Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Lincoln

For reporting year
1 February 2025 to 31 January 2026

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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 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 Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the establishment[1]

HMP Lincoln is a category B reception and resettlement prison holding adult and young adult male prisoners, predominantly serving the courts of Lincolnshire. It currently holds remand and convicted adult/young adult male prisoners, including foreign national prisoners, life-sentenced prisoners and prisoners serving imprisonment for public protection (IPP).

The prison has a full 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) of 664. At the start of reporting period, it was 654. With ongoing project works, cells off-line and part of one wing taken off-line, the operational capacity was reduced as follows:

- 614 February 2025
- 583 September 2025
- 591 January 2026

HMP Lincoln is a Victorian prison that was first opened in 1872.

The prison comprises four large residential wings, each four storeys high, together with a care and separation unit (CSU), chapel, reception area, offender management unit (OMU), resettlement area, visits hall, gym, workshop block (including a kit distribution centre), education academy, healthcare unit, gatehouse, gate entrance, departure lounge, offices and several temporary buildings. CCTV coverage is in place across all residential wings.

The Managing Governor took up their appointment in February 2024.

[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.

3. Key points

3.1 Main findings

Safety

- Assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans (used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide): there were 355 documents opened in the reporting period, compared with 450 in the previous reporting year. There has been a reduction in self-harm, with 364 incidents compared with 455 in the previous year.
- From our observations in both reception and induction, we continue to be satisfied that, generally, all the relevant checks, processes and assessments are in place. We also observed a high level of professionalism and care from staff and peer mentors. The use of the body scanner has had an impact on safety and intercepted unauthorised items being brought into the prison.
- As noted in our previous report, the Board continues to believe that prisoners at HMP Lincoln are treated fairly and with respect. This is demonstrated throughout the establishment, including the regime on the wings in challenging circumstances, the proportionate level of use of force, the attention given to equality and fairness, and the management of prisoners located in the CSU.
- From our observations and review of the available data, the Board continues to believe the establishment places a positive emphasis on the humane treatment of prisoners in its care. Efforts continue to improve the cleanliness and appearance of the prison, supported by a focus on safety in custody, including the ACCT process, use of force and segregation procedures, the services provided by the healthcare team, and an emphasis on treating each prisoner as an individual.
- Having highlighted this issue in previous reports, the Board remains concerned about the time taken to complete repair and maintenance work across the prison and the quality of some completed work. Planned projects have often been slow to commence and, once underway, have frequently taken longer than expected to complete, with limited explanation for the delays. The Board has not seen evidence of a clear and transparent work programme against which progress is routinely monitored.

    - Cells can remain out of use for extended periods at times when there is an urgent need for space in the prison population. The workarounds for the projects also place additional pressure on prison staff in what is already a high-turnover establishment. Both staff and prisoners have had to contend with ongoing disruption and noise associated with these projects.
    - At the end of the reporting period, 10 cells (18 spaces) were off-line for maintenance. The IMB acknowledge that six of these cells (11 spaces) had been off-line since 25 January 2026. The other four cells (7 spaces) had been off-line for longer, with one off-line since September, one since October and two since December.

Health and wellbeing

- The largest number of IMB applications continues to be related to a variety of healthcare management issues. From the Board's observations, healthcare waiting times are not satisfactory. Prisoners identified by the healthcare unit as having urgent needs were prioritised and seen more quickly, despite long waiting lists. There continues to be, as in previous years, a shortage of staff during this reporting period, for which they were working to fill the gaps.
- All physical, dentistry and optometry services continued to be provided throughout the reporting year, as was the case in the previous reporting period in order to minimise waiting times, all patients are triaged to ensure that those with urgent needs are seen in a timely manner. Those with urgent needs are usually seen at the next available visit.

3.2 Main areas for development

Some questions have been repeated from the previous report where the underlying issues remain unresolved, to highlight areas where further progress is still needed.

TO THE MINISTER

- Whilst this issue was addressed last year, the Board remains concerned about delays in prisoners accessing healthcare and specialist mental health facilities when required. What steps will the Minister take, working with colleagues in the Department of Health and Social Care, to improve access to these services, and when does the Minister expect those improvements to be delivered?
- In addition, there are some prisoners who do not meet the criteria for transfer to a psychiatric hospital but who are also not considered suitable for location on a main residential wing because of their behaviour and the risks they present. Some of these prisoners spend extended periods in the CSU, placing additional demands on staff and limiting available accommodation within the unit. What action will the Minister take to ensure that appropriate provision is available for this group of prisoners, and what timescale does the Minister envisage for delivering a sustainable solution?
- As highlighted in previous annual reports, and despite further significant changes to the recall process, there has been little tangible progress in improving outcomes for IPP prisoners. What further steps will the Minister take to address the ongoing challenges faced by IPP prisoners, and what milestones will be used to assess whether those steps are delivering meaningful improvements?
- Education is essential to successful resettlement. What measures is the Minister considering to address the reduction in education provision, and when can prisons expect to see improvements in the range of educational opportunities available?
- Accommodation on release is vital to the successful resettlement of prisoners. What priority is the Minister giving to reducing the number of prisoners being released with no fixed abode, and when does the Minister expect to see a sustained improvement in outcomes?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Regarding the ongoing long-term projects, which have resulted in cells and parts of wings being taken off-line, can the number of prisoners held be managed to reflect the reduced capacity? In relation to the management of the projects, can these be kept to a valid and realistic timescale and with the right number of workers to prevent further delays. In addition, where Amey outsources work, what oversight is in place to ensure timely and effective delivery?
- To support resettlement and help reduce reoffending, what priority is the Prison Service giving to ensuring that prisoners have sufficient time to complete accredited courses and resettlement activity before transfer, and how will this be monitored?
- There continues to be a problem with prisoners' property not always arriving in its entirety on completion of a transfer. Prisoners can face lengthy delays in receiving their property, which may include personal memorabilia and legal documents, and in some cases, property is reported missing. What work is being undertaken by the Prison Service to improve the management of prisoners' property during transfers, and what analysis has been carried out to identify the causes of property loss and delays, particularly for prisoners who experience multiple transfers within a short period?
- The Victorian infrastructure of the prison continues to present challenges in meeting the needs of frail older prisoners, including those living with dementia, those requiring end-of-life care and those with disabilities. What plans does the Prison Service have to improve provision for these prisoners, and to what extent will suitability of accommodation be considered before prisoners are allocated to HMP Lincoln?
- As in previous years, it remains challenging to provide nutritious meals within the current daily food allowance. When will the Prison Service consider a regular review of the food budget, and what factors will inform decisions on future increases?
- As highlighted in previous annual reports, the Board continues to have concerns about the time taken to complete repair and maintenance work across the establishment and the quality of some completed work. The Board has also observed repeated delays in projects starting and in their completion. How does the Prison Service intend to improve the management of maintenance and project work to ensure that agreed timescales are met and disruption to the prison is minimised?
- Problems with the heating and hot water systems on the wings continue to be a matter of concern. How does the Prison Service plan to improve the timeliness of preventive maintenance and repairs?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- As highlighted in several previous reports, there continues to be a significant amount of food waste and other debris outside the accommodation wings, much of it having been thrown from windows. Members of the Board have observed this directly. The resulting litter attracts pigeons and vermin. While the Board acknowledges that these areas are cleaned regularly, they quickly become soiled again. How will the Governor ensure that this longstanding

issue is addressed, and how will monthly inspections be used to monitor progress?

