



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Warren Hill

**For reporting year
1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024**

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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

Warren Hill is a category C prison (a training and resettlement prison that holds those whose escape risk is considered low but who cannot be trusted in open conditions) for adult men, with an operational capacity (the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime), as of 31 May 2024, of 267¹, the same as in the previous year. The population is drawn from all parts of the country and the prison provides for three cohorts of prisoners, as set out below.

2.1 Progression regime

The progression regime was introduced in 2014 to enable prisoners who had failed in open conditions, or who were otherwise categorised as unsuitable for placement in open conditions, to demonstrate to the parole board that their risk to the public had reduced sufficiently, thereby enabling them to move to open conditions or be released on licence.

At the time of writing the report, in July 2024, this group of prisoners mainly comprises life-sentenced prisoners and those serving imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentences, of which there are 68 in total (55 IPP prisoners and 13 recalled prisoners) or extended determinate sentences (EDS).

Prisoners on the progression regime are housed in three residential units, one of which is for older men (Sycamore unit) and those with a range of health conditions that require additional support.

In 2022, a four-bed unit was opened, as an on-site approved premises for prisoners who are waiting to move to external approved premises (which provide intensive supervision for those who present a high or very high risk of serious harm), or a category D (open) prison, or to be released on temporary licence.

2.2 Therapeutic community (TC)

This unit accommodates up to 40 prisoners and provides intensive group-based therapy for prisoners who have been assessed as being able to benefit from such a regime.

The TC runs under the guidance of psychologists and trained officers and is conducted along democratic lines, whereby prisoners have a significant say in what goes on in the unit and the decisions that are made.

Importantly, those who join the TC must agree to participate in the community.

The TC is also involved in decisions about whether prisoners join the community and whether they can remain if they breach the community ethos. When the prisoners are not engaged in therapy, they work around the prison and participate in education programmes.

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.

2.3 Psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE)

This unit accommodates up to 20 prisoners, primarily to offer transitional support for those who have completed therapy. Some of the prisoners transfer to the PIPE from Warren Hill TC and others apply to join from other prisons.

2.4 Other services

Services to the prison are provided by external agencies as follows:

- Healthcare: Practice Plus Group
- Education: People Plus
- Support for substance abuse: Phoenix Futures
- Careers advice and guidance services: The Forward Trust, which also runs the IAPT service (improving access to psychological therapies).

Other agencies contracted to work in the prison include Britten Pears Arts, Ormiston Trust, Shannon Trust, Samaritans, New Futures Network and Fine Cell (tapestry and crafts).

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

From its observations, the IMB at Warren Hill considers it is a prison that continues to feel safe for both prisoners and staff. The prison has a zero-tolerance policy towards violence and prisoners are aware of this.

There are occasional reports of low-level bullying and, where intelligence is received, the prison makes use of challenge, support, and intervention plans (CSIPs), which are used to manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence. There were no deaths in custody in the reporting year and the IMB is pleased to report that CSIPs and assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans (used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide) continue to be used well.

Fair and humane treatment

The IMB notes that prisoners are involved in decision-making and members have observed many of the prison's formal meetings with the prisoners' council raising issues of concern. Prisoners are encouraged to explore solutions to problems rather than simply complaining, and the Board has seen many examples of useful interactions between staff and prisoners.

However, the IMB raises, yet again, concerns about the provision and quality of the food provided by the kitchen at HMP Hollesley Bay. The IMB reiterates its view that the reinstatement of a kitchen at Warren Hill should be prioritised. However, it is recognised that the feasibility study, undertaken in 2023, considers exploring the possibility of expanding the number of prisoners accommodated at Warren Hill by around 100 should provide a solution to this longstanding issue. However, the IMB is absolutely convinced that, with the expansion in prisoner numbers at both Warren Hill and the neighbouring Hollesley Bay, the current arrangements for the provision of meals will not work.

Hollesley Bay staff are working out of a temporary kitchen and will not be able to deal with a further expansion in prisoner numbers. All too often, the transportation of the food (despite new hot trolleys being purchased in the reporting year) is not reliable. This results in food going cold and, on a couple of occasions, it has been tampered with.

Health and wellbeing

The standard of healthcare provision is comparable with that in the community.

The increase in the number of older prisoners and those with social care needs has resulted in approximately 10% of the population having social care needs and more prisoners going to hospital for prolonged periods. This has cost and staffing implications for the prison.

Progression and resettlement

The focus of Warren Hill remains on ensuring progression to successful resettlement. Success at parole hearings, either leading to release or referral to category D (open) facilities, continues to be high and ran at 55% over the reporting

year. The decision by the Secretary of State to review Parole Board decisions to release life and IPP prisoners continues to cause disquiet and the IMB was disappointed in the then Secretary of State's decision not to re-sentence (after investigation and detailed consideration) prisoners with IPP sentences.

