

Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Dovegate

**For reporting year
1 October 2020 – 30 September 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 to the prison's records.

The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at HMP Dovegate is committed to treating all with respect and fairness, regardless of race, colour, ethnicity, religion, belief, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.

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 Dovegate is located near Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, and is a category B training prison holding male residents aged 21 and over.

The main prison consists of convicted residents, mainly serving determinate sentences, a remand facility and about 130 local prison places.

There is also a purpose-built therapeutic community (TC), which takes repeat and mainly violent offenders, who come from any prison in the country and volunteer to address their offending behaviour through group and individual therapy. All residents go through an assessment before being accepted as suitable for the challenges which come with the therapy on the TC.

The certified normal accommodation of the main prison is 960, and that of the TC is 200, giving a combined total of 1,160.

The number of residents held in the main prison over the reporting year has been at, or close to, the operational capacity.

The main prison consists of three houseblocks. The two original houseblocks (1 and 2) each have five wings, built around a central 'bubble'. Each wing has two floors, with each floor having 20 cells and four shared showers. A food serving area and a laundry are on the ground floor. There are fixed tables and chairs, a pool table and exercise machines in the recreation area, plus an outside exercise yard with outdoor gym equipment. Cells in these two houseblocks were designed for single occupancy and have an in-cell wash basin and toilet. A further 20 cells are larger and can accommodate two residents.

The new houseblock (3) has its four wings built around a central 'bubble'. This block has a dedicated drug treatment wing. The cells are larger, complying with European Prison Rules standards, and have integral showers. All the wings have the same communal facilities as in houseblocks 1 and 2.

All cells have a telephone installed, and all calls are security monitored. The Board has access to a telephone whereby they can contact residents in their cells.

Houseblock 1	Category B trainer
A wing	Long-term sentences (over 10 years) and enhanced incentives and earned privileges (IEP) status
B/C/D/E wings	Sentenced residents engaged in employment/education
Houseblock 2	Category B trainer
F wing	Sentenced residents engaged in employment/education
G wing	Long-term sentences (over 10 years) and enhanced IEP status
H wing	Sentenced residents engaged in employment/education
J wing	Sentenced residents engaged in employment/education
K wing	Social responsibility unit (SRU)
Houseblock 3	Local prison
L wing	Sentenced/remand residents serving less than two years
M wing	Early days centre, and interventions and substance misuse team (ISMT) detoxification
N wing	Dovegate induction wing
P wing	Vulnerable residents (including those convicted of a sexual offence)

The TC, which is separated from the main prison by an internal fence, consists of three houseblocks, all having single occupancy cells, with in-cell toilets and showers. The fourth block houses the education department and a small TC visits hall with a family room. It shares some of the main prison facilities – for example, the health centre and gym.

The care and separation unit (CSU - segregation) is a separate block and has 18 cells and two special cells.

Automated teller machines (ATMs) (kiosks), are installed in all the residential areas, allowing residents to check their accounts, order meals, make medical and dental appointments, access the prison complaints system, and arrange visits. Other functions are added on a regular basis.

The prison has its own kitchen and laundry.

The health centre has two waiting rooms and a range of treatment and consulting rooms for outpatient clinics. The inpatient facility has accommodation for 11 residents. Each room has a toilet and washbasin. There is one bath/shower room in the unit.

The prison has a large education and training facility (Dovegate College), four workshops, a gym, and a multi-faith centre.

The library services are provided by Serco, in partnership with Staffordshire Library Services. The Shannon Trust are active in the prison as an additional support to prisoners with poor reading skills.

The prison kitchen produces all meals in-house for residents, as well as for staff in a small bistro.

The prison has a contract with Serco Integrated Services for facilities management.

The prison has well-maintained and attractive gardens, with productive vegetable and flower growing areas. TC grounds are exceptional, with ponds and ducks cared for by residents. These have been looked after well throughout the whole year despite lockdowns.

The hedgehog preservation scheme began in summer 2018. Constructed by residents, the project has increased the population of this endangered species, who are still very much in evidence.

Staff vacancies became an increasing concern through the year, both in administrative and operational roles. A significant number of the newer staff members moved on during the year. Combined with staff illness and self-isolation this proved a challenge for management at times. Attempts to address the issue through offering overtime were only partially successful.

The Board were pleased to see management take new innovative measures to aid recruitment, including visiting local universities and placing adverts at sporting venues.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

As with last year, due to the Covid situation, at times only one or two members made limited visits and from November through to February only two members visited the prison. This was principally to attend CSU reviews and answer applications, including those received in the prison and through the 0800 line.

The Director was well established in her post at the start of the year and continued to appoint new members to her senior management team and make new appointments in all areas of the prison.

Board members have had access to all areas of the prison. The Board has had full cooperation from the Director and her senior management team. We would like to express our thanks to them for their help, especially through the difficult months of lockdowns during the pandemic.

The Director and her deputy make themselves available to the Board at any time and are open and frank in our discussions.

We also greatly appreciate the guidance and support received from the controller and her team, who also make themselves available to the Board at any time.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

The prison was generally calm and settled, and residents had good relationships with each other and staff. Managers actively work to address gang culture and be aware of vulnerable residents who may be taken advantage of.

A weekly stability meeting was introduced, attended by senior staff from all houseblocks, safer custody and security. The HMPPS controller and chair of the Board also attend. After contributions are received by all interested parties, each wing is assessed and given a 'traffic light' stability rating for the week. Areas and/or individuals of note are highlighted.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

Accommodation and facilities in Dovegate are good. The reporting system from the Board's weekly rota visits works well, and issues of cleanliness or disrepair were generally acted on quickly.

