

Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Isis

For reporting year 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2021

Published May 2022



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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/YOI Isis – named after the River Thames – opened in July 2010. It is a public sector training prison for convicted men. In Sept 2020, started to move to being a prison for young adults between 18 and 21 years and category C adults up to 25 years. In December 2021, the proportion of prisoners between 18 and 25 was over 90%.

The prison is situated in Thamesmead, in south-east London. The certified normal accommodation is 478, and the operational capacity – that is, the maximum population that it can safely and decently hold – changed to 614 as part of the response to Covid-19. During the first half of 2021 the population was around 550, gradually increasing in later months to 600 in December.

The following provide services within the prison:

- Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust provides healthcare and Oxleas Interventions provides support to those with substance misuse issues;
- Novus is the education provider;
- Library services are provided by the Royal Borough of Greenwich;
- Mitie provides comprehensive facilities management, including catering;
- Voluntary organisations working within the prison include the Shannon Trust, Switchback, KINETIC, Belong, Bounce Back, St Mungo's and the Samaritans.

Prisoners are accommodated in two houseblocks, Thames and Meridian, each comprising a central hub and four spurs. Each spur can accommodate over 70 prisoners, on three levels. Each spur has a servery, and outside each is an exercise yard with fitness equipment. Each houseblock has a laundry, operated by laundry orderlies.

In a block opposite the houseblocks is the academy, with 19 classrooms and a capacity in excess of 200; the skill zone, with six workshops; the library; the healthcare unit; and the multifaith suite. Separately, there is a well-equipped gym, able to accommodate 40 prisoners; a cardiovascular studio; an indoor sports hall; and two outdoor astro-turf pitches. The kitchen is managed by Mitie, with a workforce that includes 20+ prisoners.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

Evidence comes from a range of sources including observations made on visits, the scrutiny of records and data, attendance at prison meetings, informal contact with prisoners and staff and communication with prisoners following applications made to the Board. The Covid pandemic has continued to affect the Board's monitoring practice. For the first half of the year meetings were held virtually, but the Board adopted a hybrid approach to monitoring, with some members visiting the prison and others gathering information remotely. The Board remains grateful for the helpful cooperation of prison staff at all levels within the establishment.

During the year, particularly as the prison moved to Covid-19 Stage 1 in October, the prison introduced fundamental changes to prison life. The impact of these changes on outcomes for prisoners cannot yet be fully assessed. In this report we identify early progress and potential future issues.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

Arguably the pandemic has been the greatest risk to safety within the prison in 2021. The handling of the pandemic is determined by Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS), with the prison developing detailed exceptional delivery models (EDMs) relating to changes in the regime and the operation of the prison. Restrictions on the prison regime were in place until the prison moved to Stage 1 in October, when it was possible to relax some of the measures.

Staff in reception have been well organised for new arrivals, and prisoners are treated with decency and respect throughout the check-in and searching procedures. First night procedures are well organised. Induction sessions have been greatly affected throughout the year; many sessions by departments and agencies are conducted by telephone and some by prisoner-led mentors. (4.1)

The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened during 2021 decreased to an average of 12 per month (or a total of 148 for the year – down from 182 in 2020). There was a disturbing rise in self-harm during the year with 412 reported incidents compared to 277 during the same period in 2020. There were significant reports of self-harm in March (61), April (57) and May (73). The figures are somewhat distorted by a small number of prisoners with mental health conditions or personality disorders, who often self-harmed eight or more times a month. (4.2)

There was a steadily increasing trend of violence during the year. On average there were 19 prisoner assaults or fights reported each month and an average of 11 assaults on staff each month. Part of this increase can be attributed to a younger

population, where over 90% of the prisoners were 25 years old or younger by year end. They typically account for 98% of the violence. (4.3)

Use of force (staff assaults, prisoner assaults and fights) showed an increasing trend across the year, with use of force increasing by 24% over the course of the year. There was a total of 370 violent incidents during the year, considerably higher than 2020 (184 incidents) and higher than pre-lockdown 2019 (311 incidents). (4.4)

During the year, 370 items of contraband, including drugs, and 159 weapons were found. (4.5)

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

The standards of hygiene and cleanliness are generally good, and the improvements reported in 2020 have been maintained. (5.1)

An average of 32 prisoners were segregated each month in 2021 (the monthly average was 34 in 2020). There were 382 prisoners segregated during 2021, of whom 128 (114 in 2020) were young adults; this increase is probably a reflection of the changing age of the population. Four prisoners were held in the unit for more than 42 days. There were 62 prisoners held under GOAD rules, and of these 22 were young adults. The periods of hybrid monitoring made it difficult for an IMB member to be present at GOAD reviews during much of 2021, and this was exacerbated by the move away from a regular time for the reviews. (5.2)

In most aspects of prison life, the treatment of men from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and other protected categories is within the expected range when compared to the prison population as a whole. In 2021 the number of discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) submitted increased to 41, and of these six were upheld and two partially upheld, a significant increase on previous years and perhaps an indication of prisoners' increased confidence in the process. In 2021 the prison introduced a recruitment process for jobs that is managed centrally by allocations staff. Prisoners must apply for jobs, and those who meet the specification are interviewed. (5.4)

For most of the year faith services could not be held. Where faith services have been possible, these have been restricted to one spur weekly for each faith, meaning prisoners have only been able to attend their faith service once every eight weeks. However, chaplains have continued to give pastoral care, work with prisoners with complex needs and offer time out of cell prayers in the multi-faith suite whenever possible. (5.4)

The majority of prisoners' property arrives with them from other prisons but, despite the efforts of staff, there are too many occasions when prisoners' property is not recovered. In its 2020 reply to the issue of property, HMPPS said that a framework 'will be published later this year, which will provide greater direction and standardisation on a national basis and has been designed with procedural justice at its core'. This has not happened. (5.8)

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

During 2021, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust has spent a significant amount of time responding to the challenges of the pandemic, including testing staff and prisoners and encouraging and providing vaccinations. During this period services continued to be provided including: a 24-hour 7 day a week service with emergency response, GP service, pharmacy services and houseblock medication services, daily input into the segregation unit, attendance at ACCT reviews (mental health led), an internal X-ray service and a dental service. The mental health team continued to provide one to one supportive primary and secondary mental health services. There has been a steady increase during the year of prisoners accessing the range of mental health services, including the in-reach team that treats those with serious enduring illness, psychological therapies and interventions for those who misuse and or are addicted to drugs or alcohol. The total caseload grew from 387 at the beginning of the year to 439 in September. (6.1 and 6.2)

