



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Whatton

**For reporting year
1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025**

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Contents

Introductory sections 1 – 3	Page
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of the establishment	4
3. Key points	6
 Evidence sections 4 – 7	
4. Safety	11
5. Fair and humane treatment	13
6. Health and wellbeing	18
7. Progression and resettlement	21
 The work of the IMB	27
Board statistics	27
Applications to the IMB	28

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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, near Bingham in Nottinghamshire, is a category C training prison (for those who cannot be trusted in open conditions but are considered unlikely to try to escape) for men convicted of sexual offences. It 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 horticulture.

The prison's operational capacity is 836¹ and the average population in the reporting year was 836.

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) comprising eight cells, which 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); C2, which was replaced by modular, prefabricated, two-tier cells, constructed and opened in September 2023, providing additional accommodation for 39 prisoners; and C3 (constructed in 2008). There are discussions about a fourth C wing being built to address the accommodation pressures on the wider prison estate, but decisions have not yet been made.

The cells comprise a mixture of single and double accommodation (with en-suite toilet, a washbasin and a shower) and older facilities (with an in-cell toilet and shared shower accommodation). The accommodation in B wing is the oldest and has previously been criticised by the IMB and HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP). The cells are the smallest in the prison and the Board has been advised that there are no plans to replace the B wings in the short to medium term. Ministry of Justice (MoJ) project delivery has advised that the pipework project began on site in November 2024 and is expected to run for two years. Planning and preparations are in place for building alterations and the upgrading of the fire alarm system to commence in autumn 2026, and the project is expected to run for 43 months.

Accommodation for purposeful activity includes a sports field, a 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 kitchen facility, allowing accommodation 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 prison library now comes under People Plus.

Outside the prison's secure compound, there is a purpose-built visitor reception centre, which is managed by HMP Whatton, a change from the external provider that had managed the facility for several years.

There are three externally commissioned services:

- Healthcare services: provided by Practice Plus Group

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.

- Facilities management: provided by Amey
- Learning and skills: managed by People Plus

The prisoners who come into Whatton do so because of the opportunities for training and courses for those who have committed sexual offences (PCoSO). They have usually been in other prisons and are accustomed to routine and regulation.

There have been no critical incidents (such as fires, riots, escapes, etc) this year.

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

Prisoners tell the Board they feel that HMP Whatton is a generally safe environment.

Fair and humane treatment

- HMP Whatton receives prisoners with a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Without the care and underlying principles of fairness and equality, there could be conflict, in the Board's view.
- From the Board's observations, the prison regime goes out of its way to ensure fairness in dealing with prisoners in all aspects of the regime.
- The Governor has surgeries with different groups and appears to listen to their opinions and complaints.
- The recognised groups of prisoners with protected characteristics (which include, among others, race, disability, religion, age, sex and gender reassignment) are represented on the WEAT (Whatton equality action team) and take part in the discussions. Their agendas are dealt with first to ensure that disciplinary representation is proportional to each group's size and supported by evidence.
- When prisoners arrive at HMP Whatton, problems with follow-on property are common. Items often go missing, and there is no effective system to track them. As a result, prisoners have to go through a long and frustrating process to find their belongings or claim compensation. This causes unnecessary stress for prisoners and extra work for staff.

Health and wellbeing

- Prisoners have access to treatment inside the prison and to hospital or clinical advice in NHS hospitals. From the Board's observations, mental healthcare is important, and help and support appear to be available to prisoners.
- The delivery of medicines to patients at HMP Whatton is significantly impacted by the condition of the healthcare facilities. The department's infrastructure is outdated, and the Board has expressed ongoing concerns about its fabric in previous annual reports. While major renovation works are scheduled for the upcoming period, these improvements will temporarily strain healthcare operations during implementation.

Progression and resettlement

- HMP Whatton is not a resettlement prison. However, prisoners are released throughout the year and receive help and are offered courses at an appropriate time before release. It is outside the remit of the prison to have contact with prisoners after release. Should contact/supervision be required, this comes under the remit of the Probation Service. The nature of the crimes committed by Whatton prisoners makes finding housing and work very difficult, and some families do not always seem to welcome back released prisoners.

3.2 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- The problems we referenced in our previous report regarding IPP prisoners persist. There are a large number of IPP prisoner at HMP Whatton and the Board is concerned that they may feel pressure or mental stress, because they are unable to see any future that may make the present tolerable. Is the Minister planning to consider IPP prisoners' welfare and wellbeing? If not, can you explain why?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- The resourcing of the prison, from catering to building repairs and development, is not being met satisfactorily, in the Board's view. It is apparent that all aspects of funding must meet difficult rising base costs. How does the Prison Service plan to ensure that funding will meet the rising costs of food and maintenance so that health and safety standards are maintained?
- What steps will the Prison Service take to ensure reliable access to chaplaincy facilities for prisoners with mobility issues, given that the stair lift remains unreliable and no progress has been made on repairs since the last report?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- The IMB has observed - and noted - changes in the provision of education and training for prisoners, including bringing in different qualifications with the new PES/education contract. We anticipate that staff will raise standards and improve outcomes for prisoners, in particular the acquisition of life and social skills in preparation for release. How will data be collated to give firm evidence of improvement?
- The Board was pleased to receive a full and informative response from the Minister regarding matters raised in our previous annual report.

3.3 Response to the previous report

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
To the Minister		
We have a disproportionate amount of IPP prisoners at Whatton and numbers have not fallen since the last review.	'On 5 September 2024, the Lord Chancellor announced that the Government would implement reforms we supported in opposition to the IPP licence period in the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. These commenced on 1 November 2024, when the licences for 1,742 IPP offenders in the community were	Although there have been reviews at Government level, the position of IPP prisoners has not materially changed. Currently, there are 101 IPP prisoners at Whatton.

