



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Annual report on the Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence for 2025 to 2026

July 2026



HC 445



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Probation Service

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Contents

Foreword	1
Executive summary	3
Introduction	5
The IPP sentence	5
The IPP Action Plan	6
Data	7
IPP prison population	7
IPP community caseload	8
IPP population in secure hospitals	9
Number of Parole Board completed oral hearing reviews	10
Percentage of release decisions based on completed oral hearings conducted by the Parole Board	11
Annual IPP first releases	12
Number of IPP recalls	13
IPP re-releases following recall	14
Mean time spent recalled	15
Number of IPP self-inflicted deaths	16
Number of people serving an IPP sentence convicted of serious further offences (SFOs)	17
Additional published statistics	18
Sentencing Act 2026	19
Individual IPP cohorts	20
Women serving the IPP sentence	20
DPP sentence	21
Recalled population	22
Never-released IPP prisoners	22

Operational highlights	24
Scrutiny panels	24
Private estate technology and innovation	24
The Phoenix Unit	25
Concentrator model	25
IPP events	25
Research projects	26
Updates from 2025 to 2026 IPP Action Plan	28
Update on 2025 to 2026 targets	28
Update on actions	31
Working towards release	31
Continued support after release	34
Recall	36
Targeted approach to DPP	36
Communication, training and engagement	37
Data transparency	38
IPP Action Plan refresh	39
Feedback from prisoners serving an IPP sentence	39
Feedback from external stakeholders	40
Updates in the 2026 to 2027 Action Plan	40
Revised 2026 to 2027 targets	41
Annex A: IPP Action Plan 2026 to 2027	43
Annex B: Never-released deep dive	61
Annex C: Glossary	63

Foreword

In last year's Action Plan, we committed – for the first time – to six measurable targets to support the progression of those serving a sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). Over the course of the year, this has driven greater focus on key priorities, including ensuring that IPP prisoners are held in establishments best suited to their individual needs. However, I recognise that further progress is required. I am therefore pleased that HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has committed funding to sustain vital services such as the IPP approved premises pilot, and to trial a new IPP advocate role designed to provide more personalised support to those serving IPP sentences. Additional targeted funding has also been secured for HMPPS Psychology Services, enabling greater access to specialist assessments for individuals facing the most significant barriers to progression.

This year, the Sentencing Act 2026 received Royal Assent, introducing a number of important changes for implementation by the Probation Service, including reforms to IPP licence termination. These changes came into effect on 1 June 2026. They reduce the qualifying period for the Parole Board to consider whether to terminate an offender's IPP licence from three years to two years following first release, with the period for Detention for Public Protection (DPP) sentences remaining at two years. The Act also introduces a new mechanism allowing IPP offenders in the community to apply for a further review one year after the end of the qualifying period, where licence termination has not been granted.

Despite ongoing operational pressures across HMPPS, I am encouraged by the progress made in delivering the Action Plan, and I am proud of the continued commitment shown by colleagues to go further in supporting this cohort towards safe release and, ultimately, the termination of their IPP sentence.

The IPP Progression Board and the External Stakeholder Challenge Group have met quarterly since June 2023 and form an integral part of our governance arrangements. I established these boards and have chaired them for the duration. This year, we have agreed to strengthen the independence of external scrutiny by moving to a new model for the Challenge Group. I am pleased to announce that Dame Glenys Stacey will take on the role of Chair. Dame Glenys brings significant experience, having previously served as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation, and her appointment will further reinforce our commitment to transparency, accountability and robust challenge. In addition, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and the Independent Monitoring Boards continue to provide valuable scrutiny through their reporting on the experiences of those serving IPP sentences.

There has also been increased public focus on the IPP sentence over the past year, including through the Criminal Cases Review Commission's review of IPP and DPP sentences imposed on individuals at a young age, as well as referrals to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. HMPPS remains committed to engaging with these bodies in a spirit of openness and transparency.

Alongside reporting on progress over the past year, this publication includes the 2026 to 2027 IPP Action Plan, which outlines our priorities for the year ahead. Supporting the effective progression of those serving IPP sentences remains a key operational priority for HMPPS.

Chris Jennings

Executive Director South West,
South Central and Public Protection,
HMPPS

Executive summary

This report sets out the progress made since the publication of the 2025 to 2026 IPP Action Plan, alongside the areas where further work is required. It also introduces the revised Action Plan for 2026 to 2027, which sets out our priorities and commitments for the year ahead.

In last year's report, we published, for the first time, six measurable targets to support IPP progression. These targets have improved transparency and strengthened accountability for delivery. They have been reviewed and refreshed for 2026 to 2027, with an additional target introduced to support the implementation of the Progression Panels for Indeterminate Sentences Policy Framework.

Overall, the aims of the Action Plan are to support men and women on the IPP sentence to progress towards a safe and sustainable release, and to ensure those already in the community can safely remain there and work towards licence termination. The Action Plan seeks to put in place the right focus and efforts to work towards this overall ambition. It remains important that HMPPS properly engages with victims and their concerns as part of this work too.

Key progress over the past year includes:

- the delivery and ongoing refinement of the Progression Panel Policy Framework, published in July 2025, with a full policy review planned for autumn 2026
- a sustained operational focus on ensuring that IPP prisoners are located in establishments best suited to their individual needs
- the introduction of six-monthly red, amber and green (RAG) ratings for IPP cases to identify those individuals facing the most significant barriers to progression
- an agreement for funding to continue the IPP approved premises pilot, increase psychology resource and trial a new IPP advocate role to provide more personalised support
- the development of a framework and guidance enabling greater use of release on temporary licence (ROTL) for IPP prisoners within progression regimes
- the implementation of IPP licence termination reforms under the Sentencing Act 2026, reducing the qualifying period before Parole Board consideration and introducing the opportunity to apply for a further review one year after the qualifying period where termination is not granted

In the 2025 to 2026 Action Plan, we committed to publishing a communications strategy by September 2025. While this work is well advanced, publication has been delayed until autumn 2026 to allow for fuller consultation. This includes incorporating additional feedback on how we engage with the families of those serving IPP sentences, and the establishment of a lived experience panel, which will play a formal role in shaping future strategy and policy.

Engagement with external stakeholders remains a core priority of the communications strategy. Over the past year, we have received a significant volume of correspondence raising case-specific issues. We recognise the importance of responding to these queries, given the impact on individuals and their families, and have therefore prioritised resources to maintain and strengthen this function.

Introduction

The IPP sentence

Sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) are indeterminate sentences. The IPP sentence was introduced under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and came into force in April 2005. It was designed to protect the public from offenders who had committed a specified serious sexual or violent offence and whom the court assessed as dangerous. There is a minimum term for the purposes of punishment and deterrence, and once the minimum term has expired, detention is justified only so long as the offender's risk cannot be safely managed in the community. Where an offender was under the age of 18 at the point they were convicted, a Detention for Public Protection (DPP) sentence was issued.

Amendments were made in 2008 to give the court a discretion to impose the IPP sentence and to restrict it to cases where at least a two-year tariff would be imposed, or where the offender had committed, or previously committed, an offence in Schedule 15A of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (the more serious violent or sexual offences).

As an indeterminate sentence, the IPP sentence is made up of two parts: a minimum tariff, which is the minimum amount of time a person must spend in prison for the purposes of punishment and deterrence, and a period on licence in the community once the Parole Board is satisfied that it is no longer necessary for an individual to

be confined in prison for the protection of the public. If an offender breaches their licence conditions, commits any further offences or the Probation Service deems it appropriate for the protection of the public, the offender can be recalled to prison.

The IPP sentence was abolished on 4 December 2012 by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 as it was being used more widely than intended and with relatively short minimum terms (tariffs) in many cases. The change was not retrospective, meaning those who received an IPP sentence continue to remain on the sentence. The government continues to hold the view that resentencing offenders serving the IPP sentence, which was lawfully passed, would give rise to an unacceptable risk to public protection.

Parliament introduced significant reforms to the IPP sentence through the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. The Act reduced the qualifying period for licence termination from 10 years after first release to three years (or two years for those serving a DPP sentence), introduced automatic licence termination, and enabled the Secretary of State to re-release recalled IPP offenders through the risk-assessed recall review (RARR) process. It also created a power to disapply the impact of a recall where an offender is returned to custody during the two-year automatic termination period, where it is in the interests of justice to do so.

These reforms led to the automatic termination of 1,742 IPP licences on 1 November 2024. A further 600 individuals became eligible for referral to the Parole Board for licence termination on 1 February 2025. Overall, the number of people serving an IPP sentence in the community has reduced by around two-thirds since the implementation of these changes.

The IPP Action Plan

HMPPS is committed to reviewing the IPP Action Plan on an annual basis to ensure it remains aligned with current priorities and continues to build on progress achieved to date. The fourth iteration of the Action Plan is published alongside this annual report, which is the third of its kind.

In response to feedback from stakeholders, staff and those serving IPP sentences, the Action Plan has been revised to provide greater clarity on our objectives and to strengthen accountability through the inclusion of measurable targets. The full Action Plan is set out at **Annex A**.

Delivery of the Action Plan is overseen by the IPP Progression Board, chaired by Chris Jennings, Executive Director South West, South Central and Public Protection, HMPPS. The board plays a central role in driving delivery, monitoring progress and assessing the impact of key actions.

In addition, an External Stakeholder Challenge Group meets in advance of each Progression Board to provide independent scrutiny and hold HMPPS to account for its delivery of activity to support the progression of those serving IPP sentences. Since June 2026, this group has been chaired by Dame Glenys Stacey, further strengthening the independence and robustness of external challenge.¹

1 GOV.UK, Biography of Dame Glenys Stacey: www.gov.uk/government/people/glenys-stacey

Data

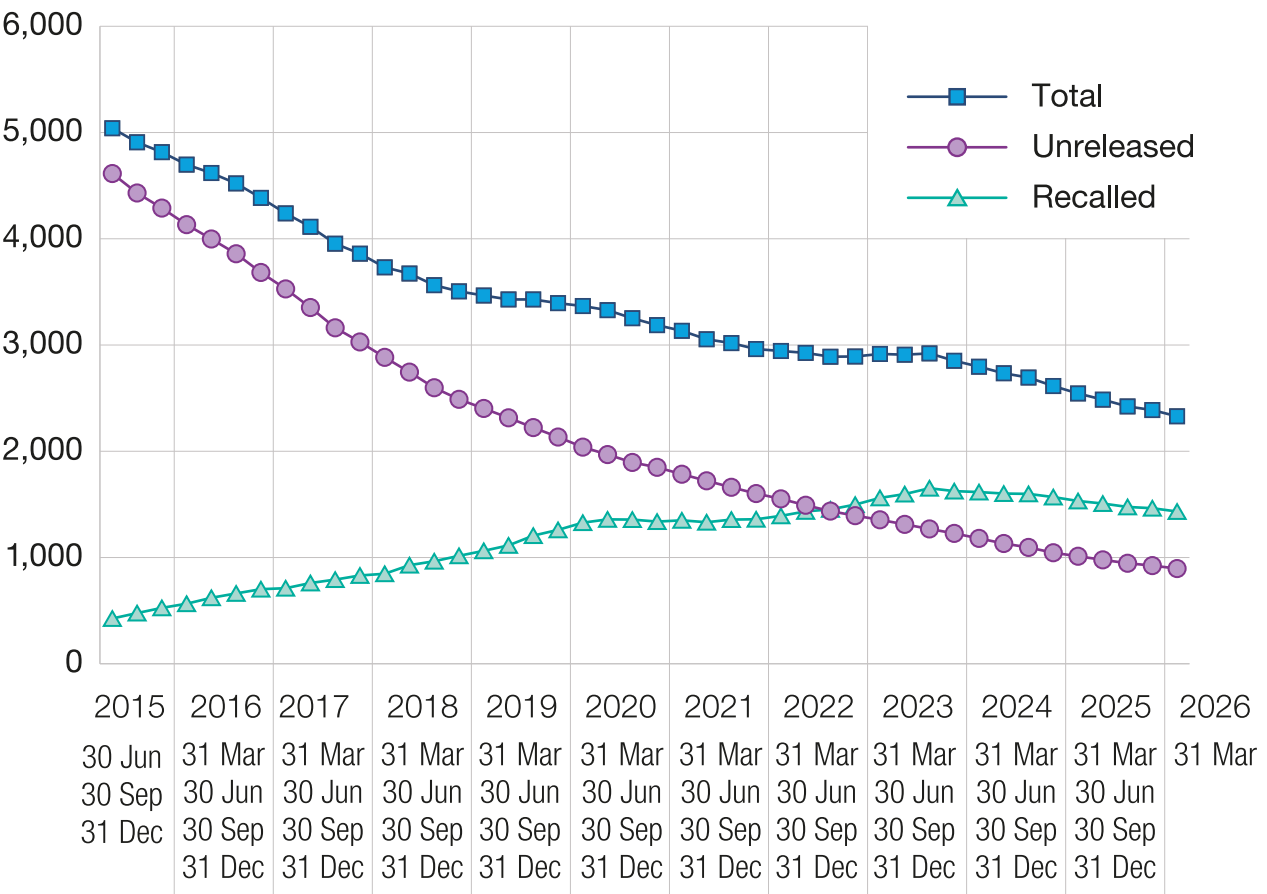
The figures presented in this section have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. They are inclusive of those serving IPP and DPP sentences.

