

The Rt Hon The Lord Foster of Bath
Chair, Justice and Home Affairs
Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 2AS

29 June 2026

Dear Lord Foster

Fire safety in prisons in England and Wales

We write further to our oral evidence to the Committee on 16 June 2026. We have been asked to provide the Committee with further information about:

- Freedom of Information Act ('FOIA') requests made by the Howard League to the Crown Premises Fire Safety Inspectorate ('CPFSI'); and
- further information about fires in prisons in 2025, broken down by prison.

Information obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests

We submitted a series of Freedom of Information Act requests asking for copies of/information about all informal, formal and statutory notices served by the CPFSI on Crown and non-Crown responsible persons with duties under the Fire Safety Order in respect of prisons in England and Wales.

We have had sight, or are aware, of 257 notices having been served by the CPFSI between November 2023 and March 2026 in relation to 50 prisons in England and Wales. Five are privately-run and the remainder are publicly-run.

These notices include Crown Enforcement Notices, Crown Prohibition Notices, Enforcement Notices and other notices raising concerns about failures to comply with the Fire Safety Order 20025. However, not all of the notices are raising concerns - some are in response to previous correspondence, confirming that action plans have been complied with and notices have been discharged.

On 19 June 2026, we received a response from the CPFSI to a further FOIA request asking them to confirm which prisons have active Crown Enforcement notices. We have enclosed a copy of the response with this letter.

We understand that:

- There are 30 “active” Crown Enforcement Notices at 27 prisons;¹
- Nine Step Away notices have been issued at eight of those prisons as a result of Crown Enforcement Notices not having been complied with;²
- A further seven prisons have Crown Enforcement Notices which have “expired” and “further enforcement action is required”. We understand this to mean that these prisons have not complied with the requirements of the Crown Enforcement Notices by the required date, and that Step Away notices may be issued in due course; and
- Thirteen prisons have Crown Enforcement Notices that remain extant, with the timeframe for complying with the notices ranging from June 2026 to January 2034.

The government’s Fire Safety Improvement List provides further information about which prisons have outstanding fire safety work to be completed, in particular those requiring automatic fire detection, smoke control and/or fire suppression works. This should be read alongside the ‘Fire Maintenance Models’, which we understand are maintained by the HMPPS Estates Team and log all projects necessary to bring the estate into full compliance, their duration and planned decants and the number of spaces that will be remedied over time.³

Number of cell fires in prison

The number of cell fires in prison in England and Wales in 2024 and 2025, broken down by prison, has been provided in response to parliamentary questions and is publicly available.

We have appended to this letter a table comparing the number of fires in each prison in 2024 and 2025. However, without further information, including about the nature of the fires, how many individuals set the fires and the recording practices in each prison, we are unable to draw any conclusions about the distribution of fires between prisons, including a comparison between public and private prisons.

Please let us know if you require any further information or we can assist further.

Yours sincerely



Sinead MacCann
Managing Solicitor
The Howard League for Penal Reform

¹ Highpoint North and Highpoint South are treated as separate prisons. Norwich, Styal and Wetherby prisons have two active Crown Enforcement Notices each.

² Styal, Norwich, Manchester, Eastwood Park, Holme House, Swaleside, Wetherby (x2) and Bristol (which has been issued since our written evidence to the Committee, published on 17 June 2026).

³ Ministry of Justice, written evidence to the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee Inquiry on Fire Safety (2026)
<https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/167569/pdf/> (accessed 29 June 2026)

Number of fires in prisons in England and Wales, 2024 and 2025, broken down by prison⁴

