



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Bullingdon

**For reporting year
1 July 2020 – 30 June 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.

2. Description of the establishment

2.1 HMP Bullingdon is a local and resettlement prison situated near Bicester in Oxfordshire. During the reporting year the process of reconfiguration has continued. This means that it now holds a larger number of prisoners on remand (up to 45% of its population) than it did before reconfiguration began. Most of these prisoners will transfer to other establishments if they are convicted. Many will appear at court hearings by video-link from the prison. It also means that Bullingdon now serves a larger number of courts than before reconfiguration. Therefore, an increasing number of prisoners who will be released to the areas served by those courts are moved back to Bullingdon for the end of their sentences, provided that they have at least three months to serve. This means that an increasing number of prisoners are serving shorter stays in the prison. The high level of turnover ('churn') leads to various problems, in particular with regard to progression and resettlement.

2.2 The prison continues to hold some young adults and sex offenders under treatment. About 15% of the prisoners are foreign national prisoners (FNPs).

2.3 The prison's certified normal accommodation is 869, but its normal operational capacity (permitted maximum number of prisoners) was 1,077, increased to 1,081 on 27 June 2021. It is planned to return it to its pre-pandemic level of 1,114 by January 2022. Average occupancy during the reporting year was 1,034. This is to be compared with 1,057 for April-June 2020 (after the onset of Covid-19) and 1,068 for July 2020-March 2021. The averages were 1054 for the year to June 2019 and 1,109 for the year to June 2018. These high levels mean that many prisoners share cells that were designed for only one occupant (see 5.1.1.2).

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

3.1.1 Covid-19

The Covid-19 outbreak has had a significant impact on the Board's ability to gather information and discuss the contents of this annual report. The Board has therefore tried to cover as much ground as it can in these difficult circumstances, but inevitably there is less detail and supporting evidence than usual. Ministers are aware of these constraints. Regular information was collected specifically on the prison's response to the pandemic, and that was collated nationally.

3.1.2 Staff matters

3.1.2.1 As of 30 June 2021, Bullingdon had 316 uniformed staff, operational support staff, prison officers, supervisory officers and custodial managers. Twenty-three of these officers were either in their first (probationary) year, having completed the initial 12-week training course Prison Officer Entry Level Training (POELT)), or were waiting to begin the course. Thirty officers had experience of under two years, and 263 officers (including supervisory officers and custodial managers) had experience of two or more years. Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, 59 prison officers left Bullingdon: 36 of these officers resigned, and the other 23 either transferred to other establishments, retired, or were dismissed.

3.1.2.2 Eight members of staff received awards for long service and good conduct.

3.1.2.3 Information technology (IT) systems in the prison continued to be slow and unreliable, and often made it very difficult for staff to carry out routine tasks. This had a bearing on safety and security, and on sentence progression, since it was an impediment to keeping records up-to-date. The recent introduction of electronic recording of use of force (UoF) and complaints has put even greater strain on the prison's IT systems.

3.1.3 Review of safety in the prison by the regional safety team

A review was carried out by the regional safety team in September 2020. One of the principal findings was that the prison had failed to implement the majority of the recommendations which the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) had made in its reports on cases of alleged suicide in the prison. Although several enquiries have been made by the IMB, it has not been possible to identify an action plan or what actions have been taken by the prison to address the recommendations made since the report was published (October 2020).

3.1.4 Audit of safe custody

This audit was carried out in May 2021 by the central performance group. In most respects the judgements made were no better than 'adequate', although it was acknowledged that allowances were needed because of the impact of Covid-19. The main aspects identified as in need of improvements were quality assurance (QA) (better application of available processes), induction (need for more local relevance), risk assessment on entry (better information required), and higher standards of monitoring and managing those most at risk of self-harm.

3.1.5 Ofsted interim visit

An Ofsted interim visit was conducted remotely on 23-24 February 2021. Ofsted noted that leaders and managers had responded appropriately to providing education, training and work where lockdown restrictions permitted and had well-developed plans to restart face-to-face-teaching. Recommendations included the need to improve the quality of learning packs and to provide training for teachers in delivering remote blended learning.

3.1.6 Prison life during a pandemic

3.1.6.1 The IMB's annual report for the year to 30 June 2020 explained how changes to the running of the prison, arising from the need to prevent the spread of Covid-19, had been introduced in the period from March to June 2020. There had been three significant changes: firstly, the ending of social visits and of access to the library and the gym, secondly the curtailment of outside agencies providing education and vocational training and work, and thirdly the implementation of a very restrictive national regime to help to maintain social distancing as far as possible for both prisoners and staff; this resulted in many prisoners having to spend 23 hours a day in their cells.