- The longstanding problem of vermin, particularly rats and pigeons, remains a concern. Board members and prison staff continue to report sightings, despite ongoing pest control measures. How is the Governor holding contractors to account for addressing this issue, and what work is planned to deliver a sustained reduction in vermin across the prison?
- Some improvement has been noted on kit collection and distribution, but bed linen and towels continue to be an issue, with insufficient items. The prisoners are not always able to change these items due to insufficient or no stock. What arrangements are in place to ensure that adequate stocks are maintained in this high-turnover establishment?

3.3 Response to the previous report

Issue raised	Response given (click here for the Minister's response)	Progress
To the Minister 1. Whilst addressed last year, the Board, still remains concerned about this issue: will the Minister speak to colleagues in the Department for Health and Social Care to improve prisoners' timely access to specialist mental health facilities, where required? access to specialist mental health facilities, where required?	I share the Board's concerns about timely access to mental health facilities. I am pleased to say that the Mental Health Bill received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025. This introduces the 28-day transfer limit to ensure timely transfers and prevent courts from detaining individuals with severe mental illness in prison as a place of safety. The Ministry of Justice is working closely with NHS England to support the national Mental Health and Justice Strategic Advisory Group which is focused on meeting the requirements of the legislation and will report directly to parliament. The group will have oversight of the transfer process and brings together key partners to identify and deliver solutions to address common causes of delays. NHS-Led Provider Collaboratives for the Midlands also have newly developed action plans to accelerate prison transfers, which includes remodelling of bed capacity and care pathways as well as procurement of additional beds. Progress is being reported to the national group and the Midlands Health and Justice Commissioning Team continues to engage with the commissioners and providers of secure mental health services bi-weekly to support the timely assessment and transfer of prisoners. I can also assure the Board that prisoners at HMP/YOI Lincoln who are waiting a transfer	This remains a concern for the Lincoln IMB.

	to a secure facility receive daily welfare checks from a senior operational manager and health care staff and multidisciplinary reviews take place to determine their individualised care plan.	
2. As mentioned in our previous annual report and whilst there have been significant changes in the recall process, there continues to be little tangible progress in the situation of the IPP prisoners. What further action does the Minister plan to make to ensure positive outcomes for IPP prisoners?	I can appreciate your ongoing frustrations about the progress of imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) prisoners. As the Board rightly recognises, the Victims and Prisoners ACT 2024 introduced significant reforms, such as reducing the point where licence termination is considered and enabling quicker re-release when recalled to custody. As of 30 September 2025, the number of IPP prisoners in custody and those that had never been released before both reduced from the same point the year before. In 2024, which was most of your reporting year, the 619 recalls to custody were the lowest since 2017 and the 602 IPP re-releases following recall, were the highest recorded. We remain to determine to support those serving IPP sentences towards release through a refreshed IPP Action Plan. This was published in the IPP Annual Report on 17 July 2025 and sets measurable targets to ensure transparency and accountability and confirms how we intend to go further. The action plan includes increasing access to Release on Temporary Licence and expanding the Approved Premises pilot to improve resettlement support. Whilst HMP/YOI Lincoln is not intended to hold IPP prisoners, long term, aiming to transfer them to other prisons that can better meet their needs, the prison is in the early stages of developing a team of key workers dedicated to Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners and those subject to IPP. Prison Offender Managers have also received additional training focused on this cohort and quarterly forums and multidisciplinary progression panels have been reinstated under the new policy introduced in July 2025 to ensure IPP prisoners are on the right progression pathway, with access to interventions, at the right time.	There have been no further updates. IPP prisoners at HMP Lincoln have started to meet regularly as a group. This will provide long-term support and development for their parole.

3.Accommodation is important for the resettlement of prisoners. For those prisoners being released with no fixed abode (NFA), how is this being addressed?	Regarding your concerns about the importance of securing accommodation on release, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), is working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and other government departments on the development of a new cross-government strategy to put us back on track to ending homelessness. Community Accommodation Service (CAS) 3 provision can provide transitional accommodation for up to 12 weeks for prison leavers and those moving on from CAS1 and CAS2, who are subject to probation supervision and would otherwise be homeless. There are also 50 Strategic Housing Specialists, based across England and Wales, one of which is based at HMP/YOI Lincoln. These work with local authorities and Homelessness prevention Teams to develop and deliver a range of solutions that remove barriers to accommodation. One of these is pre-release panels, which aim to reduce the likelihood of homelessness on release and all local authorities in the East Midlands are engaging in these. At HMP/YOI Lincoln, the risk of homelessness is identified on Reception and referrals are made prior to release to ensure needs are considered by a Resettlement Board meeting, where possibly, at 12 weeks, four weeks and one week before release. In addition, there is a duty to refer anyone who is at risk of becoming homeless to the Loal Authority of the person's choice under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	The IMB remains concerned, as there is no progress to report.
To the Prison Service 1. In order to maintain significant gains made in safety, decency and culture since 2019, can the planned increases in the	The response from the Prison Service is contained in the response from the Minister, available at Minister's response to the 2024-2025 annual report of the HMP-YOI Lincoln IMB The Board can be assured that, where capacity is increased in a prison, the national workforce planning team reviews	The IMB would like the Prison Service to take into account the high turnover of prisoners at HMP Lincoln and the long-

operational capacity be monitored closely?	the staffing offer and increases the resource as appropriate in line with national guidance. There are currently no plans for new build extensions at the prison. If this was proposed in the future, impacts on safety, decency and regime would be key considerations. East Midlands Prison Group is confident that HMP/YOI Lincoln can effectively manage a changing staffing group with a high level of relatively new staff, but the regime and staffing profiles will be reviewed.	term project work that is taking place when reviewing the regime and staffing profiles, particularly the ratio of the relatively new staff.
2. Lincoln Prison has an increasing transient population and therefore it is difficult for prisoners to access and complete training opportunities to assist with reducing reoffending. Can sufficient time be given to complete these courses,	It is recognised that, as a local reception prison, the primary focus is on accommodating prisoners from courts, which may necessitate transferring prisoners to create space. The prison tries to delay moves but a minimum period of stay cannot be guaranteed.	
3. There continues to be a problem with prisoners' property not always arriving in their entirety on completion of transfer. Prisoners can face a long wait for their property which sometimes contains personal memorabilia and legal documents relating to their	Where complaints do arise, these are being logged, tracked and reported to the Senior Management Team. HMPPS remains committed to improving the management of prisoners' property and considers possible areas for improvement on an ongoing basis. New prison places being introduced across the estate are accessible by design and will significantly increase the number of cells adapted to the needs of those with mobility issues and physical disabilities. A strategy for older prisoners was recommended by the recent Independent Sentencing Review. This included	Property tracking is still an issue.

situation and on occasions this goes missing. What work is being carried out to address this issue?	considering how best to use the estate to support older prisoners across all prisons.	
4. The Victorian infrastructure of the prison gives rise to problems surrounding the increasing numbers of frail older people. Particularly those with dementia, end of life care and disabled prisoners. What provision is in hand to deal with this?	The Food in Prisons Framework was published in July 2025. It prioritises nutrition, supports medical and specialist diets and promotes dignity, wellbeing and rehabilitation through food. At HMP/YOI Lincoln, cost-efficiency measures are being introduced, aligned with new menus which are due to be launched in February 2026. The Facilities Management (FM) provider has instigated a programme to reduce the number of outstanding work orders. This is having a positive effect, with the total number reduced by over 50%.	
5. It continues to be difficult to provide nutritional meals within the daily allowance. Are there any plans to increase this amount?	Planned and reactive maintenance continues to be monitored via a monthly validation process and any urgent requests are escalated immediately with the FM provider.	
6. As in previous annual reports, the Board is concerned about the length of time taken and the quality of work undertaken when dealing with repairs and maintenance jobs in the prison. What can be done to rectify this?	It is recognised that the hot water system continues to rely on a temporary boiler, pending completion of a replacement project of all primary heat delivery, which has commenced but is not expected to be completed until approximately 2028. The prison has established robust arrangements with the FM Provider, who is responsible for the maintenance of the temporary boiler systems, to attend the prison's daily briefings to allow issues to be escalated promptly and ensure these are prioritised and restored as soon as practicable.	We are seeing several months' delays before project work starts and further months of delay when the work starts. HMP Lincoln has to work around this with the staffing and regime for the prisoner.