Prison	Public or private prison	2024	2025
HM Prison Altcourse	Private	39	11
HM Prison Ashfield	Private	0	0
HM Prison Askham Grange	Public	2	0
HM Prison Aylesbury	Public	11	14
HM Prison Bedford	Public	55	12
HM Prison Belmarsh	Public	17	8
HM Prison Berwyn	Public	53	74
HM Prison Birmingham	Public	48	76
HM Prison Brinsford	Public	49	30
HM Prison Bristol	Public	48	60
HM Prison Brixton	Public	19	31
HM Prison Bronzefield	Private	36	0
HM Prison Buckley Hall	Public	5	6
HM Prison Bullingdon	Public	72	18
HM Prison Bure	Public	1	1
HM Prison Cardiff	Public	2	4
HM Prison Channings Wood	Public	13	8
HM Prison Chelmsford	Public	16	15
HM Prison Coldingley	Public	4	6
HM Prison Cookham Wood	Public	2	0
HM Prison Dartmoor	Public	1	0
HM Prison Deerbolt	Public	23	31
HM Prison Doncaster	Private	45	45
HM Prison Dovegate	Private	73	76
HM Prison Downview	Public	2	2
HM Prison Drake Hall	Public	1	4
HM Prison Durham	Public	16	16

⁴ This information has been transposed from responses to two written parliamentary questions <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-01-13/23432> (accessed 29 June 2026); and <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2026-01-07/103876> (accessed 29 June 2026).

HM Prison East Sutton Park	Public	1	0
HM Prison Eastwood Park	Public	3	6
HM Prison Elmley	Public	30	51
HM Prison Erlestoke	Public	17	31
HM Prison Exeter	Public	13	2
HM Prison Featherstone	Public	3	4
HM Prison Feltham	Public	31	40
HM Prison Five Wells	Private	68	11
HM Prison Ford	Public	0	0
HM Prison Forest Bank	Private	137	94
HM Prison Fosse Way	Private	33	42
HM Prison Foston Hall	Public	7	6
HM Prison Frankland	Public	4	3
HM Prison Full Sutton	Public	22	2
HM Prison Garth	Public	27	49
HM Prison Gartree	Public	13	30
HM Prison Grendon	Public	1	0
HM Prison Guys Marsh	Public	78	20
HM Prison Hatfield	Public	1	0
HM Prison Haverigg	Public	1	0
HM Prison Hewell	Public	10	8
HM Prison High Down	Public	19	12
HM Prison Highpoint	Public	37	28
HM Prison Hindley	Public	24	5
HM Prison Hollesley Bay	Public	1	0
HM Prison Holme House	Public	41	52
HM Prison Hull	Public	22	35
HM Prison Humber	Public	67	64
HM Prison Huntercombe	Public	15	5
HM Prison Isis	Public	35	20
HM Prison Isle of Wight	Public	20	7
HM Prison Kirkham	Public	0	0
HM Prison Kirklevington Grange	Public	0	0
HM Prison Lancaster Farms	Public	6	5
HM Prison Leeds	Public	31	22
HM Prison Leicester	Public	23	14

HM Prison Lewes	Public	42	38
HM Prison Leyhill	Public	0	0
HM Prison Lincoln	Public	5	8
HM Prison Lindholme	Public	96	74
HM Prison Littlehey	Public	3	2
HM Prison Liverpool	Public	32	9
HM Prison Long Lartin	Public	33	46
HM Prison Low Newton	Public	0	5
HM Prison Lowdham Grange ⁵	Public	79	78
HM Prison Maidstone	Public	3	1
HM Prison Manchester	Public	53	35
HM Prison Milsike	Private	N/A	6
HM Prison Moorland	Public	9	28
HM Prison Morton Hall	Public	4	3
HM Prison New Hall	Public	2	3
HM Prison North Sea Camp	Public	0	0
HM Prison Northumberland	Private	9	13
HM Prison Norwich	Public	57	20
HM Prison Nottingham	Public	20	54
HM Prison Oakwood	Private	42	28
HM Prison Onley	Public	26	16
HM Prison Parc	Private	65	63
HM Prison Pentonville	Public	28	21
HM Prison Peterborough	Private	40	51
HM Prison Portland	Public	26	32
HM Prison Prescoed	Public	2	0
HM Prison Preston	Public	12	6
HM Prison Ranby	Public	49	35
HM Prison Risley	Public	16	13
HM Prison Rochester	Public	24	13
HM Prison Rye Hill	Private	0	0
HM Prison Send	Public	0	0
HM Prison Spring Hill	Public	2	0
HM Prison Stafford	Public	1	0
HM Prison Standford Hill	Public	2	0