3.1.6.2 These restrictions continued to apply in this reporting year although there was a certain amount of variation in the severity of the restrictions. The prison was successful in keeping the prison largely free from Covid-19 until January 2021.

3.1.6.3 Social visits were suspended periodically during the reporting year. In July, a system of visits by video link (Purple Visits) was established. After a slow start the popularity of such visits increased. It is intended that after the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, these visits will continue and operate alongside in-person social visits.

3.1.6.4 Education and vocational training and work opportunities continued to be adversely affected by the Covid-19 restrictions during the reporting year. Until December 2020, education packs were delivered and returned to prisoners by tutors at the cell door, but between January and April 2021 the tutors were not able to go on to the wings. From April to June 2021 the packs were once again delivered and returned to prisoners by tutors at the cell door.

3.1.6.5 Many prisoners continued to have to spend 23 hours a day in their cells. In many cases they left their cells only to collect meals and medication, and to take showers and exercise on a restricted basis. Staff continued to make daily welfare checks on prisoners with the cell door open to provide direct communication with the prisoners, but this led to long periods of isolation for many prisoners with minimal access to facilities and much reduced scope for exercise and social interaction. The pressure for prisoners to share cells designed for single occupancy is likely to continue.

3.1.6.6 The pressures outlined above led to an exceptionally difficult week beginning on 12 April about which the Bullingdon IMB Chair wrote to the IMB regional representative. Following a difficult weekend, there had been 42 men on assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCTs), five prisoners on constant watch and five incidents of serious self-harm on one day. The separation,

segregation and care unit (SSCU) had reached its maximum capacity of 20 prisoners. Healthcare held 16 prisoners but 10 of these were on ACCTs. Nine ambulances were called to the prison and there were serious staff shortages in healthcare. This unsafe situation was attributable to a range of factors: frustration of prisoners who had been under lockdown for months, exhausted and inexperienced staff, and poor healthcare provision due to staff shortages. These staff shortages had been exacerbated by a dispute with agency staff arising from recent national changes to tax regulations. The regional representative shared these concerns with the National Chair of the Independent Monitoring Boards who forwarded them to the Minister in a letter in May 2021. Since then, the situation has improved: the dispute with the healthcare agency staff has been resolved and the Governor has put in place a recruitment strategy for mental health staff. However, the broad concerns of the IMB remain.

3.1.6.7 On the more positive side, the recently installed in-cell telephones (with extra personal information number (PIN) credits for prisoners for the duration of the pandemic) and additional telephones on the main wings and elsewhere have continued to work well. These helped to facilitate contact between the prisoners and their families and between the prison staff and prisoners.

3.1.6.8 There has been little success in decreasing the prison population, despite the reduction of its operational capacity because of Covid-19. Significant numbers have been brought back into prison on recall, often for very short periods of between seven and 14 days, so that they never leave the part of the induction unit in which all newly arrived prisoners are quarantined.

3.1.6.9 Some prisoners were appointed as Covid-19 peer representatives. They have met regularly with the deputy governor, and then spoken with other prisoners, helping to inform and reassure them. Prison television and radio were also used to communicate messages to prisoners.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

3.2.1 This is the sixth consecutive year in which the Board has reported concerns about safety in the prison. Levels of violence increased marginally in the reporting year when they might have been expected to reduce because of the Covid-19 restrictions, and are still far too high (see 4.3.1). A large number of drugs was found in the prison (see 4.3.4). On the positive side, in September 2020 a body scanner was installed in reception, and this has been successful in reducing the number of drugs coming into the prison. Also, in April 2021 an airport-style scanner was installed at the gate used on entry by all staff and visitors. However, the number of drugs coming into the prison is still high.

3.2.2 In early April 2021, owing to a combination of factors, the prison was in such an unsafe situation that the IMB Chair wrote to the IMB regional representative to set out the Board's concerns at the situation. These concerns were passed on to the Minister in a letter in May 2021 (see 3.1.6.6).

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

3.2.3 Although the prison has made efforts to treat prisoners as fairly and humanely as possible, these efforts have been frustrated by the Covid-19 restrictions. The Board questions whether it is fair or humane for prisoners to have to share cells which were designed for single occupancy, especially since prisoners eat meals and use the toilet in their cells. This chronic problem arising from overcrowding has been exacerbated by measures that the Prison Service introduced as part of its attempt to minimise the spread of infection during the pandemic, which meant that most prisoners spent 23 hours in their cells each day.