7. What action can be taken to address the ongoing problems with heating and hot water and to address the delays in maintenance and repairs?		Problems continue with the heating and water.
To the Governor 1. What action is being taken to address the issue of food waste and debris outside the accommodation wings? This attracts large numbers of pigeons. We have observed rubbish being thrown from cell windows on numerous occasions. It is noted that the areas are regularly cleaned but it does not stay this way for long. 2. There are ongoing issues with kit collection and distribution. Can sufficient kit items be provided for those arriving in reception, to cover until the first change on the wing? Can an effective system be put in place to ensure the	There was no response from the Governor.	N/A.

laundry that is sent out from the wings matches that which is returned in both condition and numbers?		

Evidence sections 4 – 7

As many of the main operational processes in the prison have not changed since last year, the account provided here closely mirrors previous reporting.

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

During the reporting year, there have been, on average,180 prisoners arriving each month from a variety of custodial establishments, compared with 222 in the previous year. The highest number again this year was in August 2025, when 232 prisoners arrived, compared with 282 in the previous year. The lowest number of prisoners arriving was in April 2025, with 163, compared with September 2024, when there were 162 arrivals.

The first night centre (FNC) can accommodate a total of 28 prisoners in 14 shared cells, plus three in high-risk cells, one in a disabled cell and one cell for constant watch. Board members have observed prisoners in reception and have monitored several inductions throughout the reporting period.

All prisoners are assessed on arrival and by healthcare in reception. They undergo a body scan when they arrive and those who pass the body scan are then taken to the first night centre (FNC), where they will stay until induction at 9am the following morning. Those who continue to fail the body scan are taken to the care and separation unit (CSU) until they show a clear body scan.

At induction, every prisoner is seen by a member of the chaplaincy team, ‘With You’ (the drug and alcohol rehabilitation service) and the education team. Depending on availability of spaces in FNC, prisoners may spend one or two nights there before transferred to the main wings. The prisoners are encouraged to take the Level 1 certificate in English and Maths if they do not already have this.

The Board observed professionalism and care from staff and prisoner peer mentors when they visited. Prisoners are frequently transferred to HMP Lincoln late in the evening. The prisoners then need to be processed and have checks in a thorough way, which means those working in reception and those who see the prisoners on arrival regularly work late and past the finish time of their evening shift to process prisoners being transferred in.

Prisoners arriving by month	Number
February 2025	230
March	219
April	163
May	170
June	184
July	222
August	232
September	197
October	209
November	192

December	216
January 2026	264
Total	**2498**

2025	Prisoners Discharged	Prisoners transferring	Total
February	100	67	167
March	121	88	209
April	104	56	160
May	120	69	189
June	90	58	148
July	105	74	179
August	105	91	196
September	122	103	225
October	142	66	208
November	102	90	192
December	146	92	238
January 2026	97	79	176
Total	**1354**	**933**	**2287**

In June 2025, a bail officer was introduced to provide dedicated support to the remand population, as no other department was able to provide the necessary assistance. The role works closely with the Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT), which ask newly arrived prisoners if they want to pursue a bail application. A comprehensive assessment is then prepared and submitted to the court ahead of the hearing. A key factor in unsuccessful applications continues to be the lack of suitable accommodation available on release.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

There were 355 ACCT documents opened within the reporting period, which is a decrease of 95 from the previous year's reporting period. Corresponding to the numbers in self-harm incidents, the highest numbers of ACCTs were opened in February (43), then three consecutive months in April (36), May (36) and June (36); the rest of the year there was a decline per month.

A range of reasons are recorded for opening an ACCT document, with physical health concerns being the most frequently cited. Other reasons included: bereavement, cell sharing, custodial debt, first time in custody, isolation, length of sentence, licence recall, medication issues, mental-health related, perceived discrimination, relationship breakdown and relocation to the CSU.

Convicted prisoners and those recalled on licence accounted for the highest number of ACCT openings, with both groups represented equally.

Quality assurance is completed by a safety manager on each ACCT opened at HMP Lincoln. Feedback is given to case managers on how to improve the quality if this is required. The Board found that the standard of the reviews they monitored was good. Any deficiencies appear to be identified quickly and responded to with support and guidance to case managers.

ACCT documents

Number of acts opened by month

Month/ Year	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
2025/26	43	32	36	36	36	26	29	22	27	25	27	16
2024/25	44	38	34	35	33	38	37	32	52	33	34	40

Percentage of ACCTs closed at the first review

Month/ Year	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
2025/26	34%	19%	33%	50%	19%	42%	24%	41%	12%	16%	15%	31%
2024/25	34%	33%	32%	49%	76%	42%	43%	50%	40%	39%	38%	23%

There was a reduction in recorded self-harm incidents during the reporting period, with 364 incidents compared with 455 in the previous reporting year. The lowest monthly total was recorded at the end of the reporting period, in January 2026 (nine incidents), the lowest level since November 2023. The highest monthly total was recorded in May, with 52 incidents. The average number of self-harm incidents per month during the reporting period was 30.

Self-harm by month for the last two reporting years

Month/ Year	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
2025/26	37	39	48	52	48	20	29	19	20	22	21	9
2024/25	31	61	41	37	26	32	24	31	46	32	50	44

The table above records the number of self-harm incidents and does not reflect the number of individual prisoners involved, as some prisoners self-harmed on multiple occasions.

The removal of razor blades towards the end of 2025 may have contributed to the lower number of incidents recorded in January 2026.

At the end of the reporting period, using data available to December 2025, HMP Lincoln had the third lowest rate of self-harm per 1,000 prisoners within its comparator group. Comparison with other reception prisons shows that Lincoln ranked 14th out of 30 reception prisons.

Lincoln remains rated amber against its self-harm target, which is measured through the HMPPS red, amber and green (RAG) performance framework. The amber rating reflects performance against Lincoln’s individual target rather than its performance compared with other prisons. Some establishments with a significantly higher rate of

self-harm per 1,000 prisoners are rated green. This reflects the way in which targets are set and can give a misleading impression of comparative performance. Following the publication of annual performance data, each establishment is set a new target based on previous performance, often at a more challenging level. As a result, high-performing prisons such as Lincoln may receive an amber rating despite continuing to achieve relatively low rates of self-harm compared with others in their comparator group.

The Samaritans contact number is available for all prisoners on a personal identification number (PIN) for the in-cell phones, and these calls remain free. There were 842 calls made to the Samaritans from February 2024 to 31 October 2024. Unfortunately, statistics are not available from November 2024 due to the change made in contacting the Samaritans through the PIN system. As it stands, there will be no further statistics for contacting the Samaritans, as the details are held on the individual prisoner's PIN, which cannot be retrieved.