The withdrawal of the release on temporary licence (ROTL) pilot was regretted by the Board. Again, the IMB is very disappointed at the decision by the Secretary of State to suspend the pilot and continues to urge reinstatement of the programme as soon as possible.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

The Board urges that the decision to suspend the ROTL pilot be reviewed.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

In light of ongoing concerns about the provision of food from the Hollesley Bay kitchen, the Board welcomes the progress that has been made on this front, in as much as that the proposed expansion of the number of cells at Warren Hill is fully dependent on new kitchen facilities being provided at the prison. The staff and the IMB are as one on this issue and feel that it is a necessary and absolute condition before the proposed expansion can go ahead.

The IMB also feels that the provision must be of a high standard that will enable food to be stored, prepared and cooked on the Warren Hill site. Any suggestion of warming up pre-cooked food will encounter the existing problems and, quite simply, will be wholly inadequate.

Warren Hill is well maintained, although, as outlined in last year's report, there are some areas of the prison where further investment is required. Refurbishment is underway on one of the shower blocks, but there is still a lot of work to be done on other shower blocks.

As the prison expands, the IMB would welcome reassurance that the ancillary facilities and training and educational facilities will be increased in similar proportions to the overall expansion of the number of cells.

TO THE GOVERNOR

The prison seems to have prioritised the need to ensure support for prisoners on release to reduce the recall rate. However, it needs to go further and ensure that prisoners are up to date with digital technology, so they are able to use at least the basics, such as email and online banking, etc, which are so critical to successful functioning in the modern world.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and Induction

Warren Hill continues to take practical measures to maintain the safe operating, working and living environment that has been established across its estate. Its multidisciplinary case review, prior to a new reception, identifies specific vulnerabilities and risks that a new prisoner might pose. Many of its management meetings (such as the segregation, monitoring and review group/SMARG meetings and safety in custody meetings) promote a strong safety thematic. All meetings having prisoner representation and the IMB is encouraged to observe.

The IMB is informed of new arrivals and aims to meet new prisoners within their induction period, normally in the first week, to see how the induction is going and to discuss the role of the IMB.

The IMB has observed that the reception-induction process aims to achieve a friendly and stress-free time for new prisoners, which is borne out by mostly positive feedback from new arrivals.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

In the reporting year, there have been no deaths or suicides in custody. A total of 48 prisoners had ACCTs opened, of which 13 self-harmed. There have been 69 incidents of self-harm reported, 47 of which were inflicted by just three individuals. This confirms that there has been no general increase in incidents of self-harm in the prison population since last year (when there were 11 incidents involving five individuals), but that complex cases exist and require careful management.

The three individuals who accounted for 68% of the self-harm incidents are recognised as such and receive bespoke action plans involving multi-disciplinary teams aimed at individual prisoner vulnerability. In this respect, the IMB notes the active role of the training custodial manager to ensure a comprehensive training programme and ongoing communications, including recent guidance that covers all aspects of constant supervision.

In parallel, the IMB regularly monitors open ACCTs and CSIPs, engaging with staff to ensure support is consistently offered.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

The prison continues to exercise a zero-tolerance policy on physical violence. In the reporting period, there were three prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and no assaults on staff. The IMB notes that only one of the assaults was serious (in July 2023), which resulted in the assailant being immediately transferred. In another of the incidents, a prisoner was transferred after a reported assault, but was then returned when the claim was found to be false, with the prisoner making the false accusation transferred himself. These swift actions serve as a deterrent, underpinning the prison's intent to preserve the integrity of its progressive regime.

IMB members continue to be made aware of low-level intimidation, which is partly addressed using CSIPs if bullying is suspected. Of significance, however, is that IMB members, during their routine monitoring activities and observations of many meetings, have not been aware of any serious safety concerns expressed by prisoners or staff. Again, this is a testament to the prison's zero-tolerance policy.

Self-isolation is not a major issue at Warren Hill. Both staff and the Listener team (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners) keep a watchful eye on individuals who are not engaging with others on their wing and are available to offer support.

4.4 Use of force

Officers at Warren Hill maintain their currency in the use of force, including the employment of PAVA (pelargonic acid vanillyl amide), an incapacitant spray, for which there have been zero recorded uses during the reporting year. Meanwhile, the IMB has identified five cases of 'guiding holds' (the lowest level technique that can be applied by one or two officers to allow them to escort a prisoner through or away from an area to prevent a situation from escalating) being issued.

