

Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Whatton

**For reporting year
1 June 2020 – 31 May 2021**



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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, Nottinghamshire, is a category C training prison for male prisoners convicted of sexual offences against adults and children. The certified, normal accommodation is 740, the operational capacity is 801 and the average population in this reporting year was 781. HMP Whatton is one of the largest specialist prisons in Europe to offer offending behaviour programmes to people with convictions for sexual offences. The establishment also offers a wide range of learning and skills programmes, as well as employment opportunities such as manufacturing and gardening.

The prison's residential accommodation consists of 14 residential wings: A1–8 (constructed in 2006); B1–3 (constructed during the 1960s when the prison was a detention centre housing young offenders); and C1–C3 (constructed in the following years: C1 in 2005, C2 in 2004 and C3 in 2008), and a care and separation unit (CSU) attached to the A3 residential unit. In May 2021, C2 was decommissioned and is awaiting demolition. The accommodation cells comprise a mixture of single and double cells and modern (with en-suite toilet, washbasin and shower) and older facilities (with an in-cell toilet but the prisoners living in these use shared showers). The accommodation on B wings remains, in the Board's view, unfit for purpose, and conditions in this wing have been regularly criticised by both the IMB and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP). Although the cells are some of the smallest in the prison estate, the Board has been advised that there are no plans to replace the B wings in the short-term.

Accommodation for purposeful activity includes 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 specifically for the use of prisoners undertaking the national vocational qualification (NVQ) in catering. The establishment also has a well-resourced library.

The healthcare unit includes an end-of-life suite and dementia care suite.

Outside the prison secure compound there is a purpose-built visitor centre which is managed under contract with the Prison Advice and Care Trust.

The prison also has an external contract with People Plus for the supply of library literature. This is sub-contracted to Suffolk Library Services. There are three externally commissioned services: for the provision of healthcare services with Practice Plus Group; facilities management provided by Amey; learning and skills managed by People Plus. The prison also has contracts with the Carers Federation, Circles UK, the Safer Living Foundation, Workers Education Association and other third-sector agencies in order to improve the resettlement process for older prisoners and those with learning difficulties.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 Background to the Report

3.1.1 For over two-thirds of this reporting year, HMP Whatton has been operating in the context of Covid-19. This has meant drastic changes to the operation of the prison. The regime has been severely restricted, with prisoners confined to their cells for most of the day and many activities and functions suspended.

3.1.2 The Covid-19 pandemic has curtailed visits to the prison by Board members and significantly impacted on its ability to gather information and to discuss it in the context of this annual report. Some members have been able to make occasional visits, but the principal contacts have been made by telephone to the prison when conversations, both with staff and the wing prisoners' representatives on a regular basis, have enabled the Board to have some evidence on which to base judgements.

3.1.3 The Board itself has not had face-to-face meetings each month and has relied on videoconferencing to maintain contact through formal Board meetings and weekly, less formal conversations. Ministers are aware of these constraints and the national collection of information on prisoners' reactions to the pandemic and to lockdown.

3.1.4 The report presents the findings of the Board at HMP Whatton for the period 1 June 2020 to 31 May 2021. Until the pandemic-imposed restrictions, members of the Board had made twice weekly visits to the prison but in this reporting year the range of activities and facilities reviewed have been, accordingly, very limited. Attendance at prison meetings has been possible through telephone contact and members have attended in this way. Prisoner applications have been dealt with as and when they could be collected.

3.1.5 In spite of the restrictions, Board members have felt that the access to the prison staff and, wherever possible, to the life of the prison, has provided as strong a link as is possible in the circumstances. The Board has met monthly with the Governor (via videoconferencing) and has appreciated the frank discussions, co-operation and support from her and the senior management team. The Board has greatly appreciated this, especially at a time when all the staff have been under great pressure. We are also grateful for the support of the Business Hub personnel and of our Board clerk in supporting us in our work.

3.1.6 The Board wishes to commend the Governor, senior management team and the staff of HMP Whatton for the fair and humane manner in which the restrictions imposed by the measures to combat Covid-19 were carried out with prisoner welfare the first concern. There was a consistent regime allowing daily telephone calls and regular exercise for each prisoner and throughout this year the prison has been settled and prisoners have been understanding of the need for the severe regime.

3.2 Main Judgements

How safe is the prison?

3.2.1 It is evident to the IMB that there is a clear intention on the part of prison management and staff that all prisoners should be safe and that much effort is invested in pursuing this objective.

3.2.2 The national regime of lockdown for 22 hours each day has given an entirely different life for prisoners. It has changed the parameters for safety for prisoners in that, whilst in lockdown, they are secure. A proportion have been working in activities outside their cells for a limited time but at the height of the pandemic facilities, food and materials were brought to the cells. There have been instances of self-harming and one critical incident, but prisoners have accepted the strictures of the regime well, perhaps appreciating that there are national restrictions faced by the general population in force.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

3.2.3 Prisoners are normally treated with fairness and humanity. However, since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of the prisoners have been locked in their cells for 22 hours per day. This regime followed the emergency regime management plan issued by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). This, and other directives, have constrained the Governor from relaxing the lockdown rules and any local initiatives have, in the main, been rejected by HMPPS. The Board believes that this situation is unsustainable and cannot be regarded as fair and humane treatment.

3.2.4 The substandard accommodation in the B wings continues to raise concerns. B Wing contains some of the smallest cells within the prison estate. The Board is aware that the Governor and prison managers have repeatedly raised concerns about the quality of this accommodation but no funding for a replacement has been made available.

