



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Eastwood Park

**For reporting year
1 November 2020 – 31 October 2021**

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

The IMB at Eastwood Park is committed to treating all those with whom it interacts, with respect and fairness taking into account such factors as race, colour, ethnicity, religion, belief, national origin, gender, age, marital status, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or disability.

2. Description of the establishment

HMP/YOI Eastwood Park is a female closed local prison situated midway between Gloucester and Bristol by the village of Falfield, South Gloucestershire.

The operational capacity of Eastwood Park is 442 prisoners. Based on a snapshot, 69% of the prisoners were sentenced, less than last year. Eleven percent of prisoners were on remand, a decrease from last year. Eleven percent were sentenced to less than 12 months, down from last year following reductions in previous years: In 2017 29% of the population were short sentence prisoners. Twenty-seven percent were sentenced to between 12 months and less than four years, up from last year; 26% to four years or more, up from last year; 5% were on indeterminate sentences; and 13% had been recalled, which is a significant rise since last year.

Eastwood Park has 10 residential wings. They include a mother and baby unit (MBU), two wings specialising in dealing with those with substance misuse issues, a personality disorder unit, an induction wing for new prisoners, a wing for those on an enhanced regime and a wing for prisoners with complex needs requiring significant mental health and other input. During this exceptional year part of the induction wing was dedicated to the isolation for 14 days of new prisoners and another wing to the shielding of the most vulnerable prisoners.

Eastwood Park also takes remand and sentenced prisoners from local courts, covering a wide catchment area extending over South Wales, the south, the southwest, and the midlands. Eastwood Park is the local prison for 77 courts. Around a third of its prisoners came from Wales.

Healthcare was provided by InspireBetterHealth and education was provided by Weston College.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

This has been another exceptional year because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the way that prisons have been run and on the ability of the Board to carry out face-to-face monitoring. The IMB suspended monitoring visits between 11 December 2020 and 5 April 2021. In this respect, it was difficult to make realistic comparisons with previous years. However, the Board at Eastwood Park has scrutinised what has been happening at the prison and continued to take and look into applications from prisoners, both on paper and from the national applications helpline.

In April 2021, the Governor was seconded to the Prison Group Director's team without prior notice and the Deputy Governor moved to a new post elsewhere in the estate in October 2021. Senior managers have been seconded from elsewhere in the service and management has continued seamlessly. Our enquiries were dealt with promptly, and satisfactory responses received.

We commend management and staff on the professional and humane manner that they have undertaken their duties during this challenging period.

Sadly, there was one death in custody on 24 July 2021 of a prisoner who had recently been remanded. The Coroner's inquest was awaited.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

Overall HMP/YOI Eastwood Park was safe for most women most of the time. We have been, as with previous years, concerned about the levels of self-harm and violence. There have been comprehensive efforts to reduce levels but they have proved difficult to change. The high numbers of women with mental health issues has been compounded by the impact of lockdown.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

We continue to be impressed with the professionalism of staff and have observed many examples of this in practice. However, as with last year, we have to stop short of reporting that prisoners were treated humanely because of the impact of Covid and the lengths of time for which prisoners were locked up.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

We had a continued concern about the long-term effect on prisoners' mental and physical wellbeing due to long times in cells due to coronavirus restrictions, albeit we have seen the efforts that the prison and healthcare teams have made to keep women safe from the virus. For example, Eastwood Park was among the prisons with the highest uptake of Covid vaccinations in England and Wales. We also note that there has been a steady decrease in the number of applications received by the IMB relating to health. We took this as a sign that there has been a steady improvement.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

The changes to the service provider and challenges of finding suitable accommodation provided a difficult framework within which to deliver a comprehensive resettlement service. The failure of the prison regime to match the changes in the prison population meant that women's offending-related needs were hardly met. The new reducing reoffending strategy that appeared towards the end of the reporting year gave the Board some hope that these matters would be addressed. The Board welcomes the beginning of the long-awaited construction of the activity centre which should offer the opportunity to address some of the deficits.

The Board also welcomed the opening of Eden House, an approved premises for the resettlement of prisoners. Several women from Eastwood Park benefitted from this new accommodation option.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- Our concerns continue about a prisoner with an acquired brain injury who has been continuously segregated at Downview and Eastwood Park prisons for 1,202 days by the end of this reporting period. In response to correspondence your predecessor stated that *'the truth is that the right environment simply doesn't exist within the prison system to cater for her unique needs'*. Why is it acceptable to discriminate against women when specialist facilities are available for men with a similar condition? (see section 5.2)
- Women with mental health issues and complex needs who would be better treated in the health rather than criminal justice system continue to be sent to Eastwood Park. When will the Minister take action to reduce this significantly? (see section 6.3.)
- In response to a question in our last annual report about the establishment of a women's centre in Wales, your predecessor responded by advising that seed funding had been made available. What progress has been made with this project?

TO THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

- In response to a question in our last annual report about the establishment of a women's centre in Wales, the Minister responded by advising that seed funding had been made available. When is the centre likely to open?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- When will the longstanding dampness on two wings be addressed? (see section 5.1)
- Given the fluctuations in staffing levels caused by this pandemic, which are likely to continue for some time, will HMPPS ensure that prisons are staffed sufficiently to cope with this ongoing situation? (see section 5.3)
- Will HMPPS confirm what actions they are taking to improve the accommodation options for women leaving prisons and when this is likely to have an impact on outcomes? (see section 6.6)

TO THE GOVERNOR

- Construction of the new activities centre is due for completion by June 2022. When is this important training facility due to become operational?
- What action is being taken to improve officer recruitment and retention at Eastwood Park?

3.4 Progress since the last report

What we said last year	What the response was	What we found this year
We were concerned that the new offender management unit and activities centre had again been delayed.	The project will commence in the 2021/22 financial year.	Building did commence in Spring 2021.
Deep concern about a prisoner with acquired brain injury who had been segregated for 827 days.	The minister outlined a range of national initiatives.	The prisoner by the end of this reporting period had been segregated for 1202 days.
We asked for progress in the development of the first residential women centre.	It was confirmed that some funding had been made available.	We are still waiting to hear when the centre will be opened.
We asked if there was to be a national needs assessment of women prisoners' physical and mental health needs.	HMPPS told us there was a review commissioned aimed at improving health and wellbeing outcomes.	The review was due to report in December 2021. We await the outcome.

We raised concern about dampness to cell and corridor walls on two wings which had been evident since June 2018.	HMPPS advised us that maintenance bids are risk based, for example the loss of accommodation.	A further detailed survey was undertaken and funding bid submitted for remedial works. Some cells are unfit for occupation.
We asked why replacement windows manufactured specifically for Eastwood Park had not been fitted years later .	We were told that the fitting of the windows had not had sufficient priority.	The windows still have not been fitted.
We drew attention to the large number of outstanding maintenance jobs.	Managers of Government Facilities Services Limited (GFSL) continued to promise to address this issue.	There was progress in reducing the maintenance backlog. Outstanding tasks reduced from 205 to 112.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

Main concerns

- The levels of self-harm at Eastwood Park continue to be high and of great concern to the IMB.
- ACCT care plans need to be improved.
- The levels of bullying at Eastwood Park were variable but generated a number of applications to the IMB.
- Prisons struggle to deal with prisoners with complex mental health issues, many of whom would have benefited from diversion from the criminal justice system into the health system prior to their detention.
- The late reporting of use of force incidents was of concern.
- The inflow of drugs at Eastwood Park even during the time of the most stringent lockdown was of great concern.