Staff are encouraged to wear body-worn video cameras, footage from which is reviewed at the quarterly meetings of SMARG. Like many other meetings, a prisoner representative sits on the SMARG, with the IMB observing.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The prevention of illicit items is aided by both staff dynamic security and technology, which includes the use of a body scanner, a drug trace detection system and mobile phone detection equipment. Both active and passive drug-detection sniffer dogs are utilised for visits, incoming mail and prisoner and staff searches.

Within the reporting period, there has been one find of 'hooch' (alcohol illicitly brewed in the prison), two finds of new psychoactive substances (NPS) paper and nine finds of prescription medications. Other illicit finds have included smoking paraphernalia, USB devices, mobile phone chargers, mobile phones and console games rated for 18-year-olds and over.

While the detected use of illicit drugs is limited, there remains a concern about the continued misuse of legitimate prescription medications, such as pregabalin and gabapentin by a small percentage of the population. This has been highlighted within the mandatory drug testing statistics, where all positive tests have been the result of refusing a test or the presence of prescription medications. The mandatory drug testing levels are 10%, highlighting reported concerns, through intelligence or drug testing, which are shared with both the healthcare unit and Phoenix Futures (a charity that provides support for prisoner with substance abuse). These are discussed at weekly stability meetings, with updates given to prison offender managers (POMs) and key workers.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation and clothing

All prisoners are housed in single-cell accommodation. In the older units, there are flush toilets in each cell and prisoners have access to communal showers. The accommodation for the TC and PIPE is more modern and prisoners have in-cell showers. The prison is aware of the inadequacies of the showering facilities and has already refurbished showers in one block, but there are other blocks where the showers need overhauling. This tends to heighten the obvious deficiencies in other blocks and leads to further complaints and dissatisfaction. The IMB would welcome and support a structured capital programme, introduced over a three-year period, with the necessary financial resources attached.

Work on the provision of inundation points, where hoses can be inserted in case of fire, has been undertaken. However, the IMB's concern remains about some cells where secondary inundation points are not possible. New cell doors are still required, but will not be fitted before 2025 and the issue remains on the prison's risk register.

The on-site approved premises to house four prisoners was opened in September 2021. This self-contained unit allows prisoners who have had their parole hearing and are waiting either to be released or transferred to an open prison to manage their own cooking and cleaning and take responsibility for organising their work, domestic activity and communal arrangements. The IMB welcomes this provision, as it benefits the prisoners considerably.

The communal areas in all the units are clean and well maintained. Three of the five units have gardens attached and the other two have open-air association areas with seating.

The prison has adopted measures to control vermin, including sealed waste bins and cleaning regimes.

5.2 Food

Food for Warren Hill is prepared by the kitchen at HMP Hollesley Bay, which is about a mile away. The kitchen is housed in a temporary but well-equipped field kitchen, a vast improvement on the previous kitchen, which was criticised by IMB members in the past and, ultimately, condemned.

Nevertheless, complaints about food are a constant refrain during IMB visits, with quality, quantity, choice and temperature being the most common issues raised. The provision of additional hot trolleys for the transport of the food has marginally improved the temperature of the food, but if delivery is late (for whatever reason) the time elapsed often undermines the improvements put in place.

Some food often fails to arrive on the units and replacement portions then need to be requested from the Hollesley Bay kitchen. It is unclear where and how food goes missing. Officers spend a lot of time checking food deliveries at Hollesley Bay and at Warren Hill. The pressures on the Hollesley Bay kitchen have grown with the increase of around 200 prisoners (Plomesgate and The Terraces units) at that prison. And, with Warren Hill having a planned expansion of a further 95 prisoners, the pressures on the existing facilities can only escalate. However, additional duties

have been attached to the residential supervising officers to check on the quality and quantity of the food.

Possibly, and because of the above, requests for special diets have increased, especially vegan diets, and these are carefully monitored. Prisoners who are found to be eating non-vegan food are removed from the vegan list.

The provision of special medical diets has also created difficulties, with a lack of clarity over the role of the healthcare unit in determining which diets are required. Prisoners often complain that the special diet packs they receive are incomplete or incorrect, so an officer from Warren Hill now goes to the Hollesley Bay kitchen to check the packs.

IMB members are clear that the solution to many of these issues is the reinstatement of a kitchen on the Warren Hill site. This would also provide valuable training and employment opportunities and would address many of the concerns.

Discussions and a more detailed feasibility study has been held over the reporting year to establish if an increase in the number of prisoners (now shaping up to be in the order of 100 additional men) can be accommodated at Warren Hill. Should this be the case, it is recognised that the kitchen arrangements at Warren Hill will need to be improved and self-sufficiency increased. The IMB regards this quid-pro quo suggestion as an elegant solution to what has been an ongoing source of frustration.