The Board has previously expressed its concern that, though healthcare and prison staff are committed to helping and supporting prisoners with chronic and enduring mental illness, prison is not the environment that will deliver improvements in these prisoners' conditions. This continues to be the Board's view, though the psychological therapies model does support the care of those with mental illness. Despite the good practice model for the transfer of prisoners under the Mental Health Act referred to by the Minister in his response to last year's annual report, there have been examples this year of prisoners waiting too long to be moved to an NHS facility. An example is a prisoner who has had to be kept in the segregation unit for 40 days, because it is the only safe place to hold him, whilst he waits for an NHS place. (6.3)

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

The prison provides 192 spaces in education over 10 courses for the 600+ prisoners held at Isis. Since the Covid restrictions were introduced, education opportunities have been delivered through the provision of graded in-cell learning packs to be completed individually by the learners for 7.5 hours. The men are supported through calls made on the in-cell telephones by tutors and a 2.5 hour 1-1 or 1-2 tutor session. Education representatives have been introduced to support prisoners to access and maintain their learning. During the recent restrictions in December 202, all face-to-face teaching was again cancelled, with a total return to in-cell packs. Return of

these by prisoners for assessment by teachers was minimal. Following the expected return in January 2022 to the new style of learning offered by the academy, it will be important for the prison to monitor and assess whether the removal of most face-to-face teaching results in improved academic outcomes for the prisoners. (7.1)

Attendance at education or skills workshop sessions has been low, approximately 50% since returning from lockdown. For English and maths, whether prisoners need to start at entry level or a higher level qualification is normally determined through the induction process, but this process has been significantly negatively impacted by the lockdown regimes. Ofsted visited the prison in July for a progress monitoring visit. Progress was judged to be reasonable. The IMB concurs with the report's recommendations of the need to improve the induction process for prisoners so that their access to education is faster-paced and more closely aligned to their needs.

The range of work opportunities available to prisoners includes houseblock orderlies, orderlies for visits, induction and reception, serveries, library, chapel, horticulture, education, skills and gym, Listeners, wing representatives and a range of representative and mentor roles. These had all resumed during the autumn, but were removed again in December due to the Omicron outbreak. (7.2)

The offender management unit (OMU) has again had to deal with prisoners arriving at Isis without an OASys report. Prisons receiving those convicted from the courts are resourced to provide an OASys report for prisoners. This is not the case for Isis. This means that prison offender managers spend time completing these rather than on pre-release or other work. At the end of 2021 there were 85 outstanding OASys reports. (7.3)

Throughout the year there have been long delays moving prisoners to other establishments following recategorisation. However, the situation improved later in the year. At the end of 2021 there were 29 prisoners waiting for transfer to category D establishments. The movement between prisons and the provision of transport is managed centrally, and some additional delays have been caused by Covid-related issues. But it also appears that prisoners were not being moved as a part of wider population management across the prison estate. The IMB questions whether this is a sound reason for prisoners who have achieved category D status not being moved to open conditions where they can focus on activities that will improve the success of their resettlement on release. (7.3)

A combination of limitations and restrictions within the prison and in the wider employment and housing markets because of the pandemic, together with changes in the way resettlement is managed for those leaving prison, means that it has been difficult to assess how well prisoners are prepared for and seen through release and resettlement. Within the prison there is a lack of up-to-date statistics, partly because of the difficulties of collating these figures from different organisations in the community. (7.5)

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- Require the Prison Service to deliver the policy framework for handling prisoners' property that has been promised for so many years.
- Education and work are central to the aims of the Prisons Strategy White Paper, but an integrated and sustainable programme will be needed if prisoners are to successfully make a life outside prison.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Publish the new property policy framework referred to in the response to the 2020 annual report and which the Prison Service said would be published in 2021.
- Require prisons receiving prisoners from the courts to complete an OASys report before a prisoner is transferred.
- Put in place arrangements that allow category D prisoners to move to category D prisons without undue delay after they have been recategorised.
- Support the prison to find a long-term solution to the broken cell windows in the prison.
- Provide an assessment of the impact of the changed arrangements for the resettlement of prisoners on their prospects of securing housing, employment and education.

TO THE GOVERNOR

- As soon as the measures relating to Covid-19 allow, reinstate an induction programme for new arrivals.
- Continue to increase the amount of time spent on key work and keep under review the effectiveness of the 'community-based' approach to key work.
- In year, evaluate whether the 'community-based model' is delivering the benefits anticipated in relation to violence, education and training, attendance at other activities and prisoners' feelings of safety. But also assess the impact of no planned time for association on prisoners.
- Continue to work effectively and proactively with education and vocational training providers to drive up levels of engagement and motivation in education and work-related skills, to ensure that prisoners are fully prepared to enter the world of work upon release.
- Reinstate as soon as possible Christian faith services, so that all denominations can worship on Sundays, and Friday prayers for Muslim prisoners.
- Complete the review of the IEP scheme and introduce any changes.

3.4 Progress since the last report

Issues raised with the Minister

To require concrete plans to be developed to address the continued detention of prisoners with enduring or chronic mental health problems and those with personality disorders, as a prison environment will not deliver the positive changes needed.

Response

- The White Paper Reforming the Mental Health Act was published 13
 January 2021.¹ The Government response, August 2021, provides a commitment to introduce a statutory time limit of 28 days for the transfer to mental health hospitals from custody.
- NHS England and NHS Improvement published good practice guidance on 10 June 2021 that sets the timeframe for completing the assessment, transfer and remission of individuals detained under the Mental Health Act.
- The mental health service specification will be reviewed; due to be implemented 2021/22.
- The National Partnership Agreement for Prison Healthcare in England sets out a co-ordinated approach to deliver safe decent and effective healthcare in prison.

Issues raised with HMPPS

1. Deliver the 'prisoners' property policy framework' that the Minister stated in response to previous annual reports that HMPPS was planning to publish. Response

The framework will be published later this year (2021), which will provide greater direction and standardisation on a national basis and has been designed with procedural justice at its core. This has not happened.