	<p>terminated. The remaining reforms were implemented on 1 February 2025, which reduced the qualifying period for consideration of licence termination and saw around 600 additional referrals made to the Parole Board. The Secretary of State also has two new powers, the power to use “Risk Assessed Recall Review” RARR) for recalled IPP prisoners and the power to disapply a recall. The first enables her to re-release people who have been recalled at any point without referring the case to the Parole Board, where safe to do so. The second enables her to not reset the two-year period after someone is re-released from a recall.’</p>	
<p>When will the Minister review the IPP policy in order to support the wellbeing and morale of IPP prisoners?</p>	<p>‘Based on the learning from IPP self-inflicted deaths and incidents of self-harm, HMPPS has provided guidance to all prison staff and partner agencies and developed an IPP Safety Toolkit. A series of live events has also been delivered to further raise staff awareness on the risks of IPP prisoners, and HMPPS will continue to consider further ways to raise awareness of the risks with staff.’</p>	<p>At HMP Whatton, a key worker group has been allocated to the IPP and lifer cohort of prisoners, who have been given additional training and will keep prisoners informed of any new national updates.</p>
<p>How - and when - will the Minister ensure greater finance for building and staffing?</p>	<p>‘I appreciate the Board’s funding request for site and staffing investment. Whilst HMPPS is continually reviewing the investment required across the estate, the</p>	

	<p>proposals will be underpinned by the data collected in recent condition surveys which assessed the fabric, cells, and critical assets at each prison. These will inform long-term forward maintenance registers, which can be prioritised against future capital budgets. HMPPS is currently investing around £47.3 million into HMP Whatton. This includes a programme for fire safety works with an estimated start date of November 2025. A project to replace hot and cold-water pipework supplies across Bravo units 1, 2 and 3, and Plant rooms 1 and 2, commenced in December 2024. I hope the Board will understand that demands for maintenance of the prison estate are much greater than the available funding. Therefore, once a bid for a project is received, HMPPS has to prioritise works very carefully to make best use of that funding, focusing on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency.'</p>	
To the Prison Service	Response	Progress
Prisoners are transferred to HMP Whatton to do courses that will support their release date. When will the Prison Service give improved access through funding for courses?	No response.	No update.

How will the Prison Service support HMP Whatton in finding suitable work placements on release for prisoners so that the numbers of prisoners in work improves significantly?	No response.	No update.
To the Governor	Response	Progress
Visiting time is important for families and prisoners. Is the Governor satisfied that the practice of gathering visitors outside the security area and allowing entry as a group offers the full amount of time for the actual visit with the prisoner? Visitors are given tally numbers on arrival and extra staff help when they are moved into the search room. The aim is to get maximum time with a prisoner. There is monitoring to establish effectiveness of the process.	'The organisation of visits has been made more complex because visitors come to the prison on the day, book their time and then leave the site to return around the time they have booked. There may have been changes in the interim, which alter their booked time. The Prison has now taken over the organisation of visits, which has improved the organisation. There are also six family days organised by PACT, where families can enjoy a relaxed four-hour session. Three family days are for children and three are specifically for adults.	

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 The induction process for incoming prisoners is regularly monitored by IMB members. The Board notes that staff seem especially caring, considerate and helpful with new arrivals.

4.1.2 The first stage of prisoner induction takes place in reception as soon as they are removed from the prison van. Their warrant categorisation, as in, whether they are category C (Whatton is a category C prison) and identification details are checked, and details of their property are logged. If items are found that are not allowed at HMP Whatton, the prisoner is informed that they need to make arrangements for them to be sent out. Such items are placed in the prisoner's property box, with instructions about what they need to do next.

4.1.3 Each prisoner is then checked on the X-ray body scanner, fingerprinted and photographed for identification. Their risk-assessment record is also checked to verify whether they can safely share a cell.

4.1.4 Prisoners are seen by a member of staff from the healthcare unit within an hour of arriving. They are offered a drink and given access to a phone to make a call. In addition, they are offered a small amount of credit on their phone and a small amount of canteen (a facility where prisoners can buy snacks, toiletries, stationery and other essentials). This tides them over until they receive their own money.

4.1.5 Prisoners are also seen by a member of staff from the education department, who assesses their learning needs and current ability.

4.1.6 Incoming prisoners are initially housed in wing A4, close to the reception area, until all assessments have been completed. Here they are given a tour of the building and introduced to staff. Prisoners are usually moved after they have had a few days to settle in to their new surroundings and there is a suitable wing and cell available. Prisoners are informed of support available to them by means of the Samaritans, Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide peer support), mentors and key workers. They are clearly told the rules of the prison, which may differ from the prisons from which they have transferred.

4.1.7 Most issues arising from prisoner arrival and induction at HMP Whatton relate to the whereabouts of follow-on property. This often results in prisoners being required to follow a lengthy process to chase up the whereabouts of their property or to obtain compensation for lost items.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 There have been seven deaths in HMP Whatton during the reporting year. Most were due, apparently, to natural causes. The IMB receives reports of the final outcomes. The prison staff go out of their way to ensure that those likely to be affected have access to counselling, while the chaplaincy team holds a service to mark the death, which prisoners can attend. Staff from the Marie Curie charity offer end-of-life support to prisoners, if so wished.

