



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

MoJ ref: SUB132254

27 February 2026

Dear Chair,

**HMP WHATTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 1 JUNE 2024 – 31 MAY 2025**

Thank you for your Board's detailed and thoughtful annual report. It is evident that your monitoring has been both diligent and compassionate and I want to express my sincere appreciation for the continued efforts of Board members, particularly given your reduced complement during the reporting year.

I was deeply saddened to read that seven men died in custody during the reporting year. Each death represents a profound loss and I extend my sincere condolences to their friends and families. I was comforted by your comments noting that staff, chaplaincy and Marie Curie practitioners provided sensitive support and ensured that pastoral care and memorial services were available to prisoners wishing to pay their respects. Please be assured that any recommendations arising from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's investigation will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

You once again raised the Board's concern that many of the men at HMP Whatton serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences experience a substantial degree of pressure and emotional strain due to the uncertainty of their future. This is a serious and important issue. The Government remains very mindful of the specific challenges faced by those serving IPP sentences and is determined to continue making progress in a way that supports safe and sustainable release, without compromising public protection. Nationally, a refreshed IPP Action Plan strengthens how sentence plans are developed and delivered, ensures prisoners are held in establishments that are appropriate to their needs and places clearer expectations on regular, meaningful reviews of progression. The Action Plan also introduces measurable targets to improve transparency and accountability in how progress is monitored across the system.

The collaborative work continues with NHS England to improve mental health support for prisoners, including those serving IPP sentences. This includes a comprehensive review of service specifications, clearer pathways for clinical assessment and the introduction of a statutory 28-day time limit for the Mental Health Act transfers where inpatient treatment is required. These improvements are supported by suicide and self-harm prevention work, the Listener Scheme and mental health awareness training for staff, all of which help ensure that individuals receive the right support at the right time.

Locally, I welcome the dedicated keyworker support provided to IPP prisoners at HMP Whatton. This regular contact helps monitor wellbeing, reduces isolation and keeps individuals engaged in purposeful activity and opportunities for personal development.

Thank you for continuing to highlight this issue. The welfare, support and progression of those serving IPP sentences remain key priorities and we will continue to strengthen both national systems and local practice to support these individuals.

The significant reforms contained in the Sentencing Act, which received Royal Assent on 22 January 2026 will provide the Courts with options to end the cycle of less serious offenders going in and out of prison. This includes the biggest ever expansion in tagging and the use of restriction zones to better protect victims. Alongside this, the probation budget will be increased by up to £700 million over the next three years to bolster community justice, including the probation service's resource and ability to tag offenders. The government is also investing in new technology to reduce admin so staff can focus on work that reduces reoffending.

Your report also highlights important strengths in the establishment. It was encouraging to read that prisoners continue to describe feeling safe, treated with fairness and supported by staff who maintain constructive and respectful relationships. I was particularly pleased to note the exceptionally high level of library engagement, with 96% of prisoners accessing library services in April 2025, as well as your positive observations regarding purposeful activity and clear communication between staff and the men in their care.

I note that your report has also raised some local concerns. The Governor will continue to keep you informed of any developments regarding these matters. HMPPS's comments in response to the other issue raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I very much appreciate the valuable role played by all members of the Independent Monitoring Boards operating throughout the prison estate and we are grateful for your ongoing dedication on behalf of HMP Whatton.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Lord Timpson**

**Minister for Prisons, Probation, and Reducing Reoffending**

## HMP WHATTON: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 JUNE 2024 – 31 MAY 2025

### HMPPS comments on matters raised in the report

#### **Rising Costs and the Impact on Food and Maintenance**

HMPPS recognises the Board's concern that rising baseline costs are placing pressure on catering and estate maintenance. Across the national estate, HMPPS continually reviews investment requirements, drawing on comprehensive condition surveys that assess the fabric, cells and critical assets of each prison. These surveys inform long-term forward maintenance registers, enabling works to be prioritised effectively against future capital budgets where demands exceed available funding. Budgets for prisoner food have increased incrementally to reflect rising costs, rising from £2.18 per prisoner per day in 2022–2023 to £3.01 in 2024–2025, with allocations for 2025–2026 further uplifted in line with inflation funding received by HMPPS. Governors also retain the flexibility to manage their overall budget locally and may supplement food provision where needed to maintain nutritional standards.

At HMP Whatton, a recent review of the catering menu has expanded available choices in line with the national food budget uplift. The establishment continues to make active use of produce grown on site, including fresh vegetables, salads and fruits to support menu variety and resilience. Several infrastructure projects are at various stages of planning and preparation. The fire safety project remains in its early development phase, and water pipe replacement is being scoped. A new rapid deployment unit is scheduled for installation during 2026, which will provide an additional 59 places once operational. A replacement stair lift for the multifaith area has been delivered.

#### **Access to Chaplaincy Facilities for Prisoners with Mobility Needs**

While the work is pending on the installation of the stairlift, prisons are expected to ensure that prisoners with mobility challenges can continue to access worship and pastoral support through reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Nationally, all requests for maintenance or accessibility improvements are considered within the constraints of significant demand across the estate. Once a bid for work is submitted, HMPPS must prioritise projects carefully to ensure funding is directed to areas that pose the greatest risks to life, operational capacity and decency. These principles guide the allocation of resources and the sequencing of works, including at HMP Whatton.