2. Commission research into the impact of the time spent in cells during the pandemic on the mental health of prisoners.

Response

13 studies have been approved by HMPPS National Research Committee. None had reported at time of response (30 June 2021).

3. Future arrangements for education need to reflect that tuition is often necessary with less confident learners, or for some aspects of learning, such as practical skills or complex concepts. Most learners benefit from a range of different approaches, rather than a single method.

Response

There are local plans to reintroduce face to face teaching as restrictions ease, but there will still be a blended approach at least in the medium term.

Issues for the Governor and current position

¹ Reforming the Mental Health Act, 13 January 2021, updated 24 August 2021

1. Resume organised physical exercise and access to the gym as soon as conditions permit.

Throughout the year prisoners have had an hour for outdoor exercise in their spur exercise yard. In April the gym reopened, with 14 prisoners from the same cohort attending one session a week; this increased to 20 prisoners in June. In October prisoners had the opportunity to attend three sessions per week, including one session at weekends. (See 6.5.)

- 2. Ensure that plans are in place to prevent a return to the levels of self-harm over the first three months of the year (2020), when a normal regime is resumed. Normal regime has not resumed in 2021. There were significant reports of self-harm in March (61), April (57) and May (73) before the numbers started to drop as the regime was relaxed. The figures are somewhat distorted by a small number of prisoners with mental health conditions or personality disorders, who self-harmed eight or more times a month. (See 4.2.)
- 3. Ensure that initiatives to reduce violence are focused on the increasing number of young adults, and acknowledge the incidence of bullying Levels of violence are of concern and are likely to increase as restrictions are lifted and the number of young men increases as the young adult strategy continues to roll out in 2022. (See 4.3.)
- 4. Continue to work hard with Novus to drive up levels of engagement in remote learning during a period when classroom teaching is unlikely to return for several more months.

Attendance at education or skills workshop sessions has been low, approximately 50% since returning from lockdown. There were unfilled spaces on a number of vocational courses and prisoner jobs; there is a perceived reduction in motivation amongst the population to engage in learning or roles of responsibility. (See 7.2.)

- 5. Ensure that healthcare complaint forms are easily accessible to all prisoners during the period when time out of cell is severely limited.

 Healthcare complaint forms have been available on both houseblocks.
- 6. Ensure that communication between the offender management unit (OMU) and prisoners about sentence planning, recategorisation and transfers improves as staffing levels increase.

Staffing in the OMU has been tight throughout the year and there have been some examples of poor communications between the unit staff and prisoners.

- 7. Respond to the findings of the equality survey carried out by the Board, and particularly:
 - understand why prisoners feel that jobs are unfairly allocated
 - review whether the discrimination incident report form (DIRF) system is an effective means of prisoners reporting discrimination and having their concerns investigated.

- In 2021 the prison introduced a recruitment process for jobs that is managed centrally by allocations staff. Prisoners must apply for jobs, those who meet the specification are interviewed by a panel and if suitable are allocated to the post.
- In 2021 the number of DIRFs submitted increased to 41. Of these, six were upheld and two partially upheld. (See 5.4.)

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

The prison has a safer custody function which collects comprehensive data on all aspects of safety, violence, and drug use. A detailed monthly report is produced, and a combined safer custody/use of force/equalities meeting held, usually chaired by the Governor, and attended by managers from across the prison. The IMB attends some meetings as an observer.

The charts below are derived from the safer custody data and show trends during the year.

4.1 Reception and induction

With effect from early 2021, the prison reverted back to taking only 18–25-year-old young men who are transferred from a reception prison and not direct from court.

Following normal formalities in the reception holding area, including initial health assessments, the men were, during most of the year, located to the reverse cohorting unit (RCU) for a quarantine period prior to being allocated to various spurs. The last quarter of the year saw some relaxing in quarantine restrictions, allowing a more speedy transfer of prisoners to other spurs.

The total number of transfers into Isis during 2021 was 797, compared with 624 in 2020.

Overall, staff in reception have been well organised for new arrivals and prisoners were treated with decency and respect throughout the check-in and searching procedures. The main areas of reception are generally clean, however more attention at times is needed to the cleanliness of toilets in the holding rooms.

First night procedures are well organised, including initial health and risk assessment, and prisoners are made to feel welcome by officers and prisoner mentors. Showers are offered where time permits, in-cell telephone calls allowed and meals and first night induction packs issued.

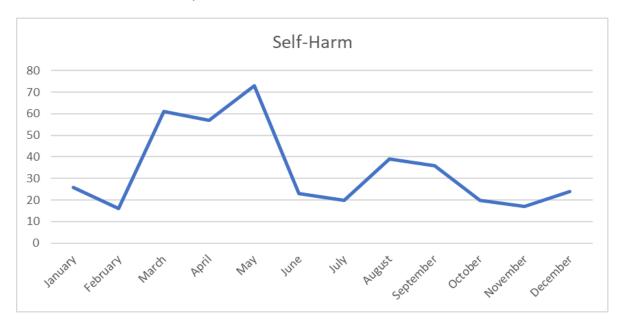
The induction programme that was organised over two days was abandoned when Covid restrictions were put in place. Throughout the year many induction sessions have been provided by departments and agencies by telephone, and some by prisoner-led mentors when this is possible. There have been difficulties in carrying out education assessments (see section 7).

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened during 2021 decreased to an average of 12 per month (or a total of 148 for the year – down from 182 in 2020, although comparisons are difficult as the prisoner population has decreased throughout the year). There was an unusual peak in March and April of ACCT documents opened, with 31 and 25 respectively. Since July, as the regime started to open up, there have been single figures of ACCTs opened each month. New ACCT documentation was introduced in August. Based on random checks during our weekly rota visits, some areas of this new documentation are not being completed in accordance with the requirements set out in the training.

There was a disturbing rise in self-harm during the year with 412 reported incidents compared to 277 during the same period in 2020. There were significant reports of self-harm in March (61), April (57) and May (73) before the numbers started to drop as the regime was relaxed. The figures are somewhat distorted by a small number of prisoners with mental health conditions or personality disorders, who self-harmed eight or more times a month. The move during the year to a younger population also contributed to the higher self-harm figures.





As set out in our annual reports for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020, the Board has concerns about the continued detention of prisoners with enduring or chronic mental health problems and those with personality disorders (see 6.3).