The Listener scheme was not available for whole of the last reporting period and was only reintroduced on 6 July of this reporting period. It is now available 24/7. Listeners are prisoners who volunteer to receive training by the Samaritans to provide emotional support to their peers. To see a Listener, a prisoner can ask any staff member and no reason needs to be given, or they can ring the cell bell and request a listener.

The reintroduction of the Samaritan support alongside the additional trained prisoners will strengthen the Listener Scheme at HMP Lincoln.

The Board notes, with sadness, the three deaths in custody that occurred during the reporting period. In addition, there was one death within seven days of release from prison.

HMP Lincoln offered professional wellbeing support to families, staff and prisoners following these deaths. The chaplaincy team also provided support to families, staff and prisoners. Prisoners had access to additional support through the Samaritans freephone service, trained members of the safety team, wing officers and key workers.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

The safer custody team at Lincoln continues to be responsible for identifying triggers and 'hot spots' for violence and the Board has observed the team taking appropriate action. This may include the separation and/or movement between wings of prisoners identified.

There was a reduction in the overall number of violent incidents during the reporting period, with 203 incidents recorded compared with 233 in the previous year (this was initially recorded as 213 in last year's report, but the figure was subsequently corrected). However, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased to 196, while assaults on staff fell slightly to 57. In the previous reporting year, there were 90 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and 61 assaults on staff.

HMP Lincoln were the third lowest in their comparative group for prisoner-on-prisoner violence and fourth lowest in their comparative group for assaults on staff.

Violence by month	2025-2026	2024-2025
February	20	15
March	21	17
April	16	22
May	18	16
June	21	22
July	20	28
August	27	19
September	15	13
October	11	17
November	13	34
December	10	11
January 2026	11	19
Total	**203**	**233**
Average per month	**17**	**19**

Challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) are used to support and manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence. In the Board's view, they continue to be used effectively to help manage threatening and or aggressive behaviours.

Referrals that do not progress to a CSIP are monitored through violence-reduction or victim-monitoring processes. Prisoners are also seen by a member of the safety team for triage, and their key workers are informed so that any concerns can be discussed during key worker sessions. All referrals are reviewed by a safety manager, who determines whether a CSIP should be opened or whether alternative support and monitoring arrangements are more appropriate.

4.4 Use of force

Use of force describes a wide range of intervention, from a guided hold where a prisoner may be returned to their cell with minimal physical contact, to a planned removal of a prisoner by officers using full personal protection equipment (PPE).

There is a use of force monthly meeting chaired by the Deputy Governor and attended by a Governor grade member of staff from residential services, security, safer custody, healthcare and operations, as well as the use of force coordinator and control and restraint instructors. The meeting is observed by a member of the IMB on an ad-hoc basis. The meeting analyses monthly data regarding numbers of incidents, reasons for the incidents, location, age range and ethnicity of prisoners.

Use of force development meetings are held weekly and chaired by the Deputy Governor. During these meetings, body-worn video camera (BWVC) footage and written statements from the officers involved are reviewed to ensure that de-escalation has been used at the earliest opportunity and that procedures have been followed correctly and in line with training. Any learning points or examples of good

practice identified are shared with relevant staff. This process helps to ensure that training remains up to date, best practice is promoted, and incidents are managed fairly and humanely. The Board remains concerned that, in some cases, there is no BWVC footage available to evidence an incident or prisoner movement, despite regular reminders to staff. The IMB supports the consistent use of BWVCs to ensure that important evidence is available when required. A member of the IMB attends these meetings on an ad hoc basis.

During the reporting period, BWVCs were activated 462 times to record use-of-force incidents, compared with 706 activations in the previous reporting period. The lowest monthly total was recorded in December 2025 (19), compared with 27 in December 2024. The highest monthly total was recorded in March 2025 (60), compared with 63 in January 2025 in the previous reporting period.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The continued use of the X-ray body scanner appears to have had a significant impact on safety and security by helping to prevent unauthorised items entering the prison. Prisoners are scanned on arrival and, where a positive scan is identified, are given the opportunity to surrender the item before being scanned again. This process has reduced the need to isolate prisoners and may also have contributed to the reduction in finds, as items are often disposed of before entry into the establishment. Where a positive scan remains, prisoners are moved to the CSU until a negative scan is obtained. In addition, the continued use of Rapiscan technology to process incoming mail, together with the deployment of dogs, continues to be effective in detecting prohibited items.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

It is important to note that Lincoln prison is a Victorian building, with all the issues that brings with it. The prison is a listed building, with the exception of E wing.

As noted in our previous report, the cleanliness and appearance of the accommodation and recreational areas continue generally to have been well maintained over the reporting period. The prisoners were regularly seen cleaning on the wings, including mopping and polishing the floors. There is a rolling programme of painting on the wings, and there has been the addition of some wall murals. Several have been completed by prisoners in the first night centre and pensioners' room.

In common with last year's report, temporary boilers continue to be a problem. The current temporary boilers have been in place in Lincoln for eight years. The boiler rooms had been refurbished, but this will need to be completed again, in the Board's view. The water and heating system continue to be temperamental.

The heating system does not allow for any temperature control other than it being switched on or off for the whole establishment. This can make it uncomfortable on the wings and in the workshops, when the weather changes temporarily and the heating cannot be turned up or down or even off for a few days or weeks.

The water continues to be regularly tested for legionella, and showers and taps are regularly off-line until tests show the water is safe.

Cockroaches are still seen on the main wings and the administrative room off the wing. These can take weeks to resolve.

The exterior areas of the establishment continues to be affected by litter, including food waste, particularly around the accommodation wings after mealtimes, despite ongoing efforts to educate prisoners. Meals are collected from a servery on the wing and taken back to their cells. There is a food waste collection after meals, and the external areas around wings are cleaned regularly through the day.

The Deputy Governor's monthly inspection for cleanliness across all wings both inside and outside continues to encourage prisoners to improve the cleanliness of the establishment. There is still a monthly award for all prisoners on the best kept wing and an additional allowance for the wing cleaners if the award includes outside. Unfortunately, these measures have still not resolved the problem.

As noted in last year's report, rats continue to be a problem. Amey, the maintenance contractor, has continued to highlight the need to address food being thrown from windows, as this undermines the effectiveness of the measures being taken. Staff and agency workers are encouraged to report all rat sightings. However, no records have been made available to demonstrate the number of sightings reported or how promptly increases in activity have been addressed.

There appears to be a tendency to regard the issue as resolved when sightings reduce for a period, only for reports to increase again subsequently. Areas continue to be identified where rats appear to be residing, and the Board considers that

control measures have not yet been fully effective. Although inspections and control activity have increased, the problem has not yet been fully brought under control.

Vaping is only permitted in cells and on the exercise yard. When attending other areas in the establishment, the vape pens should be left secured in their cell and not conveyed around the establishment. The IMB has observed that this is not always the case and we have reported vaping in workshops and on the wings.

From 10 November 2025, disposable vapes were withdrawn and replaced with the MOJA vaping pen and pre-filled liquid capsules. Prisoners were offered a free like-for-like exchange for the new device. The MOJA pen was introduced to reduce the risk of misuse, including the use of vapes to conceal or consume illicit substances. From that date, the 88 vape became a prohibited item. However, it has become apparent that, despite the MOJA pen being designed to be tamper-resistant, some prisoners have found ways to modify the device to facilitate the use of illicit substances. This remains an area of concern for the prison.