4.1 Reception and induction

The reception process has run very smoothly and was thorough and well organised. The trend this year was for the population to remain fairly constant (around 370) but the length of sentence has increased i.e. fewer short sentence prisoners and more long-term prisoners. In recent years the average stay at Eastwood Park has increased from around 27 days to 44 days. This should mean fewer turnarounds in reception over the year.

Reception catered well for the needs of the arriving prisoners, with meals being set aside for late arrivals and healthcare appointments made either on the day of arrival or as soon as possible afterwards. We did not receive any applications regarding the prisoner reception process but were told by prisoners how much they appreciated the care they received.

The reception area was clean, tidy and well-kept, which was appreciated by staff and prisoners alike. Prisoners saw their overall initial experience at Eastwood Park in a very positive light.

Pre-Covid, induction of new prisoners took place soon after entry to the prison in small groups, delivered by a prisoner induction orderly. During lockdown this was suspended. A comprehensive information booklet was handed out and staff delivered an induction through the door hatch of isolating prisoners.

In relation to supporting women who had been abused, raped or experienced domestic abuse, there had been improvements in identifying this during the basic custody screening.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Self-harm incidents peaked at 202 in May while in lockdown and, as the regime opened up, so the numbers have decreased to 102 in October. The prolific self-harmers accounted for up to 67% of self-harm incidents and the 18-24 cohort accounted for up to 33% of incidents.

Self-harm ranged from scratches to severe harm, the majority being low grade. Methods of self-harm were various, with no particular trend, as were the reasons/triggers. Ligature incidents reduced but they had more intent, resulting in an increased number of 'code blues' – where a prisoner has been found with a potentially life-threatening condition such as chest pains or unconsciousness.

Lockdown contributed to increased levels of anxiety and self-harm in the early months of the year. As the regime initially relaxed and the prisoners spent more time out of cell in April/May, the self-harm figures spiked, partially due to bullying, debt and increased violence. The following months saw a reduction in self-harm as the prisoners settled back into a more normal routine with the return of jobs, education and re-opening of the gym.

There was one death in custody in July, with no final inquest at the time of writing.

April saw the introduction of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) version 6, which was seen as an improvement, although time consuming, and took a period of adjustment to the new system. Staff shortages impacted on time to manage wellbeing checks and ACCT assessments. ACCTs were quality-assessed by staff within 72 hours of being opened and also reviewed on a random basis by the IMB. They were generally found to be in good order, with detailed multi-disciplinary notes and timely observations. The one area of weakness was care plans, which were sometimes somewhat lacking in detail and did not follow through on the concerns identified in the initial concern form and assessments. The quality of recording of conversations has much improved. There was an average of 46 ACCTs open each month, with a spike in June and September of 57 ACCTs.

The IMB received a number of applications concerning the lack of contact with and support from key workers. Low staffing levels had a negative impact on access to key workers. Support through Enhanced Management (StEM) proved helpful with the more prolific self-harmers.

The Listeners' scheme recommenced in August 2021, with four Listeners circulating around the wings. Interviews took place to increase the team to seven. Listeners were available 6am-10pm, with the Samaritans line accessible outside these hours. There was an issue with the Samaritans helpline as prisoners were unaware of the change of phone number.

During lockdown the safer custody orderlies (SCOs) on each wing supported the prisoners and reported back to staff with any concerns. The number of SCOs increased to nine to support the prisoners with the challenges created by different stages of unlock. The attendance of the SCOs at the monthly safer custody meeting proved to be an invaluable conduit between the prisoners and the management, as they reported grievances, confirmed where the system was working, or if not suggested improvements.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

The IMB was unable to visit during the lockdown period therefore a questionnaire was drawn up to hear directly from the prisoners their opinions on a range of fundamental aspects of prison life. Seventy-nine percent of respondents said that they felt they could talk to and were heard by wing staff. When asked how safe they felt, 80% of respondents were content or better.

This year the IMB received 43 applications concerning bullying, which was an increase on 41 received in the last reporting year. A number of applications cited bullying by a few named officers. This was raised with the Governor. There were ongoing cases of self-isolation due to intimidation and acclimatisation to more time out of cell. Some prisoners reported that they felt safer when they were in their cells. A few prisoners, especially on two wings, felt anxious and intimidated, preferring to eat in cell rather than in the dining hall. Self-isolation, anxiety and in some cases self-harm were reactions to being transferred into the general population (50-100 prisoners per wing) from the small reverse-cohorted reception wing.

As Eastwood Park opened up, the bullying and violence, primarily over debt, increased. During lockdown until April, the incidents of violence, both prisoner-staff and prisoner-prisoner, averaged at approximately 14 per month. As the regime relaxed and the prisoners were getting more time out of cells, there was a spike in violence, with 27 incidents in July, 15 of which were prisoner-prisoner. From August onwards, the numbers settled at an average of approximately 13 incidents per month as prisoners settled into a more normal regime. The challenge, support and intervention plan (CSIP) management plans were used to good effect, resulting in a reduction of violence. The weekly multi-disciplinary safety intervention meeting (SIM) provided intelligence, management strategies and continuing assessment and re-evaluation.

The vulnerable and those with complex mental health issues received considered, prescriptive multi-disciplinary care. The safety task force, a collaborative inter-departmental group, met weekly, focussed on the safety, wellbeing and rehabilitation of individual prisoners. The IMB was present at the weekly reviews, SIM meetings and the monthly safer custody meetings, and saw each case being handled with care and thought. Although some of the prisoners required relocation to an appropriate hospital, there were some positive outcomes with prisoners returning to the general population. Access to specialist hospital beds was slow and resulted in some ill and vulnerable prisoners being managed in the general population, which was challenging for the staff.

4.4 Use of force

Due to lockdown and changes in personnel, we only have figures for the seven months between April and October 2021 inclusive.

The use of force is sometimes necessary in a prison, and there were 209 instances in the shortened reporting period. Eastwood Park still has the third highest use of force within the women's estate. There were 37 instances of planned use of force, with the remaining 172 being unplanned. Four prisoners were reported as having

sustained injuries during use of force, two of whom required outside hospitalisation. Twenty members of staff reported receiving injuries during use of force, one of whom required outside hospitalisation.

The most common reasons for use of force were assault / fighting, non-compliance and the prevention of self-harm. A high proportion of uses of force involved prisoners with mental health issues.

During the year, the Board has monitored some planned use of force. On every occasion, we found the actions of staff to be proportionate and humane. As highlighted in previous annual reports, given the high numbers of women entering prison with mental health problems, it was the Board's view that use of force numbers might reduce if more women were diverted from the criminal justice system. Prisons are not equipped to deal with the level and nature of complexity arising from many of these cases.

The level of late reporting of use of force incidents was high and there was a plan in place to improve this.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

During the year it was clear that there continued to be an inward flow of illicit items including tobacco, drugs and drug paraphernalia, lighters, mobile phones. Prisoners coming into Eastwood Park carried items concealed on their person. Even during the tightest lockdown it was apparent there were drugs being brought into the prison. There was a specific focus on this in meetings and managers developed a range of strategies to reduce the inflow. Prisoners coming back on recall were a specific area of risk and those being released on licence were warned of the consequences.

During the year there were numerous finds of illicit items trying to be sent in via the postal system. Those attempting this route tried many ways of concealing items. It was a matter of concern that drugs can still find their way into the hands of prisoners. Not only do the drugs themselves represent a risk to the health and wellbeing of individuals, but they are also a significant factor in debt-related violence.