The Samaritans-led Listener programme was quite active during 2021 with an average of around 20 call outs per month during the year. While the number of Listeners fluctuated during the year, there were five at the end of the year. The top five reasons for call outs were mental health/illness, isolation/loneliness, problems with staff/regime, adjudications, and suicidal thoughts.

There were no deaths in custody during 2021.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

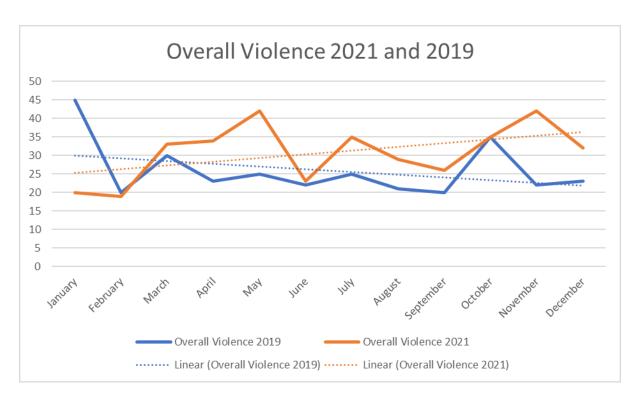
Overall violence started the year relatively low while the prison was in lockdown measures, but there was a steadily increasing trend during the year with an overall increase of 44%. On average, there were 19 prisoner assaults or fights reported each month and an average of 11 assaults on staff each month. Part of this increase can be attributed to a younger population, where over 90% of the prisoners were 25 years old or younger by year end. They typically account for 98% of the violence.

There was a total of 370 violent incidents during the year, considerably higher than 2020 (184 incidents) and higher than pre-lockdown 2019 (311 incidents). A number of factors influenced the changes to the level of violence:

- As mentioned above there has been an increase in young adults (18 to 25-year-olds) who are more prone to violent behaviour;
- The prison population during the first half of the year averaged 541, well below the operational capacity of 628, but increased rapidly from July onwards;
- Continuation of the cohorting arrangement introduced during the pandemic allowed members of different gangs to be kept apart;
- The regime changes associated with cohorting required stricter time keeping leading to increased friction between offenders and officers.

Levels of violence are of concern and are likely to increase as restrictions are lifted and the number of young men increases as the young adult strategy continues to roll out in 2022. The ethnic and religious mix of prisoners involved in fights and assaults is broadly similar to the ethnic mix of the prison population, using the figures for the second half of 2021.

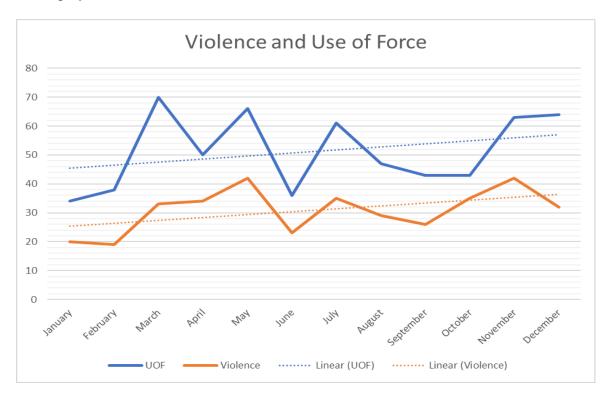
The following chart shows the comparison of violence in 2021 to 2019 pre-Covid levels:



There have been very few serious incidents during the year.

4.4 Use of force

Use of force and violence (staff assaults, prisoner assaults and fights) both showed an increasing trend across the year, as shown in the graphs below, with use of force increasing by 24%.

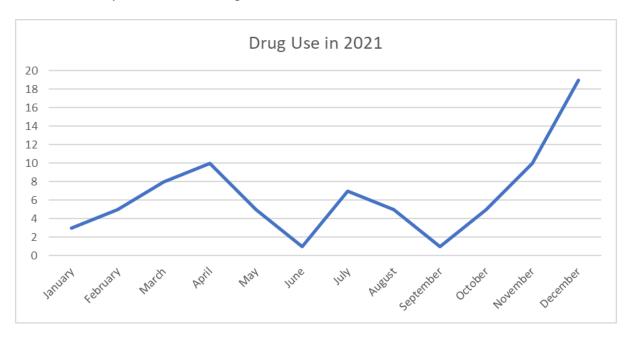


Routine use of body-worn video cameras (BWVC) was steady over the course of the year, averaging about 76%. Some footage was available for an average of 79% of incidents, compared to 84% last year, and 44% included footage from before the start of the incident. Footage is reviewed at a weekly management meeting which usually results in one or two officers being given advice about best practice. The backlog of use of force paperwork increased in the first half of the year, rising to 418 before dropping to 229 compared to 135 at the end of 2020.

4.5 Preventing Illicit Items

Statistics are compiled by the prison monthly on illicit items, including drug use, and reviewed at the safety/use of force/equalities meeting. The full body scanner in reception ensures any illegal items are identified when new prisoners transfer into Isis. All incoming post and parcels are tested, all staff and official visitors enter through airport style security, and dogs, X-ray and an itemiser are used to check all goods delivered to the prison. Intelligence-led searches of cells were also conducted during the year.

During the year, 370 items of contraband, including drugs, and 159 weapons were found. Monthly incidents of drug use are shown below:



The last two months of the year show a worrying trend as more Covid restrictions were lifted.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

The standards of hygiene and cleanliness are generally good; improvements reported in 2020 have been maintained. A senior manager makes comprehensive checks on all houseblock spurs and the segregation unit every week. Cells are also checked at random or when requested by prisoners and Mitie continues to be responsive to maintenance requirements. There is a continuing problem with windows that will not close or open; the contractor has ceased operating and repair/replacement is costly and complex.

In the serveries, prisoners wear PPE, food temperatures are recorded and hand washing facilities with paper towels are provided. Attention to food recycling is now in force. The cleaning standards of the hot serving grills have much improved. The cleanliness of the food trolleys and unwashed food trays from a previous day remain a problem.

The houseblocks, which cater for prisoners' personal laundry, have seen considerable improvement with the installation of industrial washing machines. Stock control is maintained for replacement of kit, bedding and towels, maintaining standards. Many cells have been repainted and toilet seats replaced. The showers are maintained to a good standard.

Vermin was a problem in early 2021, this is now under control and the nests have been removed from the security fencing.