IPP prison population

The overall population of prisoners serving an IPP sentence in custody has decreased significantly over time. Figures published in the ‘Offender management statistics quarterly’ show that the total IPP prison population stood at 5,040 on 30 June 2015 and has since reduced to 2,329 as of 31 March 2026. Of this total, 896 individuals had never been released, while 1,433 were recalled to custody.²

IPP prison population

Individuals serving an IPP sentence



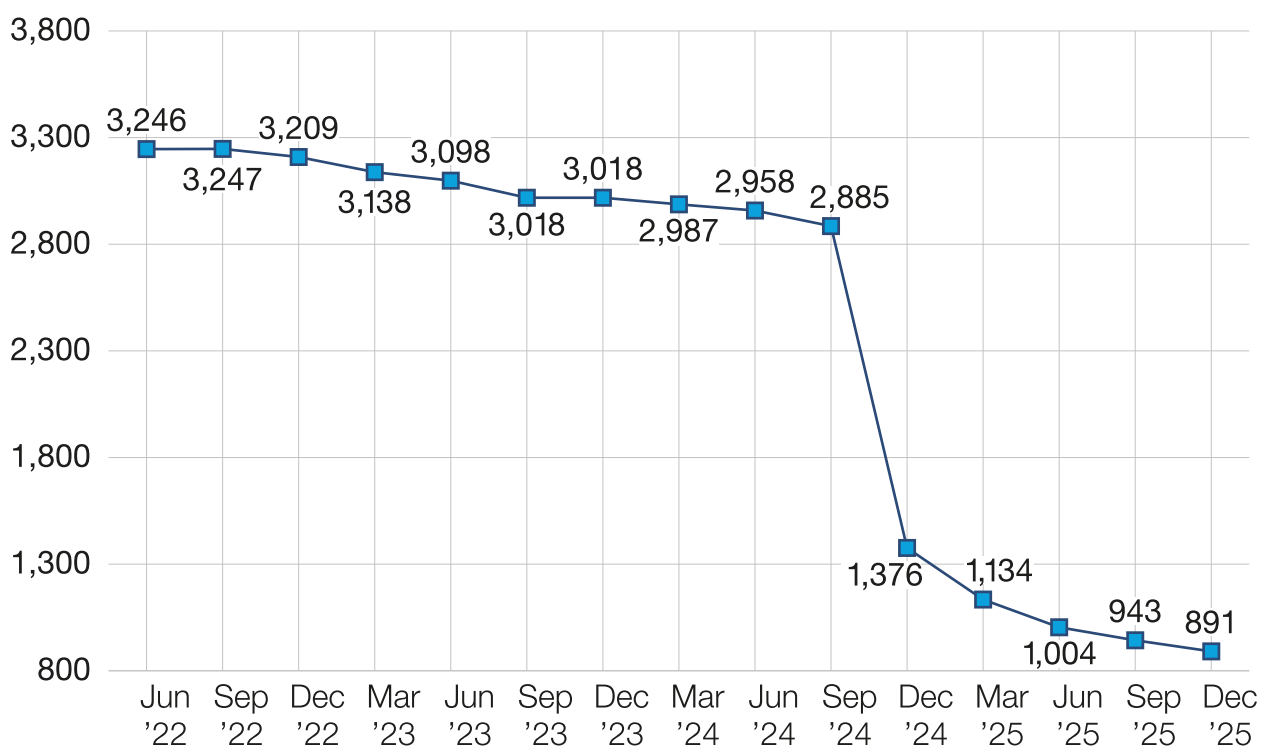
2 Ministry of Justice (2026), Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2025

IPP community caseload

As part of its commitment under the IPP Action Plan, HMPPS began publishing data in October 2023 on the number of individuals serving IPP sentences in the community. These figures show a substantial reduction, from 3,246 as at 30 June 2022 to 891 as at 31 December 2025.³ This significant decrease is largely attributable to reforms to IPP licence termination introduced by the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. Published data indicates that 1,742 individuals had their licences automatically terminated on 1 November 2024, with a further 600 becoming eligible for referral to the Parole Board for licence termination on 1 February 2025. Overall, since the implementation of these reforms, the number of people serving IPP sentences in the community has fallen by approximately 69%.

IPP community population

Individuals serving an IPP sentence



(1) The graph presents the total number of offenders who were subject to an IPP sentence on licence in the community for each probation caseload snapshot period between 30 June 2022 and 31 December 2025.

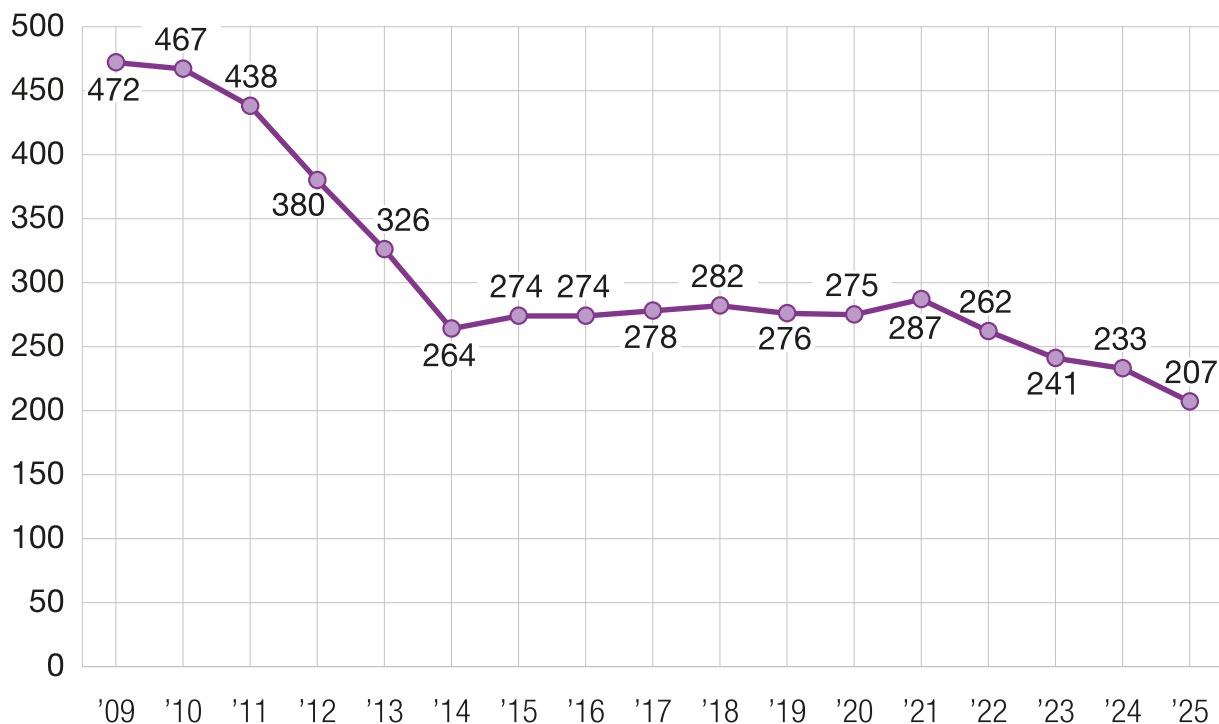
³ Ministry of Justice (2026), Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2025

IPP population in secure hospitals

As at 31 December 2025, there were 207 individuals serving IPP sentences in secure hospitals. HMPPS has worked in partnership with the NHS to reduce the time taken before individuals can be considered for release by the Parole Board following discharge from hospital.⁴ As a result, when individuals are remitted from hospital back into custody, they spend less time waiting for their Parole Board review.

IPP population in secure hospital at end of year

Individuals serving an IPP sentence



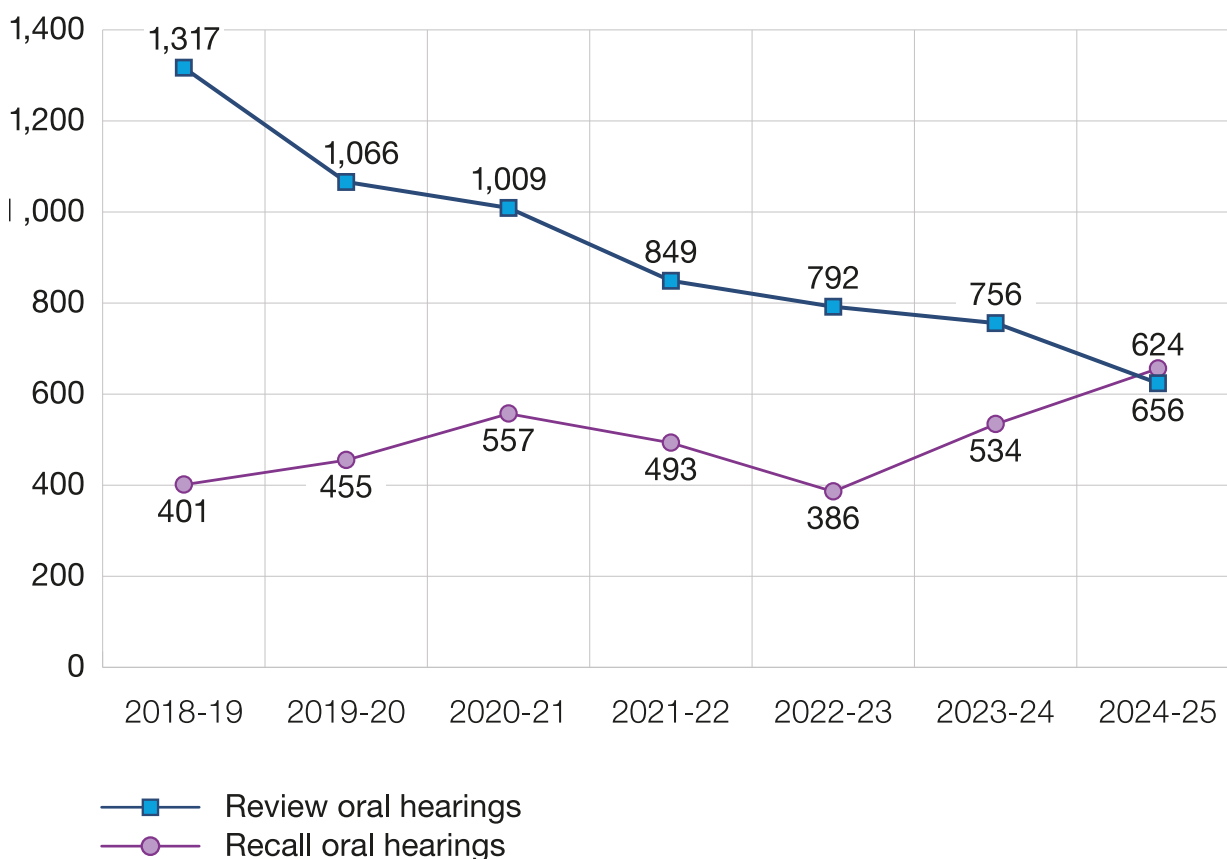
- (1) We do not hold figures prior to 2009 as the data entry system holding this data was implemented in 2009 and data prior to this period is not of sufficient quality to allow for the breakdown requested.
- (2) The number of transfers is not the same as the number of offenders transferred as there could be more than one transfer associated with an offender in a year.

⁴ UK Parliament, Parole: Question for Ministry of Justice on 13 November 2023. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-13/hl233>. Ministry of Justice (2024), Restricted patients statistics, England and Wales. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/restricted-patients-statistics-england-and-wales

Number of Parole Board completed oral hearing reviews⁵

Figures published by the Parole Board show a decrease in the number of IPP oral hearings for initial parole reviews, from 1,317 in 2018 to 2019 to 624 in 2024 to 2025. However, this has been accompanied by an increase in recall oral hearings, which rose from 386 in 2022 to 2023 to 656 in 2024 to 2025.

Completed IPP oral hearings completed by the Parole Board



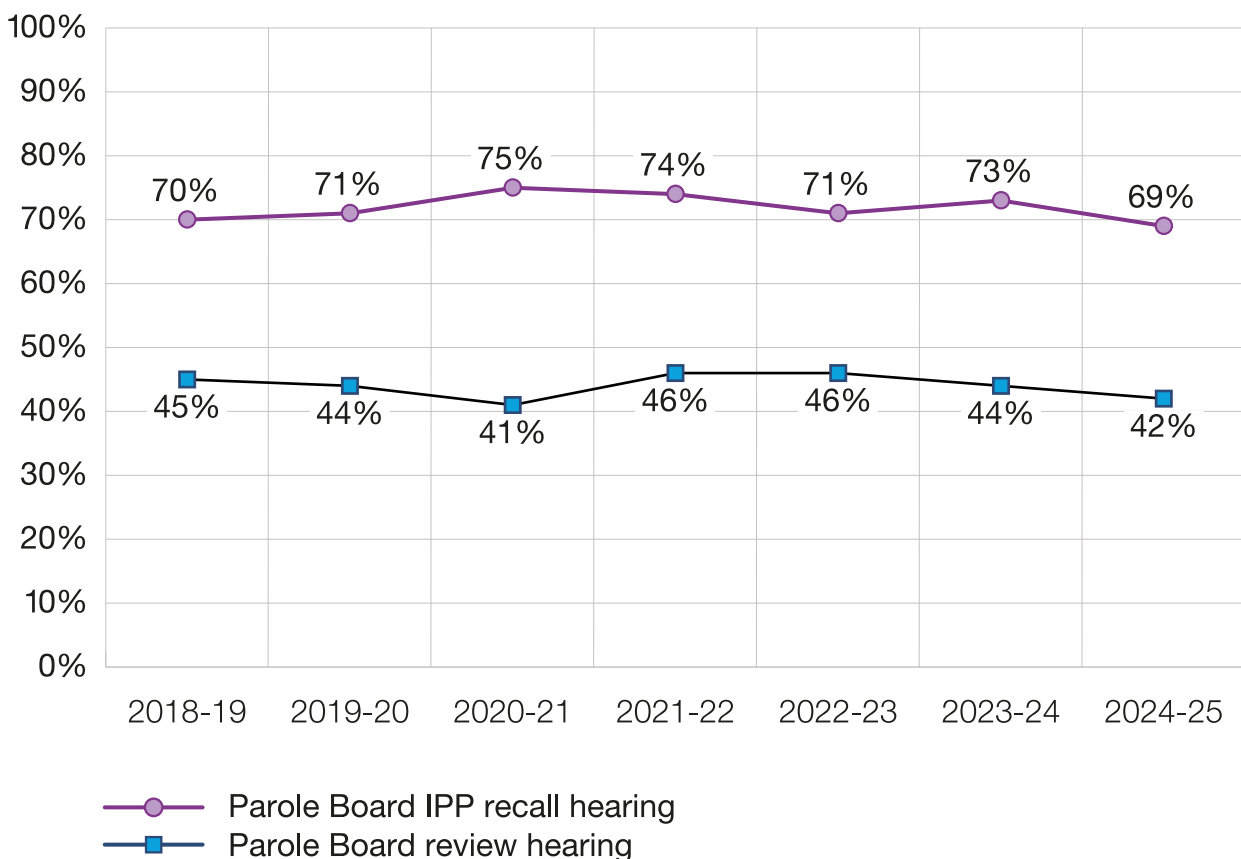
⁵ Parole Board (2025), The Parole Board for England and Wales annual report 2024 to 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-parole-board-for-england-wales-annual-report-202425

Percentage of release decisions based on completed oral hearings conducted by the Parole Board

Despite the remaining IPP prison population comprising a higher proportion of individuals with more complex and challenging risks and needs, the Parole Board's release rate at oral hearing has remained broadly stable year on year.⁶

Over the past five years, the proportion of IPP parole oral hearings resulting in release has been relatively consistent at approximately 44%. This is a positive indicator, particularly given that those who remain in custody increasingly represent the most complex cases, often requiring more intensive risk assessment and management to support safe release.

