



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Whatton

**For reporting year
1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023**

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Contents

Introductory sections 1 - 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of establishment	4
3. Key points	6
Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	14
5. Fair and humane treatment	16
6. Health and wellbeing	20
7. Progression and resettlement	23
The work of the IMB	
Board statistics	29
Applications to the IMB	29

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Introductory sections 1 - 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and, also, to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT), is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Whatton is a category C training prison for persons convicted of sexual offences against adults and children, and is one of the largest specialist prisons in Europe to offer offending behaviour programmes to prisoners with convictions for sexual offences. The establishment offers a wide range of learning and skills programmes, as well as employment opportunities, such as in manufacturing and gardening.

The prison's operational capacity is 817 and the average population in this reporting year was 802¹.

The prison's residential accommodation consists of 14 residential wings: A wings 1 to 8 (constructed in 2006) with a care and separation unit (CSU) with eight cells is attached to the A3 residential unit; B wings 1 to 3 (constructed during the 1960s when the prison was a detention centre housing young offenders); C1 (constructed in 2005); and C3 (constructed in 2008). We reported last year that C2 had been decommissioned and demolished. It has been replaced by modular, prefabricated, two-tier cells that have been constructed but have been subject to significant delays, and the unit is not expected to be commissioned until the end of August 2023. This will provide additional accommodation for 39 prisoners.

HMPPS has been investigating the possibility of extending the size of the prison with the installation of additional cell blocks. Decisions have not yet been announced.

The accommodation cells comprise a mixture of single and double accommodation (with en-suite toilet, washbasin and shower) and older facilities (with an in-cell toilet) and shared shower accommodation. More single cells have been converted to double occupancy during the reporting period. The accommodation in B wing is the oldest and has previously been criticised by the IMB and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP). A programme of gradual refurbishment has continued through this year, but the cells are the smallest in the prison estate and the Board has been advised that there are no plans to replace the B wings in the short to medium term. A planned replacement of water pipework, scheduled for early 2023, has been delayed until at least January 2024.

A programme to install in-cell telephones has been started and is expected to be completed by the end of 2023.

The cells have been fitted with new fire and smoke alarms because the alarm system was found, on inspection by the Crown Fire Inspection team, to be inadequate. There will be a further inspection to ensure that the mandatory alterations have been rectified.

Accommodation for purposeful activity includes a sports field, sports hall (including three badminton courts and a cardiovascular exercise suite), a gym with weight training facilities, manufacturing workshops, a large education unit, and a large

¹ Figures included in this report are local management information. They reflect the prison's position at the time of reporting, but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with Official Statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.

kitchen facility specifically for the use of prisoners undertaking the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in catering. The establishment has a well-resourced library that caters for all levels of literacy and those undertaking higher educational qualifications.

The healthcare end-of-life suite has been decommissioned and the room repurposed. A dementia care suite is provided.

Outside the prison's secure compound there is a purpose-built visitor reception centre managed under contract.

The prison also has an external contract with People Plus for the supply of library resources; this is subcontracted to Suffolk Library Services. There are three externally commissioned services: for the provision of healthcare services with Practice Plus Group; facilities management provided by Amey; and learning and skills managed by People Plus.

A 'solar farm' was due to be installed on land adjacent to the prison at the beginning of 2022. However, the then Deputy Prime Minister cancelled all the prison and court solar panel contracts before installation could start. We were told that the work has been re-authorised, but reductions in capital spending mean that no installation date has been announced.

3. Key points

The Board acknowledges the support given by the Governor, deputy governor, senior management team and officers so that the Board is able to meet its obligations.

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- The staff have worked consistently to ensure that the environment and practices underpin the safety of the prisoners in all they do. The large majority of prisoners say that they feel safe.
- Leadership of safety work is strong and well-coordinated and, through the regular safety intervention meetings, demonstrates a firm understanding of the risks and issues. There is good use of data, action planning and quality assurance of safety procedures.
- There were increased levels of assaults on both staff and prisoners.
- Levels of increased self-harm remain a concern. However, there are a number of chronic and acute self-harmers who are responsible for a high proportion of self-harm incidents each month.

Fair and humane treatment

- The prison has returned to a normal daily regime with the prisoners having benefited from the relaxation of the pandemic restrictions and the expansion of opportunities to return to purposeful activities.
- HMP Whatton is a training prison, not a resettlement prison. However, around a quarter of the prison population (200) are released into the community from the prison each year. The support of prisoners at this point is provided without extra staffing or finance. Accordingly, the prisoners at Whatton are at a disadvantage compared with those released from resettlement establishments.
- The substandard accommodation in the B wings continues to raise concerns. B wing contains some of the smallest cells within the prison estate. The Board is aware that the Governor and prison managers have repeatedly raised concerns about the quality of this accommodation, but no funding for a replacement has been made available. Although these cells are unfit for purpose, HMPPS is content to allow prisoners to be held in this substandard accommodation. Replacement of the pipework in the block has been delayed by 12 months.

Health and wellbeing

- Healthcare services continued to be placed under great pressure throughout the period, but prisoners' physical and mental health has been seen as a priority by healthcare despite the continued shortage of healthcare staff. However, the Board acknowledges that this shortage reflects the situation throughout the NHS, and every effort has been made by the onsite team to provide care and support to all prisoners.