3.2.5 Board members have, on several occasions, observed the use of force, but these incidents have not raised any concerns.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

3.2.6 The Board is satisfied that prisoners receive healthcare treatment that is at least equivalent to that provided in the community, and that they can access these services within a reasonable time frame. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, many of the clinics have been suspended and there have been extended waiting times to see the dentist. The healthcare team have, however, continued to provide an outstanding service despite reduced staffing levels. They have managed the roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme very efficiently.

3.2.7 We reiterate that the standard of the accommodation in the healthcare centre remains a significant concern. The statutory requirement to provide a healthcare

standard to HBN 00-03/09 is not being met, and the facilities are, therefore, deemed to be non-compliant. Furthermore, the condition of the healthcare facilities falls well below the standards that would be expected in the community.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

3.2.8 During the pandemic, the provision of accredited programmes has been curtailed or significantly reduced. Moreover, the resettlement programmes for prisoners had to be suspended. This means that prisoners have not been well prepared for their release into the community.

3.2.9 The IMB is concerned about the backlog of prisoners waiting to complete the accredited programmes for which they have been transferred to HMP Whatton to undertake. Many prisoners have expressed their concerns about the impact that this will have on their sentence plan, parole hearings and subsequent release.

There continue to be delays in transferring category D prisoners to suitable prisons.

3.3 Main areas for Development

TO THE MINISTER

Once again, the Board has had to report that a prisoner was held for a long time in secure conditions with deteriorating mental health while waiting for secure hospital accommodation (see paragraphs 5.2.4 and 6.2.2). Despite regular assurances from the National Health Service (NHS) commissioners that this area of concern was being addressed nationally, there have been no improvements to the speedy resolution of such cases. Once again, we ask, will the minister intervene and address this issue directly with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

As we have reported annually, the Board continues to receive applications about the loss of prisoners' property, usually when being transferred from another prison. Responses to prisoners' complaints from other establishments are often late or not received at all (see section 5.8). Each year, IMBs across the country receive assurances that something will be done about this. However, nothing happens. Can the Prison Service develop a reliable system of handling and tracking prisoners' property, to reduce these unacceptable losses and to minimise the number of compensation claims?

The standard of the accommodation in the healthcare centre continues to be a significant concern (6.1.6). Will the Prison Service, once again, consider substantial refurbishment or replacement of the healthcare facilities?

We repeat our previous request for the Prison Service to review, with other agencies, the timely notification of approved premises for released prisoners, to give them the best chance of resettlement and rehabilitation (7.6)?

TO THE GOVERNOR

Will the Governor review the complaints procedure to ensure it is timely, reliable, and credible (5.7)?

3.4 Progress since the Last Report

Various maintenance projects have been undertaken, including the resurfacing of pathways, refurbishment of showers and some remedial work in healthcare.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

The Board's view of safety is formed from observations taken from our own monitoring, attendance at meetings and speaking with people in the establishment. During the pandemic the Board's ability to attend the establishment was considerably reduced, and at times ceased. Where possible Board members continued to monitor by remote means.

Safer custody meetings are held on a monthly basis via teleconference which the IMB continued to monitor.

There are a small number of individuals who regularly self-harm.

Peer support groups exist within the prison and are primarily formed from the Listeners and Insiders. These groups continued to receive support from local Samaritans groups throughout the reporting year. The support was facilitated remotely via telephone.

In September 2020 the prison introduced weekly safety intervention meetings. These are in addition to the monthly safer custody meetings and have the specific purpose of quick intervention for any cases of concern. Multidisciplinary teams attend and details of meeting are provided to the IMB.

The prisoners classed as extremely/clinically vulnerable and who needed to shield were given that protection.

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 The reception area is always well managed and clean in the opinion of Board members who have visited a few times during the reporting year.

4.1.2 The prison operates an induction programme for new arrivals where these prisoners are housed on a reverse cohorting wing. IMB members would normally attend some of these inductions but this has not been possible this year due to the pandemic.

4.1.3 The safer custody team have expressed their concerns that there have been prisoners being transferred into the prison who clearly have issues and problems, including a history of violence. Due to lockdown, the team have been unable to assess whether they would have a significant impact on the prison. They are taking steps to ensure that their ability to monitor the situation enables them to react accordingly.

4.1.4 During the reporting year there were no more than two IS91 prisoners at any given time; these are prisoners awaiting deportation. Because of the low numbers the Board is unable to comment on the treatment of IS91 prisoners but have no concerns to raise on this matter.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 During the reporting period there was a total of 496 self-harm incidents. This was an increase from the previous year's total of 366. The Board considers this is partly due to the difficulties and frustrations prisoners have suffered during the pandemic lockdown periods.

4.2.2 There has been an increase in the number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened within the reporting year with 296 documents recorded against a previous year's total of 239. The Board considers this is likely to coincide with the increase in self-harm incidents and members have inspected ACCT documents periodically on monitoring visits when it has been possible. Documents have always been found fully completed and up to date.