Oral hearing release decisions



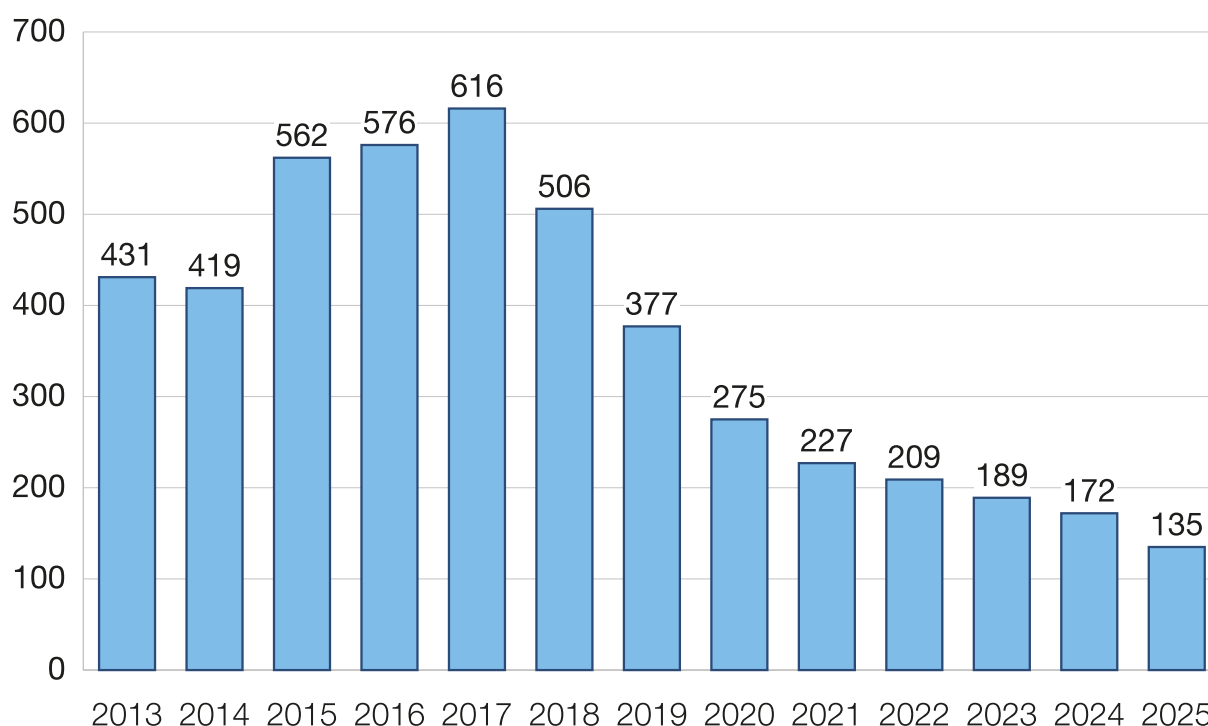
⁶ Parole Board (2025), The Parole Board for England and Wales annual report 2024 to 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-parole-board-for-england-wales-annual-report-202425

Annual IPP first releases

The number of Parole Board oral hearings for never-released IPP prisoners has decreased over each of the past five years, in line with the declining number of never-released individuals in custody. As a result, the number of first-time releases of IPP prisoners has also reduced year on year since 2017. The following graph reflects first-time releases only.⁷ Decisions on the release of IPP prisoners are a matter for the independent Parole Board. In order to direct release on licence, the Parole Board must be satisfied that continued detention is no longer necessary for the protection of the public, in line with the statutory release test. IPP and DPP prisoners become eligible for Parole Board review following expiry of their tariff and are entitled to a further review at least every two years thereafter. To support more timely progression, HMPPS updated the Generic Parole Process Policy Framework in February 2025, introducing a presumption of shorter intervals between reviews – 18 months for IPP prisoners and 12 months for DPP prisoners.

Annual IPP first releases

Individuals serving an IPP sentence



(1) All indeterminate releases reported will be first releases.

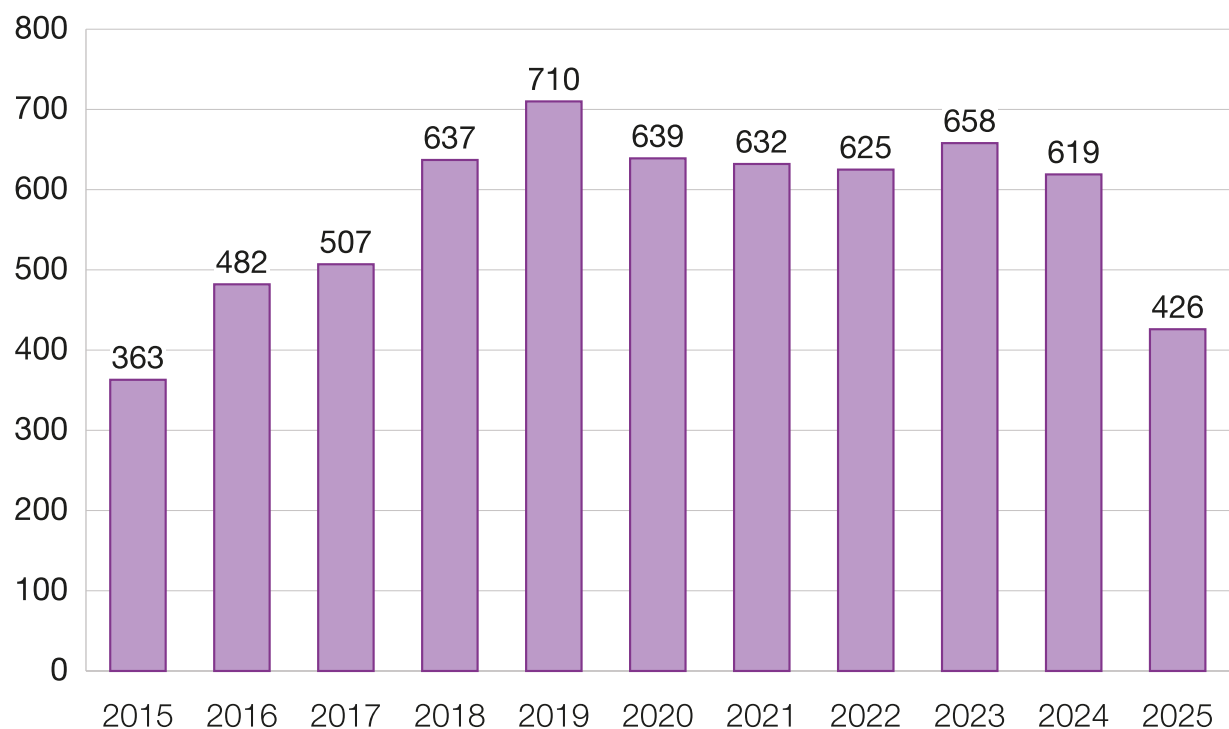
⁷ Ministry of Justice (2026), Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2025

Number of IPP recalls

The number of IPP recalls fell by 31% between 2024 and 2025. This reduction is partly reflected by the overall decline in the number of individuals serving IPP sentences in the community. However, those who remain in the community are more likely to represent a higher-risk cohort, potentially increasing the likelihood of recall where it is necessary to protect victims and the public. HMPPS remains committed to supporting a continued reduction in recall rates through strengthening recall decision-making and enhancing community-based support to enable individuals to resettle safely.⁸

Number of IPP recalls

Individuals serving an IPP sentence



(1) The table gives the number of recalls and not the number of individuals recalled in each year.

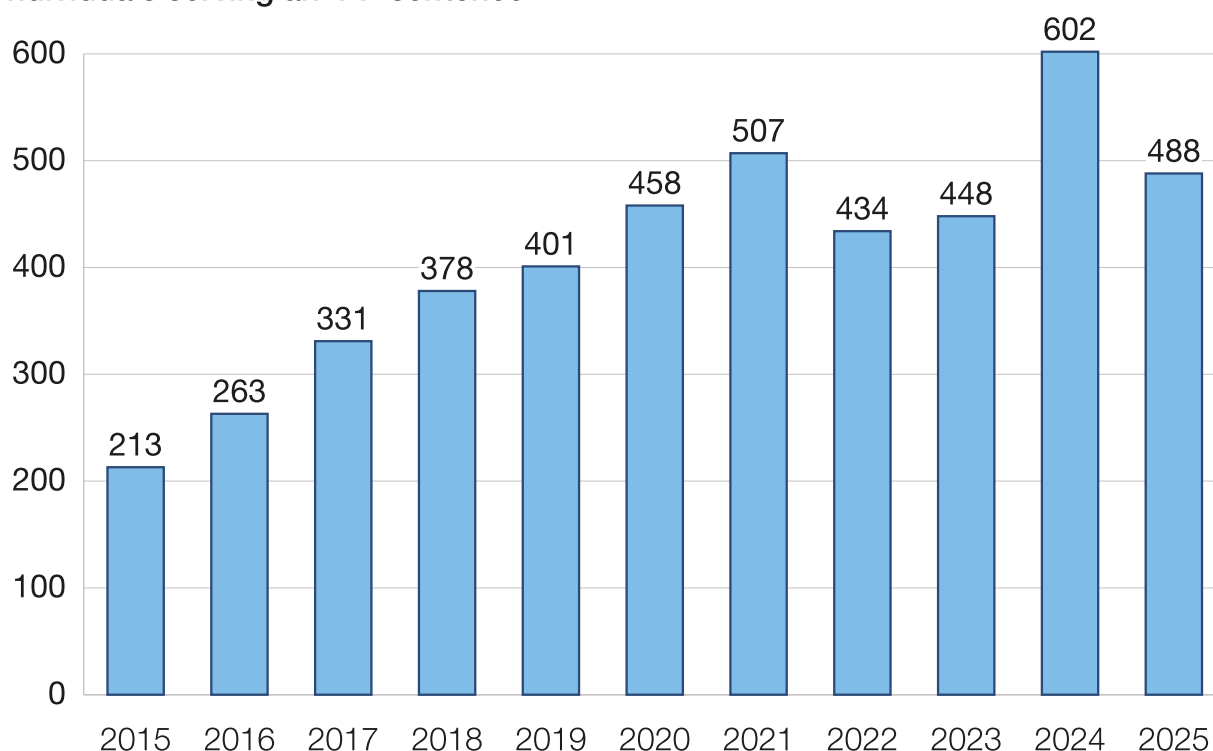
8 Ministry of Justice (2026), Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2025

IPP re-releases following recall

Between 2015 and 2021, the number of IPP prisoners re-released following recall increased, with the highest number of re-releases recorded in 2024. The number of re-releases decreased in 2025. However, this reflects a corresponding reduction in the number of recalls over the same period.⁹ Figures published in a parliamentary question show that between 1 November 2024 and 30 September 2025, officials in the Public Protection Casework Section (PPCS) within HMPPS, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, made 50 re-release decisions under the RARR process.¹⁰ It should be noted that many prisoners released under RARR will have been released far earlier than they would have been if they had waited for their parole hearing.

Number of IPP re-releases following recall

Individuals serving an IPP sentence



(1) The table gives the number of re-releases following recalls and not the number of individuals re-released following recalls in each year.