⁵ Publicly-run since 1 August 2024

HM Prison Stocken	Public	20	39
HM Prison Stoke Heath	Public	6	4
HM Prison Styal	Public	26	22
HM Prison Sudbury	Public	2	0
HM Prison Swaleside	Public	116	77
HM Prison Swansea	Public	3	1
HM Prison Swinfen Hall	Public	19	36
HM Prison Thameside	Private	70	72
HM Prison The Mount	Public	13	29
HM Prison The Verne	Public	1	1
HM Prison Thorn Cross	Public	1	0
HM Prison Usk	Public	0	0
HM Prison Wakefield	Public	17	8
HM Prison Wandsworth	Public	98	62
HM Prison Warren Hill	Public	1	0
HM Prison Wayland	Public	22	19
HM Prison Wealstun	Public	56	69
HM Prison Werrington	Public	15	10
HM Prison Wetherby	Public	23	37
HM Prison Whatton	Public	0	1
HM Prison Whitemoor	Public	23	4
HM Prison Winchester	Public	23	33
HM Prison Woodhill	Public	83	88
HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs	Public	6	7
HM Prison Wymott	Public	11	10
Total		2931	2546

Prison	Date Crown Notice Served	Date Notice expires	Supporting Information
HM Prison Styal	07/04/2022	07/07/2022	Notice not complied with. Step Away Letter Issued 06/08/2024
HM Prison Norwich	24/03/2023	24/05/2023	Notice not complied with. Step Away Letter Issued 28/11/2025
HM Prison Cookham Wood	07/09/2023	07/11/2023	Wing remains unoccupied. No confirmed dates for reoccupation.
HM Prison Manchester	05/10/2023	05/11/2023	Notice not complied with. Step Away Letter Issued 13/02/2025
HM Prison Eastwood Park	29/11/2023	01/04/2024	Notice not complied with. Step Away Letter Issued 1/08/2024.
HM Prison Holme House	12/12/2023	12/12/2024	Notice not complied with. Step Away Letter Issued 16/01/2025.
HM Prison Swaleside	04/01/2024	04/07/2024	Notice not complied with. Step Away Letter Issued 28/08/2024
HM Prison Wetherby	23/07/2024	23/01/2025	Notice not complied with. Step Away Letter Issued 2/07/2025
HM Prison Wetherby	23/07/2024	23/01/2025	Notice not complied with. Step Away Letter Issued 2/07/2025
HM Prison Leyhill	01/08/2024	01/04/2026	Further enforcement action required.
HM Prison Styal	06/08/2024	12/08/2025	Further enforcement action required.
HM Prison Whatton	07/11/2024	31/03/2026	Further enforcement action required.
HM Prison Belmarsh	01/12/2024	12/12/2025	Further enforcement action required.
HM Prison Chelmsford	09/12/2024	09/12/2025	Further enforcement action required.
HM Prison Wandsworth	10/12/2024	05/09/2031	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison Elmley	16/01/2025	16/01/2026	Further enforcement action required.
HM Prison Lowdham Grange	20/06/2025	20/06/2026	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison Maidstone	11/08/2025	12/08/2026	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs	01/10/2025	31/01/2034	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison Durham	17/10/2025	17/10/2026	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison Nottingham	20/11/2025	20/11/2026	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison Wakefield	26/11/2025	21/12/2029	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison Bristol	12/12/2025	12/03/2026	Notice not complied with. Step Away Letter issued 8/06/2026.
HM Prison Highpoint [N]	12/12/2025	12/12/2026	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison Lincoln	15/12/2025	20/12/2028	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison Highpoint [S]	17/12/2025	17/12/2026	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.

HM Prison High Down	29/01/2026	06/12/2028	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison The Mount	13/03/2026	15/05/2026	Further enforcement action required.
HM Prison Norwich	16/03/2026	23/04/2027	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.
HM Prison Littlehey	18/05/2026	18/05/2027	Crown Enforcement Notice remains extant.