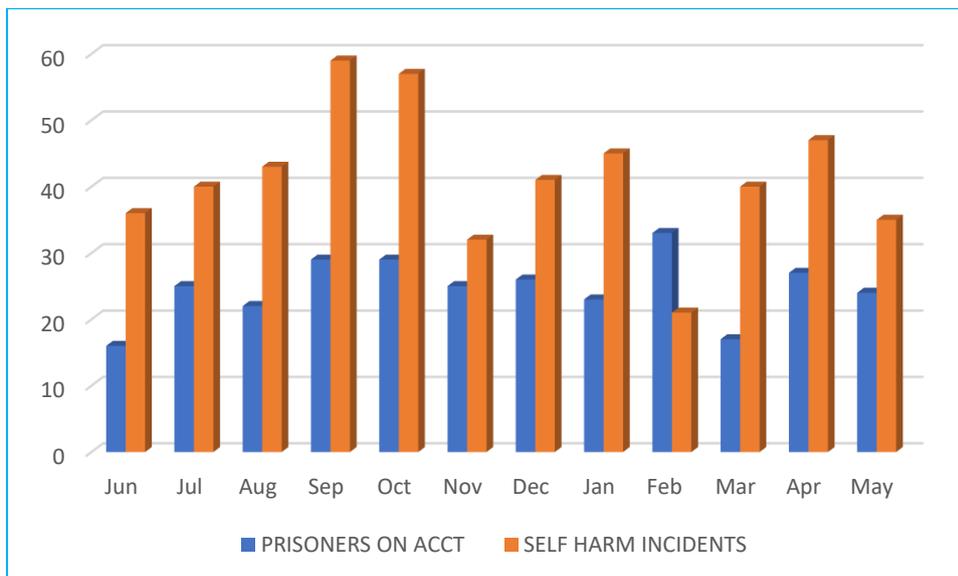


Figure 1 - Comparison of ACCTs and self-harm incidents

4.2.3 The prison had been rolling out a staff training program of self-harm awareness training, known as SASH. It had not been possible to carry out any training during the reporting year so the total percentage of staff that have received the training remains at 93.1%, although the prison acknowledge they may need to revalidate this statistic. The intention remains to increase this figure to 100% in the near future and the Board hopes to be able to report this as successful next year.

4.2.4 Version 6 of the ACCT process has been introduced. This was implemented on a short time scale which created a problem with training during Covid-19 restrictions. However, the safer custody team was successful in its task despite stretched resources. The new document is very clear and has been welcomed within the prison. The extent of its impact will become clearer in the next six months.

4.2.5 There were eight deaths in custody during the reporting year, an increase of three from the previous period. Five of these deaths were Covid-19 related whilst the prisoners were in hospital.

4.2.6 Listeners, prisoners trained by the Samaritans, have only had limited access to prisoners.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 The safer custody department ordinarily carries out an annual violence reduction survey. However, during this reporting period it has not been possible for the survey to be undertaken due to the restrictive regime in the prison.

4.3.2 There has been a relatively low number of disruptive incidents at HMP Whatton, and the Board considers that to be normal: a conclusion drawn from monitoring and conversations with both staff and prisoners.

4.3.3 There were 11 assaults on staff and 22 assaults on prisoners during the reporting year. One of the staff assaults was classified as serious and five out of the 22 prisoner on prisoner assaults were classified as serious.

4.4 Vulnerable prisoners, safeguarding

4.4.1 The prisoners at HMP Whatton would ordinarily be regarded as vulnerable prisoners in the prison system. This is because all prisoners are persons with convictions for sexual offences. For this reason, there is no requirement for a separate vulnerable prisoners' wing.

4.5 Use of force

4.5.1 Use of force levels remain low with a total of 96 incidents recorded during the reporting year.

4.5.2 Rigid handcuffs have been issued to staff. These are intended to provide a safer method of bringing physical altercations under control with a reduced risk of injury to prisoners and staff. The IMB has discussed this introduction with staff, including the trainers, all of whom viewed this to be a positive introduction.

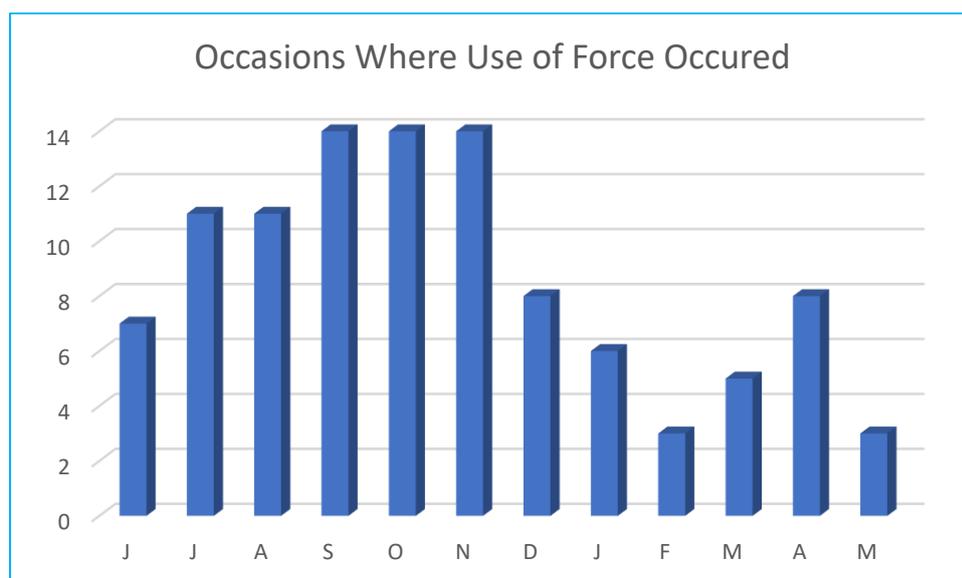


Figure 2 - Occurrences of Use of Force

4.6 Substance misuse

4.6.1 The prison suspended random mandatory drug testing during the pandemic, however, the facility to suspicion test remained in place throughout if intelligence directed. In addition, the regular deployment of drug detection dogs was suspended due to restrictions on cross site working. The prison's dog provision is shared with other sites and they are based at HMP Lincoln.

4.6.2 The Board's monitoring led us to conclude that there is relatively low-level drug use in HMP Whatton, although there continue to be occasional finds of psychoactive substances in prisoners' mail and within the establishment. The security department shares information with the Board and offers a firm reassurance to us that every effort is made by the prison staff to prevent drug use.

4.6.3 The Board is aware that, from time to time, mobile phones are found in the establishment but has no serious concerns, as these events are infrequent and the prison takes all appropriate steps to counteract this issue.

