

Independent Monitoring Boards (IMB) - Northern Ireland

Basics	Web site	http://www.imb-ni.org.uk/
	Geographical coverage	Northern Ireland
Constitutional Aspects	Legal Framework/Basis	<p>Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953 (available at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/apni/1953/capni_1953018_en_1#pt1-ch1-l1q9)</p> <p>Members of the IMB are appointed by the Justice Minister under s.3 of the Treatment of Offenders Act (NI) 1968</p> <p>Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995 (available at https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-prison-service-prison-rules)</p>
	Independence	<p>Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995 s.122(2) Any person interested in any contract for the supply of goods and services to a prison shall not be a member of the independent monitoring board for that prison.</p> <p>Website: Members of each IMB are drawn from the general public. IMB members act as independent observers of all aspects of the prison regime and as such have free access at all times to the prison to which they are appointed. The work is voluntary and unpaid.</p>
	Financial Independence	Website: IMB members are unpaid volunteers.
Membership	Composition of body	<p>Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953 s.10(2) In the case of a prison used as a women's prison, at least two of the monitors appointed shall be women.</p> <p>There are three boards in Northern Ireland; Maghaberry prison, Magilligan Prison and Hydebank Wood College and Women's prison. The number of members per Board differs according to the size of the establishment and availability of members.</p>

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	<p>Appointment</p>	<p>Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953 s.10(1) (1)The Department shall appoint a group of independent monitors (to be known as "the independent monitoring board") for each prison, young offenders centre and remand centre. (2)In the case of a prison used as a women's prison, at least two of the monitors appointed shall be women.</p> <p>Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995: s.122. -(1) The members of a board of visitors appointed under section 10 of the Act shall hold office for a period of 3 years, or such less period as the Department of Justice may direct.</p> <p>Members of the IMB are appointed by the Justice Minister under s.3 of the Treatment of Offenders Act (NI) 1968.</p>
	<p>Expertise</p>	<p>Website: Members are from different backgrounds as all are volunteers. The IMB Secretariat oversees training and induction for new members and ongoing education and training for experienced members.</p>
<p>Visiting Mandate</p>	<p>Places of deprivation of liberty to be visited</p>	<p>Website: Maghaberry and Magilligan Prisons and Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Prison each have an IMB.</p>
	<p>Frequency of visits</p>	<p>Website: a rota of IMB members ensures that each prison is visited on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995 s.123 (1) The board shall meet at the prison once a month to discharge its functions under these rules. (...) (5) At each meeting of the board a rota shall be arranged to ensure that the prison is visited by at least two visitors before the board's next meeting; these arrangements shall be made in such a way as to ensure that all parts of the prison are visited at reasonable intervals.</p>

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Types of visits	<p>Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995 s.124. –(1) The independent monitoring board for a prison shall satisfy itself as to –</p> <p>(a) the treatment of prisoners including provision for their health care and other welfare while in prison;</p> <p>(b) the facilities available to prisoners to allow them to make purposeful use of their time; and</p> <p>(c) the cleanliness and adequacy of prison premises.</p> <p>(2) The board shall enquire into and report upon any matter which the Department of Justice refers to it.</p> <p>(3) The board shall direct the attention of the governor to any matter which it considers calls for his attention, and shall report to the Department of Justice any matter which it considers should be reported to the Department of Justice.</p> <p>(4) The board shall inform the Department of Justice immediately of any abuse which comes to its knowledge in connection with the prison. (...)</p> <p>s.126. –(1) Members of the board shall have free access at any time to all parts of the prison to which they are appointed, and to all prisoners and may interview any prisoner out of sight and hearing of prison staff.</p>
Private interviews	<p>Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995 s.126. –(1) Members of the board shall have free access at any time to all parts of the prison to which they are appointed, and to all prisoners and may interview any prisoner out of sight and hearing of prison staff.</p>
Access to information	<p>Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995 s.126. –(1) Members of the board shall have free access at any time to all parts of the prison to which they are appointed, and to all prisoners and may interview any prisoner out of sight and hearing of prison staff. (...)</p> <p>s.126 (3) The governor shall allow the board reasonable access to any</p>
	<p>of the records of the prison, but this shall not entitle the board to see records which the governor must keep secret under a duty of confidentiality.</p>
Publication of findings after visits	<p>Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995: s.123- (6) A member visiting a prison shall report on his visit to the board.</p> <p>Reports published annually from each IMB board in NI.</p>
Coordination of visits	<p>Rota for visits drawn up by Board Chair.</p> <p>No visits conducted together with other agencies.</p>
Recommendations and suggestions for amendments to legislation	<p>Annual reports from each IMB board contain recommendations for changes and improvements.</p>

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Other Aspects of Mandate	Preventive activities	Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995 s.124 (1) The independent monitoring board for a prison shall satisfy itself as to - (a) the treatment of prisoners including provision for their health care and other welfare while in prison (b) the facilities available to prisoners to allow them to make purposeful use of their time; and (c) the cleanliness and adequacy of prison premises.
Standards	Legal standards applied	No legal standards applied
Reports	Annual reports	Prison and Young Offender Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995 s.127. The board shall, as soon as possible after 31st March in any year, report to the Department of Justice on all or any of their year's duties under these rules together with any advice or suggestions they may wish to make.