3.2.4 The Board is not fully confident that the prison has done all that it could to eliminate discrimination, although recent revisions in procedures are starting to improve the collection and interpretation of data related to equality issues (see 5.4).

3.2.5 There is a poor level of written communication with prisoners (see 5.1.1.3). When notices to prisoners (NTPs) are sent out, they are put on a noticeboard on the wings, but during Covid-19 some prisoners found it difficult to look at noticeboards, and some prisoners are unable to read. Also, some NTPs have been sent out giving very little notice of actions which are about to take place.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

3.2.6 The efforts of the prison to meet prisoners' health and wellbeing needs have been severely hampered by the Covid-19 restrictions.

3.2.7 The recruitment and retention of healthcare staff have remained an issue. National changes to tax regulations also impacted on and decreased the supply of agency and bank staff during the latter part of the reporting year.

3.2.8 An internal audit in August 2020 identified too many cases of mislaid prescriptions and delays in administration of medications. Waiting lists for dentistry and for both urgent and routine appointments with GPs and nurses have been unacceptably long, although to some extent this has been caused by Covid-19 restrictions and is therefore a direct consequence of the pandemic.

3.2.9 The mental health team does not offer counselling. Volunteer counsellors have not been able to visit the prison during much of the year due to Covid-19 restrictions.

3.2.10 There are some prisoners whose mental health is such that the prison is not equipped to cope with them; it is very likely that they need to be sent to secure psychiatric institutions instead.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

3.2.11 Covid-19 restrictions have frustrated the prison's efforts in this regard. Education courses were suspended for the period July-September 2020. A programme of in-cell learning was then implemented, with most education having to be conducted remotely, although some education classes were reintroduced from May 2021.

3.2.12 Vocational training and work also suffered in so far as some workshops remained closed and numbers of prisoners working in the remaining workshops and on the wings were reduced in order to meet social distancing requirements.

3.2.13 The offender management in custody (OMiC) system continued to function on a reduced scale within Covid-19 restrictions, but offending behaviour programmes were severely curtailed for most of the year because of the restrictions.

3.2.14 The increasing number of prisoners on remand or serving shorter sentences leading to greater churn has frustrated the prison's efforts to progress prisoners towards successful resettlement. In many cases, prisoners are not able to complete education courses before release. Also, in many cases prisoners are not able to progress from unskilled work to skilled work or, if they do, to finish any training courses that they undertake as part of that skilled work. On a more positive note, the prison has been selected to take part in the reducing reoffending accelerator (RRA) project (see 7.5.3) and it is hoped that this will result in improved job prospects for prisoners upon release.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

1. There are some prisoners in Bullingdon whose state of mental health is such that the prison is not equipped to cope with them; it is very likely that they need to be sent to secure psychiatric institutions instead. Some of these prisoners have spent far longer in the SSCU than 42 days, after which continued segregation has to be reported to regional management, and some of them have repeatedly self-harmed. What steps will the Minister take to ensure that such prisoners are no longer sent to the prison?
2. There continues to be a high proportion of staff with limited experience. How will the Minister ensure that experienced staff levels are maintained at adequate levels, and what can the Minister do to enhance the training that all staff receive?
3. The continuing reconfiguration of the prison has led to an increasing number of prisoners on remand or serving shorter sentences. The increasing churn has caused the prison problems, in particular with regard to progression and resettlement. The selection of the prison to take part in the RRA project is welcomed, but what other steps can the Minister take so that the prison can improve its provision of progression and resettlement services?
4. The prison continues to be chronically overcrowded, despite repeated representations by the Board that the overcrowding is unacceptable. There are 521 cells designed for single occupancy, most of which are occupied by two prisoners. This overcrowding puts great pressure on communal spaces and facilities. It is incompatible with the fair and decent treatment of prisoners who are doubled up in cells designed for single use, particularly when, owing to Covid-19 restrictions, many prisoners have to spend 23 hours per day in their cells. What steps can the Minister take to reduce the chronic overcrowding?
5. The Board understands that there are plans for a new building at the prison which is to accommodate 240 more prisoners. Does the Minister intend that

the new building be used to reduce the chronic overcrowding in the existing prison?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