5. Fair and Humane Treatment

5.1 Accommodation, Clothing, Food

5.1.1 The main impact over the reporting year has clearly been the management of Covid-19, covering both the management of the lockdown required and the Covid-19 outbreaks themselves. The IMB has maintained telephone contact with the wings, and in some cases has been able to speak to wing representatives on a regular basis.

5.1.2 There has been increased cleaning in all areas and fluid resistant masks distributed to staff and prisoners. Enhanced hand hygiene for staff and prisoners has been encouraged.

5.1.3 A Covid-19 protective isolation unit (PIU) was established on A4, together with shielding arrangements on A6 for clinically vulnerable prisoners. Reverse cohorting facilities were also provided on A4 for all incoming prisoners to enable them to have a period of isolation before joining the main prison population.

5.1.4 In April 2021, following a fire regulation inspection, the closure of C2 was announced. This has reduced the operational capacity from 841 to 801 spaces. A new fire alarm system across the site is at the planning stage. Maintenance of the prison is supplied by Amey plc. Amey is supervising renovations and improvements to accommodation. This includes re-plumbing of B wing accommodation and shower repairs to A wing blocks. A solar panel farm is planned adjacent to the prison that could cover approximately 50% of electricity expenditure. Netting has recently been installed to avoid the health issues arising from pigeon infestation of residential blocks.

5.1.5 Regular conversations have taken place with the catering manager during the past year. Meals have been supplied in foiled containers to prisoners who have tested positive for Covid-19, and who remained in their cells to prevent contamination. This has placed considerable strain on the department and is worthy of comment. The Board receives very few complaints about the quality of the food provided.

5.2 Segregation, Special Accommodation

5.2.1 From time to time, prisoners are isolated under prison rule 45. This is usually for their own protection or to ensure Good Order or Discipline. The Board would ordinarily monitor these prisoners during routine visits but that ability has been limited during the pandemic. Board members have spoken with these prisoners where possible and one GOOD review was attended which was fairly conducted in the opinion of the attending member.

5.2.2 Board members have visited the CSU during the reporting year but opportunities have been severely limited because of the pandemic restrictions. A Board member has telephoned the unit and spoken to staff when visits have not been possible.

5.2.3 The eight cell CSU is normally found to be clean and well kept. During monitoring visits, members speak to prisoners and they are regularly complimentary

about the standard of care received. Prisoners are able to occupy themselves with books and jigsaws that are available on the unit. Most prisoners have access to a radio and television.

5.2.4 Cellular confinement following adjudication was awarded on 134 occasions during the reporting period, a decrease from 191 in the previous year. There have been occasions where prisoners have been held in the CSU under the provisions of Rule 45 whilst awaiting assessment or transfer to mental health facilities. The Board is concerned at the time this has taken to complete. In one instance, a prisoner with severe mental health issues was in residence for 98 days, simply because a suitable mental health facility was not available. This was issue (in respect of other prisoners) was reported in the last year's annual report and remains an area of concern for the Board.

5.2.5 Board members have been able to speak freely with prisoners when they have visited the CSU in person. Generally, there are officers in the vicinity but private areas are available if required.

5.2.6 During visits to the CSU Board members inspect ACCT documents. These have been found to be up to date and complete with meaningful information.

5.2.7 There was a total of 416 proven adjudications during the reporting year, a decrease of 255 from the previous period. Charges were dismissed on 62 occasions. Board members ordinarily monitor some adjudications although the ability to do this has been reduced during the pandemic. The Board has no concerns with the conduct of adjudications.

5.3 Staff-Prisoner Relationships, Key Workers

5.3.1 The IMB monitoring would support the general statement that the staff do their best to ensure the prisoners are treated fairly and without prejudice. The IMB recognises that the pandemic has affected staff and prisoners and the absence through shielding and Covid infection has meant that staffing levels have been stretched, both in administration and in prisoner management.

5.3.2 The key worker scheme has been disrupted by the pandemic restrictions with limited key worker/prisoner face-to-face interactions taking place.

5.4 Equality and Diversity

5.4.1 The Prison Service is subject to the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. In brief, the Act:

- Prohibits discrimination either directly or indirectly,
- Requires public bodies to take positive action to advance equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and promote understanding.

This means that the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of equality and diversity should run through all aspects of prison life.

5.4.2 HMP Whatton provides a background of these responsibilities across its dealing with the prisoners in its charge. The range of age groups and ethnic

background necessitates a constant awareness of the needs of a differing range of prisoners' ages and length of sentence, combined with ethnic diversity and sexual orientation. The prison offers a range of offending behaviour programmes specifically for prisoners convicted of sexual offences and must ensure that the access to these opportunities is open and available by need rather than by any ethnic or personal characteristic.

5.4.3 Obtaining evidence regarding equality through IMB monitoring this year has been difficult. The inability to visit the prison has meant that the observation of discrimination through behaviour, conversation and relationships has been almost impossible. The effects of language, vocabulary and attitude are, sometimes, very subtle and must be witnessed to recognise that racism is present. Based on experience in the early part of this report's period, the prison officers and governors take great care to be non-discriminatory either in face-to-face situations or in committee discussion. The prison ethos is clear and transparent in dealing with all aspects of their work.

5.4.4 The IMB has been involved in the BAME re-categorisation programme and acts as a review of a typical set of approvals each month and has resumed monitoring of the Whatton equality action team (WEAT) meetings.

5.4.5 The prison is accessible to wheelchair users at ground level. Prisoners volunteer to push chairs for those who need and use wheelchairs.

5.4.6 There are information boards in the wings. Special efforts are made for prisoners with languages other than English as a first language. Translations are usually available and the library service provides literature in languages other than English.