By the end of the reporting period, all prisoners had been issued with an electric razor, and wet razors were no longer permitted. This change forms part of a national initiative aimed at improving safety across the prison estate.

There are ongoing issues with kit collection and distribution, especially for towels. There are often insufficient items of towels or bedding for prisoners to exchange on a regular basis. There does not seem to be control over the exchange of dirty for clean. This becomes apparent when linen and clothing is thrown out of the window.

It is recognised that the high turnover of prisoners, through releases, transfers and new receptions, contributes to ongoing pressures on the availability of kit and bedding. The introduction of arrangements allowing prisoners on the standard and enhanced level of the incentives scheme to wear their own clothing, subject to local standards, has helped to alleviate some of these pressures. This has also enabled a greater proportion of prison-issued clothing to be laundered within the establishment.

5.2 Separation

The care and separation unit (CSU) has nine cells, all of which were in use at the end of the reporting period. However, the in-cell phones had been out of service for more than a month, with no indication of when repairs would be completed.

The showers continue to be regularly out of service due to concerns relating to legionella, requiring alternative arrangements to be put in place, including the use of showers on the main wings.

During the reporting period, the Board observed 206 good order or discipline (GOoD) reviews, compared with 220 in the previous year. These reviews determine whether a prisoner should remain segregated. The Board considered all GOoD reviews it observed to have been conducted fairly.

As noted in our previous report, there were times during the reporting period when prisoners remained in the CSU for longer than 42 days, the period permitted without external authorisation. The Board acknowledges that the necessary authorisations were in place in all cases. These extended stays were generally due to delays in transfers to more suitable establishments or hospitals. It is regrettable that some prisoners spent prolonged periods in the CSU while awaiting transfer, reducing the

availability of limited accommodation. In addition, a number of prisoners whose behaviour posed risks to the safety of other prisoners or staff also required placement in the CSU, placing further pressure on the unit and its staff.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

From the Board's observations, staff and prisoner relationships continue to be generally positive and supportive. Staff numbers for HMP Lincoln at the end of the reporting period stood at 376, compared with 373 at the beginning of the year in review.

The delivery of the key worker programme continues to be affected by staffing pressures, including sickness absence and the need to provide constant watch and bed-watch cover. As a result, key worker sessions are regularly cancelled, either in the morning or afternoon, to ensure essential operational duties are maintained.

Prisoners are usually allocated a key worker within one day of arriving in reception. However, the average time before a prisoner has their first key worker session is 20 days. There are currently 117 active key workers, although the delivery rate for scheduled weekly sessions remains low at 20.43%.

When Board members spoke to prisoners who had raised concerns, many were not aware of the support available through the key worker scheme. In addition, some did not know who their key worker was or when their next key worker session was due to take place.

5.4 Equality and diversity

There was an increase in the number of discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) submitted during the reporting period, with cases recorded across four protected characteristics, compared with six in the previous reporting period. A total of 30 DIRFs were received, compared with 21 in the previous year. As in the previous reporting period, race accounted for the highest number of DIRFs, increasing from 13 to 18. Of the 30 DIRFs submitted, 13 were upheld and 17 were not upheld. The data does not identify how many individual prisoners submitted DIRFs and therefore does not indicate whether repeat complaints were made by the same prisoners.

DIRFs

Protected characteristic	**2025-2026**	**2024-2025**
Age	0	1
Race	18	13
Disability	3	2
Gender reassignment	3	1
Religion	0	2
Sexual orientation	6	2
Total number of DIRFs	*30*	*21*

Number upheld	**13**	**5**
Number not upheld	**17**	**13**
Number N/A (author released)	0	3

Although much of the written information provided to prisoners is in English, materials continue to be made available in other languages to help reduce disadvantage for those whose first language is not English. Officers also have access to a 24-hour phone interpreting service.

The library holds a selection of foreign-language and large-print books.

During education induction, where needs are identified, reasonable adjustments appear to be made where possible. English language courses continue to be offered to prisoners whose first language is not English.

Support for neurodiverse prisoners has continued throughout the reporting period. Staff awareness and communication training has also continued and remains part of the prisoner induction programme. Awareness posters and information folders are available on all wings, and each wing has a prisoner neurodiversity champion who can help raise awareness and provide support to fellow prisoners.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The prison chaplaincy service continues to provide a wide range of support in addition to faith-based activities and worship. This includes pastoral care for prisoners who are vulnerable, bereaved, distressed, or otherwise in need of support.

A chaplain attends daily induction sessions to meet all new arrivals to the prison. Chaplains also continue to visit the CSU, where they speak individually with prisoners held there.

A significant aspect of the chaplaincy's work is providing support to prisoners dealing with serious illness or bereavement within their families. The chapel continues to be well used by prisoners wishing to mark important family events and anniversaries.

The team continues to prepare for and support the observance of religious festivals throughout the year, liaising with the kitchens where necessary.

The chaplaincy team has told the Board that they are grateful for the support received from charities and other organisations that provide faith-related resources, such as Bibles and rosary beads. Efforts continue to develop and maintain these links.

They have, again, worked throughout the year to achieve a full complement of staff but remains one post short. This has increased the workload of the team, particularly that of the managing chaplain.

5.6 Complaints

During the reporting period, a total of 1792 complaints were received, compared with 1860 the previous year.

This consisted of:

- COMP 1s (ordinary complaints): 1557
- COMP 2s (concern sensitive issues): 235

Total complaints per month for the last two years is as follows:

Feb 2025	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 26
144	169	220	175	157	219	146	116	101	115	127	106

Feb 2024	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 25
17	160	162	154	146	171	163	171	131	124	124	180

The highest number of complaints continued to relate to property, with 291 recorded during the reporting period compared with 52 in the previous year. These complaints included property not arriving with prisoners on transfer, difficulties in tracing or locating property, and allegations of lost property.

The second highest category of complaints was confidential COMP 2 forms submitted directly to the Governing Governor (235). There are no data available to show how many of these were subsequently considered not to be confidential and referred for investigation as a COMP 1. The Board repeatedly heard concerns from prisoners that they were dissatisfied with the person assigned to investigate their complaint, as they believed that individual was connected to the area being complained about, which was often their reason for submitting a COMP 2.

Prisoners are informed of the appeals process and, if dissatisfied with the response to a COMP 1, its appeal, or a COMP 2, they may refer the matter to Independent Prisoner Complaints Investigations (IPCI), enclosing the responses they have received. Prisoners are also made aware that this process can take up to 14 weeks.

The number of complaints by wing

- A wing: 466
- B wing: 378
- C wing: 452
- E wing: 387
- CSU: 35
- Other: 76

The third highest category of complaints continued to be the canteen (a facility where prisoners can buy snacks, toiletries, stationery and other essentials using their allocated funds), with 147 complaints compared with 231 in the previous year. Meetings have been held with the company that runs the service to help address the issues raised. Refunds can take up to 28 days to process, which can leave prisoners out of pocket. To help with this, the prison now reimburses prisoners once a refund has been agreed, then recovers the money when the supplier's refund is received. Other concerns included items not arriving, the receipt of substitute items that prisoners did not want, and items arriving faulty or damaged.

The paper-based system for distributing and collecting canteen order forms from prisoners continues to be time consuming and restrictive. It requires funds to be deducted from the prisoners' accounts when the order is placed. In addition, staff need to come in during the Christmas and New Year period to ensure canteen orders are processed, as the service company continues to operate on a weekly ordering and delivery basis.