5. Fair and humane treatment

Main concerns

- There were issues with the quality of food, especially bread, which needed to be improved.
- The damp on two wings needed to be dealt with.
- The replacement windows for the administration block needed fitting.
- The long-term segregation of one prisoner was of great concern.
- Staffing levels as a result of the pandemic were seriously compromised.
- Ethnicity data collected at reception was often missing.
- The lived experience of BAME/GRT/FN prisoners needed improving.
- While investigating complaints, the prisoner should be listened to.
- The storage and distribution of property needed improving.

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Applications were received about the cleanliness of showers, which coincided with cleaning teams being confined to their cell for extended periods. When raised with the Governor by the IMB, this problem was resolved by allocating additional prisoners to deep-clean the areas.

In July, we received a number of applications regarding the internal temperature in accommodation blocks reaching 32°C and conditions being inhumane. After a short delay, free-standing fans were distributed to all cells and missing curtains were replaced. The IMB is concerned that, as the weather is predicted to get hotter over the coming years, a long-term view should be taken to mitigate these problems by providing habitable accommodation during extreme weather conditions.

Very many applications were received regarding the poor choice of television channels and its reliability. This has been brought to the notice of the Governor, the problems understood and remedial action identified.

Most prisoners were issued with electric kettles, allocated to them for use in their cells, if it was safe to do so. In late June there was a safety recall notice issued to remove all kettles immediately; this obviously caused a great deal of concern. The response from the prison was excellent, with over 200 new kettles ordered and distributed within three to four days.

In the IMB wellbeing survey, prisoners were asked if they had enough clothing/laundry/showers. Thirty-four percent said they were not satisfied. Some comments were:

- *'not enough clothing'.*
- *'about the laundry, we are getting our clothes back dirty and stained and smelling'.*
- *'[I've been] asking for clothes since I arrived but no reply'.*

The grounds at Eastwood Park continued to be well maintained and cared for throughout the year. Prisoners working with the groundwork team enjoy their jobs and take a great pride in their efforts.

The quality and availability of food was an important issue and one about which the IMB has received few applications, only 11 in the year. Conversely, food was the most significant issue identified during the IMB prisoner questionnaire conducted during February / March 2020. The provision and quality of the catering very much reflected the restrictions that were being applied during the pandemic.

The permanent staff in the kitchen have had a difficult time due to changing rotas, availability of supplies and depleted staffing levels. A lead caterer leaving mid-year added to their problems .

In the first six months of the reporting year, a reduced number of kitchen workers were working in bubbles; communal dining had ceased; the food choices were limited and supplies of fresh fruit and salads were unavailable. During this period the feedback received by the IMB showed that very many prisoners across the prison were upset with the quality of the food.

The questionnaire results showed that by far the greatest areas of concern expressed were related to food; its quality, availability and quantity. Food received a 61% negative response and solicited the highest level of comment, all of which was negative. These concerns were expressed from all accommodation areas.

Examples of comments received:

- *'The food is shocking. Bread is always stale and has been since the 2nd lockdown started. Would like to see salads back as an option'.*
- *'Food has been very limited in terms of choice and occasionally a lack of fruit which is what I eat mostly. Pre-select has been taken away and although it doesn't affect me, cereal is sometimes not in the breakfast packs and the bread is often solid and stale'.*
- *'We desperately need to restart pre-select meals and reinstate salads, pasta + tuna etc. as most of the time we really don't want to have to eat the badly made, unhealthy meals we receive'.*

As a direct result of this feedback, sandwiches were wrapped as soon as they were made, which improved the quality of the bread. It took a little while longer to improve the supply of fresh fruit and salads.

Over the last six months, and as the prison started to return to normality, albeit breakfast packs were still being delivered, the quality and availability of food returned to its normal good standard. The main changes being:

- Pre-select meal options were reintroduced.
- Communal dining was restarted.
- There was a plentiful supply of salads for those who wanted them.
- Fruit and green vegetables were always available.

Six of the 11 applications to the IMB about food related to dietary requirements; following discussions these were resolved. The remaining applications were about the quality and choices available.

Following our critical reports over several years, there has been a significant financial investment at Eastwood Park this year which has improved the quality of buildings for residents and staff. Works undertaken include:

- Extensive roofing works and associated refurbishments to one of the corridors. This resolved longstanding major roof leaks and consequential damage / safety issues.
- Accessibility improvements carried out around the perimeter security gate to the wing for enhanced prisoners. These have included resolution of the defective gate lock back facility, which can now allow the free flow of prisoners between the unit and their places of work.
- Conversion of two single cells into a single accessible cell on one wing to facilitate prisoners with disabilities.
- Refurbishment of all cells on the wing for women with complex needs.
- The number of outstanding minor maintenance jobs with GFSL has continued to reduce from 600 two years ago and 205 last year, and is now 112.

Regrettably there has been no progress with some maintenance issues. Dampness in two residential units continued. We provided a timeline for this work in our previous annual report from June 2018 to October 2020.



Since then, a consultant's report was prepared in March 2021 on behalf of GFSL. Numerous issues causing dampness were identified, and several cells have been

taken out of commission due to them being unfit for occupation. The outcome of a further bid to fund remedial works was awaited.

The installation of replacement admin block windows, manufactured several years ago, is still awaited.

The following were the main building projects:

- The long-awaited major project to construct an activities centre was in progress and due for completion by the end of May 2022.
- Dilapidated modular offices have been replaced with new buildings.

5.2 Segregation

Eastwood Park does not have a care and separation unit (CSU) and there were currently no plans to introduce one.

If segregation for good order or discipline (GOOD) or cellular confinement is awarded, prisoners are confined to their cells on their normal location, unless, for security or safety reasons, a wing move is indicated. Whenever possible during confinement, prisoners are allowed out of their cells for a maximum of an hour a day on their own. During time out of cell the prisoner may choose to exercise or shower. Those without in-cell PIN phones may also choose to call relatives by using communal telephones. It is up to the prisoner whether they go outside.

This arrangement has some advantages because prisoners feel less cut off from their peers – other prisoners will often talk to the prisoner through the cell door. The establishment continues to explore options to introduce a behavioural management unit. The Board was fully supportive of this development, especially because of the proactive approach to behaviour change. Regrettably this project appears to be held in abeyance.

During the overall reporting period, there were 73 prisoners segregated under GOOD or cellular confinement, plus 196 segregated under rule 53, making a total of 269. The total number of segregations was 30% lower than in the previous reporting period.

Board members, when they were in the prison, visited every prisoner segregated on cellular confinement/GOOD and in the majority of cases had no complaints about their confinement. The Board was normally informed by secure email within 24 hours of a prisoner's confinement. Generally, segregation paperwork was of an acceptable standard, and the review panels we attended were conducted well and with sensitivity.

Segregation periods were normally between one and 28 days. There was one instance in excess of 42 days, which was referred to the head of the women's estate for authorisation. This prisoner has been continuously segregated at Downview and Eastwood Park prisons since 16 July 2018 (1,202 days at the end of this reporting period).

Our concerns about this inhumane treatment continue. Despite the personal intervention of successive Prisons / Health Ministers and a national multi-disciplinary case conference, this prisoner's segregation continues. She exists from day to day in her cell. Apart from occasional phone calls to relatives and very rare visits, she has little outside contact. While the Governor and staff ensure that the prisoner has the mandatory daily time out of cell, we continue to have serious concerns about the effect that such solitary confinement has on a person with an organic personality disorder resulting from a long-term brain injury.