However, during the year, it was clear that there were 'wear and tear' issues in the fabric of the prison, specifically leaking roofs and smelly, blocked drains. There was a leaking roof in the kitchen which threatened to affect the electric supply. This was dealt with as an emergency. Repairing other leaking roofs will need a long-term plan with consideration of security issues involved in employing outside contractors working at height.

Staff treated residents with respect and the Board saw generally positive relationships between them. Although the successful key worker scheme had to be limited to the most vulnerable there was excellent communication between management, staff, and residents. The Board sensed a level of acceptance amongst the prisoners that the restrictions were necessary to keep them as safe as possible.

The lack of availability of body-worn cameras (BWCs) had been an issue for the Board for several years and had been raised in previous reports. The Board is pleased to report that new BWCs started to be rolled out to frontline staff at the start of the year and it is now rare to see these staff members without them. This is particularly the case in the CSU where their lack of availability had been an on-going concern for the Board.

The food is of a consistently high standard, with every dietary need catered for. Residents also have access to a wide range of products in the prison shop.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

Health and social care are provided by Practice Plus, which subcontracts to Midland Partnership Foundation Trust for the delivery of mental health services.

The Board has found that good cooperation between the healthcare and custodial teams produces positive outcomes for residents' health, and any concerns that the Board raises are generally dealt with immediately.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

'Through the gate' work was undertaken by the Reducing Reoffending Partnership (RRP), under contract to the community rehabilitation company until July 2021. RRP provided the seven resettlement pathway assessments and courses. These continued during lockdown and, although group work courses had to stop, the courses were adapted for one-to-one work using booklets and in-cell telephone contact.

In July 2021, national changes to the probation services resulted in much of the work being the responsibility of the prison. The Board has not been able to monitor this, but plans are in place to give time to this in the current year.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

- The Board looks for positive timely action from the Prison Service regarding the point raised below: prisoners' property during transfer. This has been highlighted in at least our last three annual reports. Far more urgency needs to be applied to this problem.
- There should be focus on reviewing the sentences of imprisonment for public protection (IPP) prisoners, enabling them to progress and move towards a safe release. It is against natural justice that so long after this sentence was abolished so many prisoners are still in prison.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- The Board continues to deal with a substantial number of property issues resulting from transfers from other establishments. More effort needs to be made to find a national solution to this problem. Despite a framework being developed in April 2020, nothing very significant seems to have happened and the IMB still chases property that has not arrived with the prisoner or is incomplete. No electronic system exists across the estate and prisoners still arrive with property cards.

TO THE DIRECTOR

The Board would like to thank the Director for her availability and openness, especially during the various lockdowns due to Covid-19. We are hopeful that what we highlight here, especially the points raised in previous annual reports, will see action in the present reporting year.

- Accelerate plans for the conversion of the in-patient unit in healthcare to provide consultation and treatment rooms adequate for the number of residents in the prison.

Should it be decided not to proceed with the above, then urgently upgrade the inpatient bath/shower room.

- Liaise with the head of healthcare to reinstate escorts to outside hospital appointments to the levels in place the previous reporting year.

Continue to encourage staff to make proper use of the BWCs which are now available and worn by frontline staff. Staff should be reminded that their value as de-escalation and evidential tools is only useful if they are turned on. This is essential for in-cell interaction where no other CCTV source is available.

3.4 Progress since the last report

The Board acknowledges the continuation of improvements made to the fabric and general cleanliness of the prison, which impacts on the health and welfare of residents. Every opportunity was taken throughout the year to upgrade many areas of the prison, highlighted elsewhere in the report.

The Board at last, after many years of reporting, was pleased to see the unhygienic toilet in the main healthcare waiting room boarded up and put out of action.

New BWCs are now available and being used by frontline staff, including in the CSU.

The ongoing improvements to healthcare provision in the prison which the Board has recognised in previous reports, and the cooperation between custodial and healthcare staff, undoubtedly contributed to the successful implementation of measures to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

All incoming residents have a consultation with a nurse and are given written information on the healthcare services available. This also covers the complaints and concerns system.

The induction process normally takes place on a wing with an early days centre and is led by well-established residents, known as Insiders. This team of Insiders meet and greet new residents and introduce them to the regime and importantly how to use the ATMs (kiosk machines). These ATMs are used for menus, canteen, arranging visits and medical appointments, and making complaints. Their function is frequently being expanded to allow residents access to other services in the prison.

In the latter part of the reporting year, very late arrivals from courts and groups of prisoners from other prisons put the normal reception and first night process under pressure.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

The number of incidents of self-harm decreased from 775 to 584 since the previous year. Many of the incidents of self-harm were carried out by a few residents who were prolific self-harmers.

The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened decreased from 874 to 685. This decrease was due to a mixture of robust ACCT management and implementation of ACCT v.06 which has a longer closure period.

There were five deaths in custody. One was apparently self-inflicted and two were apparently of natural causes. In the other two deaths no apparent cause was obvious.

As is the case for all deaths in custody, these five deaths are being investigated by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Resident-on-resident violent incidents increased by 19, from 77 to 96, and there was a decrease in resident-on-staff violent incidents, from 42 to 24.

Active violence reduction measures were in place and the SRU on K wing has been expanded to include the whole wing and is used to capacity. The aims of the unit are:

- to address and manage all forms of antisocial behaviour and violent tendencies shown by identified individuals
- to increase responsibility for behaviour and build motivation to address individual problems through cooperation with others

- to raise and develop awareness of prevention of violence
- to create a safe and stable environment for residents and staff living and working in the prison.