5.4.7 Transgender prisoners are recognized and supported appropriately.

5.5 Faith and Pastoral Support

5.5.1 The chaplaincy team reflects the diversity of faiths in the prison and continues to work hard to cover as many areas as possible. In addition to their statutory duties of attending the CSU, inductions and the healthcare centre. They have been providing an improved level of pastoral support to prisoners and staff during the pandemic lockdown.

5.5.2 The prison catering department goes to considerable trouble to reflect major cultural and religious festivals in the menu that it provides. Ramadan took place during the COVID-9 pandemic, with Muslims fasting from dawn until dusk. The kitchen supported the prisoners who were fasting by providing meals at suitable times.

5.5.3 During the Covid-19 situation at HMP Whatton, pastoral care by the chaplaincy has been of paramount importance. Prisoners of all faiths, or none, have been supported by the team. Prisoners who were distressed were able to see an appropriate faith chaplain, and bereaved prisoners received specialist assistance by appropriately trained staff. In special emergency circumstances, virtual teleconference meetings with family were arranged.

5.6 Incentives and Earned Privileges

5.6.1 The incentives policy framework (IPF) provides a system of privileges, which is a key tool for incentivising prisoners to abide by the rules and engage in the prison regime and rehabilitation, including education, work and substance misuse interventions – while allowing privileges to be taken away from those who behave poorly or refuse to engage.

5.6.2 Because of the restricted regime introduced for all prisoners in response to Covid-19, the basic level (Bronze) of the IPF scheme was suspended at the start of the first lockdown. Prisoners have been categorised as standard (Silver) or enhanced (Gold) and have enjoyed privileges associated with their status level. There have been few opportunities for prisoners to improve their status level.

5.6.3 The Board monitors the fairness and consistency of the IPF scheme. We occasionally receive complaints from prisoners that they have been unfairly punished by reducing their IPF status. For example, there was a sense of fatalism expressed by one prisoner who said, “Obviously because I am black, and everyone knows the problems here is the black prisoners get treated like second class citizens.” However, our enquiries have not found any evidence to support this view, nor have we seen any malpractice by the staff.

5.7 Complaints

5.7.1 The prison’s complaints policy sets out the requirements and information for providing a fair and effective system for dealing with prisoner complaints. The Board monitors the effectiveness of the complaints process.

5.7.2 The IMB is concerned that some complaints are not handled in a timely manner and that complaints received from other prisons do not always receive a satisfactory or timely response. This causes unnecessary stress and frustration to the prisoners. The prison is urged to resume its pre-pandemic internal monitoring of the complaints system.

5.7.3 The following table shows the categories and numbers of complaints received by the prison from 1 May 2020 to 31 May 2021:

CATEGORY OF COMPLAINTS														
	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	TOTAL
Accommodation/Cell move	4	7	5	8	2	1	5	3	7	1	3	5	3	54
Appeal	15	32	19	34	29	17	28	22	11	25	25	26	20	303
Bullying/ Discriminating	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	8
Canteen/Argos & Game Orders	14	7	10	5	10	9	6	5	6	9	6	6	15	108
Confidential Access	2	5	12	5	5	4	3	2	6	7	6	2	5	64
Category	5	6	5	4	5	1	5	1	0	1	3	1	0	37
Child Protection/Issues	2	3	1	5	3	2	6	7	7	2	6	3	3	50
Complaint to other prisons	2	15	11	3	15	19	7	23	28	6	15	9	28	181
Complaint/problems with staff	13	6	11	14	17	18	12	8	18	12	9	6	10	154
Decency	7	3	4	7	4	8	3	7	15	4	5	1	0	68
Food	12	11	10	4	6	6	6	5	5	12	11	11	8	107
IEP	5	7	4	2	3	1	5	1	1	0	2	0	0	31
Labour/Work/Education/Gym	5	8	4	4	9	11	4	7	4	3	8	8	9	84
Lifer Issues/Problems	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mail	3	7	7	6	12	7	2	6	7	4	7	4	5	77
Medical	7	18	5	9	17	17	18	6	16	12	11	15	8	159
Money/Postal Orders/ Pay	2	1	8	4	5	3	7	6	8	10	8	5	4	71
Newspaper/Magazines	1	0	3	2	5	0	1	0	2	1	7	5	2	29
OASys/Report	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	4	5	2	3	0	26
Pre-Release/release/ROTL	4	2	1	0	2	0	1	4	1	0	1	0	0	16
Prisoners	5	14	7	7	3	4	5	7	14	9	3	9	5	92
Privileges taken away	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Property	10	16	9	26	18	10	10	24	16	18	16	11	10	194
Psychological / SOTP Issues	5	8	6	7	8	8	6	6	5	0	4	5	4	72
Racial	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Regime	6	4	5	8	8	5	2	1	5	2	3	3	1	53
Transfer Prison	3	2	3	3	5	1	2	6	13	8	6	4	2	58
Telephone/Pin Phone	7	9	5	7	8	5	7	5	7	8	6	5	7	86
Visits	0	0	0	3	10	8	4	7	5	2	5	2	4	50
Other	21	35	29	27	44	37	29	14	31	47	37	19	17	387
TOTAL	161	231	187	205	255	205	187	184	242	208	215	170	172	2622

Figure 3 - Category of Complaints

5.8 Property

5.8.1 As reported in the last Board report (and in reports from many other establishments), the issue of prisoners' property transferring with them is still a concern. There have been several complaints submitted to the Board regarding property that did not arrive with the prisoner on transfer. The Board is not confident that communication is good between establishments, with some prisons ignoring enquiries from the prison's administrative staff. There seems to be no continuity in ensuring that property follows a prisoner, and there is no robust audit trail. This is an unacceptable situation, which causes distress and anger to prisoners.