At the end of this reporting period, assessments were being undertaken to determine this prisoner's suitability for a trial transfer to a secure mental health establishment specialising in dynamic care planning and therapeutic engagement. The outcome of these assessments was awaited.

The Board remained firmly of the opinion that, as specialist establishments are available for men who have brain injuries, it was discriminatory that there are no secure units for women with similar injuries.

Adjudications

The adjudication system in Eastwood Park appears to work well and prisoners feel it is well-managed and consistent in its application. Only four applications were received by the IMB relating to adjudications, and after review all procedures were followed and paperwork was correct. It can be seen from the figures that as the prison opened up after the second and third lockdowns the number of adjudications increased; there may have been a period of score-settling amongst prisoners.

October – December 2020	206 adjudications
January – March 2021	267 adjudications
April – June 2021	240 adjudications
July – August 2021	307 adjudications

5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers

As identified in last year's report, we continue to have serious concerns that shortages of staff have forced prisoners to be locked in unnecessarily for extended periods of time, up to 23 hours a day, to provide a Covid-safe environment and maintain a safe regime.

Staffing was under-resourced for most of the year and this had a serious impact on both the mental and physical health of prisoners. To compound the fact that the basic level of staffing was less than that required, other factors which played a significant part in the shortage were: the extended time it took to get new recruits trained; a larger than expected number of staff shielding; a backlog of leave due to time being carried over from last year; staff retirements; the impact of long Covid sickness and self-isolating.

The staffing required to unlock the wings for meals, medication, exercise, showers, work, face-to-face visits, Purple Visits (secure social video calls) and education was

untenable when even the smallest staffing increase was required elsewhere, i.e. external escorts or incidents.

The change from having a large number of small cohorts, especially in the induction wing, to having a single cohort for each floor in each wing greatly improved the daily routines for prisoners and staff.

In the IMB wellbeing survey, 21% of prisoners were not happy with the ability to talk to wing staff and to be heard. Some comments were:

- *'wing staff are amazing I can speak to them about anything'*
- *'wing staff help me a lot I am very thankful to them'*
- *'a handful of wing staff listen but the younger members of staff forget and don't get things done'*
- *'some members of staff don't seem to be bothered. I am struggling with my mental health when I asked to have a chat and then forgotten about'*
- *'the staff are doing their best at this time, and the girls are pulling together at this terrible time'*

Staff had received training in a trauma-informed approach. However, staff often struggled to articulate, when asked by the IMB, how this had impacted on how they managed prisoners.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Equality and diversity was the specific responsibility of a custodial manager. A significant proportion of one officer's time was ring fenced for equality issues. The diversity and equality action team meeting was chaired by the Deputy Governor, took place every two months and included wide representation, including prisoner representatives.

5.4.1 Foreign national prisoners

The numbers of foreign national prisoners have remained relatively stable over the last three years. Around half were from other European countries. It was reported however that the recording of ethnicity/nationality could be improved as data was sometimes missing.

5.4.2 Race and ethnicity

The population of Eastwood Park with an ethnicity recorded as white British was around 87%, based on a snapshot. The ethnic breakdown of the prison has remained stable in recent years.

During 2021 the IMB at Eastwood Park, in collaboration with all other women's prisons, carried out a survey of prisoners from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME), Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) or foreign national prisoner (FNP) backgrounds. At the time of the survey there were 44 such women in Eastwood Park and a survey questionnaire was distributed to all of those able to complete a survey. We received 30 responses, which was a very good response rate. The responses included the following comments from women:

‘Basically it depends on certain officers, some handle situations really well and I feel listen to and somewhat respected but some officers act like they have a chip on their shoulders and have treated me quite disrespectfully with no consideration to my emotions or mental health’.

‘In many things the prison does a lot but I’ve never been asked about my cultural needs or offered any help with my language’.

‘They don’t understand what we need as black women’.

The report included the following findings:

- Thirty-nine percent said they felt they were poorly or very poorly treated at Eastwood Park.
- Forty-eight percent said the prison understood their cultural needs poorly or very poorly.
- Forty percent said they had been discriminated against by staff and 50% had been discriminated against by prisoners.
- Only 10% of prisoners were aware of BAME/GRT/FNP-related initiatives in the prison.
- Forty-eight percent said that the canteen choices did not meet their cultural needs.

There were some positives in the report, where some staff were described as helpful and sensitive.

5.4.3 Transgender prisoners

There were up to seven transgender prisoners in Eastwood Park at any one time. In the main their treatment was considered very good. However, the IMB did receive two applications from two prisoners about ‘dead-naming’. This meant staff using their pre-transition names or pronouns. For someone who is transgender this is a matter of great importance, as it is reflective of their identity.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

There was a wide spread of women declaring a religion and those who registered as having no religion. The largest group was broadly Christian with significant numbers declaring themselves as Muslim and Pagan. Monitoring of religion needed improving, as this was sometimes missed on reception to the prison. There were also a high number of changes to the prison’s record of religion. It was considered that this was because of incorrect recording at reception.

The chaplaincy had Muslim, Christian (including Roman Catholic), Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Pagan chaplains. There was discussion about appointing a Rastafarian chaplain. The Roman Catholic chaplain post remained vacant for part of the year. There was also a facility for prisoners to access support for their faith and spiritual needs on an ad hoc basis.

The lockdown severely curtailed many traditional chaplaincy activities such as large group worship. Attendance at some faith activities was also hampered by the absence of available staff to escort women from their wings. There were also occasions when prisoners had to choose between attending a faith activity or having showers or collecting their medication.

Faith-based festivals were all marked, including the provision of traditional meals and foods. During the year the chaplaincy continued to run activities such as a 'living with loss' course.

The chaplaincy plays a central role in the prison and during the year took the lead on developing a rehabilitative culture within the prison.

As part of the BAME/GRT/FNP survey, we asked prisoners about their faith needs. Fifty-six percent said the chaplaincy had met their religious needs, a further 30% said some had been met and 15% said they had not had their needs met.

Some comments:

- *'They could have a Rastafari chaplain'.*
- *'I would like to go to the chapel on Sunday as it is the one place you get peace'.*
- *'I cannot fault the chaplaincy they have been wonderful'.*
- *'[At another prison] the chaplaincy had more time whereas at Eastwood Park the chaplaincy is not easily accessible'.*

5.6 Incentives schemes

During the year, in the light of the impact of the Covid changes, the prison suspended monitoring of incentives. The IMB did not receive any applications relating to incentives.

5.7 Complaints

Eastwood Park has a complaints procedure that has received positive quality assurance assessments and compliments over the last few years. During the last year, there was a reduction in the numbers of complaints. In comparison to IMB applications, one can see a similar pattern where complaints relating to property dominated. Towards the end of the reporting year the IMB started looking at a sample of complaints each month. In October 2021, 10 complaints were reviewed. Of these, seven were considered in order. In three cases the IMB felt that the prisoners' right of appeal could have been made clearer to them, and in two cases the complaints appeared to have been investigated without any discussion with the prisoner.

5.8 Property

Of all the applications received by the IMB this year, nearly a third of them (95) were related to the control and distribution of property within the prison. The main issues were either property being sent into the prison and not getting to the prisoners or prisoners' property stored in the prison which could not be swapped with property held by them.

