



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Stocken**

**For reporting year  
1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025**

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**All IMB annual reports are published on [www.imb.org.uk](http://www.imb.org.uk)**

## 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 Stocken is a category C training prison (which hold prisoners whose escape risk is considered low but who cannot be trusted in open conditions) for men, with an operational capacity (the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime) of 1285<sup>1</sup>. It is situated in a rural location close to the A1 in Rutland, in the East Midlands. Access to public transport is very limited, with the nearest trains and buses in Oakham (nine miles away).

Most prisoners serve medium- to long-term sentences (that is, four years or longer), but the prison also holds a number of prisoners serving life sentences and those serving indeterminate sentences (where no fixed release date is set but a minimum term is imposed by the court) for imprisonment for public protection (IPP).

There are eight wings: four house about 75-132 prisoners each, and four house nearly 200 each. The eighth wing was started to be populated in August 2024 with the opening of Oakham wing. The initially planned ramp up of the population was accelerated, due to the overall population pressures. The wing was formally opened in October 2024.

There are 16 workshops and a substantial education section. There is a large, well-equipped gym, library, chapel, and multi-faith room, which are generally well used and attended. The multi-faith room was enlarged as part of the expansion programme. However, the enlargement of the gym has been delayed due to some structural issues regarding the part of the prison that was due to be converted into the new gym extension.

Education is provided by People Plus (PP), and healthcare and mental health services by Practice Plus Group (PPG). Inclusion (drug rehabilitation) is part of the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and are subcontracted through the overarching PPG contract. For most of the reporting year, the library services were provided by Rutland County Council; this has now been taken over by People Plus. Voluntary services include Lincolnshire Action Trust, Samaritans, Prison Fellowship, Shannon Trust and Sycamore Trust.

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<sup>1</sup> 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**

In the Board's view, HMP Stocken is generally a safe place for both prisoners and staff.

##### **Fair and humane treatment**

The Board is concerned that prisoners' excess personal property will continue to be lost or mislaid, as long as all 'sending prisons' are not required to enforce the same volumetric property controls.

##### **Health and wellbeing**

The Board is still concerned about the number of prisoners with mental health problems. Although we recognise that this is a national issue, we still feel that it takes too long to transfer prisoners to secure mental health facilities, which is not good for the prisoner or the staff.

The Board's observations suggest that physical health is well catered for, despite the reliance on agency staff.

##### **Progression and resettlement**

As noted in last year's report, there has been an increase in the number of prisoners held at HMP Stocken who are out of the area. This, coupled with the rural location of the prison, makes keeping family ties difficult. Although social video calls are available, not every prisoner's family have the knowledge or means to make use of this facility.

#### **3.2 Main areas for development**

**The Board is reiterating the same questions as in our previous report, as little progress seems to have been made since last year.**

##### ***TO THE MINISTER***

- Given that HMP Stocken is one of the larger public-run prisons in England, when is 'enhanced' gate security going to be improved with up-to-date equipment?

##### ***TO THE PRISON SERVICE***

- With the ageing prison population, when are more cells suitable for those with disability or mobility issues going to be made available? Even on the new wing opened last year, there are no 'disabled' cells, only two 'low mobility' cells, which can't accommodate a hospital bed.
- Until 'sending prisons' are required to apply volumetric controls, property in excess of these will continue to be mislaid or lost. When will the Prison Service enforce its own restrictions on transferring prisoners?

##### ***TO THE GOVERNOR***

- The Board is concerned that certain prisoners held in the CSU on suspicion that they are involved in illicit activities within the prison are not sufficiently briefed by the security department about the reasons why they are under investigation.

### 3.3 Response to the last report

*Please note that the responses have been summarised by us. The full reply can be seen in Annex C.*

| Issue raised                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Response given                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Progress                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Although the Board appreciates that work needs to be done on old Victorian prisons, the remedial work required on prisons such as HMP Stocken, which was built in the 1980s, should not be forgotten. How and when will the Minister address the renovations required at HMP Stocken?                                                                                         | HMP Stocken has been successful in obtaining funding for roof repairs to most of the flat-roofed buildings. The old kitchen will have its roof replaced and it will be converted to a new gymnasium.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Work has started on some of the older flat roofs.                                                                                                 |
| It takes too long to transfer mentally ill prisoners to secure mental health facilities. This often means that they have to be held in the care and separation unit (CSU) for their own safety for extended periods of time. What is the Minister doing in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Care to address the shortfall in secure mental health places? | The Ministry is working with the Department of Health and Social Care to introduce a Mental Health Bill as soon as possible. This will introduce reforms to improve access and support for patients in the criminal justice system, bearing in mind the pressures on such services nationally. NHS England will continue to escalate the demands for places within the prison population.                                                           | There has been little or no detectable improvement. The Board is also concerned that the abolition of NHS England will hardly help the situation. |
| What is the Prison Service doing to ensure that when men are transferred between prisons, their property goes with them? The Board has received a number of applications [prisoners' written representations to the IMB] concerning property that has not been transferred with the men when they come to HMP Stocken.                                                        | Prisoners frequently ignore volumetric control limits. As a result, excess property cannot be transferred with them. There is a new requirement that such excess property should follow the prisoner within four weeks. More efficient (digital) recording of prisoner property should make it easier to keep track of handovers between stakeholders. The agency responsible for property transfers has received no complaints from HMP Stocken in | Excess property continues to be lost on a regular basis. 'Sending' prisons continue to ignore volumetric control requirements.                    |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | relation to loss of property on transfer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Although another new wing is due to be opened at HMP Stocken, no refurbishment, renovation or enlargement has been planned for the CSU. When will this be addressed?                                                                  | There is no approved bid to extend or refurbish the CSU. However, planned and reactive maintenance tasks will continue to be completed. The decorative state of the unit is regularly reviewed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | No change from previous years.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| With the pressures on the prison population, the Board is seeing an increase in the number of prisoners held 'out of area', with the negative impact this has on family ties. What will the Prison Service do to address this matter? | Given the severe population pressures on the prison estate, there is no alternative to the use of HMP Stocken as a 'national resource' [ <i>a prison that can be allocated men from anywhere in England</i> ]. Although in principle prisoners are accommodated as close as possible to their home probation region, other priorities are likely to outweigh this, as well as the lack of training capacity in London. The 'early release' scheme should provide temporary relief. Stocken has various schemes in place and in the pipeline to support prisoners whose families cannot visit because of cost or distance, including additional secure video calls. | No discernible change.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| As the prison still continues to release prisoners back into the community, despite it not being a resettlement prison, what is the Prison Service doing about funding this activity?                                                 | <i>[We have omitted a good deal of the response, as most of it does not apply to Stocken or refers to services that are not obliged to respond to the prison's submissions for support.]</i> HMP Stocken now has a fully funded employment hub and banking and Identification admin and has been allocated additional DWP resource in the form of a prison work coach. It has also been allocated two full-time creating future opportunities (CFO) case workers for prisoners with multiple resettlement needs nearing release.                                                                                                                                   | Given that 20 prisoners per month amounts to 240 per year (one-fifth of the prison population), the lack of funding specifically targeting direct release runs the risk that many of these men will lack the support they need and, consequently, reoffend or breach their licence conditions and be recalled. |