5.8.2 Each year, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) assures us that progress is being made to improve this situation. Regrettably, nothing happens year on year.

6. Health and Wellbeing

6.1 Physical Healthcare

6.1.1 Healthcare is provided by Practice Plus Group formerly known as Care UK, covering primary care and integrated mental health services.

6.1.2 The healthcare service has worked tirelessly during the pandemic and ensured that safety has been maintained through use of personal protection equipment, social distancing, and delivery of medications to prisoners' cells. Vaccinations began early in February in line with the general community, beginning with the over 80s then reducing in age to reflect what was happening nationally. The IMB applauds the unstinting support provided by healthcare for prisoners. Urgent medical needs have been dealt with in the healthcare unit, but only urgent care has been delivered by clinicians.

6.1.3 Healthcare priorities during the pandemic included medication management, daily welfare checks on prisoners in isolation and mental health provision for those most in need. Staff have also attended ACCT reviews and where use of force has been applied.

6.1.4 Palliative and end-of-life care programmes have continued to provide support for all patients who have required this. However, sadly, five Covid related deaths have occurred at hospital since November 2020.

6.1.5 Staff and prisoners generally report that healthcare arrangements are good with 157 concerns raised by prisoners but only three becoming formal complaints during the reporting year. The main concerns were related to reduced access to services, such as face-to-face appointments with the GP and dentist.

6.1.6 The provision of healthcare services is limited by the poor accommodation, which the IMB has reported annually. Cramped space, mould and damp have created further difficulties for healthcare staff during this very difficult time. Due to the aging prison population and their range of complex healthcare needs, the healthcare unit is not fit for purpose.

6.1.7 Staffing remains an issue and two vacancies remain in mental health and one in administration. Bank staff are used occasionally from a bank/agency, but it is reported that they are very difficult to source since changes have been made to taxation laws.

6.1.8 Eight staff have been affected by Covid-19 and two have had long Covid problems. This has compounded the staffing problems, and some staff have been unable to return to work for several months.

6.1.9 There is no in-patient care provision for prisoners, but local hospitals cater for their needs. This involves escort and bed-watch duties which take officers away from their routine work. This has been particularly difficult during the pandemic.

6.2 Mental Healthcare

6.2.1 Mental healthcare staff have continued to work during the pandemic and their work has been hampered at times by delays in obtaining specialist care and appropriate secure accommodation for those who require it.

6.2.2 The transfer of prisoners to outside mental health hospital provision has been difficult on occasions. We have been particularly concerned about one prisoner with severe mental health issues, who was held under Rule 45 in the CSU for more than 98 days. (We have previously reported a similar situation where a prisoner was held in these conditions for 107 days.) There were significant delays in obtaining a transfer to a psychiatric facility for the prisoner. He was eventually allocated a bed at a secure mental health hospital, but his move was repeatedly delayed. This is far from ideal for both the prisoner who needs specialist care, and for staff who have to deal with his unpredictable and dangerous behaviour. In 2020, the NHS Health and Justice commissioning managers for the Midlands Region conceded that improvements need to be made. However, there has been little progress made.

6.2.3 All prisoners are screened for autism on arrival. Those who are found to have the condition are then supported, both by education and within the prison generally.

6.3 Social Care

6.3.1 Prisoners who work on the prisoner information desk (PID) have been unable to work during the pandemic.

6.3.2 Practice Plus Group produced distraction packs which were printed off for prisoners. Whatton psychology department also produced a variety of packs that have been used, as too were resources from Public Health England.

6.3.3 The prison's physiotherapist has provided in-cell exercises and health and social care support work.

6.4 Exercise, Time Out of Cell, Gym

6.4.1 Prisoners have spent up to 22 hours per day in their cells.

6.4.2 Exercise for prisoners has had to be limited to half an hour each day during the pandemic, partly due to social distancing requirements and due to increased requirements on staffing. This, and half an hour for domestics, has been difficult for prisoners and staff alike, but most are resigned to it until the situation improves.

6.4.3 Prisoners have reported that staff have been very supportive and that they have tried to keep prisoners safe, calm and informed.

6.4.4 The nationally imposed regime operated with lockdown for 22 hours each day for all prisoners. Some work routes were in operation and staff made every effort to ensure that prisoners had sufficient material to occupy their time whilst in lockdown. The library service provided each wing with books appropriately graded and varied in subject. Throughout the daily regime that the prison services operated throughout the lockdown, there was no marked reaction from prisoners who, in general, understood the reasons for the restrictions and went along with the implications. The disciplinary data shows no major differences from previous years and applications to

the IMB do not reflect any major disaffection. This speaks well of the prison because the national lockdown imposed inhumane incarceration for a considerable time, and is continuing, whilst the general population now have relaxed variations on the original Covid-19 rules.

6.5 Drug Rehabilitation

6.5.1 All substance misuse patients have been seen and managed by the service on a one-to-one basis. Support has also been provided by the mental health team and psychology during the pandemic.

7. Progression and Resettlement

7.1 Education, Library

7.1.1 The education provider, PeoplePlus, has now been in contract for 15 months.

7.1.2 The Board believes that the courses provided meet prisoners' needs, especially when considering the offences committed by the prisoners at HMP Whatton and the subsequent restrictions on employment. The courses cater for all requirements, from basic skills level one through to Open University degree courses and beyond. There is a good uptake at every level, and supply for course places appears to meet demand well – a fact that is backed up by the lack of applications to the Board regarding education. Statistics for the year to date show an average success rate across all courses of 83% and, when taking into account the suspension of some courses, the maximum possible success rate reduces to 94%. This high success rate and the efficiency of the department is demonstrated by the Ofsted 'Excellent' rating.