Vulnerable residents, including men convicted of sexual offences, are housed on a wing in houseblock 3. They have access to education and all the other activities available to the rest of the residents, as well as a separate workshop in industries. The regime seems to work well, and few applications to the Board relate to any breakdown in this arrangement.

The safeguarding needs of residents are identified in the days following arrival, either through the residents carrying out induction (which is carried out in the same way as before the pandemic but socially distanced), or through the residents' contact with healthcare staff, health champions on the wings and equalities representatives. Wing staff and houseblock managers are also alert to the need to identify people with particular vulnerabilities.

4.4 Use of force

All planned use of force is video-recorded and available to be reviewed. The successful rollout of properly functioning BWCs and their use by frontline staff provided the opportunity for all such incidents to be recorded and reviewed.

There were 278 incidents of use of force during the reporting year, 45 fewer than last year. Of these, 103 were planned, 16 fewer than last year, and 175 spontaneous, 29 fewer than last year.

Out of the unplanned (spontaneous) incidents, 110 required the resident to be restrained; 33 involved the resident being handcuffed; eight just used a guided hold.

Officers used personal protection techniques on 18 occasions. Batons were drawn on six occasions.

PAVA spray has not been issued or used in the prison at all this year.

The Board has not attended any of the use of force meetings this year because of the paucity of Board members and Covid-19. This will be remedied in the current year.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

The prison has a first night centre on M wing, which also houses the ISMT (see section 6.5), which aims to help with detoxification.

Intelligence-led searches continue to find illicit substances and quantities of 'hooch'.

A full-body scanner was installed during the year and proved a highly useful tool in the detection of secreted illicit items. At reception it was not uncommon for incoming prisoners to offer up restricted items before going through the scanner.

A prison service audit of the use of the scanner in the prison gave an accuracy rating of 91%, which was considered a more than acceptable result.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

HMP Dovegate is now nearly 20 years old; natural wear and tear is inevitable. The houseblock managers now have a clear responsibility to oversee the cleanliness and decency of their areas, with the Director and deputy director making regular visits to the wings, to ensure that standards are upheld.

The prison is very clean and well maintained, with no evidence of damage or graffiti. The communal areas of the wings are impressively clean and tidy, and most areas have been painted during the pandemic. The external areas, with grass and flower beds, are attractive and litter free; residents comment that the grounds have a positive effect on their mental wellbeing. The exercise yards have seating and some outdoor gym equipment.

The newest houseblock has showers in each cell. On the two original blocks, the shared shower cubicles are on both floors at the end of the wing, and residents can shower daily. There have inevitably been some restrictions to this during lockdowns and occasionally the Board has had to become involved in individual cases.

Cells are generally clean and in good condition. Residents have access to cleaning equipment and can obtain clean bedding weekly. In addition to the main laundry, they can wash their own clothes in the wing laundry facility – much appreciated by residents. Most residents wear their own clothes, but prison clothing, all of which is brand new, is available.

The Board received hardly any complaints about food; the few received related usually to special dietary requirements and were promptly resolved. Residents are usually positive about the quality of food on offer, as are the Board.

The kitchen is extremely well run and efficient. The catering equipment servicing company makes weekly visits to check for faults.

Residents can order food, among other things, from the prison shop. The range of products has improved, especially for residents from a minority ethnic background.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

Board members continued to monitor the care and separation (segregation) unit (CSU) and attend rule 45 reviews in all but a few weeks of the year despite restrictions imposed by Covid-19.

The CSU is a single-story building, comprising eighteen cells and two special cells. The unit is clean and well maintained. It is a matter of policy that the unit offers a very restricted regime, though books and reading matter are available on request; distraction materials such as colouring and writing materials are provided as needed. The two exercise yards are rather grim and bare and with no outlook but that is how they were built. The addition of outdoor exercise equipment in the yards would be beneficial to residents.

The very restricted regime in the segregation unit was criticised in the last HMIP report and a number of modifications agreed to. There has been no significant change in the regime.

The unit which houses rule 45 and 55 residents has remained calm throughout the year and continues to be managed in a professional manner. The lack of body-worn cameras for staff, a concern in last year's report, has now been resolved.

The unit is visited daily by a member of the senior management, healthcare, and chaplaincy teams, all of whom speak to the men on the unit.

Overall, Board members have found the CSU staff to be open and accommodating to our visits. Staff work well as a team and treat the men in their care in a professional manner in what can be a particularly challenging environment. Staff know the residents in their care very well and are able to inform the Board of the reasons for them being there and any problems or difficulties they may be experiencing. Staff make commendable efforts to resolve any issues residents may have.

Face-to face reviews have continued throughout the year with members of the IMB attending all good order and/or discipline (rule 45) reviews whenever possible. Residents are consistently asked whether they are fully aware why they are in the CSU. Reviews are conducted in a fair and reasonable manner and the decisions taken appropriate.

Every effort is made to move the segregated resident out of the unit as soon as possible; either back into main location or to another prison if deemed more appropriate. Any suggestions by a Board member for additional healthcare support have been actioned promptly.

It is pleasing that a member of the chaplaincy team now attends rule 45 reviews.

In addition, a member of the Board speaks to all men in the CSU on a weekly basis.

The monthly samples below show the total prison population and the numbers in CSU under rule 45 and rule 55.

Definitions: White = W1, Asian = A1, A2, A3, Black = B1, B2, B3.