5.3 Segregation

There is no segregation unit at Warren Hill. When Hollesley Bay (which is about a mile away) prisoners were found to be in breach of rules, they were traditionally held on residential wings at Warren Hill, pending adjudication (a disciplinary hearing held when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules) and/or transfer. Hollesley Bay prison has developed two cells to meet this requirement and the concerns of the Warren Hill IMB have largely disappeared.

5.4 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

From the Board's observations, staff and prisoner relationships have generally been good. This has been helped in no small measure by the involvement of prisoners in a range of meetings, including safer custody, reducing reoffending, the disability and inclusion action team (DIAT) and the prisoners' council.

In common with other prisons, Warren Hill has experienced significant changes in staff due to retirement and moves to other occupations. As a result, there are large numbers of younger and relatively inexperienced staff. This gives rise, on occasion, to comments from prisoners that officers do not have the skills to deal with the issues facing them. However, IMB members feel that the support given by managers is appropriate. Since March 2022, there has been a monthly training lockdown so that staff can complete refresher training on a range of topics, including key working skills. This continued in 2023.

In the reporting year, there has been an 87% delivery rate of key worker sessions (an encouraging increase from 69% in the previous reporting year), where each prisoner meets on a fortnightly basis with their key worker. Ideally, this should be 100% and the prison staff will continue to make efforts to increase the current percentage.

5.5 Equality and diversity

An analysis of the population of Warren Hill in December 2023 showed 71% were white, 27.5% were black or had roots in minority ethnic communities, and just under 1.5% were from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

In the reporting year, to the end of May 2023, 28 discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) were submitted. A total of 17 (60%) of these related to race discrimination. Of the total of 28, five were upheld; one was partially upheld; 20 were not upheld; and two were withdrawn.

The IMB observes DIAT meetings, which are held regularly through the year. These are attended by equality representatives from all units and by the community diversity officer from the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality. The IMB has been impressed by the opportunity prisoners have in these meetings to question managers on issues such as prisoner employment and the efforts made to recruit staff from ethnic minorities. The prisoners meet with a supervising officer beforehand to look at the data for the meeting and identify issues of concern.

Each month, the prison aims to raise awareness of one of the groups identified as having protected characteristics (these include, among others, race, religion, age, disability, sex and sexual orientation, each of which it is unlawful to discriminate against). This involves staff and prisoner representatives working together to develop displays and events to mark the month.

5.6 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team has now reached full strength, with chaplains covering Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and those of the Jewish faith, plus chaplains to support Jehovah's Witnesses and Pagans. The space offered by the multi-faith room has proved invaluable for meetings.

The IMB is pleased to note that 11 prison visitors were active in the prison throughout this reporting year. Two further applicants are under consideration via the approved prison visitors' scheme and will soon start to work with prisoners who would otherwise receive no visits. The IMB fully endorses this work carried out under the guidance of the chaplaincy.

5.7 Incentives schemes

All new arrivals are classified as on the enhanced (top) level of the local incentives scheme, so they have an automatic entitlement to wear their own clothes and have a television set in their cell, among other things. Within the progression regime at Warren Hill, a system of enhanced behaviour monitoring (EBM) largely replaces the incentives policy framework. This enables a prisoner to progress by providing evidence to an EBM board that he is addressing his risk factors. Central to this process is the role of the key worker, who meets the prisoner regularly to explore issues and to challenge negative behaviour. There are three EBM stages, with additional rewards at stages 2 and 3, which might include access to the shop and coffee shop, opportunities to opt out of evening meals and longer family social visits.

5.8 Complaints

In the reporting year, the prison received 476 complaints from prisoners, a reduction of 147 (24%) compared with the previous year. The greatest number of complaints were concerned with residential matters (13%), which mirrors the trend from the last reporting period. The 'other' category received a significant number of complaints (9%), while property made up 8% of the complaints, a drop of 2% from last year. Staff and the OASys (offender assessment system), which is used to measure the risks and needs of prisoners, accounted for a further 7% each.

In terms of quality assurance, a random 10% sample of all prison complaints and how they were dealt with is examined monthly by the Governor, the Deputy Governor and the head of business assurance.

5.9 Property

As always, issues around property have been prominent in both complaints to the prison and applications (written representations) to the IMB.

However, the tracking system staff introduced and the IMB reported on last year continues to work well.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Healthcare is provided by Practice Plus Group in modern, purpose-built accommodation and there is a full-time manager on site. Healthcare staff meet new arrivals at reception and a healthcare questionnaire is completed. Feedback from prisoners indicates that long-term healthcare concerns experienced by prisoners are identified at Warren Hill and referrals to specialist services are made appropriately.