5.2 Segregation

The segregation unit has 16 cells, plus two for special accommodation. In 2021 one cell was converted into a constant watch cell, and can also be used as a normal cell as required. The unit is kept clean and maintained to a good standard. An average of 32 prisoners were segregated each month in 2021 (the monthly average was 34 in 2020). During 2021 382 prisoners were segregated, of whom 128 were young adults; the overall total was down on the total 2020 number of 405 but there was an increase in young adults, from 114 in 2020, probably a reflection of the changing population.

In 2021 four prisoners were held in the segregation unit for longer than 42 days, and one of those was authorised for 106 days. In each instance, due process was followed with the prison group director authorising the continued detainment.

The number of prisoners on an ACCT held in the unit was 35, not dissimilar to the 2020 figure of 39. The decision to hold such prisoners in the segregation unit is always made by a governor and is subject to review.

Of the 382 held in segregation over the year, there were 62 under good order and discipline (GOAD) rules, and of these 22 were young adults The segregation unit statistics and trends are given careful consideration at the segregation monitoring and review group (SMARG) meetings and the adult/young adult and ethnicity split is

broadly reflective of the prison population, the exception being the overrepresentation of white men in the unit. Staff are alert and responsive to the needs of the men they are caring for and focus on the actions required to return men to the houseblocks. The periods of remote monitoring made it difficult for an IMB member to be present at GOAD reviews during much of 2021. This was exacerbated by the move away from a regular time for the reviews to be held to a more fluid arrangement, and just 12 of the 56 GOAD reviews were attended. The IMB has requested that a regular slot is given for the reviews.

The special accommodation was used just once in 2021 (compared to six times in 2020) and the dirty protest cell on two occasions for the same prisoner.

Whilst other parts of the prison have been impacted by the various degrees of lockdown, the regime in the segregation unit has operated as normal throughout the year.

5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers

Key work is dependent on sufficient staffing and pressure on staffing has meant that the amount of key work has been minimal. In the latter months a decision was taken that key workers would be assigned to prisoners on their home spur. The prison believes that this will strengthen the relationship between spur staff and prisoners. An increase in key work may relieve some of the pressure on offender management staff.

5.4 Equality and diversity

At the end of 2021 over 91% of the prison population was 18 to 25, reflecting the implementation of the prison's young adult strategy. 73% of prisoners are from Black, Asian or other minority ethnic groups, with 44% of prisoners of Black ethnicity, 11% Asian and 13% mixed ethnicity. 47% of prisoners are Muslim, with prisoners of Christian denominations being 39% of the population. In November there were 18 prisoners with a physical disability, this low number probably reflecting the young population of the prison. 76 prisoners have a diagnosed mental disability, learning difficulty or disability. 96.5% of the population describe themselves as heterosexual; this is likely to be overstated, reflecting how the information is collected and the confidence of individuals to declare their sexual orientation.

During the year there were a total of 292 intelligence-led cell searches. The number of Black prisoners who were the subject of cell searches was over-represented in four months and in the total for the year. Prisoners from white backgrounds were over-represented in five months but under-represented for the total searches in the year. The head of security was asked at the end of the year to determine the reasons for over-representation.

In previous years, the number of DIRFs submitted has been low and none of the complaints had been upheld. The IMB has suggested that this indicated that the

system did not work for prisoners. In 2021 the number of DIRFs submitted increased to 41; of these six were upheld and two partially upheld, a significant increase on previous years and perhaps an indication of prisoners' increased confidence in the process.

Over the year the number of foreign national prisoners has gradually increased; 102 in September 2021 compared to 72 in 2020. The number of IS91 detainees has decreased from 17 in July to four in October. Initiatives to help foreign nationals and those with literacy issues include: menus translated into the most represented languages and presented in pictures, provision of *Picture it in Prison* dictionaries, promotion of the thebigword and purchase of thebigword phones for reception, both houseblocks and visitors' reception.

In 2020 the prison's data showed that the allocation of jobs to different ethnic groups was within range, but a survey of prisoners showed that 62% of BAME prisoners felt that jobs were not allocated fairly. In 2021 the prison introduced a recruitment process for jobs that is managed centrally by allocations staff. Prisoners must apply for jobs, those who meet the specification are interviewed by a panel and if suitable are allocated to the post. This process aims to provide a realistic work experience, minimise the possibility of favouritism and demonstrate to prisoners that a fair process is in place.

During the year the prison has marked dates of importance to specific groups within the prison, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, Pride Month and Black History Month. Additionally, the Black prison experience lecture and discussion and the third Isis parliamentary debate with students from Oxford University took place.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The population at 7 November 2021 (590 on roll) included 278 Muslim, 70 Roman Catholic, 35 Anglican, 113 other Christian denominations and five Rastafarian along with 25 from other faiths and 64 of no religion.

Faith services throughout the year have continued to be very restricted due to the pandemic, however chaplains have continued to give pastoral care, work with prisoners with complex needs and offer time out of cell prayers in the multifaith suite whenever possible. In addition, cell visits, in-cell telephone calls and packs for faith studies, puzzles and reading material have been provided. Chaplains liaise with probation staff, community chaplains and outside agencies supporting resettlement, and offer prisoners support in personal matters of concern irrespective of their faith.

When faith services have been possible, these have been restricted to one spur weekly, separately for each faith, meaning prisoners have only been able to attend their faith service once every eight weeks. Additionally, the Christian services have, because of staffing numbers, been delivered on weekdays rather than Sunday.

Friday prayers have also been unable to take place in a group setting. Due to the large number of Muslim prisoners it is not possible to conduct prayers in one large group and there are not sufficient staff to have two groups; this situation is being reviewed, but there does need to be some resolution.

Various religious celebrations including Ramadan, Eid, Easter, Diwali, Christmas Services and Carols and Holi were unable to take their usual format, because of Covid 19 restriction. Alternative arrangements were made where possible.

Changes to the team of chaplains this year has seen the appointment of a new Roman Catholic chaplain, Anglican chaplain and Free Church pastor. The managing chaplain post was vacant at the end of the year.

5.6 Incentives schemes

In the first half of the year, the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme was, operated in a limited form in relation to the penalties that were applied for bad/poor behaviour. These limits reflected the restrictions applied to prisoners as part of the control and management of Covid-19. As Covid measures were relaxed (June 2021) the prison took the decision to review the scheme to ensure that it supported the way that the prison planned to work in the future. That review will conclude in 2022.

