



Independent Monitoring Board FAQ's

1. What is the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB)?

The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) are an independent statutory body made up of volunteer members whose role is to monitor the treatment of prisoners and the conditions of their imprisonment at the three prison establishments within Northern Ireland.

2. What does the IMB do?

The IMB monitor the humane treatment of prisoners and the conditions of their imprisonment at the three prison establishments: Maghaberry, Magilligan and Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison.

People deprived of their liberty are particularly open to ill treatment, and to try to prevent this from happening, a national organisation was formed called the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) which the IMB are members of.

3. What is the time commitment of the role?

Each prison operates a flexible monthly rota. You will be expected to volunteer at the prison 3 or 4 times each month, which can be spread over the month or condensed into a week. However, depending on the number of volunteers at the prison, you could be on rota at least one week in every four and may need to visit the prison several times that week.

IMB Members are expected to attend a minimum of nine monthly Board meetings each year, which are held during normal office hours at the prison and mandatory training events, including induction training.

4. Do I need to have qualifications to do this role?

No formal qualifications are required. It is more important that volunteers are effective communicators, enthusiastic, open minded, empathetic and have the ability to make sound, objective judgements. Candidates must be resident in Northern Ireland. This ensures that they are in a position to attend the prison at short notice, should that be required. The role and person specification is set out in the Candidate Information Pack which can be accessed at <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/independent-monitoring-board-member-recruitment>

5. Will I be paid to do this role?

No, this is a voluntary role. However, members will be paid travel and subsistence expenses at Northern Ireland Civil Service rates.

6. What benefits are there to this role?

Volunteering with the IMB is a rewarding role where you can make a real difference to people's lives and learn new skills. You can also gain transferable employment skills such as decision making, teamwork and influencing others.

7. Where are the prisons in Northern Ireland?

There are three prisons throughout Northern Ireland. Maghaberry Prison is located near Lisburn, Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison is located in South Belfast and Magilligan Prison is located near Limavady.

8. What will I be expected to do in the role?

You will be expected to monitor the treatment of prisoners and the conditions of their imprisonment.

9. Will I meet with prisoners?

Yes, as part of your role you will have regular, face to face contact with prisoners.

10. Can I ask why a prisoner is in custody and what their offence is?

You must never ask a prisoner why they are in custody or what their offence is. However, some prisoners may openly discuss why they are in custody.

11. Will I have to do any paperwork?

Yes, you will have to record relevant information gathered during your interactions with prisoners and staff, communicate with other IMB members and prison staff, and contribute to the Annual Report.

12. Will I have to attend the prison outside standard working hours?

Yes, very occasionally you may be called in at any time day or night to monitor serious incidents at the prison, and at times there is a requirement to attend at the weekends.

13. Are the prisons accessible for someone with disability?

Throughout the prisons, there are secure entry points, numerous stairs and heavy doors to contend with. This role also requires the ability to move around the prison, and therefore may not be suitable for someone with certain disabilities. If you want further information on this, please contact imbrecruitment@justice-ni.gov.uk.

14. Can I discuss the role with other people outside of the IMB?

Information you gain in relation to individuals, either those held in custody or staff, through your role as an IMB member can only be discussed with others,

such as IMB colleagues or Prison Service staff, where it is appropriate to do so. There will be an agreement that all new members must sign to ensure this confidentiality. The names of IMB members are made public when they are appointed.

15. Can I apply for this role if I work fulltime?

Yes, however the majority of monitoring is carried out during the working week where members will have access to Governors, healthcare and other agencies. Monitoring is carried out at weekends and evenings but this tends to be ad hoc and would not be seen as the norm.

16. I am a former member. Can I reapply?

Yes. We welcome applications from former members who have served less than three terms totalling nine years.

17. When can I apply?

You can apply to be an IMB member at any time.

18. How can I apply?

We would prefer that you send a completed application form electronically to imbrecruitment@justice-ni.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you can post it to:
IMB Recruitment
Knockview Buildings
Block 3
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3SG

19. Can I get further information on the role?

Yes, if you would like to speak to an IMB member to get a better understanding of the role an IMB Member can make contact with you. To discuss the role in further detail please email imbrecruitment@justice-ni.gov.uk to request a call back.

20. Will I be subject to a security clearance check?

Yes, you will need to attain security clearance. If appointed you will be advised on how this is done.

21. How soon do I start the role after appointment?

Once you have completed all your training and we have received confirmation of your CTC security clearance you will start the role.

22. Do I have to attend a familiarisation visit?

Yes, it is mandatory that potential volunteers undertake a familiarisation day before they are invited for interview. This is to give you a very brief insight into what it is like inside a prison. The visit is offered to those who have been invited for interview and takes place prior to that interview.

23. What will I do on a familiarisation visit?

You be accompanied by a member of the Prison staff and an IMB member for a tour of areas within the prison. This will be to give you a perspective of the prison environment and what the role will involve. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and the visit usually lasts for around two hours.

24. Will there be training for this role?

Yes, you will be provided with induction training specific to the IMB role, and also by the Prison Service in relation to personal security and safety, and will work alongside an experienced member during the first few months.

25. What if I have a potential/actual conflict of interest?

If you feel you have a potential or actual conflict of interest please declare this on the application form. If in doubt please include any relevant information on your application. For more information on conflicts of interest please read the Candidate Information Pack.

If you have another other questions or require further information, please contact imbrecruitment@justice-ni.gov.uk