The GP service is provided on a locum basis, which has occasionally led to shortages. Opticians and dentists regularly attend the prison and referrals are made for physiotherapy and podiatry. The IMB considers that the provision of healthcare services is on a par with that offered in the community.

Healthcare staff are in attendance from Monday to Friday, 7.30am-7.30pm, and from 7.30am-5.30pm at weekends. Outside these hours, the prison makes use of the NHS 111 service and, where deemed necessary, ambulances are called.

A healthcare forum is held monthly at which there is prisoner representation and prisoners have reported that there are occasional difficulties in receiving notification of healthcare appointments. This appears to relate to the fact that there are insufficient computer terminals in healthcare to enable direct notification, but there are plans to rectify this.

6.2 Physical healthcare

A total of 74% of prisoners at Warren Hill are over 40, compared with 71% in the previous reporting year, and ill health is more prevalent in older populations. On weekdays, there are likely to be at least two prisoners going out for hospital appointments, and bed watches, sometimes lasting many days, are not infrequent. Several prisoners have been diagnosed with cancer and end-of-life plans have been put in place where appropriate. There has been no noticeable change from the previous reporting year.

6.3 Mental health

It is estimated that about 80% of Warren Hill prisoners have some form of personality disorder and some of these men also have mental health issues. There is a team comprising a mental health nurse, a learning disability nurse and a social worker specialising in mental health. The mental health team works at Warren Hill and the neighbouring HMP Hollesley Bay and is currently working with 44 prisoners who are in crisis. In addition, IAPT (improving access to psychological therapies) has organised group sessions for prisoners who require support and is also planning to offer one-to-one sessions with a cognitive behaviour therapy specialist.

The prison has provided a half-day mental health (first aid) awareness training course for 20 prisoners under the auspices of 'Unlock My Life' a scheme which offers offender the opportunity to open up about mental health issues and there is a new course planned about reducing dependence on vapes. This was organised in response to several prisoners getting quite severely 'in debt' with other prisoners over the quantity of re-fill vapes used. Vape cessation courses were introduced in 2023.

During the reporting year, the prison has appointed a neurodiversity support manager. Several training courses have been carried out during the year and, undoubtedly, the staff's knowledge and understanding of many mental health issues has improved considerably. The IMB commends this initiative.

6.4 Social care

Prisoners can refer themselves for social care support or may be referred by staff. Assessments are made by an agency of Suffolk County Council, where the occupational therapist may recommend the type of support required to meet their needs.

An issue of ongoing concern for the IMB is that there are discrepancies between local authorities when it comes to funding social care. Prisoners who come to the prison from, for example, Norfolk are unable to bring equipment with them, and funds and equipment must be reapplied for from Suffolk. This takes time and there is some evidence that Suffolk County Council has been unable to make funds available.

Personal care for prisoners who require it is also becoming an issue for those with personal care needs resulting from physical or mental incapacity. The prison held a course for a group of officers and prisoners to train together on the provision of personal care in conjunction with the service providers. The aim was to set parameters around what were legitimate concerns for the prison to meet and the elimination of those more frivolous requests.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

Warren Hill has a full regime, with all prisoners being unlocked for most of the day between 7.45am and 7.30pm. The working week is nine sessions, with Friday afternoons and weekends available for leisure and purposeful activity.

There is good use of the gym and prisoners are able to access it for over three hours each a week, twice more than the usual entitlement of one-and-a-half hours a week.

The sports field is also well used, with prisoners making good use of the trim trail as well as participating in team sports. Some items of exercise equipment have been placed on Sycamore unit (for older prisoners), and a PE instructor attends the unit to work with the older prisoners.

IMB members are pleased to note that Parkrun remains popular. There are over 70 prisoners and staff using this facility every Saturday morning. All register under a pseudonym but, nevertheless, appear on the weekly printouts, with times, personal bests, etc.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Warren Hill has adopted a multi-agency approach towards the implementation of the drugs' strategy, involving the healthcare department, the offender management unit (OMU) and many external groups.

Phoenix Futures works with prisoners with a history of addictions. At the end of April 2024, 47%, or 127, of Warren Hill prisoners were receiving support from the organisation. The corresponding figure from the previous reporting year was 45%. Quite a high proportion of those receiving support are self-referrals.

Many prisoners at Warren Hill go to approved premises following parole decisions on release. A few of them are interested in going to residential rehabilitation and this is facilitated by Phoenix Futures.

6.7 Soft skills

The IMB is pleased to note that Britten-Pears Arts are again active in the prison and run music sessions with prisoners, while both art and book groups have restarted. Many prisoners produce artwork of considerable quality and the writer in residence supports prisoners who want to develop creative writing skills. There was a very successful art exhibition held in Christchurch Mansion, in Ipswich, during the autumn of 2023.