At the end of the year 43% of prisoners were enhanced and 47% were on standard. The remaining 10% of prisoners were on basic. The award of either basic or enhanced status was for all ethnic groups within range, as it was for prisoners who were Muslim and those of Christian denominations. In addition, positive and negative IEPs for the last six months of the year were analysed. A total of 1,583 negative and 826 positive IEPs were issued. The analysis of the ethnicity of the recipients showed that these were in range for all ethnic groups.

5.7 Complaints

In the last six months of the year 537 complaints were received, an average of 89 complaints each month. In five out of the six months, the category with the highest number of complaints was property (internal). In the sixth month it was the second highest category. Other most complained about categories were staff, property (external), adjudications and canteen.

5.8 Property

The majority of prisoners' property arrives with them. Prisoners are restricted to 3.5 bags. Wherever possible staff assist prisoners who arrive without their property, emailing the sending establishment details of missing items and escalating to the reception custody manager and then head of operations when necessary. Officers

have also arranged to collect belongings from the most local prisons on rare occasions. Despite these efforts there are too many occasions when prisoners' property is not recovered. The Prison Service instruction on prisoners' property states it is the sending establishments' responsibility to forward any property that did not accompany the prisoner on transfer. But this regularly does not happen; as an example, on 21 September 2021 there were 32 unresolved complaints about property held at other prisons. Of these, 17 of the complaints were more than one month old. More than a quarter of the complaints related to property held by one London prison.

In the 2018, 2019 and 2020 annual reports, the issue of property not transferring with the prisoner was identified as a significant problem. In response to the 2018 annual report, the Minister stated that HMPPS planned to publish a 'prisoners' property policy framework'; this did not happen. In its 2020 reply to the issue of property HMPPS said that a framework 'will be published later this year, which will provide greater direction and standardisation on a national basis and has been designed with procedural justice at its core'. This has not happened. This is a significant issue for prisoners, who often lose personal items or important documents that cannot be easily replaced or compensated financially. It is also a drain on prison resources with staff spending time emailing and telephoning transferring prisons to locate property, and there are financial consequences in compensation paid.

Property hand-ins and items ordered by prisoners are distributed without undue delay.

The number of applications to the Board relating to property within the prison was 26 compared to 44 in 2020, and for property on transfer from another prison 27 compared to 34 in 2020.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust is the provider of healthcare services. The healthcare service is led by a healthcare manager. The Local Delivery Board is scheduled to meet bi-monthly though it met less frequently in 2021. It is attended by healthcare, social care and prison staff. Patient experience meetings have been suspended during the year.

In January, the prison was a Covid-19 outbreak site with prisoners on three spurs testing positive, leading to testing of all prisoners and regular testing of staff and other workers. There were no positive cases after 8 February and in April the prison moved to Stage 3. Vaccinations were offered in line with the government's priority groups, but despite the efforts of the prison take up has been low. The arrival of the Omicron variant towards the end of the year led to more intensive testing of both staff and prisoners.

During this period services provided included: a 24-hour 7 day a week service including emergency response, GP service, pharmacy services and houseblock medication services, daily input into the segregation unit, attendance at ACCT reviews (mental health led), an internal X-ray service and a dental service. The first night reception service continued to be provided, but the second assessment, rather than happening the day after arrival in the healthcare department, took place over the first week in the RCU. The mental health team continued to provide one to one supportive primary and secondary mental health services. Clinical substance and psychosocial misuse services continued but at a reduced level.

As a result of the transition to young adults, integrated drug treatment system (IDTS) clients have reduced to seven, and this is expected to reduce further in 2022.

The total number of escorts required to accompany prisoners to hospital, funeral, court and other reasons during 2021 was 215, compared with 226 in 2020.

6.2 Physical healthcare

The primary healthcare team provides a 24-hour service and has 19.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, of whom 14.3 FTE are qualified healthcare professionals. During the year specialist clinics have continued to be held, though a number have transferred to the houseblocks.

Between 15 and 17 clinics are held, some weekly, including GP, dentist, and nurse-led clinics. Three clinics are held monthly – ultrasound, podiatry (two sessions per month) and optician (four to five sessions per month). Monthly appointments average 1,797 with an average of 149 appointments not being kept. The full reasons for non-attendance are not clear.

6.3 Mental health

In 2021 the Trust introduced a psychological therapies model that provides treatment pathways that reflect the complexity and seriousness of the prisoner's condition. There has been a steady increase during the year of prisoners accessing the range of mental health services provided, from a total caseload of 387 at the beginning of the year to 439 in September. The increases were mainly in:

- 1. The mental health in-reach team that treats those with a diagnosis of serious and enduring mental illness such as schizophrenia and bipolar affective psychosis. At the beginning of the year it had a caseload of 27. This has gradually increased over the months to 35 in November.
- 2. The psychological therapies team's caseload increased from 73 in February, ending the year with a caseload of 106.

Atrium, a counselling service, had an average caseload per month of 20 during the year. ADHD services' caseload reduced from 20 to eight. The learning disabilities team had an average caseload of 15.

The Board has previously expressed its concern that, though healthcare and prison staff are committed to helping and supporting prisoners with chronic and enduring mental illness, prison is not the environment that will deliver improvements in these prisoners' conditions. This continues to be the view, though the psychological therapies model does support the care of those with mental illness. Despite the good practice model for the transfer of prisoners under the Mental Health Act referred to by the Minister in his response to last year's annual report, there have been examples this year of prisoners waiting too long to be moved to an NHS facility. An example is a prisoner who has had to be kept in the segregation unit, because it is the only safe place to hold him, whilst he waits for a NHS place. At the end of the year he had been in the segregation unit for forty days, and he was located in the unit until his transfer in mid-February 2022.

6.4 Social care

Social care is provided by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The number of prisoners requiring social care has throughout the year been in the low single figures, with five prisoners requiring support in December. Care and support orderlies need to be appointed and trained to fill a number of vacancies.