Prisoners are provided with information about the complaints process during induction, and complaint forms are available on all wings.

5.7 Property

Property continued to be a significant source of concern during the reporting period, both within the prison and during transfers between prisons. Complaints relating to property were by far the most numerous, with 291 recorded. The next highest category was confidential applications, with 235 complaints.

There was a decrease in IMB applications (prisoners' written representations to the Board) this year, which may reflect the reduction in the capacity of the prison during this time. In total, 25 applications were received for property within the establishment and 33 for property during transfer, totalling 58. This compares with 37 in the previous year for property within the establishment and 46 for property during transfer, totalling 83.

As noted in last year's report, the number of complaints within the establishment included items that prisoners are not allowed to have with them and need to be stored securely with their property. If a prisoner is brought in off the street and has vapes or cigarettes, these need to be destroyed on arrival at HMP Lincoln. Prisoners coming from a different category prison such as C or an open prison will find they are more restricted with what they can wear and items they can have in their cell. The complaints made for these reasons cannot be upheld.

Tracking prisoners' property can be difficult, particularly when individuals have moved between several establishments in a short period of time. There does not appear to be a system that consistently identifies the last known location of an item. This continues to cause frustration for prisoners, especially where important paperwork relating to their sentence, or personal and sentimental items, cannot be located.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

In 2025, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust gave notice on its contract to provide healthcare services at HMP Lincoln. Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust was subsequently appointed to take over the provision of healthcare and pharmacy services from 21 January 2026.

Initial assessments are carried out on new prisoners on arrival at the prison, with those arriving 'out of hours' seen as a priority. This is a national target set by the NHS. A locally produced information leaflet outlining health services is provided to prisoners on reception.

From the Board's observations, healthcare staff continue to attend a range of prison meetings, including drug strategy and use of force meetings, when operational commitments allow. In addition, several healthcare-specific meetings are held to discuss complex and multi-agency cases, where prisoners require support from healthcare, mental health services and We Are With You (WAWY), the drug and alcohol service at HMP Lincoln. Safer prescribing meetings also take place to review cases where prisoners are prescribed combinations of multiple medications.

The largest number of applications to the Board again this year related to healthcare, with 49 recorded. When property issues within the establishment (25) and property issues arising during transfer to or from another establishment (33) are combined, property accounted for 58 applications. This is broadly consistent with the previous year, when healthcare accounted for 85 applications and property-related issues for 84.

Again, this year some prisoners were not satisfied with the length of time it takes to see a GP. There was a shortage of staff during the reporting period and staff were working to fill the gaps.

Healthcare complaints are dealt with directly by the healthcare team and the NHS patient advice and liaison service (PALS).

6.2 Physical healthcare

There were delays in the dispensing of medication during the reporting period, particularly for new arrivals. Towards the end of the year, concerns were also raised about the prescribing and availability of paracetamol, as it was not always issued when requested. As the new healthcare provider commenced services at the end of the reporting period, the Board considers it important that these issues continue to be monitored.

Significant progress was made during the year through the joint efforts of healthcare staff and the establishment to eliminate hepatitis C. HMP Lincoln is understood to be the only category B prison in the country to have achieved this.

Additional healthcare staff were recruited during the reporting period, with commencement dates scheduled from February 2026.

6.3 Mental health

The establishment continues to have a high number of prisoners with mental health needs, similar to previous years. These prisoners are supported by the mental health team, which is available daily, from 7.30am to 5.30pm on weekdays and weekends. A mental health nurse also attends GOoD reviews in the care and separation unit to help monitor the wellbeing of the prisoners.

There were again a number of prisoners who, following assessment by mental health services and a psychiatrist, required transfer to a psychiatric hospital. However, the time taken to complete these transfers continues to be a concern. Prisoners often wait weeks or, in some cases, months for a hospital placement, resulting in extended stays in the care and separation unit (CSU). Where a prisoner remains in the CSU beyond 42 days, the necessary authorisation needs to be obtained to permit their continued stay pending transfer,

In addition, some prisoners do not meet the criteria for transfer to a psychiatric hospital not considered suitable to remain on a main wing. These prisoners can spend extended periods in the CSU while awaiting transfer to a more appropriate establishment, placing additional demands on both CSU capacity and staff resources.

As noted in our previous report, the neurodiversity support manager (NSM) continues to visit prisoners to assess their needs. Prisoners can self-refer or there is a referral process via a form that any member of staff can complete. Once someone has been identified, they are sent a consent form. This allows the NSM to access health records before they visit the prisoner to assess their needs. In addition, prisoners can be provided with distraction packs and ear defenders to use in their cell.

‘Unlock my life: mental health’ training has been introduced to HMP Lincoln, with prisoners trained to support prisoners with their individual needs and signpost staff where needed. Four prisoners have gone on to do the ambassador training, which allows them to deliver the training to other prisoners.

There are two small rooms where NSM and staff can meet with prisoners in a more relaxed and comfortable environment.

6.4 Social care

Social care at the prison continues to operate under a community-based model, with provision commissioned through local adult social care services, primarily Lincolnshire County Council. Where the healthcare department identifies that a prisoner requires personal care support, a referral is made to the Governor and Lincolnshire County Council, who jointly determine whether care should be provided by external care workers.

6.5 Drug rehabilitation

With You, previously known as We Are With You (WAWY), continues to provide substance misuse services and works closely with mental health and primary healthcare teams. With You meets all prisoners during induction and while they are in the first night centre, giving them at least two opportunities to engage with the

service within their first two days at HMP Lincoln. Prisoners can also be referred, or self-refer, at any point during their time at the prison.

As part of reducing reoffending agenda, With You also continues to work closely with Resettlement, Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT), Integrated Through the Gate (ITTG) and Alcoholics Anonymous in planning for care on release and helping prisoners reintegrated back into the community.

Additional awareness and intervention work continues to support prisoners with gambling-related issues. This has included raising staff awareness and reinforcing the message that gambling is prohibited within the prison, while ensuring that prisoners who disclose concerns and require support are able to access appropriate help. With You now asks all prisoners about gambling on arrival, and information and support are also promoted in the departure lounge.

Naloxone, a medication that can rapidly reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, was introduced at the prison in May 2024. Initially, With You trained prison officers in its use, and these officers then helped train additional colleagues. During the reporting period, further prison officers and support staff received training.

Each wing has a naloxone kit that is easily identifiable and includes four nasal sprays, which can be administered quickly in the event of a suspected opioid overdose. The kits also include instructions for use, paperwork to be completed following its use, and details of who to contact to obtain replacement sprays if they are used. Naloxone continues to be offered to every prisoner on release, and not just those supported by With You.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

HMP Lincoln's priority continues to be the protection of the public and the reduction of reoffending. A key part of this work is preparing prisoners for employment, training and further education on release, helping them to enter the labour market with confidence and commitment. This includes developing the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes needed to support successful progression and reintegration into the community.

The education, skills and work curriculum was designed to complement prison work, as well as focus on employability skills that are relevant to the local and national employment market.

Prisoners are encouraged to work towards getting maths and English qualifications, improve existing English, maths and ICT skills, acquire new skills and build on existing knowledge.

There is an opportunity for prisoners with special educational needs and/or disabilities to learn essential skills of reading and writing. This should be identified through the induction process.

There have been times during the year when prisoners have transferred to another establishment part way through their course. As a result, they did not get their qualification, which seems to defeat the resettlement progression.