Progression and resettlement

- The IMB continues to be concerned about the backlog of prisoners waiting to complete the accredited programmes for which they have been transferred to Whatton to undertake. Many prisoners continue to express their concerns about the impact that this will have on their sentence plan, parole hearings and subsequent release.
- Media reports relating to the changes in the parole system, particularly where they relate to persons convicted of sexual offences, have caused some prisoners considerable anguish. They are concerned that their transfers to category D (open) prisons will be impacted, or their release into the community could now be delayed. In late 2022, the Prison Reform Trust reported that 94% of Parole Board recommendations were being rejected, where, previously, 87% were accepted.
- There were long delays in transferring category D prisoners to suitable prisons. However, since February 2023, we have seen a significant reduction in the number of prisoners awaiting transfer (an average of 30 per month in 2022 compared with six in May 2023).

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- The issue of progression for those serving imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentences has been repeatedly raised in annual reports. The decision by the government this year not to accept the recommendations of the Justice Select Committee around re-sentencing and reducing licence periods has increased the anxiety for these prisoners.
Will the Minister reconsider the recommendation of the Justice Select Committee to commission a re-sentencing exercise for all prisoners on IPP sentences?
- Last year, the Minister told us that the Ministry of Justice is committed to working with health partners to reduce delays experienced by people in prison awaiting transfer to hospital. Together with the Department of Health and Social Care, a draft Mental Health Bill was published on 27 June 2022 which contains several critical reforms to improve support for individuals with acute mental health needs in the criminal justice system. This includes the introduction of a new statutory time limit of 28 days for transfer from prisons and other places of detention to hospital.
Can the Minister commit to a date when the statutory limit of 28 days for transfers of prisoners needing secure psychiatric care, which was referred to in the previous Minister's response to our report last year, will be passed into law?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- HMP Whatton is a training prison but still releases approximately 200 prisoners per year into the community. There is neither finance nor staffing available to provide for resettlement training at the prison.

Will the Prison Service ensure that adequate funding is made available to HMP Whatton to provide for effective and meaningful resettlement training for its prisoners approaching release?

- The IMB has seen no evidence that the new property framework for prisoners' property is meeting its objectives and improving the transfer of prisoners' property when transferred between prison establishments.
Can the Prison Service confirm to the Board that the new property framework for prisoners' property is meeting the objective(s) of the new framework, and share any data that is available to show that improvements have been made and the new framework is on target to achieve its objectives? How will you ensure that improvements are being made?
- The Eureka key security system has been unserviceable for over three years.
Can the Prison Service give us a timescale for the installation of the replacement Eureka system?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- Key working has not returned to pre-pandemic levels and there are concerns that some members of prison staff do not give this the priority and enthusiasm that it warrants.
Will the Governor ensure that key working remains a priority and the correct level of engagement with prisoners is maintained?

3.3 Response to last report

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
Minister: 1. Last year we reported that a prisoner was held for a long time in deteriorating mental health while waiting for secure accommodation and we asked the Minister to intervene. There has been one further case this year and, during the lockdown, those prisoners with fragile mental health were also affected by the isolation of the cell. The prison has direct responsibility for the social care of these prisoners, some elderly and in stages of early dementia. We ask	1. As the Board is aware, due to some ward closures in secure hospitals as result of patients testing positive for Covid-19, many patients incurred further delays to admission and as a result there are significant waiting times for access to secure hospital provision, for which, as you will appreciate, the pathway is complex. However, I hope to provide some assurance that NHS England (NHSE) Health and Justice (Midlands) Governance team continues to oversee	1. We have not detected any significant change in the ability to quickly move prisoners with diagnosed mental health problems to more appropriate secure accommodation. This remains an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed.

<p>the Minister to look at the evidence and, again, address this issue directly with the Secretary for State for Health and Social Care to support prisons in providing reasonable and timely support for these issues.</p>	<p>the fortnightly clinical case review meetings, which is helping prioritise the waiting list and specific needs.</p> <p>More broadly, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is committed to working with health partners to reduce delays experienced by people in prison awaiting transfer to hospital. Together with the Department of Health and Social Care, we published a draft Mental Health Bill on 27 June 2022 which contains several critical reforms to improve support for individuals with acute mental health needs in the criminal justice system. This includes the introduction of a new statutory time limit of 28 days for transfer from prisons and other places of detention to hospital. This time limit, together with operational improvements, should help reduce unnecessary delays and ensure people in the criminal justice system receive swift access to treatment.</p>	
<p>Prison Service:</p> <p>1. The current Eureka key fob alarm system has been out of service for over two years because it cannot be repaired and is outdated.</p>	<p>1. We recognise there are concerns across the prison estate regarding the current reliability and functionality of Traka, as such a joint HMPPS Intelligent</p>	<p>1. We are advised that the funding will be made available to replace the Eureka alarm detection system. However, given the restraints on capital projects, we do not</p>