The snooker league continues, as does the playing of chess.

The IMB commends the prison for its continuing commitment to the Enabling Environment. This accreditation from the Royal College of Psychiatrists recognises that Warren Hill provides a safe space where everyone can contribute to the environment in which people live and work.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

The education provider, People Plus, has continued to experience staff shortages, impacting on the learners at Warren Hill. People Plus and the prison remain bound by a restrictive contracts process. However, there are plans to introduce the prison education specification, which will replace the current contract, but the details and timing of this are uncertain. From the limited information available, the IMB is likely to support such a move away from the current, unsatisfactory contract.

Some prisoners have undertaken three-month catering courses, and steps have been taken to help barista staff improve the offers to staff and prisoners wishing to purchase lunchtime food. A new catering tutor is now in place and the working relationship between the barista and catering course has been enhanced by their catering background.

The library reported that, on average, 84% of prisoners were active users of the service. In addition to 2,800 books, a wide and up-to-date choice of over 3,300 DVDs is available, together with some 200 Xbox and board games.

In preparation for the 2024 planned move whereby the library provision will be housed within the education block (thereby allowing the existing library space to be utilised as the new kitchen facility) affords several opportunities to increase cross-curricular work. Some 'weeding out' of stock is already being done. Unwanted fitness and health publications are being passed over to the gym. The Board commends the excellent initiative to install a bookshelf in the induction unit for those spending their first night at Warren Hill. This has proved a success. The library runs a monthly alternative film group, preparing a group review after each showing, and organises a popular weekly chess club.

The Board has been impressed by the library staff's continued efforts to encourage and develop access by emergent readers, through audio books, displays of quick reads, graphic works and the reading ahead challenge. The Shannon Trust co-ordinator operates from the library and is supported by the library and education managers. The librarian has secured charity funding to provide a selection of employment-related books, which are kept in the employment hub to enhance the provision offered by the prison employment lead and peer mentors.

There are 10 computers in the library, which prisoners can access seven days a week to prepare CVs and letters, produce reports and essays for coursework, including Open University degrees, and write poems and stories for creative writing. The computers in the virtual village are usually only accessible during education hours. There are three virtual campus computers in the employment hub. These can be used by the employment hub peer mentors, catering orderly and Forward Trust information, advice and guidance (IAG) orderly in their roles and with the prisoners they assist. (Orderlies are trusted prisoners who take on work to provide services that contribute to the running of the prison.)

The IMB has repeatedly stressed the importance of increased opportunities for prisoners to access new technology, and regards this as essential preparation for release. As in previous years, the IMB is disappointed that the prison has not been able to secure the provision of in-cell laptops and hopes that funding can be found

for this initiative in the coming year. A welcome step forward has been the prison's contract, through the dynamic purchase system (DPS), with Coracle for the lease of 10 Chromebooks (laptops) for use by prisoners to assist with the study of Open University or Prison Education Trust courses.

7.2 Vocational training, work

The carpentry workshop has been producing good work for prison contracts in two areas: wood machining, and assembly and paint. The roofing course ceased last year and has not been reinstated. The secure outside area, adjacent to the woodworking workshop, has been used to run forklift truck driving courses, all fully subscribed. The two forklift instructors are both prisoners at Warren Hill, and both are qualified to teach. The welding workshop produces work to a very high standard and prisoners can achieve recognised qualifications. The multi-skills workshop has continued to function throughout the reporting year; changes in staff have led to the courses being unsettled, but the Board is pleased to note that things have improved.

The gardens provide employment for up to 20 prisoners at a time and there are opportunities to gain qualifications in horticulture. The Raptor programme also enables prisoners to achieve qualifications, allowing prisoners to learn about the breeding and handling of birds of prey. The IMB has been impressed by the skills gained by prisoners who work in this section, and by the care which they show to the birds.

The gym offers qualifications for first aid, healthy living, and fitness instruction. The prison also partnered with Ipswich Town Football Club (ITFC) and ex-players usually visit the prison to discuss the issues such as teamwork, social responsibility and business aspects of the game. Although this scheme is not running at the time of writing it is planned to re-introduce the scheme later in 2024.

The shop in the virtual village continues to offer direct sales. The sewing workshop in the visits' hall area produces small items such as bags and offers clothing repairs and some bespoke jobs. The aim is that the sewing workshop should become self-financing. An interesting development there has been the making of neurodiversity blankets and cushions (which assist some prisoners who feel the need to continually touch a particular type of material when in conversation) for both Warren Hill and neighbouring HMP Hollesley Bay. These have had good feedback and are an inspired way of using donated materials that might otherwise go to waste. A barber shop is also available in the virtual village and there is employment in the coffee shop, where prisoners and staff can purchase refreshments. Prisoners can gain a barista qualification through the personal education fund (PEF) provider, People Plus.