The two libraries are well stocked with a wide range of material that include: fiction, non-fiction, reference material, CDs, large print books, quick reads, audio books, literature in varied languages, black, Asian and minority ethnic material and LGBTQ+ interest. For those on the enhanced (top) status of the prison incentives scheme, they can also borrow DVDs from the library. All prisoners have an opportunity to visit the library on a rota system by wing once a week, including those in full-time education or work.

The library has children's story books that prisoners can borrow to read to their children over the phone. A popular project run by the library includes Storybook Dad. Prisoners read a story, which is recorded and edited with sound effects. It is then sent out on a DVD for the family member to watch and listen to. Another family provision includes Raising Readers. Men can send their children one book each month, with a dedication to them in the front of the book.

- The average footfall per month: 1260
- Average percentage of prisoners who borrow library books: 72.73%
- Storybook Dad courses completed by prisoners: 52
- Raising Readers books sent out: 135

The library has reading groups, an in-house reading challenge and education class visits three times a week. The library works with various charities such as Give a Book, which provides books for prisoners who come into the first night centre.

The library also provides training for those who first language is not English, where they can learn by discussing and reading a different topic of interest each week. This is delivered by education but includes a session in the library each week.

7.2 Vocational training, work

From 1 October 2025, changes were made to the education curriculum, resulting in a reduction in the range of courses available. The IMB was disappointed at this reduction and to learn that a number of courses were no longer offered to the prisoners. Education plays an important role in prison life, helping to improve skills, increase opportunities and support preparation for release

Courses no longer available included:

- Bricklaying Levels 1 and 2
- Business start-up
- Life skills

In addition, some courses were incorporated into broader education programmes. As a result, elements of these courses continued to be delivered, but they were no longer accredited separately or available as stand-alone courses. These courses included:

- Customer service
- Peer mentoring
- Mental health awareness

The establishment continues to offer a limited curriculum, and ensuring that it meets the diverse needs of the prison population remains an ongoing challenge. The curriculum is reviewed regularly.

Vocational courses include accredited courses in construction painting and decorating, traffic management and data cabling, barbering and infection prevention, food preparation, food safety, health and safety, and the construction skills certification scheme (CSCS).

There continues to be a ‘twinning’ project between HMP Lincoln and Lincoln City Football Club, delivered in the gym and focused on developing prisoners’ leadership skills.

For prisoners aged up to 24 who are expected to spend six months or more at the establishment, there continues to be an opportunity to complete the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh’s Award through activities delivered in the gym. Prisoners who are transferred after completing three months of the programme receive a certificate recognising the progress made, enabling them to continue the award at another establishment or in the community.

The gym continues throughout the year to run courses that are less formal and popular:

The gym continues to deliver a range of less formal courses throughout the year, which remain popular with prisoners. These include the week-long Multiply course, delivered three times a year; the week-long Impact course, which provides training towards becoming a football coach and is also delivered three times a year; and Active IQ, a 10-week programme that provides prisoners with training.

In addition, the gym supports a range of activities and initiatives throughout the year, including:

- Fundraising for Lincolnshire Air Ambulance
- Prisoners' wellbeing day
- Charity larder collections
- Celebrity guest speakers
- Inter-wing competitions
- Staff wellbeing days

The gym is open seven days a week, morning and afternoon, and three evenings a week.

The prison has job opportunities through work placements in the prison, and they have support with interviews, CVs, job applications and further training prior to release. In the Board's view, there are good opportunities to access employment through the employment hub on release.

The men receive training in dry walling, painting and decorating, and bricklaying, helping them to develop practical skills that may support employment opportunities in these trades on release.

The Bistro in the visits hall provides training for prisoners working in both kitchen and front-of-house roles, with opportunities to work towards a City & Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Catering and Front of House. This helps them develop skills and qualifications that may support employment in the hospitality sector on release.

The Bistro is available for staff to use at lunchtime. On social visits, the enhanced prisoners are allowed to book a table for themself and their visitors.

The post of work coach role supports wing workers and orderlies in developing their employability skills. At any one time, around 30 to 40 prisoners take part in one-to-one sessions, alongside some small group work. Prisoners complete a portfolio covering 10 core skills, providing examples and evidence of how they have demonstrated each skill, which are then signed off by an officer. They also complete a reflective diary. On completion of all 10 core skills, prisoners receive a folder containing up to 20 certificates.

There is no payment for participating in this programme, but the portfolio can be used as evidence of achievement, as prison staff are unable to provide references. The programme is delivered by People Plus.

The portfolios are also used to support applications to the courts or parole boards, as they reflect prisoners' engagement in prison-based work and skills development. Around 120 prisoners have completed the programme, with only five withdrawing. Some prisoners have left before completion due to transfer to another establishment. Where a prisoner transfers to another prison participating in the pilot, their work can continue; however, this is not possible if they transfer to a prison that is not part of the scheme.

7.3 Offender management, progression

Supporting People After Remand or Conviction (SPARC), a service delivered by the charity Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT), continues to provide support to individuals

who have been remanded or sentenced to HMP Lincoln. The service offers assistance from the point of reception into the prison and provides additional support during prisoners' early days in custody.

The practitioners help prisoners to address practical issues, such as contacting employers, family members and landlords following their arrival in custody. They also provide emotional support and help ensure that individuals can access the services they need. The team's focus is on supporting and safeguarding those new to the prison by addressing any immediate concerns. This support aims to reduce the risk of self-harm, suicide and violence during the early weeks in custody. Practitioners follow up with individuals on the next working day to help them navigate life at HMP Lincoln. The SPARC team works from 9am to 7pm, enabling staff to support first-night inductions and reception. Where appropriate, this initial support can then be linked to other LAT services available within the prison.

The offender management unit (OMU) and the pre-release team engage in the management of all offenders at HMP Lincoln. This starts on arrival with the completion of the basic custody screen tool (BCST)1 by the OMU and the BCST2 by the pre-release team. Additional prisoner needs are addressed throughout their stay, including the pre-release planning 12 weeks prior to release.

7.4 Family contact

Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT) provides family support services within HMP Lincoln, helping prisoners to maintain family ties while in custody. Support is delivered through a range of initiatives, including assistance with social visits, family days, and casework involving prisoners and their families, as well as planned interventions such as the Being a Dad workshop. Additional support is available for prisoners who do not receive social visits, and Ambassador Days help to strengthen and maintain relationships between children and their family members in prison.

Support continues to be provided during social visits, which take place on a Tuesday and Thursday afternoon and Saturday and Sunday both morning and afternoon. A family support worker is present at the visits to offer inductions to the new visitors, which gives them the opportunity to share any concerns they may have and help to alleviate the worries of visiting a loved one in prison. Activities and games are provided throughout the visit for families to engage in and help to encourage a meaningful visit. This includes a 15-minute break-away session for the children at each visit, which allows parents to have conversations.

During the year, 12 special themed family visits were held, providing families with the opportunity to spend quality time together in a more relaxed environment. The family days were tailored to different needs and interests, with prisoners encouraged to apply for the visits most suited to their family circumstances, including sessions for families with young children, adult-only visits, neurodivergent families and gym-based activities. Planned activities were provided to reflect the theme of each day, and lunch was available free of charge to visiting families.

There is also an opportunity for a family photo to be taken. During the family days, the prisoners are allowed to walk around the visits hall freely with their families and take part in activities, which differs to the social visits, making it a more interactive and purposeful activity for the family/friends.

The families are encouraged to speak to the team by contacting the children and families phone line or through their functional mailbox. This can enable them to maintain contact and alleviate any worries and concerns.