4.2.2 There were no self-inflicted deaths reported during the year in review.

4.2.3 Reviews of interventions and prisoners with complex needs occur weekly, with good support from departments. IMB members monitor a portion of these meetings and receive all minutes and statistics. These meetings have demonstrated positive collaboration in identifying prisoner-specific actions. However, the prison has identified that improvements could be made to related documentation when reporting evidence and shared decisions and actions.

4.2.4 From the Board's observations, the care and separation unit (CSU) operates under a consistent and efficient regime. It has not reached its capacity this year, as prisoners have generally been committed to it for short periods of time.

4.3 Use of force

4.3.1 During the reporting period, PAVA incapacitant spray, introduced into prisons in 2019, remained in use. The Board continues to regularly monitor use of force meetings, where incidents are discussed in detail and CCTV camera footage is reviewed. This monitoring shows a steady decline in the number of incidents involving force.

4.3.2 Adjudications are disciplinary hearings, held when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules. If found guilty, they may have to spend time in the CSU. The IMB monitors these hearing regularly and evidence shows that prisoners are treated fairly and with respect during the process. The responsible Governor ensures that the prisoner clearly understands the reasons for the adjudication and is given an opportunity to put their case. Whatton has introduced rehabilitative awards, especially for adjudications involving the use of illicit drugs.

4.4 Preventing illicit items

4.4.1 The Board is concerned about the proportion of prisoners on prescription drugs (around 85% of the population), although it reflects the demographic of the prison. Many prisoners come to Whatton with profound mental health needs. Concerns often surround the use of drugs prescribed for one prisoner being passed to another prisoner for recreational use. There is zero tolerance in HMP Whatton for handling, passing on, or acquiring drugs of any kind, from whatever source, and this is strictly adhered to, in the Board's view. The new systems for collection of prescription medicines should help improve this and cut down on the mass of prisoners waiting around at the dispensary on B wing. It is hoped that the new collection procedures will be in place and used early in the next reporting year.

4.4.2 The work of the post room in surveying the incoming mail and identifying potential drug-carrying paper or packages is central to the constant attention to potential routes for drugs into the prison. There have also been block searches of cells across wings that have found and removed illicit items and substances from circulation.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 Residential accommodation at the prison consists of 14 wings. Most of the cells other than B wing have ensuite facilities and are fit for purpose, in the Board's view.

5.1.2 B wing, which consists of three residential units, is, according to the latest HMIP report, not fit for purpose, and the IMB concurs with this finding. The cells are small and cramped for shared accommodation, with few ensuite facilities and limited natural light. There is currently a programme in place for refurbishment of some of the cells and shower facilities on the wing.

5.1.3 Following the latest Prison Group Directors' report, all shower blocks have been treated with anti-mildew chemicals and have also been repainted.

5.1.4 The replacement of in-cell fire detection and pipework on B wing is expected to take two years. There is a rolling programme of mattress renewal, the installation of privacy screens and the replacement of the old iron-framed bunks, which have been made a priority.

5.1.5 There is a dementia suite on B wing. Damaged equipment seems to be repaired as required.

5.1.6 Food is served on the B wing servery; some prisoners choose to eat there, while others prefer to take their food back to the cells. Food is tasted periodically by IMB members and considered to be of an acceptable quality.

5.1.7 Prisoners are encouraged to wear their own clothes.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 The care and separation unit (CSU), which is attached to the A3 wing, is where prisoners are kept away from the rest of the population. This is either as an outcome of an adjudication or for their own personal safety, which includes being a risk to others or on healthcare-recommended mental health grounds. Board members visit the CSU at least weekly. The unit is light and airy, with adequate facilities, including an exercise yard and a room where adjudications and Rule 45 reviews (which determine whether or not a prisoner should remain segregated) are held. There are eight individual cells. Cleaning orderlies (prisoners who provide services) maintain a clean environment.

5.2.2 It is stated in many of our monitoring reports that the relationships between the CSU staff and the prisoners are very positive and only a handful of applications (prisoners' written representations) have been made from CSU to the Board during the reporting year. Many prisoners have reported to the Board that they feel the care and support they receive whilst being on the CSU is of a good standard, despite the staff sometimes being faced with prisoners who present with extremely challenging behaviour. From our observations, officers are able to deal with the complex needs and challenging behaviour of a minority of the prisoners who have been accommodated in the unit.

5.2.3 The regime is flexible and designed around the needs of the prisoners: showers, phone calls and exercise are all made available to prisoners who are compliant. From the Board's observations, staff often go out of their way to

accommodate the needs of the prisoners, such as, for example, providing cards in their own language for prisoners who have little or no English, enabling them to express their basic needs. Activity packs are provided on request, and the stock of reading material is updated regularly. In the Board's view, staffing levels, as well as continuity and quality, have all been generally good throughout the year. Visits from the Duty Governor are made each day, as well as from the healthcare, psychology and chaplaincy teams, as required or requested.

5.2.4 It was noted by the Board that adjudications and reviews of Rule 45 (where a prisoner is removed from their cell to the CSU for their own interests or to maintain good order or discipline in the prison) were generally effectively carried out by the senior management team (SMT) and followed prison policy. Board members observe a number of adjudications and make written reports as a regular part of our monitoring. The paperwork for prisoners in the CSU who are on assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans (used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide) seems to have been completed correctly.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

5.3.1 Our monitoring reports and observations of meetings support what we have been told by prisoners, in that their relationships with staff are both respectful and professional. Prisoners on a wing where a member of staff had died were so concerned about the staff that they told one of our members they were 'looking out for them' and would support them where they could. They also arranged a small collection for the officer's family. This illustrates that relationship.

5.3.2 In the Board's judgement, evidence supports the view that prison staff continue to work hard on communications with all prisoners.