The clothing exchange service (CES) offers laundry services for work clothes and for general laundry when unit orderlies are unable to carry out this work, such as when washing machines are out of order, for example.

The IMB is pleased to note that the welding, carpentry, arts, and tailor workshops all participate annually in the Koestler Awards (for arts in criminal justice), with some excellent work produced and deserved successes.

Job vacancies continue to be advertised through the activities' hub. A vacancy bulletin is circulated weekly to all units, although some work opportunities are

restricted to prisoners who have reached stage 2 or 3 in the enhanced behaviour monitoring (EBM) process.

Prisoner dissatisfaction about pay levels appears to have abated, but there is discontent about the effect of the increasing costs of items they wish to purchase. Whilst there are sufficient jobs for everyone, those who choose not to work remain in their cells during working hours.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The offender management unit (OMU) is pivotal to the work undertaken at Warren Hill. OMU assists with the selection of prisoners to all parts of the prison and ensures that risk assessments are done properly before prisoners arrive. OMU staff co-ordinate the EBM process and ensure that reports required for parole hearings are provided in good time. There has been a determined push to strengthen the role of the OMU as the heart of the community by developing closer integration of services.

As described in the previous report, the offender personality disorder pathway (OPDP) has been redesigned as part of the offender management in custody (OMiC) system to allow it to be delivered in prisons. Prisoners are screened using a tool within OASys to identify whether they meet the criteria for the OPD pathway. The screen has regard to areas that might suggest a prisoner has difficulties linked to their personality characteristics.

The OMU has set up drop-in sessions for Friday afternoons, when prisoners can ask for advice and help, and their queries can usually be resolved straightaway. This helps to reduce the number of complaints, as well as alleviating the frustration of having to wait for answers.

The OMU contributes to making sure that the right people are allocated to the appropriate courses. There are pre-release courses on offer. Willow unit, Warren Hill's approved premises, which accommodates just four prisoners, provides structured sessions for residents, to prepare them for release. Prisoners are risk-assessed before being allocated to Willow and there is a culture of support amongst those on the unit.

The OMU has taken over the management and oversight of Willow unit, affording a stronger probation focus on ensuring the approved premises' experience is as authentic as possible. There is a 12-week structured-session rolling programme in place to support building resilience for release and to prepare for community approved premises. The structured sessions focus on recall data to minimise recall rates: for example, managing on a fixed budget, developing relationships and licence stipulations, etc. The IMB has been impressed with this development and by the consistent cleanliness and the calm atmosphere of the unit.

The IMB remains deeply disappointed by Ministerial intervention to delay and, in some cases, prevent movement to category D open conditions, or to release prisoners following successful parole hearings, which may have had impact on the mental health and wellbeing of many prisoners affected.

Equally disappointing is the decision to continue suspension of all ROTL activity at Warren Hill. The IMB is strongly of the view that ROTL is an integral part of

preparation for release, providing a clear incentive for prisoners, and wishes to see it brought into Warren Hill at the first opportunity.

The education and skills department has benefited from the appointment of a neurodiversity support manager (NSM). Their priorities have been to help build a neurodivergent culture, incorporating it into a variety of different departments around the prison; ensure that neurodiversity training is a mandatory subject for new and existing staff; provide reasonable adjustments to the physical environment, as well as space to accommodate sensory overload; ensure that each neurodivergent individual has access to support, knowledge and understanding around their neurodiversity profile; and prepare prisoners with neurodivergent needs for progression for release or transfer to a category D prison. The IMB welcomes this appointment and the roll-out of the priorities across the prison.

7.4 Family contact

The charity, Ormiston Families, works closely with prisoners to rebuild and maintain family links. For family social visits, Ormiston provided craft packs for children, which they were able to take home so they could maintain a link with the visit. The library works with Ormiston Families to promote Storybook Dads (where prisoners can record stories on CD or DV for their children), helping to keep them in contact with their children. The charity also works with the chaplaincy to support social visits, where necessary, given the sensitivities around family relationships.

Social video calls remain popular with prisoners, enabling contact to be maintained with families living far away who may be unable to make regular visits. There remain some problems with video calls being paused or terminated because of the sensitivity of the in-built security system, but these are being managed.

The in-cell telephony project enables prisoners to call approved numbers in the privacy of their cells and at times that suit them and their families. The service has proved both popular and helpful in maintaining family contact.