7.1.3 The library service is also provided through PeoplePlus, and subcontracted to Suffolk Libraries. The well-resourced library plays an important part in the learning process and caters well for prisoners, providing materials and support for all courses offered. Prisoners who work in the library are trained to help other prisoners find the resources they need. The library is also used to showcase prisoners' artwork and provides space for socialisation and computer work linked to their courses.

7.1.4 Earlier in the year, several applications were received by the Board regarding the limited availability of certain language materials in the library, and significant efforts have been made in this regard; there is now a huge variety of foreign language books, music and newspapers available, with additions made on a regular basis.

7.1.5 The Covid-19 pandemic has put a significant strain on the learning and skills department, with face-to-face lessons cancelled for a significant period of time. However, the department has provided targeted workbooks to nearly 50% of the population. These books are completed by the prisoner and graded by the education staff, to demonstrate progress against objectives.

7.2 Vocational Training, Work

7.2.1 Options for employment on release are restricted owing to the nature of the offences committed by prisoners at HMP Whatton. However, the department continues to promote self-employment courses and training although they were not available during the pandemic lockdown. These courses are all valuable on release, and include:

- Multi-media – runs the prison radio and offers printing services and coordinates the Shannon Trust mentors
- Woodwork – contracts with public-sector prison industries and the Woodwise certificate in the safe use of woodworking machinery

- Waste management – offers recycling qualification level 1 WAMITAB (Waste Management Industry Training and Advisory Board), delivered by PeoplePlus
- Horticulture – offers City and Guilds level 1 award and certificate, and a diploma in horticulture skills
- DHL – offers City and Guilds level 2 certificate in warehousing and storage
- Staff mess – offers level 2 NVQ in catering and hospitality
- Kitchen – offers level 2 food hygiene certificate and NVQ level 1 in catering and hospitality
- Textiles workshops – offer ABC level 2 NVQ certificate in manufacturing sewn products; basic and advance overlock certificate; a cutting course; and a basic machine maintenance course
- Laundry contract services – offer Guild of Cleaners and Launderers technician certificate
- Main stores – offer ITSSAR (Independent Training Standards Scheme and Register) certificate in counterbalance and reach forklift truck driving, and PAT (portable appliance testing) testing course, provided and delivered by PeoplePlus

7.2.2 There have been no education courses delivered since 23 March 2020, as a result of the pandemic guidelines. PeoplePlus staff are currently not entering the establishment, until clear direction is provided nationally.

7.2.3 The activities hub and PeoplePlus regularly allocated about 16 students per week into education courses before the restricted regime.

7.2.4 Pre-pandemic, communication with prisoners about work is efficient and thorough. Security issues with particular roles are common for some prisoners, but the activities team works hard to find appropriate work for each individual. Failure to allocate a suitable activity to some may result in a 12-week work trial compact being activated, with fortnightly reviews by the activities hub manager. In other cases, a multidisciplinary meeting with mandatory attendees takes place and is signed off by a senior management team member.

7.2.5 The new key worker system is helping to ensure that prisoners feel listened to. There is support available for prisoners with autism (using the autism support knowledge (ASK) profile), and this currently applies to 22 prisoners.

7.2.6 The activities hub normally allocates, on average, 25 prisoners per week into employment. Over the last 12 weeks, since the lockdown to the regime, there have been 65 residents allocated into an essential work area.

7.2.7 Prior to the pandemic, the average attendance at work remained good, and on target:

- 75% of prisoners attend workshops
- 5% are unemployed
- 13% are either retired, medically retired or medically unfit
- The remainder are on offending behaviour programmes.

7.2.8 During the pandemic, there has been very little purposeful activity for the prisoners.

7.2.9 The activities hub, industries and PeoplePlus staff work closely together, making full use of the facilities and with an innovative approach to finding suitable work, within the constraints of the prison budget. The relationship with senior managers continues to be effective and the overall service provided is excellent, and appreciated by most prisoners.

7.3 Offender Management, Progression

7.3.1 A total of 169 prisoners are serving either IPP or life sentences (May 2021). An analysis of the IPP prisoners showed that a majority of them were serving terms over tariff. The periods of imprisonment over tariff ranged from six months to 12 years.

7.3.2 The offender assessment system (OASys) measures the risks and needs of prisoners and is a key element in reducing reoffending. There is a continuing issue with prisoners arriving at the prison without a current OASys report. This delays assessment, and access to intervention programmes. Without an up-to-date OASys assessment and sentence plan, prisoners do not have a suitable treatment pathway, which, in turn, can lead to inappropriate sequencing for purposeful activities.

7.3.3 Despite the large number of changes under the offender management in custody (OMiC) model, the quality of supervision, sentence planning and risk assessment is good.

7.3.4 HMP Whatton is one of the largest specialist prisons in Europe to offer offending behaviour programmes to people with convictions for sexual offences. There are a number of specialist programmes designed to address offending behaviour. Some programmes are designed to address sexual or violent offending. Others may relate to emotional management, substance abuse, cognitive development and victim awareness, or gambling. Programmes can be mandated through a sentence plan or may be a mandatory requirement for parole consideration. Some of these programmes can be entered voluntarily.

7.3.5 During the pandemic lockdown, the specialist training programmes were initially suspended. However, one-to-one and small group sessions for Horizon and Kaizen have been restarted under social distancing conditions.

7.3.6 The suspension of accredited programmes has been a source of frustration to many prisoners. They arrive at HMP Whatton with the expectation that they will start an accredited programme as part of their sentence plan. However, because of the pandemic restrictions, this has not been possible. Prisoners are being prioritised depending on their sentence or potential release date. Communication to prisoners has been poor, leaving them uncertain as to their future and the possible impact on parole hearings.