6.5 Exercise, regime

The core time out of cell throughout the year has been 2.5 hours a day; one hour for exercise and 1.5 hours for domestics – showering, using the biometrics and ordering canteen. No association was built into the regime, but prisoners could mix within their cohort on the spur, during the period allocated for domestics. As restrictions relaxed, equipment for billiards and other games was returned. In April the gym reopened with 14 prisoners from the same cohort attending one session a week; this

increased to 20 prisoners in June. In October prisoners had the opportunity to attend three sessions per week, including one session at weekends. Time out of cell for those testing positive is much reduced, with 30 minutes for exercise and a shower a minimum of every three days.

When Covid restrictions were relaxed and the prison moved to Stage 1 in late October, the prison kept the two cohorts on each spur, believing that keeping prisoners in small groups (circa 35 prisoners) reduced conflict and violence. The prison believes that a regime with limited unstructured time alongside as much purposeful work as is possible is more suited to the young adult population. The amount of time out of cell very much depends on the activities that the individual prisoner undertakes and whether they have a job, engage in education, in one-to-one support or group work, or attend visits, gym, healthcare or faith services. Unfortunately, the reintroduction of restrictions in December has meant that it is not yet possible to assess the impact of this community (cohort)-based approach on prisoners.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Oxleas Interventions provides a clinically-led substance misuse service that helps prisoners with drug and addiction problems. The caseload for that work with prisoners increased over from 198 in March to 257in September.

6.7 Soft skills

In September wellbeing groups started, but because of the need to keep prisoners in their cohorts the numbers participating were small.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

As a designated training prison, HMP/YOI Isis contracts Novus to deliver its education and training programmes. These are developed in response to the requirements of the Ministry of Justice and the prison Governor. The programmes are aimed at providing prisoners with skills and qualifications that enhance their prospects of employment on release.

The prison provides 192 spaces in education over 10 courses for the 600+ prisoners held at Isis. Since the Covid lockdown, education opportunities are delivered through the provision of graded in-cell learning packs to be completed individually by the learners for 7.5 hours. The men are supported through calls made on the in-cell telephones by tutors and a 2.5 hour 1-1 or 1-2 tutor session either in a classroom, in the houseblock or in the academy. Education representatives have been introduced to support prisoners' access and maintain their learning. Success rates vary by course with the lowest rates achieved in English level 2.

This change in delivery from small class lessons in the academy was introduced as a way of providing education in a Covid-secure manner. It was maintained when restrictions relaxed because it was perceived as a method more appropriate to the younger prisoners at Isis and as a way to reduce violence which previously occurred when men mixed on the journey to or in the academy.

Approximately a fifth of all learners withdraw from their courses before completion. This figure may be skewed by releases, transfers and the prison's drive to provide prisoners with 'something to do' during periods of lockdown.

During the Omicron variant outbreak in December 2021 all face-to-face teaching was again cancelled with a total return to in-cell packs. Return of these by prisoners for assessment by teachers was disappointing.

Three prisoners completed Open University courses in the last year, two with distinction and one with a pass.

Following the expected return in January 2022 to the new style of learning offered by the academy, it will be important for the prison to monitor and assess whether the removal of most face-to-face teaching results in improved academic outcomes for the prisoners.

The Shannon Trust provides an unaccredited programme for non-readers to learn how to read with the support of a mentor on the wing, all of whom are trained and supported by regional Shannon Trust staff. During the pandemic the prison has been able to become part of a pilot for the use of Coracle laptops that have proved effective at assisting distance learning learners to complete work in-cell, also helped to train new Shannon Trust mentors and gave opportunity for learners to complete Shannon Trust lessons in-cell.

Challenges with engagement and prisoners returning their in-cell packs at the beginning of the year meant that there was a high number of withdrawals, and some men who had re-engaged had passed the end-date of their course. This resulted in a low level of achievement. Of the 174 men requiring learning difficulty or disability support, 55 achieved; this is 32% of the total achievement, but a total of 113 of these learners achieved after completing a non-accredited learning pack.

Ofsted visited the prison in July for a progress monitoring visit whilst the prison was at Stage 3 of its recovery plan. The progress was judged to be reasonable. The IMB concur with the report's recommendations of the need to improve the induction process for prisoners so that their access to education is faster paced and more closely aligned to their needs.

Attendance at education and skills

Attendance at education or skills workshop sessions has been low, approximately 50% since returning from lockdown.

A priority for the prison now must be to improve attendance and engagement rates.

Allocation to courses and activities

The academy is responsible for the delivery of English and maths. Whether prisoners need to start at entry level or can tackle the City & Guilds functional skills qualifications is normally determined through the education assessment that is part of the induction process, but this has been significantly negatively impacted by the lockdown regimes.

Library

The library was closed to prisoners until July. Before this an outreach service was operated, with a supply of books being provided to the spurs and prisoners able to order books. After July, though the library was open, the number of prisoners able to attend was small. In previous years prisoners would have attended when they were in the academy or skill zone, or from their spur at an arranged time. The small numbers attending the academy, the closure of the skill zone until the end of the year and the need to keep prisoners in their cohorts has meant that visits to the library have been much fewer than in previous years. The outreach service has continued.

When the library reopened, there was a new Black culture book section. A list of titles was sent out to prisoners on the biometric system. There was also an increase in the number of books in languages other than English.

7.2 Vocational training, work

The provision of training and other purposeful activities had begun to return to normal since April 2021. However, these again ceased during the Omicron variant outbreak in December. Some jobs and remote learning occurred during the lockdowns such as industrial cleaning, waste management, catering and grounds maintenance. These enabled the prison to function safely.

Novus-provided skills courses are as follows:

Construction health and safety: 24 spaces

Catering: 6 spacesBarbering: 32 spacesFood safety: 34 spaces

Prepare and apply paint: 34 spaces

Radio skills: 31 spacesRail track: 21 spaces

• NVQ diploma in food production and cooking: 5 spaces

A total of 187 spaces.

HMPPS provision is as follows:

- Industries provision
 - waste management (WAMITAB)
 - industrial cleaning (WAMITAB)
 - grounds maintenance party (unaccredited)
 - painting party (unaccredited)
- Prison employment
 - cleaning orderly positions (wing, segregation unit, hub, safer custody, healthcare centre, visits, chapel, academy, skill zone)
 - reps (library, social care, prisoner council, student voice, OMU, IMB, equalities, hepatitis C)
 - jobs (laundry, kitchens, biohazard)
- Mentoring positions (Shannon Trust, learning and development mentors, upcycling, grounds, painting and development, industrial cleaning)

WAMITAB qualifications have a consistently high pass rate for prisoners.