The management of property was extremely poor, with parcels going missing, a nine-month backlog of property swaps and at one period so many parcels backed up in reception that they were transferred to storage in shipping containers. The mental and psychological impact of these issues on prisoners was huge, and in some cases led directly to incidents of self-harm.

A voucher scheme for incoming parcels was introduced, but in the short term seemed to create problems of its own.

More serious cases were those where prisoners found that due to being locked in their cell for so long with so little exercise, they had put on considerable weight, but could not get access to new larger clothes sent in by their families. They were getting extremely stressed and embarrassed and had to resort to wearing their loose-fitting pyjamas all day.

6. Health and wellbeing

Main concerns

- The difficulties some women had with the telephone appointment system needed addressing.
- The high numbers of women with serious mental health problems entering the criminal justice system when services in the community failed to meet their needs.

6.1 Healthcare general

Avon and Wiltshire Partnership Mental Health NHS Trust continued to operate as the prime provider for the InspireBetterHealth healthcare contract with HMP Eastwood Park, working in partnership with Hanham Secure Health, who provide the physical health element of the contract and GP provision. Within the partnership, there are also dentistry services which are provided through Time for Teeth, as well as partnerships with North Bristol NHS Trust for specialist midwifery care. GP Care provide sonography on site for women and Homecare provide an optician service. All of these services are currently commissioned by NHS England health and justice commissioners.

The IMB wellbeing survey reported that 22% of prisoners were not satisfied with their healthcare/medication. The following comments were made:

- *'I have a medical condition that requires heat as treatment, for instance, heat patches, hot water bottle, heat bags. I am not allowed these items in prison'*
- *'due to having in-cell telephone appointments with healthcare and the GP, quite often these are missed due to the line constantly being engaged'*
- *'phone appointments are useless can't get through not arriving on time people being threatened with losing medication because of this'*
- *'healthcare appointments are via telephone and numerous times I haven't been able to get through'*

Over the last few years there has been a steady reduction in applications to the IMB about healthcare, from 58 in 2017/18 to 36 this year. This reflects the improvements that have been made.

6.2 Physical healthcare

During the last 12 months, the services provided by InspireBetterHealth continued to meet the demands of the changing restrictions imposed by Covid and the population. This at times reduced the capacity for face-to-face clinical appointments and meant that these appointments were triaged by priority. Nevertheless, the uptake of telephone appointments improved, with the prison providing additional lines for healthcare appointments.

There was a mixed response to face-to-face appointments. There continued to be a drive to reduce the rate of missed appointments, no-access visits and appointments being missed due to non-collection by the clinic runner. The healthcare provider received direct feedback from patients that they would prefer their appointment to be notified to them the day before. This was especially important for those engaging in

other activities in the prison and would also support the empowerment of women to take responsibility of their health and wellbeing needs.

The main environment for face-to-face appointments continued to be Pathways Health Centre, which operated as a primary care centre, similar to a community GP surgery. Whilst the restrictions of Covid constrained the main capacity of Pathways during its opening times, as Covid restrictions reduced there was a steady increase in capacity.

New receptions continued to be seen by a member of healthcare on arrival, along with a GP. There were exceptional circumstances, when a GP was not available due to the late time of the arrival, but the patients received the appropriate medication through patient group directions during their initial 24 hours.

GPs were available between 8am and 8pm Monday to Saturday, thus any patient who arrived late into the establishment was seen the following day as a priority.

Patients were provided with timely access to medicines within the establishment. The medicines reconciliation for new patients improved, meaning that patients were able to receive their named medication a lot quicker than previously and a review of their medication took place in a more timely way. Despite this, there were still 12 applications to the IMB about delayed access to medication. This was a third of the total applications relating to health.

During the last 12 months the head of healthcare held four independent health improvement groups. The main topics for discussion were access to appointments, provision of incontinence products and general appointments of concern. Women in general provided positive feedback for healthcare. There were questions about medication, especially certain medications, raised.

The provision of dental service continued to be complex. Covid restricted the work dentists could complete, including aerosol generating procedures – drilling and mechanical work. This work was referred to outside hospitals when appropriate. With the easing of the restrictions and changes in the ventilation system, this work was recommenced.

One of the impacts on dental appointments was women not attending for various reasons. This reduced the number of women who were seen and contributed to the long waiting lists. The use of triage was successful in prioritising women's treatment to prevent complications as a result of dental problems.

InspireBetterHealth worked with the dental provider to increase the capacity of clinics, and explored the use of Saturday clinics to support the improvement of waiting times.

The healthcare service continued to use the 'listening to you' forms as the mode of contact with the healthcare provider. A steady volume was received each month, with the main focus being on medication requests.

During the last 12 months, 202 enquiries were submitted, with 13 complaints being upheld. Nevertheless patients continued to also use prison complaint forms and the IMB as modes of communication. The integrated working relationship both with the prison and liaison with the IMB has supported an improved response time to these enquiries.

The head of healthcare has continued to respond promptly to enquiries by the Board about specific prisoners, which has helped to resolve many of the issues raised in applications.

6.3 Mental health

In their annual report for 2019/20,¹ HMIP reported that 71% of women coming into prison reported having mental health problems, compared with 47% of men. Of these, 56% of women reported having depression, compared with 36% of men.

A mental health crisis team operated 365 days a year, with an 8am to 8pm service. The team operated across all wings of the prison, providing support to first-case ACCT reviews, assessing prisoners who were in crisis and implementing intervention plans to support those who were acutely mentally unwell, being transferred to a psychiatric hospital or self-harming. This included the prisoners on the complex needs unit.

The mental health team provided mental health assessments by practitioners who had the additional qualification of being a non-medical prescriber, and so could prescribe, adjust and review medication. During the pandemic they had to move to provide many consultations by telephone to reduce the possibility of infection while providing a confidential service.

The mental health team was unable to facilitate outside agencies visiting the prison for much of the year, but this situation provided an opportunity to increase contact with care coordinators and probation through the use of Microsoft Teams. Release planning and engaging with resettlement within the prison continued to be a challenge. The mental health team found that not having a release address for women meant that they were unable to refer them on to community services in a timely fashion.

The mental health team were able to recruit a peer mentor to work alongside them. Their role was to provide support to peers, as they have lived experience. The mental health team agreed to provide orderlies across the prison, in collaboration with the AWP user representative lead, a programme of training and monthly reflective practice. They completed training on substance misuse and planned to provide sessions on stabilisation techniques, effective listening and mental health awareness.

One member of the mental health team successfully completed the trauma risk management (TRIM) course and offered support as a TRIM practitioner. They prioritised working alongside prison colleagues in supporting those who have experienced trauma.

The therapies team continued to provide in-cell workbooks on a wide range of psychological interventions while group work was suspended. They were able to recommence one to one sessions later in the year. To assist in increasing successful outcomes, they also included a questionnaire on motivation to work. This meant that if women were not ready to undertake the intervention, they could be kept on a waiting list rather than committing to sessions and then dropping out halfway through programmes.

¹ [Annual Report 2019-20 \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/annual-report-2019-20/)

The team recruited a neurodevelopmental practitioner to support women. After completing an assessment, they can provide information and guidance to everyone in the prison by way of a support plan with reasonable adjustments. The IMB observed this in action when reviewing one ACCT record, where there was very helpful and comprehensive advice on how to communicate with a prisoner with autism. They worked closely with education staff to assist women to engage in courses.