5.3.3 Regular meetings with the Governor, as well as with senior staff and prisoners, provide forums and drop-in sessions for ensuring the good working of the prison. They indicate that senior staff want to hear prisoners' views as part of their relationship building.

5.3.4 The Board notes there are charitable activities that encourage engagement in, as well as good attendance at, religious and cultural events, such as Black History Month. These contribute to positive interactions between prisoners and the staff.

5.4 Equality and diversity

5.4.1 Equality and fairness are evidenced in several ways. In monitoring activity and organisation, the Board considers protocols and routines. The question of fairness can be complex in some cases and simple in others, but is a judgement about outcomes and treatment.

5.4.2 Through applications to the IMB, prisoners often express feelings of injustice or that they are being treated differently from others. The sense of wellbeing is linked to these issues and is sometimes difficult to sort out successfully because the prisoner's perception is different from reality. Members dealing with such an application generally either speak directly to the prisoner to understand the problem and provide such answers as are possible, or research the background and provide a written report to the prisoner. The data show that some issues are more frequent than others, in particular the loss of belongings on transfer and understanding the

particular interpretations of HMP Whatton regulations where these differ from the prison they have left. (In a specific example, only certain versions of the video game, Xbox, are allowed at HMP Whatton, which is not the case in other prisons.) In the reporting year, health has also been a major concern, with our data showing that 15% of applications were about health issues.

IMB members try hard to ensure that applications are dealt with in a timely fashion. They are collected weekly from each wing and members of the Board deal with them as part of their monitoring visits.

5.4.3 Adjudications: we look for a clear routine that allows the case to be put, that the prisoner's understanding is checked and that they can respond to the charge without hindrance. The judgement must also be made clearly in the light of the facts and the record of the prisoner, so that any punishment is appropriate and proportionate. In our experience, adjudications were fair and consistent.

5.4.4 Observations: the majority of our observations, both at wing level and around the prison, where officers supervise prisoners' daily routines, show that there is a consistency of approach among staff; that rules are applied fairly; and that, generally, prisoners are treated with respect.

5.4.5 The CCTV coverage of wings and body worn video camera footage provide evidence to support staff and prisoner allegations. They are also a useful training tool for staff following, for example, use of force meetings.

5.4.6 The ethnic diversity of the population at HMP Whatton is increasing. Staff have been observed ensuring that, for example, interpreters are found to assist with induction and adjudications, and we have found that this is done fairly and consistently. The Board has not received many applications or heard of many incidents involving race issues and we have not observed any discrimination in how prisoners have been treated.

5.4.7 The prison deals with incidents using discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs). This allows a prisoner to set out an accusation of racial abuse or to complain that decisions affecting the prisoner are made on racial grounds. The prisoner may also use this form to report staff attitudes, language or actions. On the front page, the prisoner is asked which of the nine protected characteristics the incident relates to and to tick the appropriate box. The prisoner completes the form, adding any evidence and witness details if applicable. An officer deals with the accusation, clarifying any facts and gathering evidence from the stated witnesses. There is a grid with the headings of the process and a box where the officer adds the dates of when that section has been completed. Each witness is told what the process is and asked whether they wish to give evidence. This is carefully recorded and a judgement made. Where the case is proven, the perpetrator may be given training to help an attitude change. Our monitoring finds that the process is thorough, clearly recorded and handled appropriately. The documentation is retained and results are collated. The form is treated as confidential while the enquiry is carried out.

5.4.8 The Governor meets representatives from groups of prisoners on a regular basis, such as from minority ethnic and sexual orientation groups, to listen to their issues and complaints.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

5.5.1 The chaplaincy team is a crucial part of the prison organisation, which works specifically for the wellbeing of prisoners. The staff members represent the major religions, and other pastors make regular visits and take services. The team is involved from the moment a prisoner enters HMP Whatton, with 24-hour visits made to address pastoral and faith issues related to matters such as visits, serious health issues in the family outside, or deaths in custody. Prisoners in the CSU are regularly visited by a member of the chaplaincy team and are supported in their isolation.

5.5.2 The full range of religions is supported by collective acts of worship and celebrations, including appropriate meal offerings during specific religious festivals. Prisoners are regularly involved in leading services and take an active role, such as providing a reading in the annual carol service.

5.5.3 The wellbeing of prisoners and the recognition of religious beliefs is very important in supporting individual prisoners. Members of the chaplaincy team act for their own faith, as well as for others, where no pastoral help exists. For smaller groups, such as Pagans, Rastafarians, Spiritualists and Buddhists, the prison chaplains facilitate faith participation through, for example, worship online.

5.5.4 The chaplaincy department and rooms for religious worship are on the first floor in B wing, where the stairs provide something of a barrier to access, especially for an ageing prison population with increasing mobility problems. This difficulty was reported in our last report and remains unchanged. The unreliability of the stair lift does not allow all who want to worship to gain access to the faith rooms. The stair lifts should be repaired when difficulties in settling the contracts have been made, but no progress has yet been made. The chaplaincy team get round the problem by taking worship to the prisoner rather than relying on the prisoner being able to access the central chapel.

5.6 Incentives schemes

5.6.1 Every prisoner has a plan for their life at HMP Whatton. This includes education and the option to be involved in courses that will improve their life in prison and their chances on release. The need for most prisoners to learn to read effectively is recognised and the incentives provide entry to other activities and work that requires higher levels of literacy. The status they achieve, through good behaviour in the prison's incentives scheme, allows them to access better opportunities and earn money. Two applications to the IMB this year complained that there was not enough opportunity to progress, but these opinions are in the minority. The loss of these privileges, through negative behaviour, is depressing and restrictive for prisoners.