7.4 Circles of Support and Accountability/Safer Living Foundation

7.4.1 Since August 2014, the Safer Living Foundation (SLF) has been running the first ever UK prison-based circles of support and accountability (CoSA) project from HMP Whatton for high-risk adults with a sexual conviction. The focus has been to provide this service for older (55+) and intellectually challenged male prisoners.

7.4.2 CoSA is a successful community initiative that has been proven to reduce sexual offending. A 'circle' is a group of three to four volunteers from a local community who meet regularly with a person with a sexual conviction after release (known as the 'core member'). The volunteers create the 'circle of support' around the core member and offer, with supervision, social, practical and emotional support to the individual.

7.4.3 The circle begins around three months before the individual is released, and then continues through the transition period from prison to community, and for the next 12–18 months in the community.

7.4.4 In April 2020, a new support and mentoring project was established by the Safer Living Foundation (SLF) to help prepare people for release.

7.5 Family Contact

7.5.1 Visits are well managed and facilities for family visitors are good. There is a purpose-built visitor centre, which is managed under contract with the Prison Advice and Care Trust. Sadly, because of the offences they have committed, 34% of prisoners do not receive family/domestic/social visits. Family social visits were cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

7.5.2 Remote video visits, known as 'Purple Visits', have been made available in small numbers.

7.5.3 The prison is making preparations to restart social visits using social distancing, once this has been approved by HMPPS. This could mean that only 10 visits can be held at a time, with a maximum of three visitors for each prisoner.

7.5.4 Family days are normally held three times per year. Regrettably, family days have had to be cancelled since the March 2020 Covid-19 lockdown.

7.5.5 Prisoners have access to communal telephones on their wings to contact family and friends. All telephone numbers must be approved, and access granted via a personal identification number. The decision to give prisoners an extra £5 PIN credit every week during lockdown was much appreciated. The Board has received complaints from prisoners that telephone access to their children is delayed while external checks are carried out. They find this especially galling when they have already been granted access at their previous prison.

7.6 Resettlement Planning

7.6.1 The prison's resettlement strategy is centred on offender management and risk reduction. OMiC has now been implemented, and work continues to embed the changes, which include full responsibility for the OASys completions across the levels of risk while the prisoners are in custody.

7.6.2 Since 1 May 2019, the establishment's resettlement package has been delivered by the reducing reoffending partnership, with the work being delivered by Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland community rehabilitation company (CRC). This initiative has been introduced into prisons which were initially not classed as 'resettlement prisons'. This recognises the fact that training prisons, such as HMP Whatton, release a number of prisoners nationally each month. Post-course consolidation work occurs in many instances right up until the release date. Therefore, it is not always possible, or practical, to send prisoners to a resettlement prison three months before release.

7.6.3 At the time of writing this report, 39 category D prisoners were being held at HMP Whatton (a category C prison) and awaiting transfer to open conditions. It was identified that a significant number of prisoners were being returned to the establishment from open conditions, and that there was a need to prepare prisoners for what they might expect in an open establishment. To address this issue, a preparation for open conditions course was set up and delivered on a quarterly basis, and prisoners identified to be moving to open conditions in the next few months were invited to attend. The course involved staff from the open prisons attending HMP Whatton to deliver a presentation on what to expect in their respective establishments, and a Q&A session on subjects such as release on temporary licence (ROTL). The course was a success, and became the basis for research and the subsequent establishment of the 'category D survival course'. This has now been amalgamated with the original preparation for open conditions course. However, the course has been suspended throughout the pandemic.

7.6.4 On average, 85–90% of HMP Whatton's population are classified as high-risk prisoners, which means that they must be released into supervised accommodation, which is usually probation approved premises. Securing accommodation is an arduous task and the prison is very often only notified of a release address within the last five days before release (frequently on the day before release). Without a release address, employment is practically impossible.

7.6.5 Six months prior to a prisoner's release, the prisoner's multi-agency public protection arrangements are reassessed by the multi-agency team. Normally, prisoners are offered a two-week course in preparation for their release. The course is presented in collaboration with:

- The Geese Theatre
- Department for Work and Pensions
- National Probation Service
- Resettlement Partners RRP,

- The Offender Management Unit and,
- On occasions, ex-prisoners from Whatton.

The course is offered in such a way that prisoners are invited to seek advice in their own areas of need, to aid their resettlement. However, this course has been suspended during the pandemic.

7.6.6 Medium-risk prisoners are advised to contact their local council and ask for emergency accommodation upon release. This can result in prisoners with a conviction for a sexual offence being housed, for a short time, in accommodation that could be in breach of their licence conditions. This is regrettable and is discriminatory and unlikely to support rehabilitation.

8. The Work of the IMB

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic lock-down in March 2020, members of the Board have not been visiting the prison. This is in order to reduce the possibility of spreading the virus. Most members of the Board were self-shielding for parts of the reporting year and did not go into the prison but kept in touch by telephone. Monthly Board meetings were held by teleconference and were attended by the Governor, whose contribution was very much appreciated.

The Chair attended, remotely, the Governor's daily operational briefings and Area Chairs' meetings, and dealt with confidential applications to the Board. Applications to the IMB were scanned by the IMB clerk and sent to the duty member for action and subsequent reply to the prisoner.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	12
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the establishment	Limited by the Covid-19 restrictions
Total number of segregation reviews attended	1

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	6	2
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	2	6
C	Equality	8	3
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	7	4
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	4	8
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	8	8
F	Food and kitchens	2	3
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	7	13
H1	Property within this establishment	6	7
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	16	11
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	6	1
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	8	20
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	10	12
K	Transfers	0	3
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	22	58
	Total number of applications	112	159



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