Dovegate CSU (2021)													
	Dec			May			June			July			
Prison population		% of prison population			% of prison population			% of prison population			% of prison population		
White	679	59.9		678	60.1		684	59.7		676	59.3		
Asian	92	8.1		93	8.2		89	7.8		95	8.3		
Black	160	14.1		141	12.5		145	12.7		142	12.5		
Other	203	17.9		216	19.2		228	19.9		227	19.9		
White percentage	59.9			60.1			59.7			59.3			
Total	1134	100.0		1128	100.0		1146	100.0		1140	100.0		
R45		% of CSU population	% of ethnic group		% of CSU population	% of ethnic group		% of CSU population	% of ethnic group		% of CSU population	% of ethnic group	
White	16	61.5	2.36	3	21.4	0.44	10	47.6	1.46	4	28.6	0.59	
Asian	3	11.5	3.26	3	21.4	3.23	4	19.0	4.49	3	21.4	3.16	
Black	5	19.2	3.13	7	50.0	4.96	4	19.0	2.76	4	28.6	2.82	
Other	2	7.7	0.99	1	7.1	0.46	3	14.3	1.32	3	21.4	1.32	
Total	26			14			21			14			
R55		% of CSU population	% of ethnic group		% of CSU population	% of ethnic group		% of CSU population	% of ethnic group		% of CSU population	% of ethnic group	
White	19	55.9	2.80	27	61.4	3.98	30	66.7	4.39	18	48.6	2.66	
Asian	0	0.0	0.00	6	13.6	6.45	2	4.4	2.25	2	5.4	2.11	
Black	8	23.5	5.00	7	15.9	4.96	10	22.2	6.90	13	35.1	9.15	
Other	7	20.6	3.46	4	9.1	1.85	3	6.7	1.32	4	10.8	1.76	
Total	34			44			45			37			

The numbers involved in individual months are insufficient to draw statistically significant conclusions, but collectively the numbers are statistically significant, and there is a consistent pattern. As in previous years, the percentage of Black residents on rule 45 and rule 55 is consistently higher than their percentage in the overall prison population.

5.3 Staff/prisoner relationships, key workers

Overall, staff treat residents with respect. The Board often sees evidence of positive interactions between residents and officers, who usually show good knowledge of the residents in their care. All staff are trained as key workers and the system was working well until Covid-19. Towards the end of the reporting year the key work activity was revived.

Residents are consulted about matters through the prison council (PRIAC). Equalities representatives on the wings are also a helpful channel of communication and advice.

Officers are invariably polite, welcoming, and helpful.

The disruption caused this year by Covid-19 has thrown into sharp focus the positive relationships between residents and staff. Residents have been kept fully informed of what is going on and the support available to them. Gestures like being given extra telephone credit and extras from the shop, in addition to exercise programmes, religious support and so on, have meant that residents have recognised that prison staff have done as much as possible to mitigate the stress that such long periods without activity and confinement to cells has created.

5.4 Equality and diversity

Equality and diversity are overseen by a full-time equalities manager and her support staff.

The diversity and equality action team (DEAT) meets monthly, chaired by the Director or deputy and is normally attended, amongst others, by resident equalities team leaders and, on a rolling basis, other resident equalities representatives, each of whom is allocated to a protected characteristic. A member of the controller's team is also present.

Meetings are run in a purposeful manner with statistics of adjudications, IEP levels, and use of force in relation to ethnicity, age and religion. The Board in the last two years identified some evidence of the over-representation of the black population on rule 45 and rule 55 in the CSU. This was brought to the attention of the equalities team but the Board is not aware of any investigation as to the reasons. Similar over-representation is this year reported under segregation above (section 5.2).

Identifying gay residents on arrival is not always possible as prisoners do not always self-identify.

In addition to the initial screening in reception, the equalities team make contact with new residents to try to identify vulnerabilities, such as mental and physical health problems, learning difficulties and neurodivergence (for example, autism and dyslexia) as well as any disabilities. The resident may disclose these but there are cases where a diagnosis has not been formally made. A resident's family sometimes alerts the prison about their concerns.

Referral to the psychologist or mental health team will be made if necessary, or to the healthcare team.

The number of men with disabilities varies, typically 138-148 (approximately 12% of the total prison population), of which physical impairment constitutes the highest number. For example, there were 55 physically impaired residents in July.

An ongoing issue is determining who needs a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP). In November, 52 residents needed these, 16 of whom were on the vulnerable prisoners' wing, where many are older than average. The need is

determined by discussion between equalities and the resident. It is proposed that healthcare will be involved in the future.

Part of the year's action plan has been organising a disability tour, with the help of external agencies, to identify shortcomings in provision and to identify the further needs of sensory deprived residents.

A detailed questionnaire was issued to black, Asian, and minority ethnic and Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller residents this year to explore a number of different aspects of life in Dovegate, including arrival and reception, first night, food, life on the wing, relationship with staff and faith. In November, 37 residents identified as Travellers.

The incentives and earned privileges scheme and the paperwork relating to it have been overhauled with an awareness of unconscious bias.

Unconscious bias was an issue raised in one community in the therapeutic community. It was pleasing to see the response to this was to give staff further training.

Reception staff have been given some training in dealing with and understanding the needs of transgender residents. Tailored packs of personal items and a support/help sheet have been issued to reception staff for issue to transgender residents on arrival.

There are ongoing plans to setup a DVD library for foreign nationals.