5.6.2 Many prisoners take on voluntary roles, which, as well as keeping them occupied, can support their chances of successful parole and help them to manage their lives after release.

5.6.3 IPP (imprisonment for public protection) prisoners have little incentive to follow any productive activity. This is why we have asked the Minister, in section 3.2, to consider the welfare of IPP prisoners so that they have a goal to work towards not for release but for their welfare.

5.7 Property

5.7.1 Prisoners arriving at HMP Whatton are allowed to bring three bags of property and one outsize item, plus one bag or box of legal documents (policies vary among prisons). Many transferred prisoners have more than this, often due to property acquired during long sentences.

5.7.2 Transporting prisoners is carried out by external contractors. The vans are usually full, or almost, so limiting the quantity of property that can be carried. All passageways on the vans must remain clear of any obstacles that could impede exiting the vehicle in an emergency. This can result in a prisoner's property being left at the original prison. Legal documents are always transported with the prisoner.

5.7.3 Prisoners are responsible for paying for the transportation of any additional property they want to take with them, and the originating prison should arrange this. This is explained to prisoners on admission and before transfer; they are urged to reduce the amount they have or be willing to pay for it to be transferred. The transportation of extra property is usually at the prisoner's expense, but the prison may find it necessary to send on missing/delayed items by contracted courier or post.

5.7.4 Prisoners may complain to the prison about delayed or missing property through the usual complaints' procedure.

5.7.5 The prison will follow up, usually by email, with the sending prison, which is required to respond within two weeks. This deadline is usually adhered to, but a few prisons are known to be less timely in their responses and there are sometimes unsatisfactory delays. When the return of missing property has been arranged, the prisoner is informed by internal letter, and the complaint log is closed.

5.7.6 Where missing property cannot be located or where damage cannot be rectified, the prisoner's stated loss is checked against the signed property card that was issued at reception. Compensation is arranged, up to the value stated on the prison facilities list. In the year to March 2025, HMP Whatton paid a total of £6,393.57 in compensation to prisoners for lost or damaged property.

5.7.7 Approximately 1% of applications to the IMB relate to property that has been lost or not arrived with the prisoner when they are transferred to HMP Whatton. This is a fall from last year. Applications regarding property within the prison have increased from last year, to approximately 12%. Half of these refer to the temporary or permanent withholding of Xboxes or other electronic devices, sometimes following transfer from other institutions.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

6.1.1 Healthcare at HMP Whatton is contracted to Practice Plus Group.

6.1.2 Over 85% of prisoners are on prescribed medication, whether for age-related reasons, for physical or mental health or for treating drug addiction.

6.1.3 The healthcare area is less than ideal, in the Board's view. There have been issues with leaking ceilings and other defects in the building. Plans are in place to make alternative arrangements for when the remedial pipework is undertaken.

6.1.4 Despite this, there seems to be a pleasant atmosphere in the department, and the prisoners tell us that they are generally happy with the services provided. Prisoners who have issues with their healthcare are encouraged to speak directly with head of the department.

6.1.5 Clinics of various types are held every weekday. These include GP access, limited consultant access, mental health clinics, triage, blood taking, counselling, ophthalmology, dentistry, podiatry and basic foot healthcare, among others

6.1.6 Medicines are dispensed daily, and recent changes to the dispensing system have helped reduce waiting times for some individuals. However, lengthy queues still occur each morning, sometimes causing prisoners to be late for work or training, which the IMB continues to monitor. During the reporting period, the structure of medicine delivery was adapted to improve safety for vulnerable service users, including wheelchair users. The planned introduction of healthcare pharmacy Traka units - an electronic locker system for medications - remains delayed due to ongoing prison IT issues, preventing trials from taking place. Commissioning is expected once these technical problems are resolved.

6.1.7 The Board is not concerned about waiting times for hospital consultations and treatment. Hospital admissions are always accompanied by staff, which can sometimes lead to staff shortages in the prison.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Prisoners are encouraged to undertake exercise, especially those who may have weight challenges. Physical health is considered important as a counter to the sedentary nature of lockdown.

The prison facilities are available to prisoners, both as organised activities and activities taken by individuals. Gymnasium facilities are well equipped and have appropriately trained supervisory staff. The weight training room on B wing provides extreme exercise and is very popular with prisoners.

The playing field is accessible at supervised times and is particularly well used in the summer.

6.3 Mental health

6.3.1 Due to the nature of the cohort at HMP Whatton, mental health and drug and alcohol rehabilitation are significant issues. The leadership structure remains the same, following the 2022 change, and the quality and availability of services in the

department continue to improve, despite the poor quality of accommodation for the department.

6.3.2 One of the significant issues is in the delivery of medicines to patients. HMP Whatton's healthcare facilities are old and, as reported in our previous annual reports, the Board is seriously concerned about the fabric of the department. In the upcoming period, major renovation works are planned for the building that houses the healthcare department, which will be of benefit once complete but will cause some strain whilst being undertaken.

6.3.3 The prison provides many support platforms for neurodivergent prisoners. These include support for reading, maths, communication, concentrate and motor skills, as well as emotional regulation and organisation. There is also individual support for any other requirements.