	<p>Client Function and MoJ Property working group has been set up to capture, assess and address the issues to ensure they are addressed in a consistent manner.</p>	<p>expect to see any installation soon.</p>
<p>2. There will be a considerable backlog of courses and support for the rehabilitation and re-education of prisoners to progress to open prison and to towards release. Will HMPPS allot extra funding to ensure that the backlog is eliminated and those who have lost out have access to those courses that are important to them in a timely programme for their prison progress?</p>	<p>2. Offending behaviour programmes (OBP) funding is considered on an annual basis, although no changes were made during the pandemic, and funding allocation is based on ability to deliver and identified need. All OBP funding is kept under regular review to maximise HMPPS' ability to meet identified need based on available resources. A central OBP team has been established to support prisons in maximising use of resources to increase delivery volumes.</p> <p>As part of OBP recovery, HMP Whatton has significantly increased delivery offers compared to the period of restricted delivery and is providing high intensity longer duration programmes (which reduces the number of places offered compared to shorter, lower intensity programmes). HMP Whatton is delivering a wide range of interventions to reflect the profile of demand</p>	<p>2. Whilst there has been some improvement in the provision of OBPs, they have not returned to pre-pandemic levels and prisoners remain concerned that they may be penalised at parole hearing because they have not been able to complete the programmes.</p>

	<p>both locally and supporting national demand for programmes. A review of their current waiting lists demonstrates a close match between demand and delivery with careful consideration being given to prioritising those in greatest need.</p>	
<p>3. Will the Prison Service advise when the energy-saving solar panels will be installed at HMP Whatton?</p>	<p>3. The solar photovoltaics programme is currently paused due to supply chain issues, a decision on next steps is expected soon. The Governor will keep you informed of progress.</p>	<p>3. We understand from the Governor that authority has been granted to renew the contract. No date has been given.</p>
<p>4. As we have reported annually, the Board continues to receive applications about the loss of prisoners' property, usually when being transferred from another prison. Responses to prisoners' complaints from other establishments are often late or not received at all. Each year, IMBs across the country receive assurances that something will be done about this. However, nothing happens! Can the Prison Service develop a reliable system of handling and tracking prisoners' property, to reduce these unacceptable losses and to minimise</p>	<p>4. The newly published prisoners' property policy framework has been designed with procedural justice at its core and aims to ensure consistency and fairness and enhance prisoners' satisfaction with processes and outcomes. Given the nature of property, and the movement of prisoners between establishments, the framework looks to provide greater direction and standardisation on a national basis. It strengthens processes in relation to the main problem areas identified by IMBs and staff, including the handling of valuable property,</p>	<p>4. We have seen no evidence to suggest that the new property framework for prisoners' property is meeting the objectives and improving the transfer of prisoners' property when transferred between prison establishments.</p> <p>The IMB routinely receives applications from prisoners about the whereabouts of their property. Moreover, prison establishments are not responding to requests for information when asked through the prison complaints system.</p>

<p>the number of compensation claims?</p>	<p>managing cell clearances, compliance with volumetric control and forwarding on excess property following a prisoner's transfer.</p> <p>While digital improvements to property processes are being explored, the nature of that work means that any digital changes are likely to be longer-term and as such will not be part of the forthcoming framework. However, the introduction of digitally recorded person escort records including property tags will assist with the few investigations for property that is lost in transit with Prisoner Escort and Custody Services suppliers.</p>	
<p>5. The standard of the accommodation in the healthcare centre continues to be a significant concern. Will the Prison Service, once again, consider substantial refurbishment or replacement of the healthcare facilities so that they match those expected in the community?</p>	<p>5. Following criticisms made by the by the Care Quality Commission (pre-pandemic), work was undertaken to address each of the concerns raised. A review of the healthcare facility has recently been conducted to identify some remedial work.</p> <p>A minor refurbishment programme is being considered to create additional external storage areas to enable the expansion of treatment rooms, office</p>	<p>5. Whilst some minor refurbishment has been undertaken, the general condition of the healthcare accommodation remains poor.</p> <p>Some wooden storage sheds have been constructed.</p> <p>The planned replacement of the B wing pipework has been regularly postponed and is now expected to start in early 2024 – 12 months late.</p>

	<p>space and consultation rooms.</p> <p>The B wing pipework replacement project is due to start in early 2023 which will alleviate the water ingress and damp issues within healthcare.</p> <p>The provision of an onsite temporary healthcare unit will be provided whilst the projects are running.</p>	<p>The provision of an onsite temporary healthcare unit to be provided whilst the projects are running has been costed and deemed to be too expensive. It is unknown how healthcare services will be provided during these periods.</p>
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Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

Board members have observed prisoners in reception and induction. All the relevant checks, processes and assessments were in place, and the Board saw a high level of professionalism and care from staff and peer mentors.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

For this reporting period there were 333 acts of self-harm by 77 individuals. This data shows an increase in the number of self-harm incidents from the same period last year, which was 242. There is a trend at HMP Whatton for the chronic and acute self-harmers to be responsible for a high proportion of self-harm incidents each month.

Prisoners who self-harm are managed through the ACCT process. An ACCT is an assessment, care in custody and teamwork document. The ACCT process is the system used to support those people at risk of self-harm and suicide. It is used to identify risks, behavioural triggers, and protective factors for individual prisoners and to enable care plans to be drawn up to provide individual support, address issues and to help reduce risks. These prisoners then have regular ACCT reviews, are recorded on the daily briefing sheet (DBS) and are discussed at a weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM).