Pre-Covid, residents were able to attend a number of forums (focus groups) relating to the protected characteristics of equalities legislation (age, disability, race, sexual orientation and gender identity and religion and belief) and in addition veterans in custody, foreign nationals, and care-leavers (a person under 25 who has been looked after by a local authority). Each monthly meeting had a staff lead. Representatives brought the concerns of the forums to the DEAT meetings, where their views were taken seriously.

With the restrictions created by the pandemic and the need for strict social distancing, the resident representatives have not been able to attend the DEAT meetings. Regrettably, the forums have not been able to meet this year. In preparation for forums being restarted, however, new staff leads have been appointed and some training was given in July.

Throughout the year there have been various equalities activities, limited necessarily by the Covid regime. These have taken the form of DVDs, presentations, and quizzes (both to staff and residents) such as autism awareness, bipolar day, transgender day of visibility, an LGBT month, and Black History Month. Also, a resident-chosen meal was provided for Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller residents. In addition, residents have been able to name a charity to support in relation to their forum group.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The prison has an attractive multi-faith centre with two large rooms, which can be merged to form one large meeting place.

There have been significant changes in the chaplaincy team this year in both personnel and direction. For a time after the co-ordinating chaplain resigned, the chaplaincy was managed by the equalities manager. A new managing chaplain came into post in November 2020 – the change in title is significant – who has given a much greater sense of purpose and direction to the team.

In addition to the managing chaplain (who is a Roman Catholic deacon), there is a full-time Anglican chaplain and a full-time Muslim chaplain with part-time Muslim, Free Church and Catholic chaplains. Representatives of the other Christian denominations as well as other major faiths, Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism go into the prison on a part-time basis, some more frequently than others, according to need.

There is still an ongoing difficulty in recruiting a specialist chaplain to meet the needs of Rastafarian residents.

A valuable addition has been the appointment of a bereavement councillor.

A Humanist was appointed to the team during the year, though did not pass clearance, so there remains a vacancy in that position.

The figures collected on religious affiliation when prisoners first arrive in reception do not indicate whether they regularly attend religious activities.

It must be emphasised that all the members of the chaplaincy staff have responsibility for all residents, regardless of their belief or non-belief. Board members see this in action across the prison and especially in their contact during reviews in segregation.

The chaplaincy team always respond positively to requests from Board members to see residents we have identified, through applications or otherwise, that would benefit from chaplaincy input.

Chaplains make contact with new residents within 24 hours of arrival as required and visit all residents in the segregation unit daily. Unlike in the past, a chaplain attends rule 45 reviews. They also contribute to assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) reviews and attend meetings held by the security department to manage residents charged with terrorism offences.

The restrictions imposed by Covid have impacted on the ability to hold religious services. Muslim Friday prayers, and Catholic and Anglican services were held on a wing-by-wing basis on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. With the easing of restrictions, they are held on a house block basis. Throughout the year, the chaplaincy has made use of Dovegate TV to send out prayers, services, and anything else of significance.

There has been a full calendar of events marking religious festivals during the year, regime restrictions allowing, including special food to celebrate Eid.

The Board is pleased to see the renewed sense of purpose, organisation, and direction of the chaplaincy team under the new manager and with the recruitment of a significant number of new staff.

5.6 Incentives and earned privileges

In accordance with the incentives policy framework of last year, an IEP incentives forum was set up, and a new IEP policy/facilities list created. The forum meets two-monthly. The Board has no more information on this matter.

5.7 Complaints

The prison complaints procedure works efficiently overall, with replies answered politely. As reported in previous years, the Board notes that it is to the frustration of the residents that complaints sent out to another prison from which the resident was transferred are not answered within an acceptable time. These are not always followed up and it then becomes easy for the complaint to be overlooked; the Board is then involved, frequently having to involve colleagues on other Boards or other prisons directly.

Complaints increased over the year by 162 on the previous year, from 1,521 to 1,694. Last year the top three categories were property, confidential access, and security. This year the top three were property, wing issues and confidential access.

5.8 Property

As observed above (see section 5.7), complaints about property remain stubbornly at the top of the list.

Applications about property represent the largest proportion of applications to the Board. External property applications related entirely to prisoners arriving from other establishments with property missing. The Board had no requests from other Boards to assist with applications relating to property missing on transfer from Dovegate.

Despite highlighting this to the Minister and the Prison Service in previous years, the Board has seen nothing concrete in terms of a solution to the problem.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Measures put in place by the prison and the healthcare team to address the challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic were effective in preventing any outbreak in the prison up to the end of the last reporting year.

However, having been successful for six months in keeping the virus at bay, infection in the prison reflected that in the community and the prison was declared an outbreak site at the start of the reporting year.

Despite achieving significant improvements to waiting times for GP and dental appointments and mental health assessments in the last reporting year, the ongoing situation with Covid-19 has seen a dramatic rise in waiting times across all healthcare services. This is due, in part, to the increase in time needed between patients, to allow staff to clean and change PPE, but, more significantly, due to the significant decrease in waiting room capacity within the unit. The existing waiting rooms originally could hold in excess of 35 residents, but this has reduced to five, due to social distancing rules. This is woefully short of the required waiting room capacity for an establishment of the size and demographic of HMP Dovegate.

No addition to the healthcare facility was provided when houseblock 3 was built.

Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, the 2015 HMIP report declared that 'There were insufficient clinical rooms for the population, which reduced the services provided'. A proposal is being drawn up, which seeks to define a resolution to the lack of clinical rooms, the shortage of waiting room space and the insufficient capacity of the pharmacy hub, as well as introducing additional mental health resources, which will be focused on those patients with the greatest need.