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

#### **4.1 Reception and induction**

The reception department continues to generally work well but, as with the rest of the establishment, has been under pressure due to the large number of men and property passing through the department.

There are peer supporters in reception to help new arrivals understand the processes at HMP Stocken, particularly with regard to what happens in reception. Prisoners have two private interviews, one in reception and one on the induction wing, and healthcare staff carry out a health screening to identify any immediate issues.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report - and in our previous report - property on transfer continues to be an issue, if volumetric controls have not been applied. This can result in delays when there are not enough staff in reception to search all the property. This may mean that the prisoner may not be able to take all his property with him on to the wing. The excess property then needs to be stored in reception and screened at a later time. On occasion, men are arriving without any of their property, which causes problems for them.

Induction mentors are employed in both reception and on F wing. The feedback from prisoners that the Board has received shows they are appreciated by the new prisoners arriving in Stocken.

Prisoner induction takes place on F wing and is a two-week programme, starting on a Monday. All new arrivals remain on F wing while they complete their 'passport', which outlines their induction process. Not all new prisoners are able to complete their passport whilst they are on F wing, usually due to operational capacity issues. Whenever anyone has to be moved before completing the induction process, the wing is notified and the prisoner will receive support to complete their passport whilst on the wing.

#### *The first night on F wing*

On arriving on F wing, following the reception process, prisoners are asked to check the cell allocated to them and to sign a cell compact, or contract (to confirm that everything is clean and in working order).

An induction officer does the first night assessment interview and will gather up-to-date next-of-kin information, and any security or health concerns. The assessment interview covers many areas, including any necessary support for disability requirements, reading and writing ability, cohort engagement, sexuality, debt, self-harm issues and access issues (to showers, phone calls and hot meals).

All new arrivals are checked at least three times (randomly), throughout the night, by wing staff.

#### **4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody**

##### **ACCTs**

ACCTs (assessment, care in custody and teamwork) documents, used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm or suicide, are monitored by the prison, in

particular, by the safety department. As a Board, we are pleased to see that the quality of interactions between staff and prisoners on ACCTs has improved, as has the documenting of these interactions.

| <b>Month</b> | <b>ACCTs opened</b> | <b>ACCTs reopened</b> |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| May 24       | 40                  | 14                    |
| June 24      | 24                  | 15                    |
| July 24      | 20                  | 16                    |
| Aug 24       | 21                  | 14                    |
| Sept 24      | 23                  | 15                    |
| Oct 24       | 24                  | 16                    |
| Nov 24       | 22                  | 12                    |
| Dec 24       | 28                  | 10                    |
| Jan 25       | 36                  | 18                    |
| Feb 25       | 27                  | 14                    |
| Mar 25       | 41                  | 15                    |
| April 25     | 20                  | 14                    |

### **Self-harm**

March 2025 saw a significant rise in the number of self-harm incidents and the number of prisoners who self-harmed. However, according to the head of safety at HMP Stocken this is still lower than at comparable prisons.

| <b>Month</b> | <b>Self-harm incidents</b> | <b>Individuals involved</b> | <b>Multiple self-harmers</b> |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| May 24       | 54                         | 30                          | 11                           |
| June 24      | 62                         | 23                          | 9                            |
| July 24      | 77                         | 29                          | 17                           |
| Aug 24       | 51                         | 23                          | 11                           |
| Sept 24      | 58                         | 28                          | 12                           |
| Oct 24       | 52                         | 31                          | 11                           |
| Nov 24       | 52                         | 27                          | 10                           |
| Dec 24       | 49                         | 20                          | 13                           |
| Jan 25       | 56                         | 33                          | 11                           |
| Feb 25       | 69                         | 34                          | 13                           |
| Mar 25       | 86                         | 38                          | 17                           |
| Apr 25       | 52                         | 22                          | 11                           |

It is worth noting that 76% of the prison population have never self-harmed, according to a safer prisons meeting in January 2025. A large majority of self-harm incidents are due

to the actions of a small number of regular self-harmers. So, for example, the top three self-harmers (out of 29 individual self-harmers) accounted for 20 of 49 incidents.