6.4 Social care

HMP Whatton has a relatively elderly age-profile of prisoners. The most elderly or frail, and those with disabilities, are all housed in one wing, A8. Social care needs are identified during a prisoner's initial health screening or by referral from staff. Nottinghamshire Social Services provide initial assessments, and care assistants are provided 'in-house. At the time of writing, in August 2025, three prisoners were receiving direct social care support. Care and personal needs' plans are prepared in consultation with the prisoners and staff. Staff on the wing report that they can request mobility and support equipment for prisoners relatively easily and it arrives quickly. On a minority of occasions, HMP Whatton has not been provided with accurate social care assessments when the prisoner arrives. However, the team seem to work quickly to reassess needs and provide appropriate equipment and, sometimes, new medication. The IMB has received very few applications from this wing or in relation to social care needs during the reporting period. Although Marie Curie staff offer support, Practice Plus Group is responsible for applying for funding from NHSE to provide overnight care for end-of-life prisoners.

6.5 Time out of cell, regime

During the reporting period, the regime of the establishment has, from time to time, been affected by staff shortages and responses to violent incidents and escorts to hospital. Where violent incidents occur, a dynamic risk assessment is made, which can result in a prisoner losing his association privileges (when they are allowed to mix with each other in the prison's yards). Prisoners in the CSU have access to a secure outdoor exercise yard.

The IMB has observed exercise on the yards, which appears to be enjoyable and beneficial to prisoners. There are two gyms, with those on the enhanced (top) level of the incentives scheme being offered additional time in the gym. From the Board's observations, the sessions seem to be enjoyed by participants, with staff wanting to help develop more prisoners so they can mentor and support others.

Activity in the association rooms regularly seems settled and enjoyed by the prisoners. Listeners and mentors are readily available. Relationships between staff and prisoners during these periods has been observed as professional and effective.

Time out of cell is dependent on access to purposeful activity and by the incentives scheme status. A total of 70% of prisoners at HMP Whatton work full time (65%) or

part time (5%). The remaining 30% are either retired (due to age or medical conditions) or unemployed.

Prisoners on the basic (lowest) level of the incentives scheme (fewer than 1% of the population) have the least time out of their cell, at one hour and 15 minutes a day. Enhanced prisoners get an additional two hours a day on top of any employment or activity. Even when on basic regime, prisoners can still attend work, education or programmes. As well as time spent at work or in education, employed prisoners should have one hour and 45 minutes during the week and two hours at the weekend. Retired or unfit prisoners should receive over four hours' time out of their cell during the week and two hours at the weekend. The group that is most disadvantaged, though, is the unemployed. The Board cannot be certain that prisoners always get the time out of cell to which they are entitled.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

6.6.1 During the reporting period, there remained an identified requirement for more support in the substance misuse area. This role was actively being recruited for at the end of the period.

6.7 Soft skills

6.7.1 The prison provides many opportunities for the prisoners to develop and practise soft skills. All employment provides the opportunity to practise skill development, approaches and methods that emphasise the nature of patience, diplomacy and resilience. It gives prisoners opportunities to experience and practise such skills, which can then be transferred to other situations. Whilst HMP Whatton is not a resettlement prison, a proportion of men are released each year and need this kind of support as part of their general preparation for leaving the prison.

6.7.2 Prisoners also experience valuable interactions in areas of discipline, adjudication and complaint resolution: soft skills give better results and improved outcomes as a reward.

6.7.3 The IMB has observed staff acting as role models to prisoners, in discussions on duty and in practice. The prisoner representatives on WEAT (Whatton equality action team), practise soft skills in making their points effectively and by putting into practice what they have learned as they represent the views of others to the committee.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 At HMP Whatton, People Plus runs under the Prison Education Framework (PEF). Operationally, this will change from October 2025, when the replacement Prison Education System begins. Contracts will 'create a prisoner education service focused on work-based training and skills', according to a recent Ofsted report. This is intended to get more offenders into work on release, thereby helping to keep the public safe.

The prison's education, skills and work strategy aims to raise English and Maths levels, foster a love of reading, ensure a safe learning environment, develop employability skills, engage reluctant learners, ensure value for money and offer higher-level learning opportunities.

At HMP Whatton, 27% of residents self-reported unemployment prior to imprisonment. A total of 43% of the prison's population either left school without qualifications or did not finish school. HMP Whatton prioritises early engagement with work prospects on a prisoner's arrival, starting with an education, skills and work needs analysis on induction. This involves education, activities, CIAG (careers, information, advice and guidance) and the library. Prisoners then begin their personal learning plan and undergo necessary screenings and assessments. Some 8% of the prison's population makes a conscious decision not to engage with the services offered.

As a training prison, there's strong encouragement for participation in purposeful activities related to education or work. While working, prisoners are encouraged to attend sessions on employability, fundamental British values, and understanding Prevent (a government-led programme to help stop individuals becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism). Reading areas with career pathway-aligned signage are being introduced in workshops.

Despite not being a designated resettlement prison, HMP Whatton releases prisoners to residence across the country. To compensate for the lack of a prison employment lead, a resettlement panel meets every six weeks.

7.1.2 Disability: the three most common disabilities recorded are mental illness, learning difficulties, and hearing impairment (including deafness).

7.1.3 Neurodiversity: 60% of the prisoner population at HMP Whatton present with either multiple diagnosed or self-declared neurodivergent needs. Neurodiversity assessments have fallen from 20 to five per month, thanks to the online screening that makes assessments available from the individual's previous prison.

7.1.4 Literacy and Maths assessment levels: around 69% of 839 assessed prisoners were at, or below, Level 1 in English, which is considered to be 'very poor literacy skills', according to the prison. Maths skills: one third of 841 sampled assessments were below Level 1, meaning that they were only able to add and subtract small numbers.

7.1.5 Reading: a reading skills assessment had 11% as non-readers. A prison-wide reading strategy caters for those with diverse reading needs, using easy-read materials, Braille resources, and reading pens. Twenty-three prisoners (3% of the

prison population) required English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) tuition. The charity, Shannon Trust, has trained prisoner mentors to help with this group.