Complaint forms specific to healthcare are available on all houseblocks and are dealt with by healthcare managers.

Inpatient unit

Concerns have been raised as to the suitability of the inpatient service and unit in the prison, along with the establishment's ability to deliver health services in line with the recovery agenda, and the ongoing Covid restrictions. The inpatient unit still has a very dated bath/shower room, where the bath/showers do not allow wheelchair access.

The Board reported on this last year and in previous years and it was the first point in the areas for development made to the Director in last year's report. Despite assurances throughout the year that plans were being taken forward to remedy the situation, the Board has not been made aware of anything concrete being in place.

The health needs assessment of 2020 concluded the following findings in relation to the inpatient unit:

- there is currently no dedicated cell within the inpatient unit for palliative and end of life care

- The inpatient unit does not have staffing with the right skill sets, it should meet all need that is presented here.
- there is no nursing station within the inpatient unit.

For many years, the Board has reported that the toilet in the main waiting room in the health centre was not fit for purpose. We have found it frequently blocked and filthy. Despite some improvements to the waiting room itself, the toilet continued to be a concern and we questioned whether it needed to be there. Alternative toilet facilities are available in the corridor. We are pleased to report that after a discussion with the Director at the June 2021 Board meeting, the toilet was immediately put out of use and the area boarded up. The current staffing profile for the inpatient unit is one registered nurse, with 24-hour provision. There is no dedicated mental health provision, despite the majority of admissions to the unit being for mental health reasons. During the 10-month period of October 2020 to August 2021, 91 patients were admitted to the inpatient unit.

Of the 26 patients admitted by prison staff, 17 were to access the gated cells for non-clinical constant supervision under the ACCT process and eight were inappropriate admissions, for example for security reasons.

Of the remaining 85 admissions (33 for physical health and 52 for mental health reasons), only 17 required increased mental health input, which could have been delivered on the wings, with the correct wrap around care.

Based on this evidence of the use of the unit, a proposal is being drawn up to discuss the potential closure of the unit with commissioners, Serco and HMPPS controllers.

6.2 Physical healthcare

It remains a contentious position that anyone should experience a planned death in prison. However, for some individuals, compassionate release to alternative premises in which they can end their life is either not possible or unwanted and therefore there is a requirement that those individuals who do have a planned death in a custodial setting experience the highest standards of care. It is for these reasons that a proposal has been put forward by Serco and Practice Plus Group to the controllers, prison owners and NHS England to provide a palliative care suite on one of the wings, which will enable the establishment to comply with the 'Dying Well in Custody Charter', which is a national framework for local action.

The increase in the number of escorts available for external hospital appointments, reported in last year's report, was changed at the start of this reporting year by reducing escorts from six daily to four daily. This, combined with increased waiting times at the local hospitals, has seen a dramatic rise in the time taken for patients to

attend scheduled hospital appointments. The Board will recommend this as an area of development for the Director.

The collaboration between healthcare and custodial staff on the wings continues to have a positive impact on the day-to-day management of the Covid-19 crisis. Dedicated cohort areas in place to shield and assess residents, and the special measures taken to protect and support high-risk and extreme-risk residents were in place throughout the year.

Nursing staff continue to be available 24 hours a day. A proportion of GP consultations are telephone appointments, but face-to-face consultations continue to take place, when necessary, with GPs and nurses.

Healthcare staff and kitchen staff work closely together to ensure that all dietary requirements are covered. Any issues that the Board raised in this regard were responded to promptly.

6.3 Mental health

All individuals entering HMP Dovegate have a screening assessment, and if mental health concerns arise a referral is made to the mental health team. Any member of staff within the prison can complete a referral (TAG) to the team, and residents can self-refer. All referrals receive an assessment, and routine referrals are seen within five working days and urgent referrals within two working days. The team attend all initial ACCT reviews which support referrals for those not currently known to the team and attend or send contributions to ACCT reviews for those on the team's caseload.

The mental health team's vacancy rate continues to prove problematic, which creates pressure in attempting to achieve targets. During 2021, contractual obligations were not always met within the target time to see routine referrals within five days but those who were urgent were prioritised. There are five visiting psychiatrist sessions per week (one session = a half-day clinic). These are covered by three visiting psychiatrists.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, all urgent referrals have been seen within the required timescale. To support contact with residents, the team continues to use the in-cell telephones for telephone reviews and assessments.

All service users have been offered self-help material and distraction tools.

The primary care administration team, head and deputy head of healthcare have relocated to new offices within the safer custody hub, and this has provided the mental health team with two additional clinic rooms within the healthcare centre. This now negates the need for mental health staff to conduct confidential assessments and interventions in communal areas on the wings.

A lack of a therapeutic group space for any healthcare interventions meant that the ability to conduct group interventions with appropriate teaching materials was limited.

Use of the in-cell telephones has enhanced the team's ability to contact service users, and additional lines have been added, so that there is now sufficient capacity to meet demand.

6.4 Social care

Social care assessments are provided by Staffordshire social services, with a triage between healthcare nurses and occupational therapists where necessary. Practice Plus Group continues to manage and deliver social care packages to residents. There is a robust process in place for referral, assessment, and feedback. All residents can apply for social care. If the assessment concludes that care should include mobility aids and the supply of special equipment such as shower chairs, special mattresses and commodes, then occupational therapists assess individual needs and supply the necessary equipment. All healthcare assistants who deliver social care within the prison are at level two social care. Each qualifying resident has an individual care and support plan. There is a good working relationship between all agencies to ensure delivery of the required services for the residents, either on the wings or on the inpatient unit.