### **Deaths in custody**

There were four deaths in custody during the reporting period. One took place after the man had been released from prison but within a timeframe that means it is still classed as a death in custody. Three of the deaths are likely to be due to natural causes. The other death was likely to have been self-inflicted, but the exact cause will not be established until an inquest has been held and the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) has investigated the death and published its report.

A Coroner's inquest, in May 2025 regarding a death in custody in 2023, ruled that it was self-inflicted.

### **4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation**

The Board continues to be concerned about violence, the finding of illicit items and self-harm. However, we are pleased to report that, despite the increase in the prison population at HMP Stocken with the opening of the new wing last summer, the level of violence has increased, although no faster than the increase of HMP Stocken's population.

In addition, the number of violent incidents from March to April 2025 showed a considerable increase over the previous few months, also reflected in challenge, support and intervention plans, or CSIPs (used to support and manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence) and use of force (UoF) incidents. Plus, December also saw an unprecedented increase in the number of under the influence (UTI) incidents. Involvement in the drug culture is evidenced by the number of UTIs cited on the DBS (daily briefing sheet), by intelligence on the illicit 'economy', and by the productive outcomes of searches for all forms of contraband. The diligence of staff in identifying sources of incoming drugs and supply chains should be acknowledged and commended. During the reporting year, the Governor re-purposed I wing to specialise in implementing the intervention pathway for known drug users. This is a safeguarding intervention for those who repeatedly use illicit substances. It is noted that 75% of the I wing cohort have neurodivergent characteristics.

Debt: safety analysts scrutinise information relating to debt. The reviewed debt strategy provides for prisoners with active debt alerts to be monitored, including transfers in. Debt is acknowledged to fuel violence, self-harm and bullying and is linked with the drug culture.

Prisoners who self-isolate are located on K wing. One of the benefits of placing them on the same wing is that they can associate and exercise together, without fear of conflict with other prisoners. The Board considers that the processes are now good, with positive feedback from the men and effective communication across the prison, with an appropriate awareness of neurodiversity. The challenge is to get these prisoners into a normal regime, including a requirement to work.

The prison continues to encourage and facilitate access to Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide peer support) and, when requested, the Samaritans.

## Violent incidents

| Month   | No. of prisoner-on-staff assaults | No. of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults | No. of fights |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| May 24  | 7                                 | 5                                    | 4             |
| June 24 | 4                                 | 5                                    | 3             |
| July 24 | 1                                 | 8                                    | 4             |
| Aug 24  | 7                                 | 5                                    | 5             |
| Sept 24 | 5                                 | 3                                    | 2             |
| Oct 24  | 5                                 | 5                                    | 5             |
| Nov 24  | 4                                 | 9                                    | 4             |
| Dec 24  | 4                                 | 3                                    | 2             |
| Jan 25  | 4                                 | 1                                    | 3             |
| Feb 25  | 8                                 | 6                                    | 4             |
| Mar 25  | 8                                 | 10                                   | 8             |
| Apr 25  | 14                                | 8                                    | 5             |

We are not sure why there are occasional spikes in prisoners-on-staff assaults or prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, although it may well be associated with a rise in the availability of drugs.

### 4.4 Use of force

All incidents involving the use of force (UoF) are reviewed weekly by the prison to identify if it was appropriate and establish any learning opportunities. A member of the IMB attends this meeting, which is around every four weeks, as an observer.

| Month   | Use of force: planned* | Use of force: spontaneous |
|---------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| May 24  | 8                      | 25                        |
| June 24 | 9                      | 36                        |
| July 24 | 18                     | 33                        |
| Aug 24  | 13                     | 29                        |
| Sept 24 | 11                     | 36                        |
| Oct 24  | 6                      | 25                        |
| Nov 24  | 3                      | 28                        |
| Dec 24  | 4                      | 43                        |
| Jan 25  | 5                      | 34                        |
| Feb 25  | 7                      | 28                        |
| Mar 25  | 10                     | 42                        |
| Apr 25  | 9                      | 22                        |

*\*Planned use of force mainly includes the relocation of prisoners from a wing to the Care and Separation Unit when a prisoner refuses to co-operate.*

### 4.5 Preventing illicit items

The body scanners and an X-ray machine for screening property, which were introduced into Stocken last year, are still working well to reduce illicit items entering the prison through reception. As a result, staff are still finding illicit items on prisoners arriving on transfer from other prisons.

Targeted cell searches, based on intelligence, regularly take place, along with searches by an illicit brewed alcohol detection dog (IBAD). At the end of the reporting period, the prison had three trained dog handlers in post.

Despite the best efforts of the staff, illicit items still manage to get through. As staff close off one route, another opens up, often driven by organised crime groups (OCGs). The threat from drones dropping packages of illicit items into the prison grounds has increased during the year.

Some evidence has been seen of prisoners cutting the mesh over their cell windows to facilitate drugs drops via drones. The prison has responded by increasing inspection of the cell fabric.

The other gap in security is 'enhanced gate security' and although random searching of staff takes place it would be improved with the installation of enhanced security/scanning equipment that the board has seen at some other establishments.