The number of ACCT documents opened over the past year has increased from 134 in 2022 to 166 in 2023. However, we note that there has been a significant increase in the number of prisoners being transferred to HMP Whatton who have a previous history of self-harm. For example, one prisoner had self-harmed on 322 occasions before his transfer to HMP Whatton and a second prisoner had 188 recorded attempts.

To improve staff understanding and provide more bespoke support to the most prolific self-harmers, the head of psychology is taking the lead on some detailed work with these prisoners.

Many prisoners are being transferred to HMP Whatton even though their index offence is not related to a recent sexual offence. Prisoners are resentful of these moves to a prison for persons convicted of sexual offences and this often leads to self-harming.

There have been three deaths in custody from natural causes since our last report, which were investigated by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman in accordance with normal procedure. Their reports have been published.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

There continues to be a relatively low number of disruptive incidents at HMP Whatton, a trend considered to be normal based on previous years and the opinion of the Board, whose members speak regularly with staff and prisoners alike.

During the reporting period, there have been a total of 66 recorded assault incidents. There were 17 prisoner assaults on staff, of which three were serious and the staff required medical treatment. There were 49 prisoner assaults on fellow prisoners, of which eight were reported to be serious. The IMB is concerned that these figures show a significant increase in the number of assaults reported from 2021-2022, when there were nine assaults on staff and 25 assaults on prisoners.

4.4 Use of force

Quarterly use of force meetings discussed all incidents of use of force. The Board regularly observed these meetings, where there continues to be a regular review of all use of force paperwork, CCTV footage and body-worn video camera footage.

Use of force was required on 72 occasions during the reporting period, an increase from 54 incidents that were reported in the previous year. The main reason for use of force is non-compliance, followed by preventing harm to a third party and escorting.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Mandatory drug testing has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The Board's monitoring has led us to conclude that there is relatively low-level drug use in HMP Whatton, although there continues to be occasional finds of psychoactive substances in prisoners' mail and within the establishment. There were 28 drugs finds recorded during the reporting period. The security department shares information with the Board and offers a firm reassurance to us that every effort is made by the prison staff to prevent drug use.

Two mobile telephones were found and 14 weapons.

Homemade alcohol (hooch) was discovered on 24 occasions.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The new accommodation to replace C2 will increase the places available by 39 when commissioned at the end of August 2023. This will increase the maximum prison capacity to 856.

There has been a greater focus on transferring recategorised prisoners to category D prisons from HMP Whatton, enabling prisoners go to the open estate prior to their discharge. At the end of May 2023, there were only six category D prisoners awaiting transfer compared with 35 in May 2022.

Regular conversations have taken place with the catering manager during the past year. Catering has been made more difficult because of rising prices and the lack of availability of some foodstuffs. There have been considerable issues over the past year with shortfalls in the provisions from suppliers resulting in last minute changes in menu, severe issues with menu planning and prisoners being unable to access their choices due to these supply problems, particularly with fresh produce.

There is a new menu management system, Athena, which has been implemented. This has resulted in less waste and the reduced ability to use food for illicit purposes, e.g. making hooch. Prisoners can select menus on a weekly basis. Standards are being maintained despite the increased supply costs.

In May 2023 (the end of the reporting period), the daily allowance for feeding a prisoner at HMP Whatton was £2.30. The meals comprise:

- a. Breakfast - cereals and toast
- b. Lunch - soup, sandwiches and fruit
- c. Evening - hot meal

On Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, the hot meal is served at lunchtime and sandwiches are offered in the evening. Prisoners with money in their account can supplement their diet by buying snacks from the canteen list. Religious and dietary requirements are catered for.

Meals are prepared in the central kitchen and the food is delivered to the wings in heated trollies. Complaints about food remain rare, and the Board notes that the prison provides a good standard of catering.

As a Board, we received very few applications about the quality and quantity of food.

5.2 Segregation

The prison operates an eight-cell care and separation unit (CSU). The unit continues to deal with some challenging prisoners, who often abuse their surroundings and damage cells (e.g. flooding, destroying cell fixtures and ripping up flooring). Board members routinely visit the CSU, which is always found to be well kept. Officers on the CSU are always helpful when Board members visit.

During monitoring visits, when Board members speak with prisoners, they have often been complimentary about the standard of care that they are receiving whilst on the unit. Prisoners are provided with books and jigsaws as well as a radio. Board members can speak freely with prisoners when they visit the CSU.

During visits to the CSU, it is normal for Board members to inspect ACCT documents for prisoners on the unit, where applicable. There have not been any issues raised with these documents which we have always found to be up to date.

Cellular confinement following adjudication was awarded on 140 occasions during the reporting period (141 in 2022-23).

There have been 19 occasions during the reporting period where prisoners have been located in the CSU under Rule 45, good order or discipline (GOoD). For prisoners with continuous stays on the CSU, there are periodic GOoD reviews and Board members have monitored some of these when we have been notified of a scheduled review. The Board is satisfied that reviews are consistently conducted appropriately, fairly and sensitively by the prison staff.

