



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Whatton  
New Lane  
Whatton  
Nottingham  
NG13 9FQ

10 November 2023

Dear Chair,

**HMP WHATTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2022 to 31 MAY 2023**

Thank you for your Board's report for the year ending 31 May 2023. Thank you for providing a comprehensive picture of HMP Whatton over the reporting period, especially as you continued to operate with several vacancies.

I was saddened to hear there were three deaths in custody during the reporting year due to natural causes. As you are aware the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) carry out independent investigations into deaths in custody and I would like to assure the Board my officials take recommendations from the PPO very seriously.

I appreciate the Board's ongoing concerns about prisoners that are subject to Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences. The Justice Select Committee (JSC) published their report into the IPP sentence on 28 September 2022 following a year-long inquiry. The Government has now issued a formal response to the Committee's report, which can be accessed on the parliament.uk website. The Government continues to focus on the rehabilitation of IPP prisoners through a refreshed and updated Action Plan, published on 26 April 2023, as a response to the JSC's report. The Plan provides a renewed focus on supporting those serving IPP sentences in both custody and the community, by ensuring that each prisoner has a robust and effective sentence plan, tailored to their individual need, and supporting those in the community on licence to comply with their conditions.

The refreshed Action Plan will be a strong driver to build on past achievements and continue to provide the best possible opportunities for those serving an IPP sentence to progress towards a safe and sustainable release. These efforts in recent years delivered a substantial reduction in the number of IPP prisoners who have never been released. That number stood at 1,269 at the end of September 2023, a reduction from 1,437 at the end of September 2022. It remains a priority for His Majesty's Government that all those serving the IPP sentence receive the support they need to progress towards safe release from custody or, where they are being supervised on licence in the community, towards having their licence terminated altogether. In that respect, the Lord Chancellor advised in his statement to the House of Commons, on 16 October, that he would be looking at options to curtail the licence period to restore greater proportionality to IPP sentences in line with recommendation eight of the JSC's report. He will come back to Parliament on this in due course.

The Mental Health Bill, which introduces a statutory 28-day time limit between referral to transfer within which individuals with an assessed severe mental health need must be transferred from prison or detention centre to hospital under the Mental Health Act, is expected to be enacted during Spring 2024. This mirrors the standards set out in the '*Good practice guidance on the transfer and remission of adult prisoners under the Mental Health Act 1983*', published by NHS England in 2021. To support this reform, there are ongoing workstreams between NHS England and stakeholders in the criminal justice system to promote clinical best practice and timely access to care in an appropriate setting for those whose mental health needs cannot be met in prison and other places of detention. The Bill will be brought forward when Parliamentary time allows. Announcements on the contents of the forthcoming legislative programme are a matter for the King's Speech, to be made later this year.

It was encouraging to receive your comments about the good work of the equality action team that led to increased applications from minority groups for internal jobs along with the numerous wellbeing initiatives that are available at HMP Whatton. I was also impressed to learn about the horticultural work at the prison resulting in a large amount of produce for HMP Whatton and seven other prisons together with a £15,000 return to the prison industries budget.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Justice Secretary and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Whatton.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Damian Hinds', is centered on the page.

**Damian Hinds**  
**Minister for Prisons and Probation**

## **HMP WHATTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2022 to 31 MAY 2023**

### **HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report**

#### **Resettlement Provision**

HMP Whatton is an example of recent improvements in the national staffing picture within prisons. From June 2022 to June 2023 the number of Band 3-5 prison officers increased by approximately 15%, however we also recognise some staff are then assigned to detached duty. HMPPS remains committed to ensuring prisons are sufficiently resourced and that we retain levels of experience fundamental to delivering quality outcomes for prisoners. Prisoners at HMP Whatton are encouraged to engage with resettlement processes and the prison advertises job vacancies, provides CV writing assistance, and assists with information on disclosure of offences. The recent appointment of a Head of Education, Skills and Work manager and a Neurodiversity manager significantly strengthens learning and skills opportunities throughout the establishment in order to meet the needs of the labour market.

Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) are available to all sentenced individuals released from Resettlement or Non-resettlement prisons and are designed to support sentenced prisoners and those subject to Probation supervision in the community address the needs linked to their offending and to achieve the stability they need to do so. Community Offender Managers (COMs) are based in the community and have overall responsibility for providing resettlement support to all prisoners released from HMP Whatton. COMs engage with specialists based in prison, including the Offender Management Unit, and in the community and making sure a resettlement plan is in place for when people leave prison. HMP Whatton is one of the largest providers of Offending Behaviour Programmes and has an impressive record in securing accommodation upon release. Nationally, HMPPS will be introducing Resettlement Passports which will be set up prior to release and will bring together the key information and services that an individual needs to resettle into society, such as bank accounts, CVs and ID to prove right to work and rent.

#### **Prisoners' Property**

HMPPS notes the Board's concerns about the transfer of prisoners' property despite implementation of the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework on 5 September 2022. The Framework places an emphasis on ensuring compliance with volumetric control limits, since anything within these limits will be transferred with the prisoner. Volumetric control limits apply to all prisons and the Framework contains a leaflet to explain these limits to prisoners. The Framework introduced a new requirement that prisons must transfer excess property within four weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances which make this impossible. The Framework is clear that Governors should ensure management checks are undertaken to have confidence that prisoners' property is being handled correctly and with care. HMPPS will monitor the impact of the new Framework going forward and will continue to look at what further improvements can be made.

#### **Security System**

The replacement of the Eureka key security system has been allocated capital funding for completion during the current financial year. HMPPS is currently awaiting cost estimates from the facilities management provider. If the estimates fall within the allocated funding, the project will be completed before the end of March 2024.