7.1.6 Prison education fund (PEF): over the previous year, the PEF has funded 28 accredited courses, from bookkeeping to painting and decorating. It has funded nine unaccredited activities such as the library. Some courses have been dropped, such as cycle maintenance, but replacements are planned. One is a Level 1 constructional multi-skills course in bricks, tiling and groundworks. The IMB was disappointed that the longstanding art course was dropped, due to financial considerations. This had contributed to many excellent art works in the prison and had achieved Koestler Arts Awards (a charity that allows prisoners to express themselves creatively). We are informed that the equipment was distributed to prison wings and to the Older People, Active Lives group.

7.1.7 Student satisfaction: a 2024 prisoner survey revealed high satisfaction with recent education, with 94% of respondents reporting they were satisfied. However, the survey also indicated that only 47% of those responded would choose to enrol in another course. Those undertaking Maths told the IMB that they welcomed the opportunity their studies gave them to enhance their incentives scheme status.

7.1.8 Distance learning: 30 prisoners are engaged with Open University distance learning and 20 with the Prison Education Trust. Prisoners are allowed up to two three-hour sessions per week away from their workplace to study at the library computers. These students complain about two issues: the reduced hours of the Open University coordinator; and that the Coracle offline laptops provided for in-cell study do not communicate with the library computers, making electronic management of course work difficult. Universal serial bus storage is prohibited (to prevent prisoners communicating externally and storing illicit material).

7.1.9 Dynamic purchasing system (DPS): this has allowed the prison to purchase 14 different services, from Shannon Trust literacy and numeracy support, through to City & Guilds catering Levels 1 and 2, as examples. This system has led to 59 qualifications gained in a four-month period.

A work coach was funded through the DPS. Since starting in 2024, they have engaged with 63 prisoners. This has led to 10 releases with realistic work plans. Additionally, 18 previously disengaged prisoners have started working within the establishment and 35 have been supported into education. The work coach also facilitated Level 2 food hygiene training for 60 prisoners, to meet work role requirements. Currently, they support 24 prisoners with employability skills, and nine wing workers.

The IMB find it impressive that, as of May 2025, 95% of 1,154 starters have achieved their qualification.

7.1.10 Library: in April 2025, 96% of the prison population actively accessed this provision. Library services are run directly by People Plus. Current stock is around 13,000 books, CDs and games that cater for all levels of literacy. Prisoners report that the library is difficult to access when in their workplace. However, the library staff told the IMB that they make every effort to operate over weekends to cater for these workers who represent 73% of the prison population.

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 From the Board's observations, the activities hub and the industries and education departments work hard as a team to ensure that prisoners engage in activity that will support them on release, promote their wellbeing and work towards successful rehabilitation.

There are 762 work spaces, 610 full-time and 152 part-time. A total of 80 attend programmes. There has been a large reduction in the number of medically retired prisoners, and there now only 25 individuals, down from 48. The prison undertook a review of all those prisoners who were classified as medically retired and, as a result, the numbers were reduced and those re-classifieds were available for work. This reduced the costs of the prisoners who were paid in this way and allowed them to earn money instead.

The work on offer includes:

- Multimedia, which runs the highly respected prison radio and offers printed services.
- Waste management: an external contract with a waste management company has now ended, as it did not work out as expected. In handling prison waste and sorting recycling material for collection, prisoners gained valuable experience in an industry that may possibly employ them, even though their sentence may have been or included a sex offence.
- Horticulture: this remains the envy of other prisons, and the prison gardens always look amazing. The Windlesham trophy competition is being entered again in the hope of retaining the title. Prisoners undertake a range of horticultural skills training. The fact that a prisoner may undertake work on release as a self-employed gardener greatly improves his chance of reasonable employment when he leaves the prison.
- Paint shop: this area works very effectively and offers qualifications up to part Level 3. It provides opportunities for self-employment on release.
- DHL: this is a popular work space, which supplies the canteen to HMP Whatton and other prisons. Security is high for this work and prisoners are searched on finishing their shift. The work also has the capability of providing skills and experience for after release.
- Kitchen and staff mess: these appear to be well run and offer the opportunity to obtain qualifications.
- Textiles: this is where catering jackets for staff and prisoners are made, as well as sandbags.
- Laundry: this has been refurbished and remains an excellent facility, supporting other prisons, and it is hoping to expand.
- Television repair workshop: this is planned as a new venture and will provide a repair service for the prison estate, as well as offering useful skills, such as PAT testing (which involves checking electrical appliances and equipment to ensure they are safe to use).

7.2.2 A work coach now works with the newly fit for work prisoners to support them back into work or education. There are 23 prisoners in this category.

7.2.3 Work continues on the Ofsted recommendations, covered in last year's annual report. The Ofsted team is satisfied that any re-inspection would have a

positive outcome. There are plans in place to support prisoners with disabilities and learning difficulties and the neurodiversity support manager continues to have valuable input. There continues to be an emphasis on working towards qualifications and work experience focusing on a career pathway.

7.2.4 The IMB remains committed to monitoring the progress of the work in this area but we are confident that, with the team's particular emphasis on reducing absence and providing an effective induction programme, they are working hard to ensure the best possible outcomes for all prisoners.

7.3 Offender management, progression

7.3.1 There are certain transfers into the establishment of prisoners who are expecting to undertake the specialist courses available on a relatively urgent basis. However, due to space issues, these prisoners may not always receive the priority that was expected. Courses crucial for rehabilitation and preparation for release are available to prisoners who are within a certain period of their release date. HMP Whatton hold prisoners who have either a current or historical sentence for a sexual offence. There is a changing demographic, with a greater number of younger prisoners, who may present with more challenging behaviour.