Prisoners with mental health problems continue to be held in the CSU for too long before being transferred to alternative secure accommodation. The proposed statutory limit of 28 days for transfers of prisoners needing secure psychiatric care has not yet been enacted into law.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

Key work is a core part of prison officers' work and it is one of the central aspects of the HMPPS offender management in custody (OMiC) model. It is aimed at improving safety in prisons by building better relationships between staff and prisoners.

The key worker scheme was severely disrupted by the pandemic restrictions with limited key worker/prisoner face-to-face interactions taking place. The key worker scheme has been reintroduced but is taking some time to become fully effective again. However, HMP Whatton has the second highest number of key worker sessions for their comparator sites. Shortages of staff due to detached duty, initial prison officer training and unplanned escorts to hospitals often result in key worker sessions being cancelled.

While the Board is fairly satisfied that key worker sessions continue to take place, it is not convinced that all members of prison staff give key work the priority and enthusiasm that it warrants as prisoners progress during their sentences towards resettlement. Many of the complaints raised to the IMB through the applications process could be resolved by key workers during their interaction with prisoners.

The Governor conducts 'surgeries' with prisoners on a regular basis, emphasising the underlying thrust to establish fair and equitable conditions across the prison.

It is also noted that staff training is resuming with new staff recruited over the last year who are experiencing the differences in regime for the first time. Pressures of maintaining staff levels have also meant that some routine training has not taken place.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The Prison Service is subject to the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. In brief, the Act:

- prohibits discrimination either directly or indirectly
- requires public bodies to take positive action to advance equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and promote understanding.

This means that the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of diversity should run through all aspects of prison life.

HMP Whatton works towards fulfilling these responsibilities across its dealings with the prisoners in its charge. The prison offers a range of offending behaviour programmes specifically for prisoners convicted of sexual offences. It ensures that the access to these opportunities is fair and based on need, irrespective of ethnicity, qualifications or personal characteristics.

Focus group meetings with black, Asian and minority ethnic prisoners continue to tackle the area of negative perceptions, including access to jobs and incentive scheme sanctions.

The HMP Whatton equality action team (WEAT) has examined, and monitored, the fairness and equality of the allocation of jobs. This was in relation to ethnicity, especially as the majority of the population is white. The monitoring showed that prisoners from some ethnic groups were not applying for work because they thought they would not be selected. This led to unequal allocation, but now that changes have been made, applications from minority groups for jobs have increased.

The WEAT committee has representatives from: Gypsy/Roma/Traveller; transgender; ethnic minority; young prisoners; neurodiverse prisoners; prisoners with disabilities.

The prison celebrates special days or periods, such as Black History month, religious events (e.g. Ramadan) and other special occasions related to ethnicity. The chaplaincy ensures the specific observances for faiths with specific dietary provision are met.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy reflects the diversity of faiths in the prison and continues to work hard to cover as many areas as possible. Prisoners of all faith, and those with no faith, are supported by the team. Prisoners who are distressed are able to see an appropriate faith chaplain, and bereaved prisoners receive specialist assistance by appropriately trained staff. In special emergency circumstances, virtual teleconference meetings with family members are arranged.

5.6 Incentives schemes

The incentives policy framework provides a system of privileges, which is a key tool for incentivising prisoners to abide by the rules. It aims to encourage them to engage in rehabilitation, including education, work and substance misuse interventions. It

allows privileges to be taken away from those who behave poorly or refuse to engage.

The Board monitors the fairness and consistency of the incentives scheme. We occasionally receive complaints from prisoners that they have been unfairly punished by a reduction in their incentive status. However, enquiries have not found any evidence to support this view, nor have we observed any malpractice by the staff.

At the end of the Board's reporting year, the numbers at each level of the incentives scheme were as follows: basic, 24 (2.9%); standard, 297 (36.6%); enhanced, 458 (56.5%), super enhanced: 33 (4.1%).

5.7 Complaints

There were 2,634 Comp1 complaints submitted to the prison during the reporting period, an increase of 66 complaints over the previous year. The Board notes that a small number of prisoners submitted multiple complaints about the same subject throughout the year.

We have noticed an improvement in the response times to prisoners' complaints since they have been reviewed at the Governor's morning briefing. However, complaints forwarded to other prisons (usually relating to property) are often ignored and no responses are provided by those prisons.

The number of applications received by the Board remained consistent, at 182 in 2022 and 183 in 2023 (see statistics at Section 8).

5.8 Property

The management of, and accounting for, prisoners' property continues to be a perennial problem apparently across the whole prison estate. The published prisoners' property policy framework has recently been introduced. We have evidence that this has not yet had the desired impact for prisoners and we continue to monitor it.

There have been several complaints submitted to the Board regarding property that did not arrive with the prisoner on transfer. The Board is not confident that communication is good between establishments, with some prisons ignoring enquiries from the prison's administrative staff. Our evidence shows that there is no continuity in ensuring that property follows a prisoner, and that there is no robust audit trail. This is an unacceptable situation, which causes distress and anger to prisoners.

Responses to prisoners' complaints from other establishments are often late or not received at all. Each year, IMBs across the country receive assurances that something will be done about this. The new policy framework does not address these issues because the tracking of prisoners' property is not included.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Healthcare is provided by the Practice Plus Group (PPG), formerly known as Care UK, covering primary care and integrated mental health services. In addition to the PPG, dental care is subcontracted to Time for Teeth, but all other clinicians are provided by PPG. This arrangement is now approaching the end of its term and a new tender will be in place from 1 April 2024.