## **5. Fair and humane treatment**

### **5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food**

#### **Accommodation**

Each of the eight wings has a primary purpose:

- F is the induction wing
- H is the behavioural Intervention wing
- I wing is for drug intervention
- K wing is for those who are neurodivergent
- L is the opiate substitute treatment wing, where there is an integrated drug treatment system (IDTS)
- M wing is for recovery/incentivised substance-free living
- N (Newton) wing is for prisoners on the enhanced (top) level of the incentives scheme
- O (Oakham) wing is for long-term prisoners

The overall state of the accommodation has improved with the opening of the two newest wings. However, despite some repairs being carried out, the oldest wings are showing signs of their age.

The Board was disappointed that, in light of the ageing prison population, no cells with disability access were included in Oakham wing, which was only opened last summer. The prison has four cells for disabled prisoners and two low-mobility cells (which cannot accommodate a hospital bed). There is a waiting list for these cells. The Board had been led to believe by the head of wellbeing that, with a population in excess of 1,000, as many as 50 such cells are needed.

At the end of the reporting year, some of the showers on N wing were being repaired. These showers had not worked properly since the wing was built in 2018-2019.

In February 2025, possibly due to a marked change in the weather, water/condensation was further damaging the ceiling and the walls of the main corridor (see the photos in Annex B).

#### **Clothing**

Prison-issued clothing is washed in an on-site laundry, which also holds a stock of replacement clothing items. In addition, each wing has washing machines and tumble dryers for prisoners to launder their own clothes. There are some issues with equipment breaking down and fixing broken equipment and procuring replacements seems to be a difficult and lengthy process. This is exacerbated by some prisoners using the wing washers and dryers to launder prison-issued clothing, as well as their own clothing. However, the availability of working washers and dryers has improved during the reporting year.

#### **Food**

Food is provided by a central kitchen, which offers one hot and one cold meal each day. Breakfast packs are provided so that each prisoner can make his own breakfast. The menus are regularly reviewed, with input from the prisoners. Special menus and arrangements are made for major religious festivals, such as Ramadan and Christmas.

Each wing is also provided with sandwich makers, toasters and microwaves, so men can supplement their meals with items from the canteen (a facility where prisoners can buy snacks, toiletries, stationery and other essentials using their allocated funds). Separate equipment for the preparation of halal food is provided but not consistently and is often misused by men for non-halal food. We get occasional complaints about the equipment not working and that it can take some time for the prison to replace the items. As they are used by the whole wing, it may be the case that the men do not always look after them.

The kitchens receive very few complaints in relation to the number of meals produced and, from the Board's observations, complaints are well handled by the kitchen manager. The Board regularly inspects the complaints book and discusses the replies with the kitchen manager. A good proportion of the complaints received refer to special diets. However, one complaint was received during the year alleging that some rice was contaminated with a 'foreign' object. This was investigated by both the kitchen manager and the supplier. It was determined that the foreign object was not in the rice prior to it being delivered to the wing. It is possible that it was introduced by the prisoner who made the complaint.

## **5.2 Segregation**

Men are placed in segregation in the care and separation unit (CSU) for one of two reasons: 'own interest' (OI) or good order or discipline (GOoD). OI can include being in debt, under threat for another reason or when a man has severe mental health issue and it is the safest place for them. GOoD is mainly for those men who have allegedly been carry out bullying, threats and violence or are suspected of being involved in the 'drug culture'. The unit has been close to full on a number of occasions during the reporting year, and, as men are moved on or back to wings, a new group of men are then segregated in the unit.

A man held in the CSU has to have a review at least every 14 days to decide if it is appropriate to keep him segregated and to determine an action plan. A meeting is held every week to discuss every man in the CSU, and an action plan is set out with a view to moving them on. The maximum time allowed in segregation without further authorisation is 42 days. For a man to be held longer than this requires authorisation from the Prison Group Director (PDG). The Board monitors most segregation reviews and evaluates all the necessary paperwork, including the PGD authorisation if that is required. Our view is that paperwork and record-keeping are of a high standard.

One of our concerns relates to men held on grounds of security intelligence, such as, for example, that they might be involved in facilitating the supply of mobile phones. In some cases, men are held for quite long periods before they receive a visit from the security team to explain or explore the reasons why they are being segregated. We recognise that this is usually due to staffing issues, but, nevertheless, the lack of information is frustrating for both the prisoner and the CSU staff.

In our previous reports, we noted concerns over men being held in segregation for more than 42 days, when they had been re-categorised to category B and were waiting to be transferred to a more restrictive prison. This situation has improved, as the Prison Group Director put in place a new transfer policy. However, due to the shortage of secure mental health facilities, we do see men with severe mental health issues held in the segregation unit for excessive lengths of time. During the reporting year, one man was held in CSU for 77 days before being transferred to a secure mental health facility.

One of the chaplaincy team visits the CSU every day, while the GP visits on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The gym staff provide a gym session in the CSU every Wednesday.

Adjudications (disciplinary hearings when a prisoner is alleged to have broken prison rules) are held daily in the CSU for men who have been placed on report. When the Board has been able to observe adjudications, they are conducted well and in a sympathetic manner.

### **5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers**

The Board's frequent observations of staff and prisoner interaction suggest a high level of professionalism. As noted in last year's report, we had some concerns over the new officers' interpersonal skills. We reported that the prison Governors recognised this and had increased the length of time that new prison officers are mentored. The benefit of this has shown itself during this reporting year, as the young officers have grown into the role. Prisoners with challenging behaviour are dealt with consistently and with the minimum of confrontation possible in the circumstances.

We are pleased to see that the ethnic diversity of the prison officers has continued to increase.

The consensus seems to be that key working is effective if both parties want it to work. An intelligent progression plan, sensitively drawn and conscientiously worked at, is a useful tool and a worthwhile document. Good key working can also reduce the number of wing applications and complaints.