The prisoners also have the option of maintaining contact through social video calls and are encouraged to do so. This is valuable, in particular for prisoners who are located a distance away and for visitors who may have difficulties assessing social visits.

All the cells now have in-cell phones, which makes family contact more accessible and easier.

7.5 Resettlement planning

The CFO3 (employability and social inclusion) programme helped participants move towards mainstream provision or employment by addressing barriers to work. In July 2024, the programme was replaced by CFO Evolution. While retaining many of the features of CFO3, this national programme is available across all probation areas. Its focus is on supporting participants during their time in custody on Evolution wings and continuing that support in the community through Evolution hubs.

Lincolnshire does not have ‘wings’ or ‘hubs’ but uses limited resources to provide a service to HMP Lincoln with it’s Through the Gate provision. This includes a warm handover into the community where there are end-to-end case managers for all participants.

HMP Lincoln has one full-time evolution support worker who works closely with LAT’s three Lincolnshire community support workers. They also have the facility to connect with support workers across England for a warm through the gate handover, which should ensure a seamless service for participants.

The support offered continues to include, but is not limited to:

- Support work with gaining ID (if not offered by the establishment), CV writing, disclosure advice, obtaining a national insurance number.
- Life skills: including financial, organisational, coping and communication skills.
- Preparation for the labour market: interview skills, self-employment and advice.
- Support with the evolution workbooks and resources such as Good to Go and Managing Anger that can be delivered in small groups.
- Referrals to other organisations such as Reconnect and housing support services manager, who can support meeting wider resettlement needs.

The departure lounge, through which all prisoners are released, offers a resettlement service, working with prisoners 12 weeks prior to their release. This is to ensure their needs are met in relation to their release and they have immediate support on the day of release from prison. The staff also provide emotional and practical support, such as supporting emergency housing needs, facilitating phone calls, mobile phone charging, setting up email accounts, clothing, maps and directions, breakfast and additional advice for the day of release. LAT also helps prisoners needing a bank account and ID before release.

The departure lounge continues to be open each morning, Monday to Friday, to support prisoners on release, most of whom are released between Monday and

Thursday. During the reporting period, a total of 1,325 men were released, compared with 1,147 in the previous year.

The Department for Work and Pension (DWP) continue to attend the departure lounge each morning to support prisoners nearing release. This includes assisting with Universal Credit claims and, where possible, arranging advance payments. This support helps to reduce the number of appointments prisoners need to manage on release and can ease their transition back into the community.

A weekly resettlement meeting is chaired by LAT and includes partner agencies, as well as prison staff. The discussions focus on every prisoner due to be released in the following week and starts preparation for those being released in four and t12 weeks, whether into Lincolnshire or outside the area. This helps to plan accommodation, a DWP claim, ID and necessary appointments for the date of release.

The Board remains concerned that difficulties in accessing accommodation have continued throughout the reporting period. This appears to be a national issue rather than one specific to Lincolnshire.

LAT has been successful in securing the new contract for the departure lounge for the next two years.

Reconnect

Reconnect is a service provided by the Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT), in partnership with LAT, that supports individuals who are 18+ and have an identified health need (both diagnosed and undiagnosed), with community care when they are released from prison.

The main aims of Reconnect are:

- To increase healthcare and support services for those leaving prison.
- Reduce any health inequalities for individuals leaving prison.
- To ensure health needs are met for those leaving prison.
- To ensure a safe transition from prison to community-based health and support services and to provide follow-ups to ensure engagement is maintained and meaningful.

The Reconnect team will undertake referral screenings and assessments of needs and will facilitate prisoner engagement with healthcare and support services. They liaise with services inside and outside the prison and support individual prisoners both in custody and in the community.

Rough sleeper drug and alcohol treatment group (RSDATG)

LAT is commissioned by the Lincolnshire Partnership Funding Trust (LPFT) to provide support for people released from prison without onward accommodation and who may therefore be at risk of rough sleeping. The service supports individuals with housing needs, including those with identified or hidden substance misuse issues.

Prisoners are identified prior to release, and support plans are developed to help prepare them for their return to the community. Following release, individuals can receive support for up to six months to help them engage with relevant services and sustain their resettlement.

In the previous reporting period, the Board noted that around two-thirds of prisoners released from HMP Lincoln were not being released into the Lincolnshire area. During this reporting period, 1,325 prisoners were released, compared with 1,147 in the previous year, of whom 570 (307) were released outside Lincolnshire. This can make it more challenging to coordinate support, including accommodation and Universal Credit arrangements, on release. Of the 1,325 prisoners released during the reporting period, 411 were released with no fixed abode (NFA), compared with 276 in the previous year.

If the prisoner does not have an address to go to on release, the departure lounge ensures that he is aware of how to contact his local council and make an immediate application for accommodation. There is no approved premises (bail hostel) in Lincolnshire.

The Board remains concerned about the shortage of suitable accommodation available to prisoners on release, particularly as this appears to reflect wider national pressures rather than an issue specific to Lincolnshire.

	Reporting year 2025-2026	Reporting year 2024-2025
Prisoners released	1325	1147
Released out of area	570	307
Released NFA	411	276

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	9 - 14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	3 (including one on a sabbatical)
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	3 (including one new member in training and one member dual-boarding)
Total number of visits to the establishment	190
Total number of segregation reviews attended	206

Total number of segregation reviews attended in the previous year: 220.

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Current reporting year 2025-2026	Previous reporting year 2024-2025
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	**37**	59
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	**9**	17
C	Equality	**1**	2
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	**12**	25
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	**34**	37
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	**3**	23
F	Food and kitchens	**2**	1
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	**49**	85
H1	Property within this establishment	**25**	37
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	**33**	46
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	**4**	31
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, dates, recategorisation	**35**	63
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	**38**	28
K	Transfers	**15**	10
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	**16**	19
U	Unknown	**2**	8
	Total number of applications	**315**	491

During the reporting period, the prison population was lower than in previous years, largely due to the ongoing refurbishment work on E wing, with one floor remaining out of use throughout the year.

IMB applications by wing

Code	A wing	B wing	C wing	CSU	E wing	FNC	Unknown	Total
A	0	19	7	1	10	0	-	37
B	1	4	1	1	2	0	-	9
C	0	0	0	0	1	0	-	1
D	1	8	3	0	0	0	-	12
E1	7	10	13	1	2	1	-	34
E2	1	0	1	0	1	0	-	3
F	0	0	1	0	1	0	-	2
G	14	6	11	0	14	2	2	49
H1	0	7	4	0	14	0	-	25
H2	9	6	9	2	5	2	-	33
H3	1	0	2	1	0	0	-	4
I	8	3	14	0	9	1	-	35
J	6	13	9	1	8	1	-	38
K	5	4	5	0	1	0	-	15
L	2	1	4	1	6	0	2	16
U	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	2
Total by wing	**55**	**81**	**86**	**8**	**74**	**7**	**4**	**315**

Annex A

Service providers

- Maintenance: Amey
- Education: People Plus
- Escort contractor: GeoAmey
- Healthcare and pharmacy: Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Mental health: Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Substance misuse programme: With You (previously We are With You)
- Social Care: Lincolnshire County Council
- Visits Hall: Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT) provide volunteers
- Resettlement services: Shelter, although some services are provided by Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT)
- Safeguarding: Adults Board - Lincolnshire County Council
- Workshops: staffed by civilian instructors
- Prisoner canteen: DHL to 2025, with an option to extend to 2027



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