During the reporting period, staffing levels have greatly improved with a greater proportion of staff now working directly for the provider. However, specialist roles, such as programme deployment and mental health nursing, have been very difficult and protracted to recruit for.

During the reporting period, the healthcare service underwent a change in leadership. However, good working relationships were maintained between healthcare and the prison. The head of healthcare is also a member of the senior leadership team of the prison.

The prison now has a directly employed general practitioner for three days a week and can offer in-house services, such as ultrasounds and X-rays, at monthly surgeries. The prison also has access to specialists without prisoners having to leave the establishment.

The provision of healthcare services continues to be impeded by the poor accommodation reported by the IMB annually for some years. Cramped space, mould and damp on walls create ongoing difficulties for healthcare staff. Whilst improvements to the plumbing works are planned (now delayed until early 2024), there is no plan to improve the general accommodation.

Prisoners wishing to raise concerns about medical treatment can submit forms to the healthcare department for resolution. If this fails, the formal prison complaints procedure can be used. During this reporting period, 16 concerns have been registered with the healthcare department.

The IMB received 16 applications relating to healthcare in the past year, an increase of two from the previous year. Eight of these applications were from three people. Most of these applications were received at the beginning of the reporting year, a few months after the pandemic restrictions were removed in the UK.

6.2 Physical healthcare

The return to normality, after the effects of the pandemic, presented significant challenges to the department. An increase in waiting times was inevitable. This was managed in a very professional manner and due to this no complaints were made to us.

At weekends, healthcare is provided by a team of general nurses, assistants and mental health nurses. The weekend attendance of the mental health nurses allows for daily visits to CSU to continue.

Outpatient hospital appointments have now returned to normal, which has resulted in prison staff being involved in more escort duties; this in turn depletes staff in the prison, resulting in potential changes to the prison regime. There are significant

efforts under way to increase the in-house services offered to prisoners to reduce the need for external appointments. Some prisoners refuse to attend hospital appointments despite being advised to.

On release from prison, every patient receives a discharge letter containing a summary of their medical records to give to their new GP upon registration with a practice. The prisoner also receives at least two weeks' worth of their medication to support them between release and registration with a GP. On release from HMP Whatton, most prisoners go to approved premises that have dedicated pharmacies.

6.3 Mental health

By the end of the reporting period, the mental health, substance misuse (SMS) and intellectual or developmental disability (IDD) team was at full complement.

The mental health team comprises:

- a mental health nurse (who is also the clinical lead)
- further mental health nurses
- registered nurse for learning difficulties
- learning difficulties psychologist
- learning difficulties assistant.

Prisoners can self-refer for mental healthcare and all referrals are reviewed at daily meetings. A daily duty professional covers referrals and ACCT reviews, and a weekly multidisciplinary team meeting discusses more complex cases. These professionals also attend Rule 45 hearings.

The IMB has reported in previous years that there have been significant problems and, therefore, delays with transferring prisoners to secure specialist mental health hospitals. This results in prisoners being held in CSU segregation cells for long periods whilst the receiving hospitals assess and approve admittance. There is then a further delay for a place to become available. This delay can have serious effects on the prisoner's mental health and issues for the prison in dealing with such severe cases in CSU. Long-term use of CSU accommodation for vulnerable prisoners is not suitable.

6.4 Social Care

HMP Whatton has a relatively elderly age profile of prisoners. The most elderly, frail and prisoners with disabilities are all housed in one wing where Nottinghamshire Social Services provide care assistants to support them. Social care plans have been prepared in consultation with the prisoners.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

Time out of cell has now returned to pre-pandemic levels, with the exception of staff shortages resulting in regime changes, often at short notice.

Throughout the reporting period, the gymnasiums have remained open and prisoners are accessing four periods each week. This covers sessions including games, use of the cross trainer, cycle or rowing machines, and weight training.

An important part of the uptake to use the gymnasiums is the enthusiasm of the departmental staff and the effective use of the facilities. An example of this is the 5km run using the sports field within the perimeter of the prison.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

There is no dedicated programme for drug rehabilitation. Patients receive support and clinical treatment for substance misuse as required.

6.7 Soft skills

There are many other significant contributors to prisoners' wellbeing and their progress toward resettlement. Examples of this are: the Whatton multimedia studio, providing experiences in both printed word and spoken word; the Koestler Trust fine cell work; and a variety of other initiatives, such as the Reading Dogs, where prisoners read to specially trained dogs to improve their literacy levels. There is also involvement with local theatre companies.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

Education services at HMP Whatton are provided by People Plus.

Access to education classes was restricted because of Covid-19 during quarters one and two of 2022. The regime was further affected by sporadic wing lockdowns in quarters three and four.

'Advice and guidance supporting offenders in custody' inductions are held within the second week of a prisoner's arrival at HMP Whatton. Half of the prisoners assessed during the reporting year were on entry level 2 for English - equivalent to a national school curriculum for attainment at age seven to nine or below. For maths, two-thirds were classified as entry level 2. Neurodiversity is identified through these assessments. Many assessments identified either mental health issues and/or dyslexia.