As the staff shortages reported last year have reduced, the amount of key working has increased. From the Board's observations, the prison has continued to concentrate on delivering key work to the most vulnerable prisoners, as determined in the safety intervention meetings (SIMs), e.g. self-isolators and prisoners on ACCTs, etc.

### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

The prison has a full-time equality advisor who has responsibility for leading on the provision of advice on equality issues and ensuring compliance with legislation. They are assisted by a full-time business administrator.

A neurodiversity support manager (NSM) has been appointed to the education, skills and work department.

In April 2025, a temporary one-year specialist position was created within the offender management unit (OMU) to help support foreign national prisoners and the Home Office with immigration paperwork to facilitate deportation and create space in UK prisons.

This specialist role includes supporting foreign national prisoners with issues such as explaining deportation orders, contacting the Home Office and cross-border agencies concerning repatriation, as well as ensuring that foreign national prisoners are getting everything they are entitled to, such as books and education.

At Stocken, there are 97 foreign national prisoners and seven Irish national prisoners, with 39 languages spoken, mostly Albanian, Polish and Romanian.

Any prisoner who has communication challenges due to a language barrier is able to use a language translating service. Staff also volunteer to translate in various languages and other prisoners support each other in this area, too.

There is an equality, diversity and inclusion plan in place, to ensure that different categories of prisoner are treated fairly.

The staff diversity and equality action team (DEAT) is made up of the senior management team (SMT) and the heads of function. It has an essential role in monitoring and discussing a broad range of data at bimonthly meetings.

The prison monitors equality and diversity through the protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010. These include race, age, disability, religion, sex and sexual orientation. A named member of the SMT is the lead for a particular characteristic and focuses on the characteristic for a month during the year. So, for example, the incentives scheme data and use of force incidents are reviewed and monitored for any disproportionality for each characteristic group.

There is also a quarterly prisoner DEAT forum, comprising function staff, or their representative, and prisoner equality reps drawn from each wing. In-depth data packs are provided, which prisoner equality representative can make available to the wider prison population.

The equality adviser manages the discrimination incident reporting form (DIRF) process, following the guidance. Initially, investigations are carried out by non-operational managers, from band 5 and above, before scrutiny by the equality adviser. All investigations are quality assured monthly through the Governor.

From the Board's observations, the needs of prisoners with mobility issues are effectively and respectfully managed. The social care process, overseen by the wellbeing function, is robust in arranging assessments and adjustments where required. Disability forums are held to support, and learn from, the prisoners.

In March 2025, there were 29 prisoners with personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs). These provide assistance for those who cannot get themselves out of the prison unaided in an emergency.

Throughout the reporting year, various celebration days have been held. Successful events have included an Armed Forces Day, monthly Veterans' breakfast club meetings, Black History Month, VE Day celebrations, Gypsy and Roma Traveller history month and LGBT history month.

The progress with DIRFs and the introduction of scrutiny panels, consisting of both prisoner and external professionals, is, we believe, seen as a strength of the prison.

In the year January 2024 to December 2024, 150 DIRFs were submitted, with the following outcomes:

- A total of 54 DIRFs were investigated: 96 were dismissed, due to not being DIRF-related.
- Of the 54 investigated, 13 were upheld; 41 were not.
- 0 were partially upheld.
- A total of 10 of the 150 submitted were advised to submit complaints, as they were not DIRF-related.

The Board has been reliably informed that some members of the SMT don't seem to be fully committed to the aims of the equality and diversity department, particularly in regard to the implications of the wealth of data available on a monthly basis. This is inherently difficult to check, so we report it as a concern from within the prison.

With constant moves of prisoners in and out of HMP Stocken, it is difficult to recruit and maintain prisoner representatives.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

Different religions and faiths are recognised and respected, with provision for prisoners to practise their religion or faith fully and in safety.

Prisoners are well supported by the five full time members of the chaplaincy. The team is led by an Anglican priest and includes many faiths, with services held both in the chapel and the multi-faith room.

A member of the team visits everyone held in the CSU on a daily basis. In addition, the chaplaincy team provides support at a particular time of need, such as, for example, after a bereavement or with a 'trigger' date imminent. Services are held for the men who have died in custody, which family members are invited to attend.

The chaplaincy team is enhanced by a group of volunteers from the community outside the prison, who regularly attend to assist with the organisation of the Sunday morning service. From the Board's observations, this is well attended by prisoners, who fully engage in the music and singing, which is always uplifting.

The IMB acknowledges the invaluable contribution the chaplaincy team makes to the overall care, support and rehabilitation of prisoners at HMP Stocken and to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

All prisoners are asked to declare their religion or faith when they arrive at HMP Stocken. The table below is a snapshot of the breakdown.

| <b>Religion/faith</b>         | <b>No. of men</b> | <b>% of HMP Stocken's population</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Christian (all denominations) | 666               | 53%                                  |
| Muslim                        | 256               | 20%                                  |
| Buddhist                      | 26                | 2%                                   |
| Other                         | 65                | 5%                                   |
| Jewish                        | 7                 | 1%                                   |
| No religion                   | 244               | 19%                                  |

## **5.6 Incentives schemes**

The prison has a local incentives scheme called the 'Incentives Policy', which is regularly reviewed in line with the Incentives Policy Framework. There are three levels: basic, standard and enhanced. A typical breakdown is 4% on basic, 37.3% on standard and the remainder - 58.7% - on enhanced. This shows a reduction in 'basic' prisoners over last

year's figure of 6.3%. In the Board's view, it is probably due to the population pressure increasing the number of out-of-area prisoners, who may react in a negative way to try and get moved nearer home. The scheme is intended to reward good behaviour, and staff are encouraged to issue warnings rather than rushing to use the adjudication system (a disciplinary hearing held when a prisoner is suspected of having broken prison rules) or place them on report, leading to an adjudication.