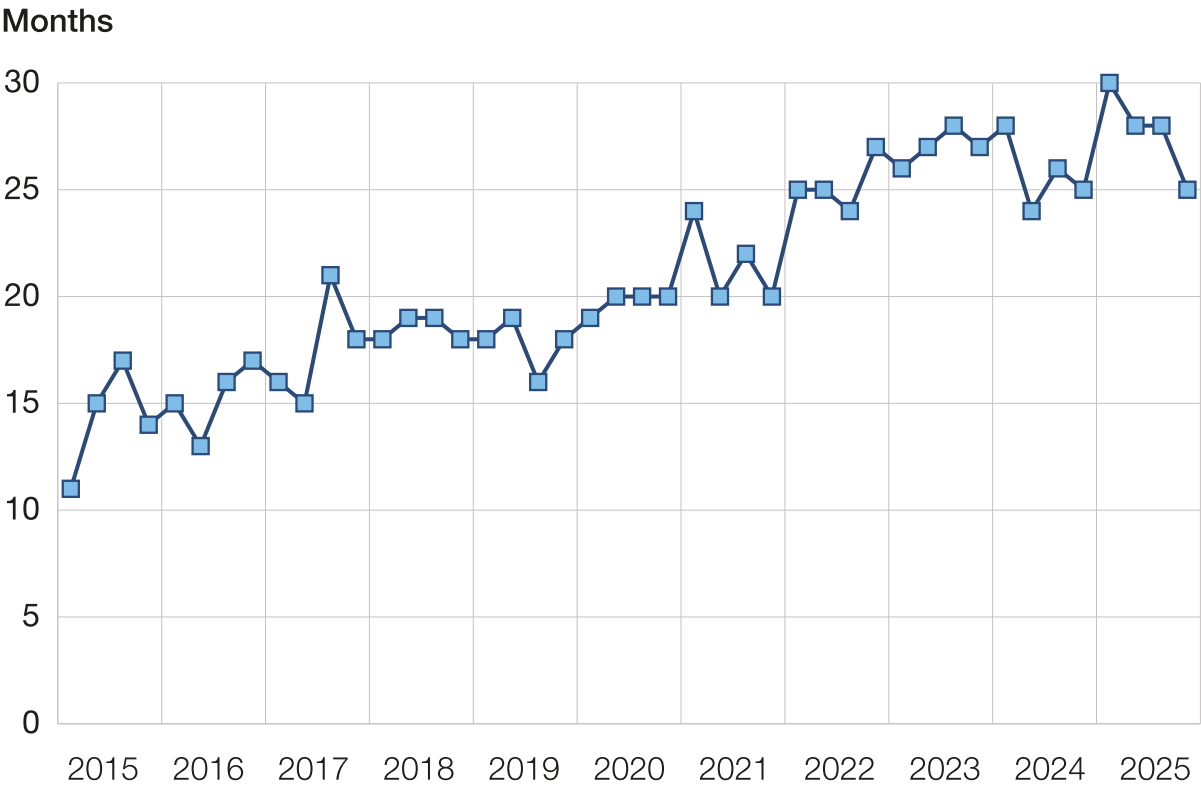
⁹ Ministry of Justice (2026), Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2025

¹⁰ UK Parliament, Prisoners' release: Question for Ministry of Justice on 10 April 2026. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/1897339>

Mean time spent recalled

The mean time spent in prison following recall has broadly increased since 2021.¹¹

Mean time recalled



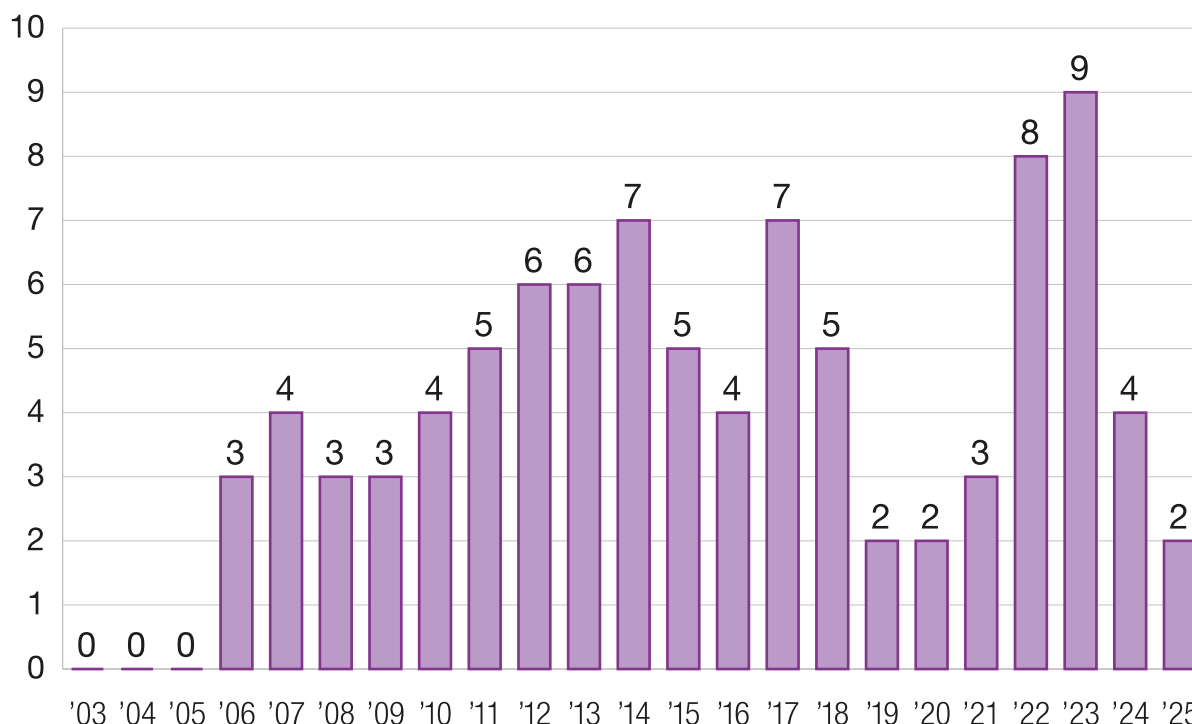
¹¹ Ministry of Justice (2026), Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2025

Number of IPP self-inflicted deaths

Every death in custody is a tragedy that has a profound impact on families, other prisoners and staff. Tragically, in 2025 there were two self-inflicted deaths among those serving IPP sentences.¹² Further detail on the steps HMPPS has taken to improve the safety and wellbeing of individuals serving IPP sentences can be found in the section covering updates on delivery of the 2025 to 2026 IPP Action Plan.

Number of IPP self-inflicted deaths

Individuals serving an IPP sentence



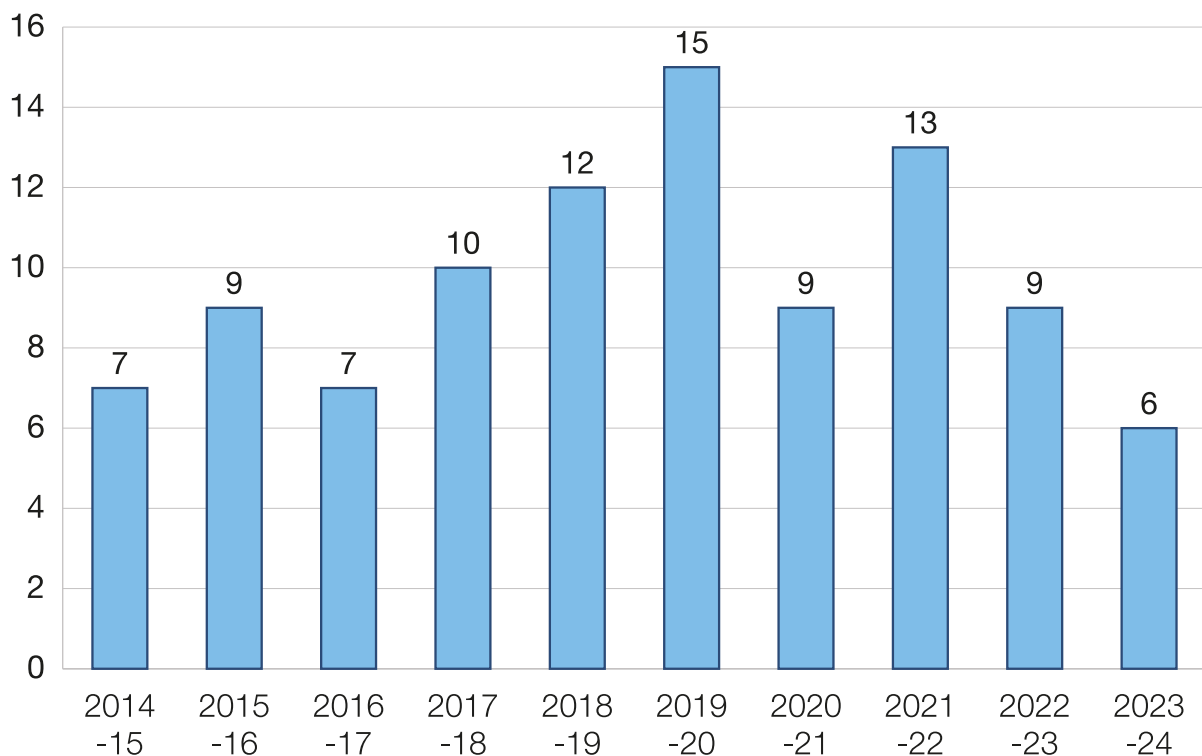
- (1) Deaths in prison custody figures include all deaths of prisoners arising from incidents during prison custody. They include deaths of prisoners on ROTL for medical reasons but exclude other types of ROTL where the state has less direct responsibility.
- (2) Due to the number of deaths that remain unclassified (awaiting further information) in recent years, and the latest year particularly, caution should be used when comparing with earlier periods.

¹² Ministry of Justice (2026), Safety in custody: quarterly update to December 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-quarterly-update-to-december-2025

Number of people serving an IPP sentence convicted of serious further offences (SFOs)

SFOs are rare. Fewer than 0.5% of all offenders under statutory supervision are convicted of an SFO. Nonetheless, every single one is taken extremely seriously, and in all cases a review is carried out to identify any improvements for the better management of future cases. The data is presented by the year of the notifications.¹³

Number of IPP offenders convicted of an SFO



- (1) These conviction figures are provisional and subject to change as outstanding cases are completed.
- (2) Index sentence refers to the sentencing disposal imposed by the court which led to probation services supervision of the offender.
- (3) Data is based on the year the notification of the SFO was received by HMPPS and not the date of conviction.
- (4) Figures include cases where the offender died prior to any trial, where a court has ruled that they were responsible.
- (5) 'Other' relates to cases who were ROTL at the time the SFO was committed and the SFO review was completed by the prison.
- (6) The lag between notification period and publication date for conviction figures is to allow time for most cases to complete the criminal justice process.

¹³ Ministry of Justice (2025), Proven reoffending statistics: October to December 2023. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-october-to-december-2023

Additional published statistics

HMPPS continues to explore how it can improve transparency and has made additional IPP-related data available through its published statistics.

As part of 'Offender management statistics quarterly', an annual publication now provides more detailed data on IPP prisoners. The data is available on GOV.UK and can be found in the document titled 'Annual prison population: 2025'.¹⁴

The following data can be found:

- **Table 1.A.17** – Breakdown of the prison population, including IPP, by offence group
- **Table 1.A.24** – Breakdown of the prison population, including IPP, by nationality group
- **Table 1.A.29** – Time series of never-released indeterminate sentence prisoners, including IPP, by custody stage
- **Table 1.A.31** – Time series of never-released IPP prisoners by custody stage and tariff
- **Table 1.A.32** – Time series of the indeterminate sentence population, including IPP, by sex
- **Table 1.A.33** – Breakdown of the indeterminate sentence population, including IPP, by age
- **Table 1.A.34** – Breakdown of the indeterminate sentence population, including IPP, by ethnicity

We now also publish, on a quarterly basis as part of 'Offender management statistics quarterly', data on the number of 'never-released' IPP prisoners (excluding those held following recall) in each prison establishment.¹⁵

By navigating to the PT tab, you can change the 'view' filter at the top of the page to 'b.Establishment*Sex*Custody type' which shows a breakdown of various custody types, including the IPP sentence.

14 Ministry of Justice (2025), Offender management statistics quarterly: January to March 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2025

15 Ministry of Justice (2026): Prison population data tool: 31 March 2026. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2025



Sentencing Act 2026

The Sentencing Act 2026, which received Royal Assent on 22 January 2026, introduced further reforms to IPP licence termination. These reforms:

- reduced the qualifying period for licence termination from three years to two years following first release
- enabled individuals whose licence is not terminated at the end of this period to apply for a further Parole Board review one year later, prior to automatic termination

These changes came into force on 1 June 2026. They form part of the government's broader commitment to ensuring that individuals serving IPP sentences are given every opportunity to demonstrate that their risk has reduced sufficiently to allow for safe licence termination, and ultimately bring their sentence to an end.

Individual IPP cohorts

We recognise that different cohorts within the IPP population may face distinct barriers to progression. We are therefore committed to deepening our understanding of the individual needs of those serving IPP sentences. The key progress made in this area is set out below.

Women serving the IPP sentence

As at 31 March 2026, there were 20 women serving IPP sentences in custody, of whom seven had never been released and 13 had been recalled following release. As at December 2025, a further 23 women were serving IPP sentences in the community.¹⁶

In April 2025, the Women's Group IPP Delivery Plan was updated and published, covering the management of all women serving IPP sentences across custody and the community. The plan set out key actions aligned to strategic outcomes, with a focus on delivering a gender-specific, individualised and relational approach to supporting, managing and safely progressing women serving IPP sentences. Progress against these actions has been monitored throughout the year, with a formal review and update completed in December 2025.

By this point, a further 50% of women serving the community element of their IPP sentences had their licences terminated, reducing the total number of women serving IPP sentences to less than 60.

All women serving IPP sentences in custody are currently held in establishments appropriate to their needs. The focus has therefore shifted to strengthening engagement with stakeholders across both custody and community settings, recognising the complexity of co-ordinating activity across the 12 women's prisons and 12 probation regions. This is critical to ensuring smooth and effective transitions into the community for those being released.