7.3.2 There are 17 category D prisoners (who are eligible for an open prison) awaiting transfer. There seems to be limited availability of spaces in category D prisons. Other than HMP North Sea Camp, in Lincolnshire, and HMP Hollesley Bay, in Suffolk, there are restrictions on transfer. HMP Leyhill, in Gloucestershire, is full. HMP Haverigg, in Cumbria, will only take those prisoners who live locally, because of the costs incurred by release on temporary licence (ROTL) prisoners. HMP Prescoed will only take from category C HMP Usk, both in Monmouthshire. About two or three prisoners transfer to category D establishments each month. Eligible prisoners feel that this delays their opportunity for work training prior to release.

7.3.3 An average of 18 parole hearings are held each month. Of these, just over a quarter are successful. This is a significant improvement in hearings and success from the previous year.

7.3.4 HMP Whatton holds 106 Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners, which is close to the figure of 102 last year. There has been an upward trend of those serving mandatory life sentences, which is currently 121.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 Between 10% and 20% of prisoners receive regular social visits. Prior to entry, visitors are searched and IDs checked. The prison also holds family days, which bring together prisoners and their families outside of their statutory entitlement to social visits, usually in more informal settings. Members have observed two family day visit sessions over the reporting period.

7.4.2 The activities set up on family days are run by PACT staff and volunteers. Soft seating was arranged around coffee tables, which also had some activities for children, such as word searches, with rules about visiting stuck to the table surfaces.

7.4.3 On social visits, prisoners can sit on any table, but must sit on the red chairs, so staff can easily identify them. The area is clean, tidy and welcoming, as are the

toilet facilities. Officers wear plain clothes when children are visiting. There is a table with a buffet lunch and refreshments for prisoners and their families.

7.4.4 During the reporting period, the Prison Advisory and Care Trust (PACT) charity supported general prison visits, including the booking process. In March 2025, there was a contract change, whereby the prison took over responsibility for social visits. PACT is no longer involved in the general visits process. PACT continues to arrange monthly 'Making Positive Connections' sessions, which are aimed at prisoners who do not receive social visits. These are held in the visits hall and give selected prisoners the opportunity to engage in group games, and arts and crafts, and to order food that is available during social visits.

7.4.5 Officers report that there are very few incidents in the visits hall. The only issues occur are when children become bored, so the visit ends there and then.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 Although HMP Whatton is not a resettlement prison, it remains the case that about a fifth of the prisoners are released over the year. Prisoners are transferred to Whatton to complete programmes before release. The courses are being completed more quickly, due to shorter waiting lists. This means the time available for resettlement planning has been greatly reduced in the past year. There is still no allocated budget for this, although there is one dedicated member of staff and an allocated orderly. The entrance to courses is guided by the prisoners' release date. The prisoner benefits from this because courses deal with release, social availability and gaining skills that will be profitable when they leave the prison.

7.5.2 There continue to be several vital factors that affect resettlement at HMP Whatton. PCoSO prisoners find it extremely difficult to find employment. The prison has worked hard to forge links with various industries but, broadly, these have been unsuccessful. The New Futures Network (a specialist part of HM Prison and Probation Service/HMPPS), which attracts and supports employers to work with prisons, is helping with this, and a representative visits the prison every six weeks. HMP Haverigg also offers helpful advice, as it has a similar demographic and has experience, as a category D prison, with prisoners released on temporary licence. It remains the case that prisoners are vulnerable and isolated on release and have often lost contact with family members.

Despite this, the prison seems to work hard to prepare prisoners for release, with help to set up bank accounts and apply for benefits, and six or seven prisoners being seen each day. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring that every prisoner has accommodation to go to on release. Although this is sometimes secured at the very last minute, HMP Whatton has a 100% record for this.

It remains difficult to keep in touch with prisoners after their release, but the small team works extremely hard with limited resources to prepare men for life after prison.

Data for the reporting period

- 142 released
- 142 housed on the first night

- 2 in settled accommodation; 17 with family and friends (sustainable); 10 with family and friends (not sustainable); 109 in temporary accommodation; 3 housed with health needs
- 1 deported
- 3 gained employment

8. The work of the IMB

The IMB has continued to monitor, with a regular rota and by observing prison meetings, prisoner reviews and adjudications. We emphasise that IMB members are monitoring the process and representing neither the prison nor the prisoner.

The collection and processing of applications have continued and is improved using Kahootz, a project management platform. Individual applications are recorded and the responses of the Board recorded with them. We have had difficulties this year in the collection of the applications across the estate, and this is now part of the monitoring duties of our members.

The Board continues to meet on the second Wednesday of the month. We have had speakers from the prison staff at several of our meetings, which have provided good background knowledge.

We added one new member to the Board and had one resignation, which maintained our total, but we are still well below the recommended 15 Board members. Monitoring visits, the resulting reports and responses to prisoner applications form the largest and most important aspects of our monitoring role.

The Board is part of a wider East Midlands Group and there are regular meetings in which we discuss practice and outcomes and provide support for Chairs and Vice-chairs in their responsibilities.

We have hosted visitors to Whatton from other IMB Boards and shared experiences in this way.

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	208

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	9	10
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives schemes, sanctions	6	5
C	Equality	3	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	8	7
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	5	9
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	1	2
F	Food and kitchens	5	2
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	13	15
H1	Property within the establishment	8	12
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility	14	7
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues	1	1
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation	16	5
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	14	7
K	Transfers	6	4
L	Miscellaneous	29	13
	Total	138	99



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