During the year, there were 32 Mental Health Act transfers, which was a slight increase of four on last year. However, seven referrals were declined by the outside hospital providers as not requiring a transfer, and six women were well enough not to require transfer after treatment in the prison. This meant that there was an increased waiting time for hospital transfers and the team was having to treat women who were unwell, which was not ideal but indicated success in treating their conditions. There were five women released from court before transfer. There were some delays in transfer when the receiving hospital was unable to admit the patients due to Covid restrictions.

Waiting times for the Mental Health Act transfers varied, and were certainly exacerbated by the impact of Covid on the availability of community-based secure mental health services.

During lockdown, group work had to stop. The psychiatrist continued to see all relevant prisoners to complete assessments and reviews, with the support of a number of junior psychiatric colleagues.

During the year, the Board's main contact with mentally ill prisoners was through regular monitoring of the complex needs unit. This unit dealt with prisoners with the most serious mental health concerns. Prison and health staff worked closely together to address the health and social needs of the prisoners. During the year the refurbishment programme resulted in a reduced capacity. This resulted in a number of seriously unwell women being managed on other wings which were less well prepared for dealing with this level of vulnerability. Once completed and the capacity returned to 10, the unit was able to deal with nearly all referrals.

The behaviour of some of the residents in this unit was highly challenging and confrontational. The staff team faced daily challenges to maintain order, deal with hygiene issues and violent behaviour, and provide for the needs of the prisoners at the same time. Their professionalism and commitment were always impressive.

During the lockdown, the Nexus service for women with a personality disorder had to adapt – for instance, in relation to the day service, group work had to stop but content was adapted and presented in individual work-pack format. The service slowly and steadily returned to pre-Covid levels and women continued to feel the positive impact of being on the unit.

6.4 Social care

Social care continued to be provided through South Gloucestershire Council for those assessed during their time in prison as requiring additional support. The Covid outbreaks at Eastwood Park did not prevent the provision of carers attending to women; additional PPE was utilised to support the care team to attend to individuals. There was a high demand for social care in the ageing population being admitted to

prison, and social care continued to work with the prison and the healthcare provider to ensure a swift timescale from assessment to implementation of the care package.

There were 57 referrals received from Eastwood Park over a nine-month period. It was a challenge to complete assessments during the lockdown, and at times a waiting list needed to be held while outbreaks were being managed within the prison. Where cases/referrals were highlighted as being eligible for a Care Act 2014 care package within the community, continuity of care assessments could be implemented to ensure women were suitably supported until a reassessment of their needs within the prison could be ascertained.

There were no applications to the IMB in relation to social care this year.

6.5 Exercise, regime

Not surprisingly, the most frequent applications about living conditions during the year concerned the lack of time out of cells, lack of time to shower and lack of time to exercise.

During the lockdown, the women were allowed 30-60 minutes' time out of cell per day. This had to be carefully managed in small group numbers.

The IMB wellbeing questionnaire in March 2021 asked if prisoners felt they were getting enough exercise. Seventy percent were satisfied that they were getting enough time to exercise. Some stated time out of cell was insufficient, others noted the gym was inaccessible and some stated their dislike of walking around the yard. One comment was *'COVID is no one's fault so I understand'*.

During this time IMB received four applications regarding restricted time out of cell and the lack of a shower on return. All points were answered, noting that group size impeded time out of cell and there were staggered times for showering.

As conditions and the weather improved, there were increased opportunities to go outside for exercise and also use the fitness suite under strict social distancing conditions.

From September, the fitness suite accommodated more prisoners per session than previously. Orderlies cleaned the equipment between sessions and performed a deep-clean at the end of each day. The women continued to make full use of the facilities with additional sessions being offered before breakfast during the week.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Substance misuse service users continued to access support upon their arrival. This was mainly face-to-face, or over the phone when the regime was suspended. Interventions included confirmation of prescribing, orientation, assessment, group work, allocated key workers who provided structured one to one sessions, care planning and release planning inclusive of prescribing and support appointments. A multi-disciplinary approach to engage with other services in managing complex

women within custody remained intact. Service user engagement with the substance misuse team was reported as excellent.

The drug recovery community (DRC), an abstinence programme, continued to liaise with service users and their key workers prior to acceptance onto the programme. Upon completion of the programme, service users still accessed support while on the outreach programme.

Overall, despite challenging working environments and the restrictions that Covid-19 have placed upon the DRC service, these were good results and showed that the DRC/SMPT (substance misuse treatment provider) intervention is helping to improve outcomes for the women we work with.

During the year the results included: 89 women completed the DRC programme, 63 completed a detox with DRC, 58 women remained drug free out of the 63 who had completed a detox with DRC, nine women were referred to residential rehab, 22 women were referred to various supported housing placements (predominantly abstinence-based housing), 52 women engaged with DRC outreach wherever they were in the establishment, and seven women were referred to DRC but did not wish to engage.

Of those women who participated in the DRC: 92% completed their treatment, 92% of the women who detoxed with the DRC stayed clean at time of release/completion, 58% engaged with DRC outreach work, 10% went to rehab, and 24% went to supported housing (dry houses referred by DRC workers).

The 'through the gate' (TTG) role further developed. The TTG worker co-ordinated this integrated release care plan for every prisoner being released, whether or not they engaged with the substance misuse team.

This role also included: harm minimisation information, overdose and tolerance awareness, alcohol awareness, coca ethylene awareness, the risks for those with poly-drug and poly-drug and alcohol use of using on top of a script, blood-borne virus and sexually transmitted infection awareness, route and method of use (injecting, smoking, sniffing, oral) and details of their nearest needle exchange, safe storage of medication (lock boxes), legalities and the importance of engaging with community services including in the event of a relapse, recognising using thoughts and behaviours, managing and identifying triggers and cravings, and identifying supportive networks on release.

Each service user was offered naloxone training information and a naloxone kit provided. This helps to reduce the numbers of overdoses, which is a significant risk on release.

6.7 Soft skills

Most of the groups for learning, therapeutic activities and recreation were suspended during the pandemic. These have slowly returned during the latter part of the year. Courses addressed aspects underpinning offending in conjunction with third sector organisations.

Nelson Trust were present throughout lockdown, resuming separate small groups in each wing when access was finally permitted. Nelson Trust delivered courses on 'Beyond Anger,' 'Pegasus' (sex working), managing change and domestic abuse. These were valued by the women and supported by prisoners who encouraged others to participate.

Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) staff began the reporting period working remotely, then returned to site. They were a source of support to prisoners, although personal contact remained limited. An IMB application was received in October asking when the staff would be back to full capacity; this was resolved by the end of the month.

The social groups for older prisoners did not take place. In previous years the 'Rubies' group had been based in a specific room with adequate storage for the craft materials they use. However, this facility was removed and since then the group leader has struggled to find a suitable space. One application was received by IMB asking about the lack of the 'Rubies' group.

7. Progression and resettlement

Main concerns

- Throughout the pandemic, the education department was fully staffed by teachers and contracted staff, working at home or on site. However, education delivery was erratic due to shortages of operational staff.
- Some women stated there were not enough library books available with different topics. Another stated the resources were not challenging.
- There was concern that there were insufficient places in education and work to meet the needs of the population.
- Although ROTL was showing signs of improvement, there was room for further development.
- Key working and establishing a rehabilitative culture at Eastwood Park had made a faltering start due to the pandemic.
- The range of options aimed at reducing re-offending did not meet the needs of the changed population.
- Purple Visits were an excellent addition in maintaining family contact but were compromised by frequent cancellations.
- Work needed to be done to improve access to accommodation options, finance, benefit and debt advice.