During the year, the Women's Estate Psychology Service (WEPS) has extended the reach of its flexible and responsive community-facing service. Site-based points of contact have been established to provide local oversight of women serving IPP sentences and to strengthen links between custody and community services. This reflects an increased emphasis on sustaining progress and stability following release, in order to safely reduce the risk of recall and support progression towards licence termination.

¹⁶ Ministry of Justice (2026), Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2025

WEPS community-facing activity has included:

- proactive case consultancy for all women with IPP sentences moving into the community
- support for those transitioning between secure hospital care and custody
- close working with probation practitioners to ensure that the detailed understanding of an individual's risk, safety and support needs developed in custody is effectively handed over to those managing their supervision in the community

DPP sentence

A DPP sentence was imposed where an individual was under the age of 18 at the point of conviction for a serious specified violent or sexual offence, committed on or after 4 April 2005, and where they may have been liable to life imprisonment. However, the court determined that the seriousness of the offending did not warrant a life sentence, while also concluding that the individual posed a significant risk of harm to the public. As a result, many of those serving DPP sentences have spent most, if not all, of their formative adult years in custody.

We recognise the profound impact this experience can have on individuals serving DPP sentences. As part of the refreshed Action Plan (Annex A), we continue to take a targeted approach to this cohort to ensure enhanced organisational oversight. In last year's Action Plan, we introduced a target for HMPPS Psychology Services to provide quarterly case reviews, which has been achieved at a rate of 100%.

Building on this progress, additional actions have been included in this year's plan. These include further exploration of how learning from these case reviews can be systematically applied to support progression, and a consolidation exercise to ensure the DPP population is accurately identified and understood. In addition, as part of the continued focus on operational delivery, area executive directors (AEDs) will continue to use their IPP operational delivery plans to drive improvements in the support provided to individuals serving DPP sentences, both in custody and in the community.

Recalled population

As at 31 March 2026, there were 1,433 recalled IPP prisoners, representing a 6% decrease compared to the previous year.¹⁷ Over the course of the year, there has been a sustained operational focus on improving recall processes. HMPPS has reviewed and streamlined recall documentation, delivered targeted training to managers within PPCS on establishing the causal link for recall decisions, and reduced the cohort of senior managers authorised to approve recalls. These measures are intended to strengthen consistency, quality of decision-making and support arrangements in the community.

A recall referral trial is also underway, which extends the period before newly recalled cases are referred to the Parole Board. This trial is scheduled to report its findings by November 2026. The extended referral window is designed to enable more thorough multi-disciplinary assessment, supporting better-informed decisions on case progression, appropriate next steps, and an individual's suitability for re-release. Between 2024 and 2025, the number of IPP recalls fell by 31%.

Never-released IPP prisoners

As at 31 March 2026, there were 896 IPP prisoners who had never been released, representing an 11% decrease compared to the previous year. Of these, three individuals had not yet served the minimum tariff imposed by the court, while 693 had served 10 years or more beyond their tariff.

It is also notable that the composition of this cohort has shifted over time. In March 2011, 1,760 of the 6,550 never-released IPP prisoners (27%) had been convicted of a sexual offence, and 2,430 (37%) for violence against the person.¹⁸ By June 2025, 413 of the 978 never-released IPP prisoners (42%) had been convicted of a sexual offence, while 303 (31%) were convicted of violence against the person.¹⁹ This shift suggests that individuals convicted of sexual offences may face particular challenges in progressing towards release.

To strengthen understanding of the barriers faced by the never-released cohort, HMPPS Psychology Services undertook a 'deep dive' analysis as part of the IPP Action Plan (2024). This work reflects an ongoing commitment to improving understanding of the needs of those serving IPP sentences.

17 Ministry of Justice (2026), Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2025. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2025

18 Ministry of Justice (2011), Provisional figures relating to offenders serving indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7b879fe5274a7318b8f403/provisional-ipp-figures.pdf>

19 Ministry of Justice (2025), Annual prison population: 2025, Table 1.A.17. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2025



The deep dive examined a sample of prisoners representing approximately 12% of the never-released population, focusing on key areas including sentence planning, behaviour, risk management and access to services. Its purpose was to identify common themes and challenges within custody in order to inform improved operational practice and support progression.

HMPPS officials have reviewed the findings and recommendations from this work alongside other psychological deep dives relating to recall and offender personality disorder (OPD). This has enabled identification of areas where action has already been taken in response to recommendations, as well as areas requiring further development. A summary of this review will be shared with the IPP Progression Board by the end of 2026. A summary of the deep dive on the never-released IPP population is set out in **Annex B**.

Operational highlights

Scrutiny panels

HMPPS conducted IPP scrutiny panels in February 2026, which found that all HMPPS areas have made steady progress against delivery of the national IPP Action Plan. This includes strengthened governance arrangements, improved multi-agency working and increased consistency in progression activity across the estate. Examples of effective practice include the development of enhanced multidisciplinary boards, more targeted case management models, greater integration of psychology and OPD services, and innovative approaches to prison regimes and engagement that incorporate lived experience.

Performance indicators, including suitable location rates and report timeliness, have shown improvement. However, operational pressures across the system remain high and a number of challenges persist. These include variation in the quality and delivery of progression panels, ongoing staffing and resource constraints, fragmentation of data, and inconsistency in the application of RAG ratings. In addition, the complexity of the cohort – particularly those presenting high risk, those managed out of area and individuals with significant trauma-related needs – continues to impact progression outcomes.

Overall, the findings highlight a system that is continuing to mature and become more co-ordinated. However, they also underline the need for greater standardisation, improved data quality, increased resource capacity, and the continued development

of progression-focused initiatives to sustain momentum and deliver improved outcomes at a national level.

Private estate technology and innovation

A number of prisons within the contracted estate are delivering innovative approaches to support individuals serving IPP sentences. At HMP Rye Hill, IPP prisoners are offered mock parole hearings designed to build confidence, familiarise individuals with the parole process and reduce anxiety ahead of formal hearings. This initiative has been well received, with participants reporting increased confidence and a clearer understanding of what to expect.

At HMP Oakwood, a range of initiatives has been introduced to support resettlement and promote independence. The establishment has opened an on-site Iceland supermarket, enabling prisoners to purchase groceries and develop practical skills in financial management and decision-making in preparation for release. In addition, prisoners serving IPP sentences contribute to their own podcast, which is broadcast on Oakwood TV. This provides a platform for peer support, the sharing of lived experiences and wider engagement across the prison community.

The introduction of IPP Man Club (based on Andy's Man Club in the community) has allowed IPP prisoners the space to talk freely about emotions in a supportive environment. This initiative provides a vital outlet for individuals to share their experiences without judgement, fostering a sense of solidarity and mutual understanding among participants.

By encouraging open dialogue, the club aims to break down the stigma surrounding mental health in prison settings and equip prisoners with the emotional resilience needed for their rehabilitation and eventual reintegration into society.

HMP Oakwood is also working in partnership with Coventry University to develop and implement the use of virtual reality headsets to support preparation for real-world environments. These immersive tools allow individuals to simulate everyday situations, such as visiting a shopping centre, and are particularly beneficial for those who may be vulnerable to cognitive overload or heightened anxiety in busy public settings. This targeted approach aims to build confidence, resilience and practical coping strategies, supporting a smoother transition back into the community.

The Phoenix Unit

The Phoenix Unit at HMP Aylesbury is due to open later this summer as a purpose-designed residential unit to support IPP prisoners assessed as red on the RAG rating who have become disengaged from progression. The unit aims to rebuild motivation and facilitate progression through personalised management plans, with a strong focus on wellbeing, positive relationships and the development of life skills.

The unit will accommodate up to 49 men, including approximately 15 IPP prisoners alongside 34 long-sentenced peers. This mixed cohort has been intentionally designed to promote stability, positive role modelling and peer support.

Residents will have access to a range of structured activities, including yoga, acupuncture, peer-led groups, book clubs and a stoicism course, all of which are intended to support engagement, reflection and personal development.

Overall, the Phoenix Unit is designed to provide a supportive and rehabilitative environment, helping to re-engage individuals who have faced the greatest barriers to progression, reduce negative influences and enable them to move forward to the next stage of their sentence.

Concentrator model

The East Midlands region is currently piloting a concentrator model across two probation delivery units, whereby individual practitioners manage caseloads with approximately 50% IPP cases, alongside a mixed caseload.

The pilot aims to deliver more specialised, consistent and targeted support to individuals serving IPP sentences, equipping practitioners to develop deeper expertise and deliver more responsive, personalised support that improves outcomes.

The outcomes of the pilot will be evaluated at the end of 2026. Subject to a positive evaluation, HMPPS will consider the potential for wider national rollout of this model.

IPP events

Over the past 12 months, there has been an increased operational focus on delivering events across both custody and the community, aimed at sharing good practice and strengthening support for those serving IPP sentences.

In the West Midlands, a regional consultation has been commissioned to better understand the experiences and needs of individuals serving IPP sentences. Co-designed and delivered in partnership with people with lived experience, the consultation has created a safe environment for candid and unfiltered feedback. Its purpose is to deepen understanding of the challenges, trauma and systemic barriers faced by this cohort, and to inform improvements to support across both custodial and probation services.

The consultation was formally launched on 19 January 2026 at Newbold Revel, bringing together colleagues from across the Midlands to review early findings. Contributions from external stakeholders highlighted emerging themes and amplified the voices of those serving IPP sentences, alongside examples of effective regional practice. Testimony from individuals with lived experience provided powerful insight into the significant emotional and psychological impact of these sentences.

The consultation offers critical, unfiltered insight into these experiences and will play an important role in shaping future policy and practice. Next steps include sharing tailored feedback with participants, incorporating findings into refreshed regional action plans and exploring opportunities for wider rollout. This work represents an important step towards strengthening support for a particularly vulnerable cohort, with delivery dependent on continued collaboration across custody, probation and partner organisations.

In addition, in February 2026, two events were held in the South Central region (at HMP Grendon and HMP Aylesbury) to support IPP prisoners in understanding the changes introduced through the Sentencing Act 2026, the new progression panel process and the wider progression opportunities available to them.

In May 2026, the HMPPS Directorate of Contracted Operational Delivery hosted an IPP-focused event at HMP Ashfield, bringing together staff from across the contracted estate. The event provided a valuable opportunity to share good practice, identify emerging challenges and discuss operational issues directly with headquarters colleagues. This engagement enabled insights from the frontline to be captured and fed back to the centre, supporting a more informed and responsive approach to policy and delivery.

Research projects

The National Research Committee within HMPPS has approved researchers from Cambridge University to undertake a research project titled 'Understanding IPP prisoners' experiences of the IPP Action Plan'. The study aims to explore how individuals serving IPP sentences experience and interpret the IPP Action Plan.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the research includes a survey across multiple establishments, alongside in-depth interviews with approximately 60 IPP prisoners in England and Wales. This design allows for both breadth and depth of insight, examining awareness of the Action Plan, perceived changes in sentence management, and experiences of progression, support and recall.



A key focus of the study is to generate insights into how prisoners interpret recent reforms, and the extent to which these are experienced as meaningful changes or viewed as largely symbolic.

The research is guided by questions concerning the effectiveness of the Action Plan, its impact on the distinctive pains of imprisonment associated with IPP sentences, and whether procedural reforms can help to restore legitimacy to a sentence that some people may consider to be unjust.

Findings will be disseminated through a public report and a series of briefings, with the aim of informing both academic scholarship and operational practice. The project is supported by HMPPS headquarters and external stakeholders, and has been developed in close collaboration to ensure its relevance and methodological rigour. The final report is anticipated to be published in September 2026.

Updates from 2025 to 2026

IPP Action Plan

In the 2025 to 2026 IPP Action Plan, HMPPS introduced six measurable targets to enable transparent monitoring of progress for the first time. This section provides an update against those targets, alongside progress made across the six priority workstreams: progression towards release, support following release, recall, a targeted approach to DPP, communication, training and engagement, and data transparency.

Update on 2025 to 2026 targets

| Target 1

90% of IPP prisoners to be located in a prison appropriate to their current priority needs by December 2025, with a plan to improve this to 95% by July 2026.

Update: 91% of IPP prisoners are located in a prison appropriate to their current priority needs.

The proportion of IPP prisoners located in establishments most appropriate to their needs has increased from 80% (August 2025) to 91% (April 2026). An appropriate location is defined as an establishment that can meet an individual's sentence planning needs, contribute to those needs while a transfer is arranged, or provide the support required to engage individuals who are not yet ready to participate in relevant interventions.

Progress against this target has been driven by strengthened operational oversight, including monthly meetings with area leads to review the national location database and agree solutions for individual cases. A national workshop

was also held in October 2025, focusing on facilitating moves from reception prisons to Category C establishments.

This has been complemented by ongoing engagement with prison capacity leads to secure the resources required to support transfers, including addressing constraints around prisoner transport.

While this progress is positive, further improvement is required. Of the remaining cohort not currently located in the most appropriate establishment, factors include lack of engagement or refusal to transfer, ongoing referrals to services at alternative establishments, and those recently recalled who are therefore located in reception prisons.

It is anticipated that new measures being introduced this year, including the IPP advocate role and additional psychology resource, will provide further support to individuals who are currently struggling to engage with their sentence plan. This, alongside continued operational focus, is expected to drive further progress against this target.

| Target 2

90% of PAROM1 parole reports are submitted to PPCS by the required deadline.

Update: 81% of PAROM1 parole reports were submitted to PPCS by the required deadline.

Between 1 July 2025 and 31 March 2026, 81% of IPP PAROM1 reports were submitted within the required timeframe.