7.5 Resettlement planning

The employment hub at Warren Hill is funded through the New Futures Network, a specialist part of HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), which attracts and supports employers to work with prisons in England and Wales. Notifications about employment, particularly in the catering and construction sectors, are regularly received by the prison. Prisoners are informed about such opportunities and can, if wished, gain training and experience.

Recent employment opportunities have been identified with visits by Glendale, IT companies, Greene King and potentially Sizewell C. The IT provision in the hub enables potential employers to deliver presentations remotely through a SMART screen which, given the geographical location of Warren Hill and employers giving up their time voluntarily, is an asset. Presentations have been delivered by DHL, WT Partnership, Only a Pavement Away, MENTA and Galldris Services.

The employment hub runs guidance and employment services for prisoners, assisting them with issues such as CV preparation, job searches, disclosure letters, interview preparation, bank accounts, driving licences and copies of birth certificates. Assistance is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) work

coaches. They arrange appointments for prisoners, when they are released, at the local job centre for claimants of welfare benefits such as Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments. National Insurance numbers are provided through a process with HMRC, involving ringing the HMRC general phone line. It can be quite a lengthy process; until a data sharing agreement is agreed, the DWP is no longer able to provide prisoners with National Insurance letters. For those prisoners who cannot complete HMRC security clearance on the phone, the prison employment lead (PEL) completes an online paper application. The paperwork is an essential ID document to prove the right to work status and as a form of ID to renew or apply for provisional driving licences. Friday job clubs help prisoners to interrogate the job market and to identify jobs for which they might be eligible. The PEL, the ID and banking lead and the DWP work coach are all present and deliver a joined-up service by appointment at the Friday job club.

There are two prisoner employment hub peer mentors, who support the prison staff and offer help with writing CVs and browsing employment opportunities on the gov.uk website.

As Warren Hill takes prisoners from all over the UK, staff need to be able to provide information about the national picture in relation to employment opportunities.

Forward Trust is a partner agency providing information and guidance to prisoners. It holds an initial one-to-one induction to discuss pre-release employment and education options and will help with CVs and application forms, provide advice on training and distance-learning opportunities and offer 'disclosure' advice. Forward Trust now has a prisoner IAG orderly, who will have the opportunity to complete an accredited qualification. The charity has worked very closely with other agencies and with staff in the prison, ensuring that prisoners receive an integrated service. The IMB has been impressed by its approachability and efficiency.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

As anticipated, there has been a moderate level of churn in Board membership following on from the previous reporting period. The situation improved, however, through 2023, with greater stability expected through the latter part of 2024.

The reporting year ended with eight members going into the new reporting year. This number is likely to be further enhanced in the coming months by two additional members who have gone through the selection process and are waiting for Secretary of State approval. This will bring the total complement to 10, just one short of the recommended 11 places.

During the reporting period, a total of 134 visits were achieved, averaging two per week, many of which involved more than one Board member. These covered all aspects and areas of the prison. The Board members continue to engage directly with the Governor and his senior leadership team and are supported by the IMB Secretariat. Healthy and professional relations, accompanied by a respectful rapport, continue among the IMB, the staff at Warren Hill and the prisoners.

In respect of the appointment of a new Governor, the plans for expansion on the site and the current study of the governance arrangements between HMP Warren Hill and the nearby HMP Hollesley Bay, the IMB is grateful for the timely consultation and information sharing that has taken place. The outcome from these will impact on the IMB's operations but will not impact on its effectiveness.

	2022	2023
Recommended complement of Board members	11	11
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	7	7
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8	8, with 2 pending
Total number of visits to the establishment	134	162

Applications to the IMB

The significant decrease in the overall number of applications, down by 52%, is seen as positive and mirrors the decreasing trend in formal complaints mentioned in the Complaints section (para 5.7), although the IMB drop is roughly twice that of the prisons' complaint section. Nevertheless, drops in both monitoring systems is to be welcomed.

Accepting that the figures for category F are low (food and kitchens), it should be remembered that the food issue at Warren Hill has been on the agenda for several years and many prisoners feel that things will never change. The IMB can assure readers that, on most visits to the prison, the food issue is raised extensively. On a positive note, there are great expectations that this issue will finally be resolved when the expansion plans are delivered, which include a new kitchen for Warren Hill.

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year - 2021	Previous reporting year - 2022	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	1	0	0
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	0	1	1
C	Equality	0	1	1
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	4	2	0
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	4	3	3
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	0	3	2
F	Food and kitchens	6	3	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	3	13	2
H1	Property within the establishment	0	3	0
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	6	5	3
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	0	0	0
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, re-categorisation	5	1	1
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	1	6	3
K	Transfers	1	0	2
L	Miscellaneous	0	6	2
	Total number of applications	31	47	21



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