7.1 Education, library

The effect of the pandemic was experienced across the prison and had a major impact on education and prison activities.

Initially, all contracted education staff worked from home, providing in-cell work packs covering foundation and vocational subjects. Subsequently, teaching staff returned and facilitated learning on the wings with bespoke learning packs.

Classroom face-to-face education teaching did not resume until 31 August. Due to operational staffing levels, functioning classes were sporadic, with 50% of classes being cancelled in October. Functional skills exams took place in education with the support of governors to provide an operational response. This provided much-needed recognition and achievement of prisoner learning during very challenging times. It was noted by the contracts team that this was exceptional.

Education induction assessment of levels was initially completed by paper assessments in cell. From 31 August, digital assessments were re-introduced alongside the rapid learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) screener. Prisoners assessed with LDD needs were then supported by a member of staff and outcomes used to inform the individual support required.

Distance learning continued throughout the whole pandemic. Risks were assessed and supervised in order to access computers in education.

Eastwood Park had the highest number of applications for funding to the Prisoners' Education Trust of all public sector prisons.

- 23 (18 in 2020) prisoners accessed Open University courses and 51 (20 in 2021) accessed other distance learning courses during the year. One prisoner secured a place at university on release.
- 19 Koestler awards were received in the 2021 awards
- Two Hardman Trust awards were given to two prisoners (the Trust assists prisoners who are serving long sentences).
- 154 exams were taken with a 94% success rate, 82% of these qualifications were functional skills and IT.

The IMB wellbeing questionnaire in March 2021 asked if prisoners were able to get distraction packs/education. It was stated that 71% of the women were 'very happy', 'happy' or 'OK' with the education provision available. One prisoner stated she had received her distance learning qualification, while another stated that the distraction packs were of a basic level.

The library remained open throughout the pandemic, predominantly being run by the education manager who took boxes of books to all the wings. The boxes were changed weekly. When the library staff returned, they changed books on the wings and ran a request service, averaging approximately 180 requests per month for library books.

7.2 Vocational training, work

Many vocational activities were curtailed early in 2021 by the pandemic. During this time, the IMB conducted a wellbeing survey in February/March 2021. Among the prisoners' responses were references to being unable to work, missing activities and courses, with some noting distraction packs were available.

As national restrictions were lifted, the prisoners returned to employment within the kitchen and servery, as wing cleaners and orderlies for reception, and in education, equality, chapel, safer custody and resource management. In the interim period, some women had been released, which disrupted the continuity of trained teams of prisoners; hence some areas required total retraining of the workers.

Hospitality training was gained from the on-site café where the aim was to create barista opportunities. This training could lead into the innovative Clink (hospitality) course that started in June 2021. In order to complete this course and gain the relevant qualification (NVQ 1 and 2), a prisoner needed kitchen experience and to have 24 months of sentence remaining. There were five women enrolled on Clink, with a maximum of eight in the future. The scheme was organised nationally and supported prisoners on release with employment in the community based in the hospitality sector.

From the prisoner needs analysis 21% of the women aspired to work in the hospitality sector and 48% of them had sentences between 12 months and more than four years. The Clink course appeared to correlate well with the needs of the women.

The building of the activities centre started in spring 2021 and subsequent planning for its operation has now begun (estimated completion August 2022).

Release on temporary licence (ROTL) was totally curtailed during lockdown and was slowly recovering. Three women gained employment (hospitality-based) at the local conference centre.

Opportunities for six additional ROTL placements were being sought with Greggs, who offered the women an employability skills interview. Negotiations with a national construction company for two ROTL places were taking place. It was thought that they will be very popular with the women.

Part of the reducing reoffending strategy (2021) was to increase ROTL opportunities for those prisoners' risk-assessed as suitable. An additional aim was to develop links with external colleges for prisoners to access further education on ROTL.

While working in the kitchen, prisoners trained for a level 1 hygiene certificate. This was a requirement for their job and was a transferable skill when they leave the prison. Unfortunately, due to pandemic restrictions the level 2 hygiene courses were cancelled this year.

The prisoners working in the kitchen were affected by the changing shifts and routines but generally coped well. They expressed their gratitude for having a job to do rather than being cooped up in their cells.

The permanent staff in the kitchen have had a difficult time due to changing rotas, availability of supplies and depleted staffing levels. A lead caterer leaving mid-year added to their problems.

There were ten applications regarding work and training received by IMB. Six were during lockdown when activities were not operating, and four questioned their lack of jobs.

7.3 Offender management, progression

Offender management in custody (OMiC) was introduced at Eastwood Park in the last year. This comprises two elements – each prisoner should have a key worker who provides support and continuity through the sentence; and there should be case management, with a new set of arrangements for managing the sentence.

Key working has been badly affected by the low staffing levels as a result of Covid infections amongst staff. In addition, the new case management system took some time to establish, as it took time to complete the recruitment of prison offender managers and to install them in the purpose-built office. It was our view that prisoners at Eastwood Park were still to feel the impact of this new way of working.

Over the last few years, the nature of the population at Eastwood Park has changed. It has moved from being a typical local prison where women would be received from sentencing courts, spend a short time at Eastwood Park and then move on to a prison where they could access a range of activities and interventions aimed at rehabilitating them. More recently, there has been a much greater proportion of

prisoners serving longer sentences. Whilst it was positive that there were fewer women serving shorter sentences, it does mean that the rehabilitation offered at Eastwood Park does not fit the needs of the women imprisoned there. The changes needed to improve this situation have been hampered by the limited space available in the prison for a fuller range of rehabilitative activities. The long-promised new activities building had at last started construction, but it will be several months before these facilities will be available for use.

In recent years in our annual reports we have criticised the arrangements for rehabilitation at Eastwood Park, e.g. the underfunded community rehabilitation companies that had a very high staff turnover and the lack of space to run a programme fitting the needs of prisoners. In this report it is unfortunate to report that this was still the situation. There were some positive signs, with a new building on its way and new management. At the end of October, a new reducing reoffending strategy was published. It is a comprehensive, coordinated and ambitious programme of action. The aim will be to introduce a rehabilitation culture at Eastwood Park and to make it a place of hope for prisoners.

7.4 Family contact

It has been a difficult year for women to maintain consistent contact with their families and friends. There have been limits on visiting, video links and telephone contact as a result of Covid. Face-to-face visits were suspended for months, video link contact was cancelled at short notice as a result of staffing shortages and women struggled to pay for very frequent phone contact, as phone costs are much higher than they would be in the community. It is known how important family contact is to maintain the health and wellbeing of prisoners, and so the prison allowed £10 free phone credit during the lockdown. This was very much appreciated by the prisoners.

We received an increased number of applications in regard to family contact. The most frequent related to the short notice of cancellation of video link contact and the length of time taken after entry into the prison to register the numbers of friends and family, thus enabling a call to be made. The days immediately after detention are often the times when people need their family most.

Visits

Prison social visits were stopped in early October as the prison entered the second lockdown and resumed at a very low level in late spring. Ensuring the safety of family, prisoners and staff meant visits were still contact-free.

It was important that families and friends had the opportunity to maintain contact and although this was restricted it was very good for the prisoners. The downside was that due to the Covid restrictions, the cost of travel and the very large catchment area, many families found visiting upsetting, expensive and time consuming.

In 2020, Eastwood Park was chosen to be a pilot site for Purple Visits (prisoner video calls) and we reported how well this was received by the prisoners. When

working well, prisoners told us that this was their preference as it felt more personal and was easier for their family/friends than coming to Eastwood Park as a large number live many miles away.