Prisoners being recalled to prison are placed on the standard (middle) level when they arrive back at HMP Stocken, and prisoners transferring from another prison generally keep their already earned incentives scheme status.

## **5.7 Complaints**

The prison employs a dedicated complaints clerk so that all complaints are recorded and chased, if they are approaching the timeframe in which they should be answered (which includes chasing other prisons if the complaint concerns them). The prison monitors all internal complaints that are due that day or the next, at the morning meeting.

The Board scrutinises a random sample of complaints to assess if they are being answered to a sufficient standard. After action by the No.1 Governor, the quality of the responses to standard, non-confidential complaints (called Comp 1s) has improved.

## **5.8 Property**

Property still makes up a significant proportion of applications (prisoners' written representations) to the IMB, particularly those concerning missing or lost items during transfer from other prisons. This is usually because of excess property which has to follow on rather than being transferred with the prisoner.

If the application refers to property being transferred from another establishment, we usually advise the prisoner to contact the Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations (IPCI) team, which is part of the Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO). One of the issues is still prisoners transferring with their property being above the volumetric controls (a policy limiting the amount of personal property a prisoner can possess).

The Board has seen an increase in applications about property. This mainly concerns catalogue items (which the prisoner has ordered from an external supplier), allowed items and clothing parcels. The issue with catalogue items generally involves the time taken for the item to be processed through stores and reception in relation to the return period the supplier allows. Also, HMP Stocken has been ordered to pay compensation to prisoners on a couple of occasions during the reporting year when property has been lost within HMP Stocken. We are aware of some occasions when a prisoner has been moved to the CSU and their cell has not been 'booted off' correctly, which has resulted in property going missing. ('Booted off' means the cell is locked using a mechanism which should prevent anyone else from being able to access it.) The prison management team is addressing this issue with staff. The Board has also noted when observing adjudications that there has been a lack of privacy keys on some wings (whereby prisoners are able to prevent other prisoners from entering their cell without permission).

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

The healthcare unit has gone through a difficult period this reporting year, with a high turnover in staff, although, from the Board's observations, they have worked hard to limit the impact this has had on the prisoners. However, one result of this has been that there has been long delays in healthcare staff replying to prisoners' applications/complaints. The Board will continue to monitor this during the next reporting year. The new healthcare manager appears to be working hard to recruit more permanent staff and to improve the culture.

The unit is in the process of appointing a business manager and a substance misuse lead.

As reported below, a new pharmacy opened towards the end of the reporting year. However, a number of prisoners have reported issues in applications to the Board. It is hoped that the appointment of permanent pharmacy technicians, rather than relying on agency staff, will improve the situation. The Board will continue to monitor the situation.

A social prescribing link worker is a new role that was established during the reporting year. A social prescriber helps individuals identify non-medical solutions to improve their health and wellbeing. This includes helping men take control of their own health and wellbeing, to develop a personal wellbeing plan and help in accessing services that have the potential to boost their wellbeing.

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

A new primary care lead started towards the end of the reporting year.

Despite several delays, the new pharmacy is now in operation and two permanent pharmacy technicians are due to start at the beginning of the next reporting year.

Two permanent nurses have been recruited and three more are going through the recruitment process. This will reduce reliance on agency staff.

Generally, the Board has not been concerned about healthcare provision. The Board's experience with healthcare in the local community is that the provision within HMP Stocken is at least as good as that in the community.

### **6.3 Mental health**

Although a new mental health lead was appointed, there were some issues and the recruitment process has started again. Three permanent mental nurses are in post, with two more going through the recruitment process.

Two counselling services are operating within HMP Stocken: Anita Keene Counselling services, which focuses on bereavement, separation and living in prison; and First Step, which focuses on men who have been sexually assaulted/abused, either as a child or an adult.

In a typical month, 94 counselling sessions are held, with a further 25 applications for support.

## **6.4 Social care**

Social care is led by the wellbeing function, and referrals and equipment are monitored and provided in conjunction with the healthcare team. There are no prisoners with formal social care plans, although there are over 25 prisoners for whom recommended adaptations have been made.

There are four cells suitable for disabled prisoners: two each on K and L wings. There are also two cells on O wing that are suitable for those with 'low mobility', plus a cell on I wing that is suitable for someone with dementia. With the ageing prison population, this provision falls short of what is required to meet prisoner needs. For example, a transfer was requested to move a disabled prisoner to HMP Stocken, but the cells that could accommodate his needs were occupied.

## **6.5 Time out of cell, regime**

The prison has a constant focus on the number of men in full- and part-time employment. This includes reporting the figures on the number of men in work and absences at the morning meetings. This also includes looking for new opportunities for work (see 7.2).

The regime has also been reviewed several times during the reporting year so that all men, including full-time workers, were getting time for domestics (time spent phoning family, etc) and association (socialising with other prisoners).

However, towards the end of the reporting year, the amount of time prisoners spend out of their cells in the late afternoon/evening period has been restricted. This is due to the increased drone activity. Recently, staffing patterns have been changed to cover outside areas in order to return to more time on the exercise yards.