To support delivery against this target, the indeterminate sentence prisoner policy team provides a monthly forward look to IPP area leads, identifying reports due within each region and enabling proactive management of workloads.

Challenges in consistently meeting this target reflect broader capacity and workload pressures across the Probation Service, which continue to affect report completion timelines.

| Target 3

The Probation Service to complete 97.5% of IPP termination reports by the required deadline, ready to be referred to the Parole Board for consideration for licence termination, as soon as they become eligible.

Update: The Probation Service completed 20% of IPP termination reports by the required deadline.

Between 17 July 2025 (the date of publication of the annual report) and 31 March 2026, 20% of IPP licence termination reports were submitted within the required timeframe.

While a late report does not necessarily result in a delayed referral to the Parole Board, delays in the completion of termination reports have contributed to slower referral timelines in some cases. However, the majority of cases were referred, albeit sometimes slightly later than planned.

| Target 4

100% of DPP prisoners to have their case file reviewed every quarter.

Update: 100% of DPP prisoners had their case file reviewed across recent quarters.

The DPP quarterly review is a psychology-led, light-touch case review process introduced across HMPPS in January 2025 to strengthen oversight and prioritisation of individuals serving DPP sentences. Its primary aim is to support timely, proportionate and well-evidenced sentence planning, ensure the accuracy and consistency of RAG ratings, confirm placement in appropriate prison locations, and clearly identify barriers to progression.

The quarterly review operates as a structured review of recent case activity, delivered in consultation with probation practitioners, and has consistently achieved 100% compliance across recent quarters. It has led to improved practitioner focus on the DPP cohort, strengthened consistency and transparency in the application of RAG ratings, and increased visibility of need, risk and engagement issues across this group.

| Target 5

IPP ROTL to be extended to all four progression regime prisons by July 2026.

Update: IPP ROTL was extended to all four progression regime prisons.

Controlled ROTL is being piloted across all four progression regime establishments (HMP Warren Hill, HMP Buckley Hall, HMP Erlestoke and HMP Humber) from May 2026. A single delivery model has been agreed and issued to sites, setting out common eligibility criteria, staged ROTL arrangements and additional safeguards reflecting the complexity of the cohort. Supplementary guidance, operating alongside the national ROTL Policy Framework, supports a consistent approach across progression regime prisons while allowing for local operational delivery.

Rollout will be staggered, with establishments commencing ROTL at different points based on local readiness and operational capacity. It is not anticipated that all sites will go live over the summer period.

Implementation will be monitored through ongoing engagement with sites and planned quarterly review meetings to assess delivery, compliance and emerging learning. This will support oversight of the pilot and inform wider evaluation of the impact of ROTL on progression outcomes for IPP and life sentence prisoners in progression regime custody.

| Target 6

All IPP offenders recalled for being out of touch, or in relation to allegations which were quickly found to be unsubstantiated, will be considered for RARR.

Update: All recalled IPP offenders are considered for RARR.

Following return to custody on recall, all IPP offenders are considered for re-release under the RARR process. PPCS assesses each case on receipt of the Part B post-recall risk management report, irrespective of the reason for recall and regardless of whether the community offender manager supports release.

Figures published in a parliamentary question show that between 1 November 2024 and 30 September 2025, officials in PPCS within HMPPS, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, made 50 re-release decisions under the RARR process.²⁰

20 UK Parliament, Prisoners' release: Question for Ministry of Justice on 10 April 2026. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/1897339>

Update on actions

| Working towards release

Increase focus on supporting IPP prisoners to engage with their sentence plans, recognise individual needs and target resource towards those who are struggling to progress.

- The Progression Panel Policy Framework was published in July 2025 and implemented in October 2025. Since then, we have monitored delivery and undertaken extensive staff engagement, including events during IPP in Focus Week, continuing professional development sessions delivered by HMPPS Psychology Services, and discussions across operational forums and with area IPP leads. Between 9 October 2025 and 31 March 2026, approximately 78 IPP progression panels were recorded. To strengthen oversight of implementation and recording practices, an IPP case audit tool is currently being developed. This will be trialled in two regions in summer 2026 before wider rollout, enabling further analysis of the quality and content of progression panels. While minor amendments have already been made to the report template, a full policy review is planned for autumn 2026, taking into account feedback on the timing of panels to ensure better alignment with key sentence milestones (for example, ahead of Parole Board reviews). In April 2026, Chris Jennings, Executive Director South West, South Central and Public Protection, HMPPS, wrote to areas to encourage alignment of progression panel timings with parole reviews, where operationally feasible.
- RAG ratings continue to be refreshed every six months and monitored centrally. As at February 2026, approximately 40% of IPP prisoners in custody were rated green, 37% amber, 22% red, and 1% pending review. For those in the community, 50% were rated green, 45% amber, 3% red, and 2% pending review. Definitions of RAG ratings can be found in **Annex C**.
- Developing Wings is a consultancy-based model providing support and guidance to small units within the custodial estate. While not designed specifically for the IPP/DPP cohort, units supporting this population may benefit from its input. The National Rehabilitation Investment and Outcomes Board has commissioned the development of overarching operational guidance for small units, expected by the end of 2026. This will include consideration of units supporting individuals serving IPP and DPP sentences.
- A 'deep dive' was conducted on a sample of IPP prisoners who have never been released. The findings have been presented through a summary report and shared across national, psychology and area-level forums within HMPPS. Headline findings are included in **Annex B**, and the recommendations have been incorporated into the 2026 to 2027 Action Plan.

- HMPPS Psychology Services have delivered and embedded the refreshed custody IPP service throughout 2025 to 2026. This has included aligning case review processes with the Progression Panel Policy Framework, issuing updated guidance for psychologists, establishing a research compendium, maintaining the DPP quarterly review process, and introducing a structured monitoring and review approach. These developments were showcased at a national IPP Psychology Services event in February 2026, held jointly with community IPP model leads.
- As at April 2026, all Category C sentenced men are included in a new process designed to return individuals to suitable resettlement prisons. This aims to provide a clearer and more effective pathway through custody to the community, supporting rehabilitation and resettlement outcomes. Remissions to the Long-Term and High Security Estate, women's estate, and Youth Custody Service continue under existing arrangements, with remand prisoners returning to their nearest local establishment. Areas for Prison Group directors were onboarded between late 2025 and March 2026. During the trial period, seven prisoners were remitted under the new process. Since 1 January 2026, three IPP prisoners who were in scope were remitted prior to full onboarding and subsequently moved to resettlement prisons within two to three weeks. As at 28 April 2026, one IPP remission has taken place under the fully implemented process.

Identify and support IPP prisoners at risk of self-harm and violence in custody, while supporting their engagement and progression.

- We have continued to raise staff awareness of the heightened risk of self-harm, suicide and violence among prisoners serving IPP sentences through the ongoing promotion of the IPP Safety Toolkit. The toolkit brings together a range of resources to improve understanding of IPP-specific risks and challenges, including staff awareness sessions, prisoner-focused sessions for peer mentors, a structured questionnaire to support more effective engagement, and practical checklists highlighting key learning points and actions for staff.
- We continue to monitor, analyse and publish data on self-harm and self-inflicted deaths among IPP prisoners through the safety in custody statistics. Emerging trends are actively reviewed and shared through established safety networks, informing the ongoing development and refinement of learning materials and operational guidance where appropriate.
- Additional awareness-raising activity has taken place across the year to highlight the elevated risk of self-harm and suicide among IPP prisoners. This has included targeted learning sessions covering both custodial and community settings. IPP-specific materials and resources were also circulated as part of HMPPS Safety Week in October 2025, and existing guidance has been reviewed and updated to ensure staff have access to current and relevant information.

- Through this sustained focus on awareness, learning and improved information sharing, both prison and probation staff are better equipped to identify and respond to the specific risks faced by individuals serving IPP sentences, enabling timely intervention, appropriate support and more effective risk management.

Maintain clear processes for referral to the OPD pathway and access to services, where these are required.

- We continue to monitor data on IPP prisoners accessing the OPD pathway. Recent figures indicate a slight reduction in the overall caseload. Among those remaining, the proportion receiving formulation activity and the rate of recall have remained broadly consistent.
- Further comparative analysis with the wider IPP cohort is currently limited, pending the development of updated data products following the discontinuation of the national IPP dashboard.
- Updated formulation guidance has now been completed and will be disseminated across the OPD pathway by the end of May 2026, supporting greater consistency and quality in practice.

Ensure that those serving IPP sentences are assessed for their clinical need and receive the support required.

- The Chief Medical Officer's report, published in November 2025, did not include any specific recommendations in relation to prisoners serving IPP sentences.²¹

Provide timely and high-quality preparation for parole and release, with increased opportunity for demonstrating reduction of risk.

- Parole Board IPP Taskforce members have undertaken a number of positive visits to prisons to share information about the parole process. It has also been noted that, in some areas, Parole Board members are directly involved in local governance panels, strengthening engagement and mutual understanding. At a national level, HMPPS continues to engage with the Parole Board through the External Stakeholder Challenge Group and is establishing regular working-level meetings to discuss ongoing developments and operational issues relating to IPP policy.

21 Department of Health and Social Care and Ministry of Justice (2025), The health of people in prison, on probation and in the secure NHS estate in England. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-health-of-people-in-prison-on-probation-and-in-the-secure-nhs-estate-in-england

- Funding has been allocated to HMPPS Psychology Services for 2026 to 2027 to deliver a targeted programme of specialist assessments for individuals serving IPP sentences, including both those who have never been released and those who have been recalled. These assessments will be undertaken in response to Parole Board directions or referrals from probation practitioners. The aim is to ensure that individuals' responsivity needs are fully understood and addressed, supporting

more effective rehabilitative pathways, risk assessment and risk management planning. This approach is also intended to ensure that outstanding specialist assessments do not act as a barrier to progression. Delivery is expected to include a limited element of consultancy to support the effective implementation of assessments in practice. A monitoring and evaluation report will be produced in April 2027 to assess the impact of this investment.

| Continued support after release

Support IPP prisoners to re-integrate into the community and ensure ongoing support is available while on license, and appropriate plans are made on license termination.

- The approved premises pilot has been extended and is now embedded across 14 sites, with a standard placement duration of 16 weeks. The Probation Service Officer allocated to IPP pilot sites has been attending progression panels in Greater Manchester, which has received positive feedback. This model will now be rolled out across all IPP pathway sites to strengthen alignment between custody and community planning.
- To ensure timely consideration of licence termination, areas are provided with a forward look of all reports due over the following six-month period. Completion rates are actively monitored and reported under Target 3.
- Information has been gathered from each region to support an internal review of referrals to services following licence termination. Each region reviewed a sample of 10 randomly selected cases and was asked to consider:

- whether any outstanding needs were identified at the point of termination (including within the termination OASys)
- what support was put in place to address these needs
- the views of the individual at the point of licence termination

A substantial volume of qualitative data has been collected and is currently under review.

- Work is underway to improve awareness of the circumstances in which individuals serving IPP sentences may be eligible for Section 117 aftercare, and the responsibilities of professionals in supporting access to this provision. This includes the development of a guidance document by HMPPS Psychology Services and ongoing engagement with NHS partners on the production of updated national guidance.

- Progress against the IPP Action Plan has continued to focus on strengthening learning from implementation and supporting delivery at a regional level. A monitoring strategy is now in place, with initial work exploring pathway implementation from both leadership and frontline perspectives. Regions receive six-monthly activity overviews aligned to pathway objectives, followed by structured engagement with regional leads to support service development, share learning and identify ongoing support needs. Mechanisms to disseminate best practice and encourage innovation are embedded through regional overview products, community pathway spotlight sessions and senior-level updates. Learning is also being incorporated into refreshed psychology information packs to ensure resources remain current and responsive to emerging practice.
- Support the Probation Service to identify and support those serving IPP sentences in the community at risk of self-harm and suicide.**
- Learning from a review of IPP-related deaths in the community has been actively disseminated to raise awareness of the heightened risks of self-harm, suicide and associated vulnerabilities among individuals serving IPP sentences in the community. This learning has been shared through a psychology continuing professional development event, the Safety Learning Group, and directly with regional deaths under supervision leads and administrators, supporting the effective communication of key messages to frontline probation staff.
 - A seasonal newsletter has been issued to probation regions, providing a concise summary of key learning and practical recommendations to support staff working with individuals subject to IPP sentences. In addition, a targeted learning bulletin was developed and circulated to probation colleagues, highlighting the increased risk of self-harm and suicide among recalled prisoners and offering guidance on identifying and managing risk, particularly during periods of heightened vulnerability such as recall to custody.
 - The HMPPS safety team continues to play a key role in a dedicated working group focused on improving the sharing of risk information for recalled prisoners. In January 2026, changes were implemented to the vulnerabilities section of the Consider a Recall digital platform and the Part A recall report, strengthening information sharing between probation and prisons. These changes improve the visibility of risk factors for individuals on recall and are particularly important for those serving IPP sentences, who are disproportionately affected by recall to custody.
 - Through this sustained focus on awareness-raising, information sharing and the dissemination of learning, both prison and probation staff are better equipped to identify and respond to the specific risks faced by individuals serving IPP sentences, enabling more timely, informed and effective interventions.

| Recall

Maximise use of RARR to increase the number of re-releases and reduce the time spent recalled.

- Where a progression panel has taken place, its outcome is now being used to inform more timely decisions on RARR, supporting a more co-ordinated and evidence-based assessment of suitability for re-release.
- The IPP Recall Referral Trial, which extends the period before newly recalled cases are referred to the Parole Board, remains on track to report its findings by November 2026. The extended referral window

is intended to enable more thorough multi-disciplinary assessment, supporting better-informed decision-making on case progression, appropriate next steps and an individual's suitability for re-release.