Unfortunately, after such a positive start, the implementation of Purple Visits has caused a great deal of upset to many prisoners this year. Although the visits were booked well in advance, they were regularly cancelled at the last moment due to staffing issues, with both the prisoners and families not being informed. This lack of notice and poor communication has caused distress and anxiety to prisoners and their families who have been waiting by phones, with small children awaiting the calls.

These problems were compounded for foreign national prisoners, who had to book visits taking into account different time zones and availability of communications.

In the IMB wellbeing survey we asked prisoners about getting their post and telephone calls. Only nine percent were unhappy. In relation to the video calls, 23% were unhappy. Some comments were:

- *'it takes to far far too long for numbers to be added to your phone PIN'.*
- *'it takes too long to get post and parcels'.*
- *'can't fault extra credits being given'.*
- *'first five days were traumatic not being able to speak to my family when I needed them'.*
- *'No one has told me about purple visits'.*
- *'I've been asking for a purple visit call for three months but no response'.*
- *'being able to book after each purple visit is really helpful'.*

Mother and baby unit

This excellent 12-bed unit provided a happy, caring and safe environment for mothers and their babies. This year there has been an average of two mothers, and therefore it is sadly underused.

A new national policy on managing pregnant women and mother and baby units was published. At Eastwood Park new instructions were issued with posters to explain what needed to be done in the immediate time before labour began and if it began unexpectedly. Posters were prominently displayed.

7.5 Resettlement planning

During lockdown, the focus of the prison was dominated by keeping prisoners safe from Covid. In addition, the community rehabilitation company which had the contract for resettlement services at Eastwood Park was wound down and replaced. Staffing of the resettlement team during this period was, as a result, somewhat unsettled. On top of that, the team had been accommodated in one end of a building that had been condemned. Towards the end of the reporting year a new reducing reoffending strategy was agreed. This was to provide the framework for developing a renewed approach, given all the above changes and challenges.

In relation to accommodation, the needs analysis reported that 15% of prisoners were of no fixed abode prior to coming into the prison. 12.8% did not know where they would be staying on release.

During the year, the IMB had applications from women who were anxious about where they would be staying on release and had not had confirmation of the arrangements right up to a couple of days before release. Finding accommodation for prisoners has always been a significant challenge, exacerbated by an element of postcode lottery dependent on the attitude of the receiving home area. In recent years there had been improved communication between partner agencies and support from the Police and Crime Commissioners. As highlighted in the 2020 IMB resettlement report, there continued to be a gap between what prisoners expected and what resettlement teams were able to deliver.

Improvements such as pre-release planning boards had helped, providing clarity about what each agency could try to achieve in order to house the prisoner in stable and suitable accommodation.

In relation to finance benefit and debt, the needs analysis reported that 19% of prisoners had debts of between £1,000 and £3,000. Thirty-seven percent needed a bank account setting up. Jobcentre Plus representatives working within the prison helped prisoners arrange appointments to claim benefits. Activity to address finance benefit and debt had been fairly minimal. As a result of the set of actions comprising the strategy going forward were many.

In relation to addressing offending behaviour, Eastwood Park did not offer accredited offending behaviour programmes. It supported a small range of interventions, most provided by the Nelson Trust (see section 6.7 above). In view of the changed nature of the prison population at Eastwood Park, with increased numbers of long-term prisoners, this area of work needs considerable improvement to meet the needs of the women.

A pattern changing programme for those affected by domestic abuse was introduced and proved popular with and valued by prisoners.

In the IMB wellbeing survey 29% of prisoners were not satisfied with the drug services or behaviour programmes being provided. The following comments were made:

'you are surviving here there is no help unless they put you on the waiting list for you to think something is getting done'

- *'non-existent'*.

The work of the IMB

Our work during this period was again severely affected by the Covid pandemic.

During periods of lockdown (November 2020 to March 2021), we kept our visits to the prison at a minimum. Board meetings have been held either in the prison's training centre, which is outside the main gate, or via teleconference.

The Governor attended monthly Board meetings or joined teleconferences, to keep the Board aware of all developments within the establishment.

We normally received copies of notes following the daily operations meetings, which included details of segregated prisoners, issues that had arisen and general statistics. During periods of remote monitoring, we normally received weekly updates from individual wings/departments throughout the establishment, which enabled us to prepare weekly reports remotely.

As direct monitoring visits were kept to a minimum, we were a pilot Board for the introduction of a national freephone IMB applications helpline. This highly successful service for prisoners has been run by volunteer Board members throughout England and Wales, with coordination by the IMB Secretariat.

The facility for prisoners to make written applications has also continued. Due to the exceptional circumstances, such applications have been submitted via wing complaints boxes, rather than the normal IMB application boxes, which have been sealed off for the time being.

We would like to take this opportunity to commend our Board clerk, who scanned all written applications received and coordinated all letters to prisoners in response to helpline and written applications received. The Governor's secretary has also been very helpful by sending us minutes of meetings and notices to staff. All communication in respect of applications between the Board and Eastwood Park has been via secure email.

Two probationary members joined the Board in January 2020. Unfortunately, their training was severely affected by the lockdown, and the normal national training courses were suspended because of the pandemic. National online training was developed urgently, and worked well. Both members made visits to the establishment as often as possible, and, following successful induction, they have been appointed as full members of the Eastwood Park Board. These new members prepared, distributed and assessed a prisoner questionnaire so that we had direct feedback about their lived experience during lockdown. The board also participated in an equalities and diversity survey of prisoners throughout the women's estate.

The Governor, management team and senior staff have been accessible and extremely helpful to the Board during this difficult time. We were confident that information provided remotely by the prison accurately reflected conditions in Eastwood Park.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Total number of visits to the establishment	204
Total number of shifts on the 0800 telephone line*	120 plus (estimated)
Board members interviewed and awaiting appointment at end of the reporting period.	3
Additional board member awaiting confirmation of dual boarding with Hewell IMB	1

Applications to the Board

Applications by month

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
19/ 20	21	18	22	14	27	9	12	6	32	18	11	26
20/21	9	5	11	5	6	30	38	37	32	46	26	59

Time taken to deal with applications

	Within one day	Within one week	Longer than a week
2019/20	35%	52%	13%
2020/21	42%	51%	7%

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

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	36	27
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	2	4
C	Equality	7	16
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	5	15

E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	17	27
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	6	4
F	Food and kitchens	10	11
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	40	36
H1	Property within this establishment	21	95
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	0	4
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	3	2
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	21	18
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	41	43
K	Transfers	7	5
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	0	0
	Total number of applications	216	307

Paper applications represented 77% and 0800 applications 23% of the total.

There was a big increase in applications during the second half of the year. This coincided with the IMB returning to face-to-face monitoring. The 59 applications received in October was a record for one month. The largest rise was in applications related to property. It was clear that the system for receipt and distribution of incoming property to prisoners had broken down for a considerable period. This was due, we were told, to the limited number of staff available to process requests and a vast increase in parcels being sent in to prisoners.

Other changes included a reduction in the applications related to accommodation. There were fewer about the choice of TV channels, as this was addressed during the year. Unsurprisingly, there were more applications about time spent out of cell, access to showers and contact with family all of which assumed greater importance for prisoners during lockdown.

Despite the disruptions of lockdown, the board continued to answer applications, normally within a week. Only seven percent took longer, usually as we were awaiting information from a third-party.

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