Four full-time inclusion support coordinators work on the wings with neurodiversity learners who are often anxious or reluctant to attend the education department. All teaching staff are fully qualified in teaching and experts in their specialist subject field.

The introduction of a new reading strategy includes an assessment which gives learners a reading and spelling score. It highlights the support that is needed to develop these skills. To date, 64 reading assessments have been completed.

Sixty-nine different courses have run during the year. There were 1,454 starters with 1,419 completing the courses. Overall, 1,332 (92%) of starters achieved a qualification.

Courses include functional skills in English and mathematics, vocational training for decorating and horticulture, and personal skills, such as preparation for release. Employability training includes bookkeeping and accounting, along with business and enterprise qualifications.

Learner forums, consultations and monthly feedback surveys help to define what is taught. These have highlighted a need for more vocational programmes.

The introduction of a health and safety in construction level 2 course has led to 71 learners qualifying. This success enables them to work on a construction site on release.

The introduction of sector qualifications will address labour shortages, aligning the majority of qualifications and training to employer-led standards. Prisoners have long-term benefits from these courses.

The prison offers 30 different employment activity types. These all require a minimum maths and English level 2.

A recent initiative has been a pilot study to issue secure non-networked HMPPS-assured Chromebook laptops to certain prisoners to allow study in-cell.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Pandemic restrictions were lifted just before the start of the reporting period, and all workshops and other work facilities have been open and are operating at full capacity.

The activities hub, industries and the People Plus education staff work together as a team and make full use of the facilities and a limited budget to provide suitable work for the prisoners that will improve their employability on release.

There are 745 workspaces, but this is gradually increasing. These include:

- multimedia: this runs the prison radio from its own studio and offers printing services
- woodwork: this has continued to make items for use within the prison e.g. hives, benches, pin boards. The new instructor is currently obtaining further qualifications to enable him to deliver the Woodwise course
- waste management: this offers recycling qualification 1, Waste Management Industry Training and Advisory Board. This facility has elaborate plans for expansion and is working with Bakers Waste, a commercial waste management company, to the advantage of prisoners - this company will provide guaranteed interviews on release for prisoners working in this area. Rebates are also generated for waste streams in this facility which are offset against the prison budget
- horticulture: this maintains the impressive prison grounds and offers City and Guild certificates and diplomas. The large produce garden supplies the canteen and seven other local prisons with fruit and vegetables, putting £15,000 back into the prison industries budget. Prisoners appreciate that the skills developed enhance their life in general and their prospects of work after prison
- paints: a well-run workshop offering a basic entry qualification and then up to level 2
- DHL: supplies a number of local prisons with canteen supplies for prisoners and offers a City and Guilds level 2 qualification certificate
- kitchen and staff mess: provide an opportunity to obtain level 1 and 2 in catering and hospitality, and in food hygiene
- textiles workshops: offer a number of City and Guilds courses and make workwear, net bags, catering jackets and sandbags for the Ministry of Defence
- laundry: serves HMP Whatton and other local prison establishments. The laundry has recently benefited from the investment in new machinery. It offers the Guild of Cleaners and Launderers qualifications, recognised as an industry-specific qualification in the laundry business
- a cycle maintenance workshop opened in mid-2023 to replace the bricklaying training facility.

At the end of the reporting period (May 2023), statistics for the employment status of prisoners showed that:

Status	No	%
Employed	577	71%
Unemployed	72	9%
Retired	77	9.4%
Medically retired	52	6.5%
Unfit	2	0.25%
Attending programmes	31	4%

Ofsted conducted an inspection between 9 and 12 January 2023. The overall effectiveness outcome, previously 'outstanding', was 'requires improvement'. The inspection team highlighted that: "instructors do not promote high enough aspirations for prisoners and that workshops lack clear and demanding goals that fail to provide opportunities for progression". Furthermore, they commented that:

- there were sufficient places for work
- prisoners were encouraged to apply
- places are allocated quickly
- prisoners had access to several qualifications in vocational areas, helping them to improve their life and employment chances on release.

Ofsted inspectors felt that timely support was not given to those with learning difficulties and disabilities, thereby putting them at a greater disadvantage, both in their daily life and wellbeing, and in their prospects for life after prison.

The workshops were complimented on being kept tidy, and that prisoners felt safe and were kept safe.

The prison's senior management team (SMT) has devised a plan to work on the points raised from the inspection. However, the SMT felt that the inspectors did not fully understand the nature of the prisoners at HMP Whatton, in particular, their future employability in the light of their offences.

There is a reported commitment to revise delivery in all workshops and work to implement a clear route of progression in in each area and to include job descriptions for prisoners. There will be work booklets to ensure feedback is provided effectively.

The IMB will monitor the impact of this.

7.3 Offender management, progression

Whilst it is disappointing that prison offender manager (POM) caseloads remain high due to staff shortages, it is pleasing to see that the re-categorisation backlog has been cleared and currently only one prisoner is awaiting a move to open conditions.

There remain five prisoners who have Parole Board recommendations to move to category D (open prison) and are awaiting Secretary of State approval, though we

have been informed that the national backlog will be cleared by the end of September 2023.