## **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

The inclusion team is the substance misuse service in HMP Stocken. They were based on I wing but are now located near the mental healthcare and physical healthcare teams. The team comprises psychosocial intervention staff and are subcontracted through the overarching healthcare contract (which delivers the clinical elements of substance misuse services). They run programmes for both drug and alcohol abuse. They work closely with the incentivised, substance-free living wing (ISFL) and the Hive (the drug recovery wing, located on I wing). Due to the implementation of the safeguarding intervention (see 4.3), the Hive was disbanded in December 2024.

## **6.7 Soft skills**

As part of the prison's work with external employers, some of the men approaching release have the opportunity to take part in mock interviews to improve their interview skills.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

#### **Education**

People Plus are HMP Stocken's current education provider under the Prison Education Framework (PEF). They currently employ 23 tutors and 5 admin staff. As well as functional skills (English and maths) they also deliver ESOL (reading and writing), Peer Mentoring, Employment and digital skills and PSD (family relationships, personal and interpersonal conflict, improving assertiveness and decision making).

Budgets continue to get tighter and some tutor groups have had to be increased in size. However, there is a need to resolve an issue of culture and level of expectation within both the prisoners and tutors in order to improve outcomes.

The Digital Education Platform (DEP) has been introduced to allow for one IT system to be used across all providers. This should offer an improved user experience for prisoners, teachers, and the supporting education team. The new system should allow for consistency as prisoners move through their journey in prisons, allowing them to access their learning content from any prison location. It should also allow for greater flexibility around the use of learning environments and the ways prisoners consume learning content.

#### **Library**

The library service has been a concern towards the end of the reporting year as the contract with Rutland County Council ended as they said they could no longer afford to run the service. The library is now provided by People Plus but there was a period of confusion over how the service would be provided. As an interim measure the prison initiated mini mobile library trolleys which were taken to the wings.

### **7.2 Vocational training, work**

From the Board's observations, vocational training (VT), delivered by People Plus, is well catered for, with qualifications delivered in barbering, bricklaying, plumbing and tiling, motor mechanics, and catering. Prison industries deliver qualifications in cycle repairs and waste and environmental management (WAMITAB), and food safety. Most of the training courses are fully staffed, enabling prisoners to work towards qualifications at Levels 1 and 2, and several of the workshops (such as bricklaying, painting, and motor vehicle repairs, for example) can also offer Level 3 qualifications, which require a lot of study from the prisoners.

A new workshop was established during the reporting year to manufacture window latches.

A small number of prisoners from the catering workshop also work in the 'Stockpot', the prison mess. This gives them an opportunity to interact with all grades of staff on a professional basis.

There is also a workshop where prisoners produce breakfast packs, plus two DHL workshops, where they fulfil the canteen orders (a facility where prisoners can buy snacks, toiletries, stationery and other essentials using their allocated funds) for a number of prisons.

In addition, there are two workshops with substantial links to outside manufacturers: Karcher, where equipment is repaired; and the motor vehicle workshop, which has vehicles provided by Toyota.

### **7.3 Offender management, progression**

The offender management unit seems to have settled well into their new accommodation. They coped well with the short notice given in changing the early release criteria.

### **7.4 Family contact**

Social visits have taken place throughout the reporting year. Visits are on Monday to Thursday afternoons and on Saturday and Sunday mornings and afternoons.

The charity, Lincolnshire Action Trust, provides activities for the younger children in the visits' hall.

Social video calls are also offered, which can help maintain family contact, as many of the prisoners are a long way from home and HMP Stocken is in a rural location. However, some men whose families live a long way away say that social video calls are not always possible, due to not all prisoner's family having the knowledge or means to make use of this facility. All cells on the wings have in-cell phones, which allow prisoners to call family and friends at more convenient times.

The prison also runs family days (which bring together prisoners and their families outside of their statutory entitlement to social visits, usually in more informal settings), which are held once a month on a Tuesday.

### **7.5 Resettlement planning**

As in previous reports, we must repeat that HMP Stocken is not a resettlement prison. However, 140 prisoners were released direct from HMP Stocken in the last year, compared with 252 in the previous year. This figure includes those released under the Government's early release scheme. The OMU, Lincolnshire Action Trust and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) continue to help prisoners to the best of their ability and resources, in the Board's view.

The employment hub continues to run successful jobs fairs, including a construction fair, and visits by Toyota and Amey, which have resulted in a number of prisoners being offered employment on release.

Also, there are noticeboards in the employment hub where job vacancies suitable for men approaching release to see and apply for.

## 8. The work of the IMB

### Board statistics

|                                                              |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Recommended complement of Board members                      | 16  |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period | 10  |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period   | 10  |
| Total number of visits to the establishment                  | 424 |

### Applications to the IMB

| Code | Subject                                                                                                                                  | Previous reporting year | Current reporting year |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| A    | Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions                                                                                    | 12                      | 19                     |
| B    | Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions                                                                        | 19                      | 20                     |
| C    | Equality                                                                                                                                 | 5                       | 8                      |
| D    | Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell                                                               | 8                       | 20                     |
| E1   | Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions                                                                             | 23                      | 25                     |
| E2   | Finance, including pay, private monies, spends                                                                                           | 18                      | 7                      |
| F    | Food and kitchens                                                                                                                        | 3                       | 4                      |
| G    | Health, including physical, mental, social care                                                                                          | 39                      | 62                     |
| H1   | Property within the establishment                                                                                                        | 27                      | 34                     |
| H2   | Property during transfer or in another facility                                                                                          | 52                      | 53                     |
| H3   | Canteen, facility list, catalogues                                                                                                       | 11                      | 1                      |
| I    | Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation | 38                      | 37                     |
| J    | Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying                                                                                              | 27                      | 19                     |
| K    | Transfers                                                                                                                                | 16                      | 18                     |
| L    | Miscellaneous                                                                                                                            | 5                       | 1                      |
|      | <b>Total number of applications (subjects)</b>                                                                                           | <b>303</b>              | <b>328</b>             |
|      | <b>Total number of applications*</b>                                                                                                     | <b>286</b>              | <b>293</b>             |
|      | <b><i>*An application may contain more than one subject</i></b>                                                                          |                         |                        |