6.5 Exercise, regime

There are spacious exercise areas and outdoor gyms in the prison. The gym is large and well equipped, and popular with the residents. Each wing has use of the gym on a rota basis. When not in lockdown the rota system continued, although the maximum capacity was reduced to allow for social distancing. The Board rarely receives complaints about access to the gym.

During the year much of the outdoor gym equipment was upgraded.

In addition, the gym itself had a major overhaul. The main gym, exercise room and the weights room were redecorated with the addition of inspirational quotes. New flooring was laid in the weights room and a considerable amount of new cardiovascular and weights equipment installed. It is hoped that the gym will become an educational gym academy with the recruitment of a health and wellbeing tutor.

The amenities fund was used to install a new fitness suite in a small unit in the main prison.

During lockdowns, gym staff were deployed to the wings.

The Board was pleased to see that great effort was made to maximise time allocated to the residents in the gym to the full when the Covid regulations allowed.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

All arrivals at Dovegate have an immediate healthcare assessment, carried out by healthcare staff. Any residents who arrive needing stabilisation or detoxification are transferred to a dedicated area on M wing for continuous monitoring. Further tests are carried out, and contact is made with previous pharmacies to ensure the continuation of regular medicines. Residents are also assessed by a specialist

prescriber for further prescribing, and by the psychosocial team. In addition, healthcare assistants attend M wing twice daily to check on these residents' general health.

The ISMT team consists of a service manager, two specialist prescribers, two healthcare assistants and six psychosocial practitioners. The ISMT actively challenges residents who misuse drugs and works with them to address their addictions with recovery programmes and interventions. Care plans and training programmes are in place to support and enhance recovery.

Group sessions are no longer routinely provided, due to the absence of a room for this purpose.

There is a hotline number available, specific to substance misuse, and a 'Safer Dovegate' meeting takes place weekly to discuss support for vulnerable residents.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

Education staff are employed directly by Serco, so were available throughout the year to continue providing education and purposeful activities in different forms, including during lockdowns. An assistant director has responsibility for regime and activities.

An Ofsted monitoring visit took place at the latter end of the year and the prison was given a 'reasonable progress' rating. The education team, senior management and the controller were pleased with this, considering the challenges posed by Covid.

The Board welcomes the report and endorse its findings:¹

'The vast majority of prisoners are currently engaged in some form of activity across education and work, albeit limited. Attendance at education has been high. Only a few prisoners work full time in areas such as the laundry and the kitchens. This has enabled them to continue to undertake qualifications. However, prisoners who do not participate in classroom-based education, prison work, or the few industries that operate on a full-time basis, can only attend workshops and classes for up to one day each week. Therefore, they still spend long periods of time in their cells with limited structured activities to keep them purposefully occupied.

'Managers modified the curriculum to suit better the circumstances and learning needs of a disparate prison population. Despite limited access to face-to-face learning, prisoners can follow an increasingly broad range of subjects through in-cell packs. Topics such as 'stay fit and well' and 'Dovegate does Dragons' Den' have added variety and fun. Managers have expanded the prison's own television channel rapidly, providing short programmes linked to education subjects. Many of the programmes have been created by the prison's own tutors. The use of Dovegate television is high, and prisoners speak positively about it.'

In-cell packs were introduced in the first lockdown and have been continually added to and improved.

Distance learning to A level standard and Open University courses have seen a rise in numbers, with Open University coordinators visiting the wings to ensure that materials are received by learners, and assignments submitted on time. Students on these courses can apply for grants and student loans. Residents who have qualified as teaching assistants have been valuable in Dovegate for many years and were used effectively throughout the year. Residents can go on to level 3 in advanced education training.

Education tutors have made full use of in-cell telephones and the ATMs to keep in contact with their learners.

¹ [50173993 \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](https://www.ofsted.gov.uk/50173993)

The Virtual Campus project is well advanced but was not active at the year end due to some technical issues.

Dovegate TV has continued to be a valuable resource for a variety of topics, including yoga, geography, history, and cell exercise workouts. It has been developed and expanded as it became clear that Covid would continue to disrupt face to face contact.

The library is available to residents and staff and has a wide range of books, CDs, DVDs and audiobooks to borrow. They also offer legal sessions, an activity club and are involved in Silver Readers, a charity which encourages reading of stories to other people. The library has an officer who is available to escort residents to and from the library.

The Shannon Trust is active in the prison. This is a peer-mentored adult reading programme which can give residents a vital start to increasing their literacy level.

A library trolley service has operated when the prison is on lockdown, with requests made on the ATMs. Residents who cannot attend the library when the prison is functioning normally can make use of the outreach system to order books on the ATMs.

7.2 Vocational training, work

When the prison was out of lockdown, industries reopened but with lower capacities in the workshops.

The level 2 hospitality and catering qualification has been able to continue throughout, as the kitchen workers continue in employment.

The prison welcomed a new programme by Restart Dogs, the first in the adult estate. Selected residents participating on the programme will become dog trainers, developing puppies destined to be assistance dogs. The Restart Dog project, launched in 2019, has an innovative approach to providing education in a high security setting. Restart Dogs, led by a dog trainer and behaviourist, will teach the residents how to train assistance dogs. Four puppies, who are destined to help with the challenges of a person's disability, providing emotional and practical support in day-to-day tasks, will receive their puppy life skills training by the residents. The puppies will receive their basic training for 10 months until they are ready to go on to the next phase of their training. A carefully selected group of residents who have demonstrated a willingness to make changes to their own behaviour are putting their learnt skills to the test by training the puppies through positive reinforcement techniques, encouraging them to choose positive, appropriate behaviours in a calm and positive environment. This project has been extremely popular with staff and residents.