Improve recall decisions.

- All IPP recall decisions are now made by PPCS decision-makers at Band 8 or above. Targeted training on establishing the causal link for recall decisions has also been delivered, strengthening the consistency and quality of decision-making.

| Targeted approach to DPP

Continue to prioritise support for those serving DPP sentences.

- Progress on the DPP cohort, including the delivery and impact of quarterly reviews, is set out under Target 4.
- The policy introducing a presumed maximum interval of 18 months between Parole Board reviews for IPP prisoners, and 12 months for those serving DPP sentences, came into effect during the 2025 to 2026 Action Plan reporting year. As a result, it is too early to undertake a meaningful assessment of its impact.

- Prior to this change, there were no defined expectations regarding review intervals, meaning that earlier data on hearing times is not directly comparable and would not provide an accurate reflection of performance under the current policy framework. HMPPS will continue to monitor cases affected by this change throughout the 2026 to 2027 reporting period, with a full assessment of performance to be included in the next publication.

Communication, training and engagement

Improve communication to those serving the IPP sentence and staff working with them.

- HMPPS committed itself in the 2025 to 2026 IPP Action Plan to publish an IPP communications strategy, setting out overarching communication objectives and key deliverables to support effective engagement with staff and individuals serving IPP sentences in both custody and the community. While the strategy remains under development, publication has been delayed due to competing operational priorities, including supporting implementation of licence termination reforms introduced through the Sentencing Act 2026. This commitment will be carried forward into the revised IPP Action Plan to be published this summer. The extended timeline will also enable further engagement with external stakeholders and individuals with lived experience, ensuring the strategy is responsive to their needs.
- HMPPS continues to explore opportunities to expand the use of in-cell technology across both public and private sector prisons, as part of the wider development of the IPP communications strategy and efforts to improve communication and access to information.
- From 21 to 25 September 2025, HMPPS delivered a dedicated programme of events for IPP in Focus Week, aimed at enhancing understanding of the IPP sentence across both custodial and community settings. The programme comprised five themed sessions, led by subject matter experts, each focusing on different stages of the IPP journey. These sessions explored the specific challenges faced by individuals serving IPP sentences and highlighted the support available to help them progress towards safe and sustainable release.
- Engagement with individuals serving IPP sentences remains a priority across all HMPPS areas. Forums and engagement events continue to be delivered by IPP area leads, with positive examples emerging from both public and private sector establishments. These have included events involving individuals with lived experience, with further activity planned. Increasingly, establishments are recognising the specific needs of those serving IPP and DPP sentences and are adapting local approaches and resources accordingly to better support progression.

| Data transparency

Collect and share data in line with HMPPS priorities relating to IPP progression.

- HMPPS has decided to discontinue the national IPP Dashboard, recognising that it required significant analytical resource while only providing a point-in-time snapshot of the IPP population, which quickly became outdated. In its place, many individual areas have developed local dashboards tailored to their specific operational needs and priorities.
- HMPPS continues to review the IPP Action Plan on an annual basis and publishes a corresponding annual report. As highlighted in the section on additional published statistics, a broader range of IPP-related data is now available through official statistical publications. In addition, HMPPS provides external stakeholders with a quarterly data pack, which signposts and consolidates the most relevant published statistics.
- Internally, HMPPS continues to monitor a comprehensive set of measures relating to the IPP population. These include releases, recalls, parole outcomes, licence terminations, self-inflicted deaths and self-harm incidents, as well as other key operational activity such as the use of RARR, ROTL and open conditions.

IPP Action Plan refresh

We review the Action Plan annually to ensure it continues to deliver against one of HMPPS's key priorities: supporting individuals serving IPP sentences to progress. It is therefore essential that this framework reflects the needs and experiences of those subject to the sentence.

As part of this year's Action Plan, HMPPS has committed to establishing a formal IPP lived experience panel. Once in place, this panel will be consulted on relevant policy development and changes, ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience are embedded in decision-making and contribute to shaping future improvements.

Feedback from prisoners serving an IPP sentence

Over the past year, HMPPS HQ staff working centrally on the IPP Action Plan have undertaken a number of visits to prison sites to engage directly with individuals serving IPP sentences and to better understand the challenges they face in custody.

Several individuals raised concerns about progression. While some reported having completed the interventions and programmes required of them, they felt that this had not translated into progress towards release, leading to a perception of "shifting goalposts" and a lack of transparency in decision-making.

There were also concerns regarding sentence planning. Some individuals reported that expectations within their sentence plans were unclear, and that they were not meaningfully involved in the process. This included limited awareness of mechanisms such as progression panels, with some individuals unfamiliar with their purpose or existence. In addition, there was a lack of awareness of progression opportunities available at other establishments.

Communication emerged as a consistent theme. Some individuals reported that they did not fully understand the purpose of the IPP Action Plan, had not had the opportunity to read the annual report, and were unclear on how it was intended to impact them directly. There was a perception that individuals were often the last to hear about changes, including legislative developments, and that staff were not always able to provide clear or consistent information. Concerns were also raised about limited contact with both community offender managers and prison offender managers.

Some individuals expressed concerns that prisons and staff were not sufficiently equipped to support their health needs, particularly in relation to complex mental health issues. They felt this lack of support could hinder their ability to engage with interventions and, ultimately, to progress.

Finally, some individuals raised concerns regarding training and employment opportunities, noting that the provision available within their establishment – such as welding or forklift driving – did not align with their aspirations on release. In particular, they expressed a desire for greater access to digital skills training that would better equip them for higher-skilled employment.

To address this, HMPPS is creating a formal IPP lived experience panel who will be consulted with on the consultation strategy, to work towards improving the issues highlighted above.

Feedback from external stakeholders

The IPP External Stakeholder Challenge Group first convened in September 2023 and has met quarterly since. The Group brings together a range of organisations, charities and campaign groups, including individuals with lived experience of the IPP sentence. We remain grateful for their continued engagement and constructive challenge.

In October 2025, the Prison Reform Trust published an article on the IPP Action Plan.²² The article concluded that recent government action represents modest but welcome progress, highlighting steps taken to reduce the IPP population and support progression. However, it emphasised that many individuals remain in the system long after tariff expiry and continue to face significant barriers to release and licence termination, indicating that more substantial reform is required to address the ongoing challenges of IPP sentences.

As part of this year's review, the Group was consulted on the revised Action Plan. Stakeholders emphasised the need for the Action Plan to remain focused on outcomes rather than processes, to be underpinned by a clear analysis of the barriers to progression, and to include robust evaluation of delivery to date. There was also a clear call to strengthen the ambition and impact of the targets.

In response, we have refined a number of targets to ensure clearer alignment with policy intent and statutory requirements and have reviewed delivery timelines where appropriate. We have also introduced additional actions, including some directly informed by stakeholder feedback. However, it is important that the targets strike an appropriate balance between ambition and what can realistically be delivered within the current operational context.

Updates in the 2026 to 2027 Action Plan

This year's Action Plan follows the same structure as the 2025 to 2026 Action Plan but includes a number of new and expanded actions.

- Monitor and analyse the use of ROTL within progression regimes, including the volume of ROTL activity and the nature of activities undertaken. Following a full year of delivery, case studies will be examined to assess the impact of ROTL on progression outcomes.
- Pilot a new IPP advocate role to provide more personalised support to individuals experiencing barriers to progression.

22 Prison Reform Trust (2025), Modest but welcome progress in the long journey for IPP reform. Available at: <https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/modest-but-welcome-progress-in-the-long-journey-for-ipp-reform/>

- Work with the lived experience team to establish a dedicated IPP lived experience panel, which will be formally consulted on relevant policy developments and communications affecting those serving IPP sentences.
- Introduce targeted actions to support women serving IPP sentences, including learning events for community offender managers and referral of all women to the WEPS community pathway to strengthen resettlement support.
- Explore approaches to better monitor and understand the progress of individuals who remain rated red under the RAG system, despite multiple progression panels, to inform further targeted interventions for the most complex cohort.
- Build on the DPP quarterly review process by ensuring that insights are systematically fed into progression panels, the work of IPP advocates and other relevant services to support a more co-ordinated, wraparound approach for those serving DPP sentences.
- Work with the prototyping and evaluation team to design and implement a formal evaluation framework for the IPP Action Plan.
- Strengthen collaboration between IPP leads and chaplaincy services through shared learning events, and explore opportunities to enhance chaplaincy support at key points in the sentence, including preparation for parole reviews.
- Amend governance processes for operational policy development to ensure that the needs of and impact on IPP prisoners are explicitly considered as part of all relevant policy changes.
- Review opportunities to expand access to resettlement activities across the privately contracted estate, ensuring that IPP prisoners outside those settings are not disproportionately disadvantaged in accessing progression opportunities.

Revised 2026 to 2027 targets

All targets have been reviewed as part of this year's Action Plan refresh. The most notable change is that the ROTL target from the previous year has now been completed and has therefore been retired. However, an ongoing action has been included to continue monitoring the implementation, progress and impact of IPP ROTL.

In addition, a new target has been introduced for the first time relating to the delivery and effectiveness of progression panels.

Target 1: 95% of IPP prisoners to be located in a prison appropriate to their current priority needs by December 2026, with this level to be maintained thereafter.

Due to ongoing capacity pressures and the continued fluctuation of the IPP population, as well as the preferences of certain offenders, it is not feasible to achieve or sustain a target of 100%. However, a target of 95% represents an ambitious but realistic benchmark, maintaining focus on this critical area of delivery while reflecting the operational context.

Target 2: 90% of PAROM1 parole reports to be submitted to PPCS by the required deadline.

This target remains ambitious for the Probation Service, particularly in the context of significant operational pressures and the ongoing implementation of wider measures introduced through the Sentencing Act 2026.

Target 3: 100% of individuals to be referred for licence termination by the date at which they become eligible (this does not include those who apply as they do not have a set eligibility date, but their application must be considered within a reasonable timeframe).

This target has been amended to focus on referrals rather than report submission and has been increased to 100% to ensure alignment with statutory requirements.

Target 4: Maintain 100% of DPP prisoners to have their case reviewed by HMPPS Psychology Services every quarter.

This target was achieved during the 2025 to 2026 reporting period and will be maintained at 100% going forward.

Target 5: All IPP cases where probation practitioners are supporting release to have the RARR decision communicated to them within six weeks of receipt of the report, where all relevant information is provided.

This target has been revised, as the previous iteration focused primarily on process. The updated target instead emphasises timeliness, which is expected to have a more direct and meaningful impact on outcomes for the individual.

Target 6: 100% of red-rated prisoners to have a progression panel between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2027.

Last year, a target relating to progression panels was not included, as the policy had not yet been implemented. Progression panels are now an integral part of HMPPS's approach to supporting IPP prisoners to progress towards release, and the introduction of this target will strengthen accountability for their effective and consistent delivery.



Annex A: IPP Action Plan 2026 to 2027

HMPPS intends that the actions set out in the IPP Action Plan will support more individuals serving IPP sentences to achieve safe and sustainable release, progress towards licence termination, reduce recall rates and minimise time spent in custody following recall.

This will be delivered through a targeted programme of measures, including:

- increasing the proportion of IPP prisoners held in establishments most appropriate to their needs
- embedding the use of progression panels and reviewing the associated policy framework to ensure support is provided at key points in the sentence
- maintaining a focus on timely decision-making through the RARR process
- strengthening communication with IPP prisoners, those in the community and the staff who support them

Working towards release

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Provide clear pathway for progression for every IPP and DPP offender	Pilot new IPP advocate role to provide additional support to those serving the sentence.	Evaluate trial 9 months after implementation	May 2026 to April 2027	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Track and monitor delivery of progression panels in line with policy framework.	100% of red rated prisoners to have a progression panel between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2027 (Target 6)	Report in monthly IPP dashboard and publish in 2027 annual report	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Review the frequency, attendance and recording of progression panels using the quality assurance tool	Policy is amended and guidance published	Begin review in September 2026	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Review the progression panel report template to ensure IPP prisoners and offenders receive clearer, more concise next steps and personalised targets following each progression panel.	Progression panel report template is amended	January 2027	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Provide clear pathway for progression for every IPP and DPP offender (continued)	Continue to review and update case RAG ratings every six months.	Report in ministerial dashboard and stakeholder meetings	Six-monthly	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Provide contribution to the Security Categorisation Framework on remission of sentenced men (outside of the Long-Term and High Security Estate) to reflect updated processes.	Update at stakeholder meeting once complete	December 2026	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Develop a framework for progression-focused wings through consultation to ensure that all services and units have clear, evidenced aims and criteria to further improve progression opportunities.	Framework is published and usage monitored	December 2026	Chief Psychologist

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Provide clear pathway for progression for every IPP and DPP offender (continued)	Progress actions from the never-released deep dive (see Annex B).	Progress on actions is reported at external stakeholder meeting	September 2026	Chief Psychologist
	Review and evaluate DPP quarterly review process and the refreshed case review process for HMPPS Psychology Services.	Update at stakeholder meetings	Quarterly	Chief Psychologist
Work with Parole Board to better understand and minimise any blockers to progression	Continue working closely with the Parole Board IPP Taskforce to strengthen joint working and support a more effective and efficient parole system.	Update at stakeholder meetings	Quarterly	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Ensure parole reports are completed and submitted within the required timeframe set by the Parole Board.	Monitor timeliness and report in monthly dashboard (Target 2)	Monthly	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection/ Chief Probation Officer



Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Work with Parole Board to better understand and minimise any blockers to progression (continued)	Explore how to monitor the progress of individuals who have maintained a RAG rating of red, even after several progression panels. This will further our understanding of the impact of progression panels, and what more might be needed to support the most complex cohort.	Update at stakeholder meetings	Six-monthly	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Utilise newly agreed funding to commission specialist assessments for those who are struggling to progress and provide relevant consultancy on such assessments.	Monitor and review demand and delivery	To be implemented from 1 April and reviewed quarterly	Chief Psychologist
	Improve processes for identifying those who are eligible for Section 117 aftercare support ahead of parole review so timely arrangements can be made by making reference to Section 117 in PAROM reports and giving consideration to this when reviewing the Progression Panel Policy Framework.	Feedback from the Parole Board regarding Section 117 delays	Quarterly	Director General Operations

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Provide more opportunities to help IPP prisoners feel prepared for parole reviews, and demonstrate reduction of risk	Monitor and analyse the use of ROTL at progression regimes, including the number of ROTLs and what activity was undertaken on the ROTL. After a year of IPP ROTL being available, case studies should be analysed to understand how this might have improved their progression.	Report number of ROTLs in monthly dashboard	Monthly	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	All areas to invite Parole Board to their regional governance meetings.	Covered in area scrutiny panels	Yearly	Director General Operations
	Increase join-up between IPP leads and chaplaincy through shared learning events. Also consider ways to increase chaplaincy support for IPP prisoners at key points in their sentence (such as preparing for parole reviews).	Feedback from IPP prisoners	Yearly	Head of Chaplaincy Services AED South West, South Central and Public Protection



Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Provide more opportunities to help IPP prisoners feel prepared for parole reviews, and demonstrate reduction of risk (continued)	Review a sample of cases that have been rejected for open conditions to further understand potential blockers to progression. Share learnings with probation practitioners and the Parole Board.	Report completed for internal use	January 2027	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Support prisons to consistently identify, manage and support IPP prisoners who are at a heightened risk of self-harm, suicide or violence in custody, while supporting their engagement and progression	- Continue to raise staff awareness of the heightened risk of self-harm, suicide and violence of IPP prisoners. This will include refreshing and promoting the IPP Safety Toolkit, ensuring it incorporates lived experience and the latest evidence. - Regularly monitor and analyse published IPP-related data to identify new or emerging safety trends. Where changes in risk are detected, timely guidance and communications will be issued to establishments. - Review internal and external learning to ensure key safety considerations are consistently embedded in relevant policy, operational communications and frontline practice. - Identify and explore existing IPP-focused initiatives operating across the prison estate, highlighting effective practice and sharing learning widely.	Monitor published data on suicides and self-harm Recording of awareness sessions and guidance issued	April 2027	Head of Safety Group



Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Maintain clear processes for referral to the OPD pathway and access to services, where these are required	Monitor OPD data for screening, triage, formulation and consultation process activity for those serving IPP sentences.	Reported on internally	Quarterly	Health and Care Partnerships

Continued support after release

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Support IPP prisoners to re-integrate into the community	Monitor outcomes from the approved premises pilot providing in-reach support to those coming up to release and extending approved premises stays to 16 weeks.	Rate of recall from the pilot sites	Review quarterly	Community Accommodation Service
	- Co-ordinate and oversee delivery of the HMPPS community pathway for individuals serving an IPP sentence in the community. - Develop structured exploration of outcomes for individuals on the pathway to adjust delivery to maximise impact.	Monitor activity and project work	Review quarterly	Chief Psychologist

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Strengthen probation staff capability to identify safety risks early and deliver meaningful, trauma-informed support to individuals serving IPP sentences in the community	• Increase staff awareness of the heightened risks associated with individuals serving IPP sentences by making use of existing communication channels. Short, targeted reminders and key messages will be incorporated into routine team briefings, existing training sessions and internal bulletins. These will highlight common risk factors, early warning signs and the importance of trauma-informed practice. • Strengthen frontline practice by reinforcing consistent expectations for safety planning through brief practical prompts, reminders and signposting to existing national guidance. Managers will highlight the importance of co-produced plans, regular reviews and noting any changes in wellbeing during routine supervision and line management discussions.	Monitor published data on suicides and self-harm Recording of awareness sessions and guidance issued	April 2027	Head of Safety Group



Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Strengthen probation staff capability to identify safety risks early and deliver meaningful, trauma-informed support to individuals serving IPP sentences in the community (continued)	Support better information sharing between custody and community teams by making more consistent use of current communication routes, such as email handovers, case management systems and existing inter-team contacts. Staff will be reminded to share relevant updates promptly, particularly changes in risk or wellbeing, using established processes.			

Recall

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Maximise use of RARR to increase the number of re-releases and reduce the time spent recalled	Monitor use of progression panels following recall (the policy mandates a panel must be held within 28 days).	Monitor internal management information	Review quarterly	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Maximise use of RARR to increase the number of re-releases and reduce the time spent recalled (continued)	- Review Recall Referral Extension Trial outputs and outcomes and take forward any learnings. - Identify any impacts on: - the quality and timeliness of evidence submitted for reviews for re-release (via Parole Board and RARR) - the timeliness of RARR decision-making - any change in outcomes	Review completed findings reported internally and decision made on future policy	November 2026	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
Review psychology recall trial	Undertake two research projects to evaluate the psychology consultancy approach within the IPP recall pilot and make recommendations for next steps.	Research project is completed and disseminated	October 2026	Chief Psychologist

Communication, training and engagement

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Provide clear communication to those serving the IPP sentence and staff working with them	Deliver communications strategy published in June 2026.	Feedback from staff and those serving the sentence	Annual survey	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Send quarterly newsletter to all IPPs via IPP area leads.	Newsletter is circulated	Quarterly	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Utilise prisoner-facing technology to share updates and increase awareness of IPP policy and processes.	Feedback from those serving the sentence	Annual survey	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection and Chief Psychologist
	Deliver another dedicated IPP in Focus Week for staff in autumn 2026.	Week is delivered and attendance is monitored	Annual	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Expand use of IPP forums to more prisons and use these groups to share any policy or legislative updates, and seek feedback on future changes.	Monitor number of prisons with high populations of IPPs holding IPP forums	Annual review at area scrutiny panels	Director General Operations

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Provide clear communication to those serving the IPP sentence and staff working with them (continued)	Work with the lived experience team to set up a specific IPP lived experience panel. This panel will then be formally consulted on any policy change or communication going out to IPP prisoners.	Panel established by November 2026	Feedback at External Stakeholder Challenge Group and Progression Board	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Amend the governance process for agreeing operational policies so that IPP prisoners must be specifically considered as part of any policy change, regardless of the content of the policy.	Mandated IPP consideration established by September 2026	September 2026	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
Increase access to staff training and information sharing opportunities	Continue to use area leads forum to share good practice from across the estate.	IPP leads meetings held	Bi-monthly	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	HMPPS Psychology Services to provide training and teach-ins following the findings of the training gap analysis for psychology, probation staff and other relevant staff groups.	Delivery of training/teach-ins and attendance is monitored	Annual	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection and Chief Psychologist



Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Increase access to staff training and information sharing opportunities (continued)	Publish IPP SharePoint.	Usage is monitored	September 2026	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection
	Update MyLearning training package.	Package is updated and usage is monitored	January 2027	AED South West, South Central and Public Protection

Individualised approach to women and DPPs

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Improve data relating to DPP prisoners	Consider ways to consolidate records of DPP prisoners across various data systems.	Data on DPP prisoners is able to be published in the 2027 annual report	Complete by May 2027	AED South Central, South West and Public Protection
Continue to prioritise support for those serving DPP sentences	DPP prisoners to have their cases reviewed by HMPPS Psychology Services every quarter.	Shared in monthly dashboard (Target 4)	Monthly	Chief Psychologist

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Continue to prioritise support for those serving DPP sentences (continued)	Review the average time between referrals to the Parole Board to ensure that DPP prisoners are referred as soon as is sensible in each case, in line with updated HMPPS policy which now mandates a presumed annual referral for DPP prisoners to the Parole Board.	Complete a standalone exercise	December 2026	AED South Central, South West and Public Protection
Provide bespoke support for women serving the IPP sentence	- Use women's specific expertise to understand gendered vulnerabilities relevant to risk, safety and support, by including strategic women's probation leads and women's regional senior probation officer leads in decision-making and oversight of women serving the IPP sentence. - Provide gender-specific, trauma-informed and relational case oversight and communication, using good join-up between prison offender managers, community offender managers, WEPS IPP single points of contact, and individual women serving the IPP sentence.	Monitor through Women's Group Delivery Plan	Annually	Prison Group Director, Women



Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Provide bespoke support for women serving the IPP sentence (continued)	- Continue joint working between Women's Group IPP operational lead and WEPS IPP leads, to allow proactive and supportive prison moves where required for sentence progression. - Use expertise of women's regional senior probation officer leads, strategic women's leads, and WEPS IPP and community pathway leads to support transitions across geographical and service boundaries. - Provide the offer of psychologically informed case support from WEPS to all probation practitioners managing women on the IPP sentence. - Give consideration to including women's specific services on the optional invite list in Progression Panel Policy Framework guidance including women's regional senior probation officer leads and WEPS contacts.			

Data transparency

Action	How will we deliver this?	Measures	Timeframe	Owner
Collect and share data in line with HMPPS priorities relating to IPP progression	Report on progress of targets to ministers through regular dashboard.	Submission of dashboard to ministers	Monthly	AED South Central, South West and Public Protection
	Publish an annual report on progress against the IPP Action Plan.	Report is made publicly available	Published annually	AED South Central, South West and Public Protection
	Work with the prototyping and evaluation team to design a formal evaluation of the IPP Action Plan.	Reported on in 2026 to 2027 annual report	Annual	AED South Central, South West and Public Protection
	Continue to track a number of additional measures over time, such as those relating to the IPP population, releases, recalls, parole outcomes, licence terminations, self-inflicted deaths, self-harm incidents and other operational activity, including the use of RARR, ROTL and open conditions.	Published in 'Offender management statistics quarterly' and shared at IPP external stakeholder panels	Quarterly	AED South Central, South West and Public Protection



Annex B: Never-released deep dive

HMPPS Psychology Services deep dive exercise – summary for the IPP annual report

A deep dive exercise was completed by HMPPS Psychology Services to better understand the barriers faced by individuals serving IPP sentences who have never been released. The work formed part of the HMPPS IPP Action Plan (2024) and reflected an ongoing commitment to responding to the needs of the IPP cohort.

As of March 2025, 1,012 prisoners were subject to IPP sentences and had never been released. The deep dive examined a representative sample of this population to understand the following areas: sentence planning, behaviour, risk management and access to services for the IPP cohort. Its purpose was to describe themes observed within custody, to improve understanding and practice.

About the exercise

A randomised sample representing approximately 12% of the never-released IPP population across England and Wales was reviewed (129 individuals). Information was drawn from existing prison and probation records, including sentence plans, risk assessments and psychology case information, and was quality-assured within regions.

This exercise was not formal research. It relied on information recorded within operational systems at the time of review and reflected a snapshot in time. The findings should therefore be interpreted with caution and cannot be assumed to apply to every individual serving an IPP sentence.

Key observations

The exercise identified a complex and challenging picture, characterised by both sustained efforts to progress and substantial barriers.

- Many (53% fully, 19% partially) individuals were engaging with their sentence plans, and the majority had completed one or more accredited offending behaviour programmes during custody, often over many years.
- Behavioural instability was a significant factor affecting progression. Difficulties such as self-harm, conflict or segregation were common and frequently linked to long-term distress, frustration or loss of hope.
- High levels of mental health needs, personality-related difficulties and neurodivergent conditions were identified. These were often reported as directly affecting engagement, emotional regulation and readiness for further progression.

- Outstanding sentence plan targets were most frequently linked to psychological and health-related needs, including personality-focused interventions, mental health support and substance misuse services. Delays were commonly associated with engagement difficulties, service criteria thresholds or waiting times.
- Progression through the prison estate was limited. More than half of the sample had never accessed open conditions, including individuals assessed as presenting low or medium risk on standard risk assessment tools.
- Certain groups, including those many years over tariff, those assessed as presenting higher levels of concern (RAG rated as red), those convicted of sexual offences, and individuals sentenced when under 18, experienced compounded challenges despite evidence of prior engagement with their sentence plan.

What this tells us

Overall, the findings suggest that lack of progression appears related to the combined impact of complex needs, behavioural instability and system requirements that require sustained stability or consolidation before acceptance is considered. The exercise highlights the importance of responsive, needs-based sentence planning involving specialist provision.

Applying the learning

The deep dive reinforces the importance of the following areas, which underpin ongoing work streams:

- timely access to appropriate psychological and health services
- using professional judgement and formulations alongside structured risk tools
- understanding behaviour in its custodial and psychological context and with regards to the impact of the sentence
- staff support and training to develop skills to encourage hope and engagement
- clear, realistic, individualised and transparent sentence planning



Annex C: Glossary

AED	Area executive director
DPP	Detention for Public Protection
HMPPS	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
IPP	Imprisonment for Public Protection
NHS	National Health Service
OPD	Offender personality disorder
PAROM1	Parole report completed by the Probation Service
Part B	Post-recall risk management report
PPCS	Public Protection Casework Section
RAG rating	Red, amber, green rating
	Custody-based IPP cases Red – significant level of concern for progression Amber – moderate level of concern for progression Green – minimal level of concern for progression Community-based IPP cases Red – in general, there should be no individuals in the community with a red RAG rating, as this would indicate a level of concern significant enough to warrant recall. However, in limited circumstances, a red rating may be applied where an individual has been recalled but remains unlawfully at large Amber – some level of concern for progression Green – no concern for progression
RARR	Risk-assessed recall review
ROTL	Release on temporary licence
SFO	Serious further offence
WEPS	Women's Estate Psychology Service



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