There has been a noticeable improvement in the allocation of accommodation on the first night of release, with 100% of prisoners released this financial year having housing upon release.

The first lifer/imprisonment for public protection (IPP) support group since prior to the pandemic has taken place and will be scheduled to meet bimonthly. This will help to support and inform this complex group to move forward in their sentence progression.

It is a matter of concern to the Board that the number of prisoners serving indeterminate sentences (IPP/lifers) remains high (191 at the end of May 2023 – 24% of the prison's population).

In February 2023, the government rejected calls from the Justice Select Committee to undertake a re-sentencing exercise for those serving IPP sentences. It also rejected further recommendations from the committee for the management of those on IPP sentences and their futures. IPP prisoners who spoke to IMB members described increased feelings of hopelessness and frustration following the government's decision. In some cases, this led to poor mental health, violence and an increase in disruptive behaviour. Many IPP prisoners were questioning whether they would ever be released now, and feared they would die in prison.

HMP Whatton is one of the largest specialist prisons in Europe to offer offending behaviour programmes to people with convictions for sexual offences. There are a number of specialist programmes designed to address offending behaviour: some address sexual or violent offending; others may relate to emotional management, substance abuse, cognitive development and victim awareness, or gambling. Programmes can be mandated through a sentence plan or may be a mandatory requirement for parole consideration. Some of these programmes can be entered voluntarily.

The suspension of most of the accredited programmes during the pandemic was a source of frustration to many prisoners. They arrived at HMP Whatton with the expectation that they would start an accredited programme as part of their sentence plan. However, because of the pandemic restrictions, this was not possible. Prisoners are now being prioritised depending on their sentence or potential release date.

7.4 Family contact

HMP Whatton prisoners come from many areas of the country and so visits to the prison usually involve difficult journeys. Visits are well managed and facilities for family visitors are good. There is a purpose-built visitor reception centre adjacent to the prison car park where visitors can wait until called forward to the prison visits hall.

Because of the nature of their offences, many prisoners have no contact with their immediate family or contact is not allowed at all.

The prison has upgraded the visiting facilities with more comfortable and appropriate furniture. The visits hall is within the secure area of the establishment and visitors are escorted through to it.

The installation of the in-cell telephone system will make a difference to prisoners. It will improve privacy, compared with calls made in the current boxes outside the wing or in a transit area, where conversations may be overheard. Furthermore, the in-cell telephone will also provide greater accessibility for prisoners with disabilities who currently have problems in accessing the boxes.

Telephone contact for foreign prisoners remains a problem. Prisoners have raised with us that calls to overseas countries are expensive, and more than they can afford for any length of time. However, charges and connections remain outside the management of the prison. Matters of security at the other end, and the ability of families to access telephones, are also difficulties that are impossible to overcome.

7.5 Resettlement planning

Under the probation reform programme, the approach to providing resettlement services changed in June 2021. The National Probation Service (NPS) and Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRSs) unified to become the new Probation Service. The responsibility for delivering resettlement activity transferred to the regional probation directors (RPDs) and to commissioned rehabilitative service (CRS) providers, commissioned by RPDs.

Prior to release, sentenced people in prison will have a plan for addressing outstanding rehabilitation needs, which is managed by the prison offender manager (POM) in partnership with the community offender manager (COM). CRS provide delivery of resettlement and pre-release interventions. These services will support sentence management activities completed by the probation COM and pre-release staff in the prison.

The HMPPS offender flows strategy sets out three stages of prison custody: reception, training and resettlement prisons. Prisoners who enter the resettlement stage of their sentence will progress from HMP Whatton to a resettlement prison to be prepared for release into the community. The sequencing of offending behaviour programmes and specific risk reduction work, however, often results in HMP Whatton releasing prisoners with no resettlement resource provided.

Six months prior to a prisoner's release, a multi-agency risk management meeting is held to make arrangements to hand over the prisoner to community supervision. All associated risk and public protection risk factors are considered, along with their resettlement needs. A collaborative pre-release course is delivered to prepare for release and includes the following contributors:

- Department for Work and Pensions
- careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG)

- New Futures Network (job search on release)
- offender management unit
- substance misuse services
- the Shaw Trust (work and health programme on release).

The course is designed to gain active prisoner involvement and includes CV writing and the disclosure process to employers. The course focus is on gaining employment on release and the support available to do so in the community.

On average, 86% of HMP Whatton's population are classed as high risk or above, which means that they must be released into supervised accommodation, usually probation-approved premises. Accommodation on release is a real challenge to achieve. The high-risk population are allocated into probation-approved premises. The medium risk cohort, on occasions, have to report to the local authority on release to secure accommodation after all avenues to seek accommodation have been exhausted. The same applies to those who are released at end of sentence with no licence conditions. The Prison Service has no jurisdiction on release, and often this cohort fail to engage with resettlement services.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Total number of visits to the establishment	186

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	2	9
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	5	13
C	Equality	1	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	11	13
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	12	18
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	4	10
F	Food and kitchens	7	9
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	14	16
H1	Property within the establishment	20	11
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	18	15
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	8	7
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	10	10
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	10	13
K	Transfers	3	8
L	Miscellaneous	57	31
	Total number of applications	182	183



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