7.3 Offender management, progression

The offender management unit (OMU) is staffed by non-operational staff, rarely deployed elsewhere, so they are able to dedicate their time to their role. During the changes necessitated by the pandemic, the shift patterns of staff in the OMU were

modified, to create the necessary social distancing in the office. However, the overall number of hours worked remained the same.

Video-links to courts worked and hearings took place for remand residents. New equipment was installed during the year to increase quality and capacity.

Offender assessment system (OASys) assessments have continued to take place, as has the preparation of residents for their parole hearings, with contact being made by telephone. Parole hearings have been conducted either by telephone or video-link.

7.4 Family contact

Every resident has access to an in-cell telephone, and the extra free credit they have received has been a lifeline in enabling family contact during the Covid restrictions.

The Visits Hall was completely upgraded with new décor and furniture and more user-friendly social distancing screens. These were a great improvement on the previous temporary screens.

‘Purple Visits’ (a secure virtual calling platform), where residents have family contact via computer tablets in the visits hall, are now in place and working well. These visits are very popular with most of the residents.

Family Support Services were active in maintaining family relationships and connections. They offer a range of supportive interventions including one-to-one sessions on a variety of issues such as family courts and adoption processes, toddler groups and family days. They provide Acorn and Phoenix visits, Story Book Dads and FRED (Fathers Reading Every Day). Craft sessions encourage residents to make and send cards on special occasions.

7.5 Resettlement planning

Resettlement planning was carried out by the RRP in the early part of the year until the national changes to the probation services took place in June 2021.

In-cell technology was used when group course work had to be discontinued.

During the first nine months of the year, of the residents released, 93% had accommodation to go to, compared with 85% last year. In December 2020 and January 2021, the figure was 100%.

Figures from the last three months of the year have not been obtained by the Board. Responsibility for finding accommodation had passed from the community rehabilitation company to NACRO.

7.6 Therapeutic community

The therapeutic community is separated by an internal fence within the HMP Dovegate grounds. Residents must make a request to the admittance committee and are discussed to see if they are likely to benefit from the therapeutic and group work that is fundamental to the workings of this area.

There are three blocks with two wings on each, holding a maximum of 200 prisoners in total. Each wing has a wing chairman and deputy who are elected, and all residents sign up to the community constitution before they enter the therapeutic system.

As the community is based on group work, Covid-19 has had a major impact on the progress of all residents in this area. The initial complete lockdown meant that the psychology-based group work was halted, and residents received only two exercise sessions of 45 minutes per day.

As time progressed, with the realisation that Covid was continuing, the prison became more inventive in its delivery of in-cell phone therapy. Once Stage 3 was reached, group work for ten residents was allowed twice a week and education once a week.

The accommodation has been improved over the lockdown period with more cleaning and painting taking place, and with fewer residents on the wing at a time less mess occurs. The TC remains one of the cleanest areas in the whole of HMP Dovegate, the community charter increasing the pride that residents take in their communal areas.

8. The work of the IMB

The start of this reporting year was six months into the Covid pandemic, and the Board had come to terms with remote monitoring and fewer visits. There were six members at the start of the year and after what was thought to be a successful recruitment campaign four out of seven candidates were appointed. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, at the end of the year only one of these new members remains on the Board, none of the others having completed training or undertaken any duties. Due to our shortage of active members and the lockdowns, many areas of the prison have been subjected to very limited monitoring.

A member of the Board always gives a presentation detailing the work of the IMB to the ITC for new officers.

The Board is grateful for the support of the IMB clerk, as well the staff in the business support unit and the complaints department. This we found vital for applications and general working of the Board, especially during lockdowns.

The Board has an open and constructive relationship with prison managers and staff, including healthcare staff, and feels welcome in all parts of the prison. The new Director and deputy director had been in their posts for six months at the start of the year and an emphasis on security was evident.

Senior managers made themselves available to the Board and joined our meetings in person or remotely when this was necessary.

The Director responded promptly to the Chair of the Board when issues had been raised by residents via confidential access applications.

The deputy director always had an open door and invited the Chair to attend the weekly stability meetings.

The Board valued the frequent contact with the controller and her team, and their willingness to share their overview of the stability of the prison.

Unlike the previous year, when monitoring was done remotely for almost four months, visits continued throughout the year, albeit by only two members during the lockdown over Christmas 2020.

The number of applications to the Board from residents were equivalent to the previous year, when only half of the year had been affected by the pandemic.

Both of these years' numbers were considerably lower than previous years. The Board had previously attributed this to a more efficient prison complaints process and to the success of the key worker scheme. However lockdowns may have had an impact on residents being able to put in applications, although the 0800 applications line was well used.

A challenge for the Board in the coming year will be recruitment, particularly as the two most experienced members will retire at the end of 2022, due to tenure.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	6
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Total number of visits to the establishment	167
Total number of segregation reviews attended	154

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year 19/20	Current reporting year 20/21
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	15	10
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	6	8
C	Equality	7	7
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	14	6
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	3	8
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	9	9
F	Food and kitchens	5	2
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	34	29
H1	Property within this establishment	24	29
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	26	24
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	0	2
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	6	11
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	17	26
K	Transfers	7	3
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	7	4
	Total number of applications	180	178



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