Third-party/voluntary sector provision is as follows:

InHouse Records (unaccredited) - provision for groups of learners to work with a tutor twice a week to access opportunities to engage in music production, record label

management skills and personal development. Through the gate services were included as part of this aspirational programme where ongoing support is provided to enable prisoners' routes to employment.

Attendance, uptake and success on these courses varies. Recycling and waste management are particularly hard to recruit to, despite these having very good employment prospects. This appears to be a consequence of the younger population at Isis.

There were unfilled spaces on a number of vocational courses and prisoner jobs; there is a perceived reduction in motivation amongst the population to engage in learning or roles of responsibility and access problems may have contributed to this figure. The promotion of the rehabilitative nature of work to the prisoners appears to be underdeveloped and should now be an area of focus for all involved.

The plans to increase the provision of barbering by providing small salons on the houseblocks which were mooted in last year's report have not yet come to fruition. This is due to the lack of water available in the spaces suggested. Once implemented this plan will allow the achievement of the level 3 barbering qualification.

The range of work opportunities available to prisoners includes houseblock orderlies, orderlies for visits, induction and reception, serveries, library, chapel, horticulture, education, skills and gym, Listeners, wing reps and a range of representative and mentor roles. These had all resumed during the autumn but were suspended in December due to the Omicron variant outbreak.

The prison has managed to continue with three initiatives to increase the prospect of prisoners having employment on release.

- The Guildhall School of Music and Drama ran an 'Untold Workshop' in July for six prisoners to learn about theatre skills, with the aim of running a longer course for more men in January 2022 to give access to jobs in theatres.
- An events company, Gallowglass, has visited and is hoping to run an employability course in January 2022, with the aim of offering employment to some of the attendees upon release.
- Prisoners working in The Quays (staff restaurant) were linked into the Right Course programme that prepares prisoners for employment in the catering and hospitality sector. This has now changed to become a production kitchen making meals for the local community. Work

commenced in November 2021. Prisoners are able to achieve food preparation qualifications

The charity Bounce Back continues to work with the prison to support rehabilitation and preparation for the world of work.

There are many interesting proposals offered by the prison to improve vocational training and work. As the prison rebounds from the many Covid-enforced breaks in the provision these must be deemed as priorities and prisoners actively motivated to participate and thereby develop the knowledge, skills and techniques which will enable them to secure and retain employment upon release.

7.3 Offender management and progression

The OMU has again had to deal with prisoners arriving at Isis without an OASys report that underpins sentence planning; about a half of all prisoners arrived without a report., This means that prison offender managers spend their time completing these rather than on pre-release work. At the end of 2021 there were 85 outstanding OASys reports.

Throughout the year there have been long delays moving prisoners to other establishments following recategorisation. However, the situation improved later in the year. At the end of 2021 there were 29 prisoners waiting for transfer to category D establishments. The movement between prisons and the provision of transport is managed centrally, with some additional delays because of Covid-related issues. But it also appears that prisoners were not being moved as part of a wider population management across the prison estate. The IMB questions whether this is a sound reason for prisoners who have achieved category D status not being moved to open conditions where they can focus on activities that will improve the success of their resettlement on release.

In 2021 25% of applications to the IMB related to sentence management, a similar proportion to the year before.

7.4 Family contact

Each prisoner has access to an in-cell telephone. Mail arrangements have remained the same during the year.

Video calls (Purple Visits) have continued throughout the year. Social visits restarted in April but sessions were only 45 minutes in duration, to allow time for cleaning and sanitising between sessions. The number of prisoners able to attend each session was 18, reduced from 40 before the lockdown; the number of prisoners booking visits remained low, though numbers were gradually increasing. In October full visits

recommenced and the numbers able to attend increased to 36, but with only one spur in each visit's session, to limit opportunities for conflict. The tea bar and the play area also opened, but as restrictions were reimposed in December, these facilities closed again.

7.5 Resettlement planning

There were 609 releases in 2021 – an increase on 2020, when Isis had fewer prisoners.

From June 2021 responsibility for preparing prisoners for their release from prison passed from community rehabilitation companies, which have been disbanded, to the Probation Service. Prison officers and probation officers in the prison managed the release of prisoners within the prison, with local probation officers dealing with the higher risk offenders; about 40% of the prison population in Isis. Since June housing referrals were made to St. Mungo's, who had a caseworker in Isis.

The pandemic reduced job opportunities for released prisoners. Hospitality and retail had not been open for most of the year and these are key sectors for prisoners seeking employment. Construction resumed normal working but job opportunities and interviews have moved online.

As last year, all prisoners leaving custody received a Covid resettlement pack and a job centre information sheet, containing a helpline that ex-offenders called to apply for benefits when job centres were not open. Prisoners' probation workers, key worker, prison offender manager and case administrator were able to access the resettlement plan.

The impact of these changes on releases and resettlement is not clear, partly because of the limitations imposed by Covid restrictions on the prison regime and the wider housing and job markets. The change in responsibility for resettlement has also resulted in delays in collating statistics on the help and advice given to prisoners on release from Isis, partly because of the multiplicity of suppliers. There is also no mechanism for tracking the longer-term outcomes for those released from Isis

The work of the IMB

Though restrictions have been in place for most of the year, Board members have managed to visit on a weekly basis to respond to applications and visit key areas of the prison. They have been supported by those members who, not able to visit, monitored aspects of prison life remotely. Daily reports from the prison, including reports from the segregation unit and weekly calls with the Governor, have been very helpful. Applications have been responded to by meeting the prisoner, using the incell telephones or replying in writing.

Board meetings were held virtually in the first half of the year and then in person with some joining remotely. In October all members were attending meetings in person. Unfortunately, the Board had to revert to virtual meetings in December.

Three experienced members left during 2021. Five new members were appointed, two of whom left soon after appointment.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the establishment	233
Total number of shifts on the 0800 telephone line	49
Total number of segregation reviews attended	12

Applications to the IMB (including via the 0800 telephone line)

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
А	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	19	10
В	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	19	8
С	Equality	4	3
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	8	5
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	18	7
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	14	7
F	Food and kitchens	2	4
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	34	7
H1	Property within this establishment	44	26
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	34	27
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	5	8
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	83	53
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	52	30
K	Transfers	12	6
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	6	11
	No Action	2	1
	Total number of applications	356	213



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