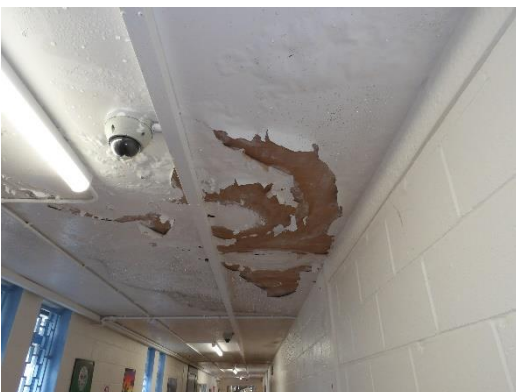
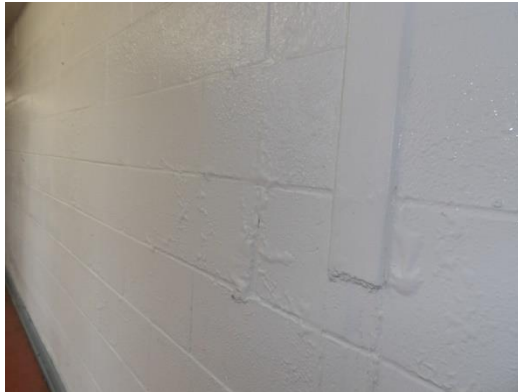
## **Annex A**

### **Service providers**

- Education is provided by People Plus.
- Healthcare, mental health and drug rehabilitation services are provided by the Practice Plus Group.
- Dental health is provided by Time for Teeth.
- Library services were provided by Rutland County Council and now by People Plus.
- Voluntary services include the Samaritans, Lincolnshire Action Trust, the Prison Fellowship, the Shannon Trust and the Sycamore Trust.
- Anita Keene Senior Counselling services.
- First Step.

## Annex B

### Photos of the main corridor



## Annex C

### Minister's response to the 2023-2024 IMB annual report



Ministry  
of Justice

**Lord Timpson**  
Minister of State for  
Justice

Vice Chair  
Independent Monitoring Board  
HMP Stocken  
Stocken Hall Road  
Rutland  
LE15 7RD

**MoJ ref:** SUB119929

13 December 2024

Dear Vice Chair,

#### **HMP STOCKEN: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1 MAY 2023 – 30 APRIL 2024**

Thank you for providing your Board's annual report on HMP Stocken. I have read your report with care and I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work that has been put into capturing your helpful observations, particularly as you continued to operate with several vacancies. The Lord Chancellor and I would also like to thank the Board for supporting her visit to HMP Stocken earlier this month and for my visit in October when I opened a new house block. We greatly value the insight gained and hope you found our visits beneficial.

I was deeply saddened to hear that three prisoners died during the reporting year, either in custody or shortly after release. I offer my condolences to all their friends and family and would like to reassure the Board that recommendations made by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman are taken very seriously.

I understand the Board's concerns around the maintenance and upkeep for all prisons. The Ministry of Justice continues a rolling programme of fire safety improvements, capital investment and major maintenance investment throughout each financial year across the estate. HMP Stocken has been successful in obtaining funding for roof repairs to most of the flat-roofed buildings within the site. The old kitchen will also have its roof replaced leading to it being converted into a new gymnasium and the Reception Centre has recently had roof repairs completed with a full redecoration due to be completed.

I appreciate the Board's concerns about access to secure mental health facilities. I can confirm that the Government and we at the Ministry of Justice are working with the Department of Health and Social Care to introduce a Mental Health Bill as soon as possible. This will include a range of reforms to support and improve access to mental health care for patients in the Criminal Justice System so that those affected get the timely care they need. It is also acknowledged that there are pressures on mental health services nationally and, in

response, NHS England Health and Justice National team are working strategically across the systems to improve pathways.

Responsibility for the commissioning of secure mental health beds rests with Mental Health Provider Collaboratives in each region. NHS England will continue to escalate to them the demands for places within the prison population. NHS England Health and Justice Midlands Teams continues to maintain oversight of long waits and access to secure inpatient treatment in a mental health hospital. Delays have been escalated to the Provider Collaboratives and Mental Health Specialised Commissioners both regionally and nationally, given this is a widespread issue. Fortnightly multi-agency calls are held and chaired by the NHS England Health and Justice Midlands Team to support prioritisation of patients and expedite transfers. A national data exercise is underway to determine the scale of demand and waiting times for all patients. Once completed, further delivery actions can then be agreed.

It was encouraging to receive your comments about the leadership's clear vision, aims and values, where pride in achievement is fostered and people and progress are valued, which is evident throughout the prison. Also, how displays of prisoner artwork and photos of prison events permeate the prison, where good work is widely shared, appreciated and celebrated. I was also pleased to read about how the Governor and his Senior Leadership Team (SLT) continue to do their best for prisoners being released from HMP Stocken, including work done by the employment hub and Lincolnshire Action Trust.

I note you have raised some local issues of concern in your report which the Governor will continue to keep you aware of as work continues. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) comments in response to other issues raised in your report are set out in the attached annex.

The Lord Chancellor and I appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work on behalf of HMP Stocken.



**Lord Timpson**

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



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