parole Board attended the Peers' IPP Roundtable to discuss the Board's IPP Taskforce which was set up to support the effective management of IPP cases. The next roundtable will be held in July where IPP recalls will be the primary area of discussion.

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I have recently offered to meet the Justice Select Committee to discuss the latest actions we are taking following the publication of the IPP Annual Report and revised Action Plan. I would be delighted to offer a similar meeting with JHAC, should that be useful to you and the Committee.

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

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