1. There are some prisoners in Bullingdon whose state of mental health is such that the prison is not equipped to cope with them; it is very likely that they need to be sent to secure psychiatric institutions. Some of these prisoners have spent far longer in the SSCU than 42 days, after which continued segregation has to be reported to regional management, and some of them have repeatedly self-harmed. What steps will the Prison Service take to ensure that such prisoners are no longer sent to the prison?
2. There continues to be a high proportion of staff with limited experience and some have no experience of the prison regime as it was before Covid-19 restrictions were imposed and may therefore find it difficult to adapt when these restrictions are finally lifted. How will the Prison Service ensure that staff receive the training and professional development which they will need if they are to succeed in their role?
3. The continuing reconfiguration of the prison has led to an increasing number of prisoners on remand or serving shorter sentences. The increasing churn resulting has caused the prison problems particularly in the area of progression and resettlement. Many prisoners have not had time to complete education courses before their release. Also, many prisoners have either not been able to progress from unskilled work to skilled work or have not been able to complete any training courses which they have undertaken as part of this skilled work. The selection of the prison to take part in the RRA project is welcomed but what other steps will the Prison Service take to ensure that the prison improves its provision of progression and resettlement services?
4. The prison continues to be chronically overcrowded, despite the Board's repeated representations that the overcrowding is unacceptable. There are 521 cells designed for single occupancy, most of which are occupied by two prisoners. This overcrowding puts great pressure on communal spaces and facilities and is incompatible with the fair and decent treatment of prisoners who are doubled up in cells designed for single use, particularly when, owing to Covid-19 restrictions, many prisoners have to spend 23 hours per day in their cells. What steps can the Prison Service take to reduce the chronic overcrowding?
5. The Board understands that there are plans for a new building at the prison which is to accommodate 240 more prisoners. Does the Prison Service intend to use this new building to reduce the chronic overcrowding in the existing prison? If not, what other steps can the Prison Service take to reduce it?
6. There continues to be a problem with the availability and use of drugs. This is despite the strenuous efforts which were made in the reporting year on the part of the prison, including the greater use of sniffer dogs, the screening and copying of incoming mail, the installation of a body scanner for prisoners in reception, and the installation of an airport-style scanner at the gate used for entry by visitors and staff. What further steps can the Prison Service take to address the availability and use of drugs in the prison?

TO THE GOVERNOR

1. There continues to be a high proportion of staff with limited experience. In some instances, these staff have no experience of the prison regime before Covid-19. How will the Governor ensure that these staff receive appropriate training so that they can carry out their duties effectively?
2. The continuing reconfiguration of the prison has led to an increasing number of prisoners on remand or serving shorter sentences. The increasing churn resulting has caused the prison problems particularly in the area of progression and resettlement. Many prisoners have not had time to complete education courses before their release. Also, many prisoners have either not been able to progress from unskilled work to skilled work or have not been able to complete any training courses which they have undertaken as part of this skilled work. The selection of the prison to take part in the RRA project is welcome but what other steps will the Governor take to ensure that the prison improves its provision of progression and resettlement services?
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4. The Board understands that there are plans for a new building at the prison which is to accommodate 240 more prisoners. Does the governor expect that this new building be used to reduce the chronic overcrowding in the existing prison? If not, what other steps can the Governor take to reduce that overcrowding?
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3.4 Progress since the last report

3.4.1 Following the suspension of social visits (see 7.4.1), a system of Purple Visits (video link) was established (see 7.4.2). After a slow start, the success of these visits grew and it is intended that they will continue after the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted.

3.4.2 The reduction of the number of outstanding offender assessment system (OASys) plans (see 7.3.1) continued. This was a positive development as better and quicker sentence planning is needed to improve prospects for the rehabilitation of prisoners for their release.

3.4.3 A new x-ray body scanner for prisoners was installed in reception in September 2020 (see 4.1.3). This proved successful in detecting illicit items.

3.4.4 An airport-style scanner was installed in April 2021 at the gate used for entry by visitors and staff.

3.4.5 The prison has been selected to take part in the RRA project. This means that it has started to receive additional support to improve rehabilitative support to prisoners particularly as regards employment and accommodation (see 7.5.3). Two new temporary staff were appointed in June 2021 specifically to support the RRA project.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.0 Overview

The safety of the prisoners is managed through the monthly safety strategy meeting and a weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM). The latter reviews prisoners who are subject to safeguarding i.e. those who are on the violence reduction programme known as challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIP), and also long-term residents of the SSCU (see 5.2 below). These meetings continued through the reporting year, in spite of the Covid-19 restrictions.

Another important part of violence reduction is OMiC, under which an officer is allocated as key worker to each prisoner. Key working was reduced, and for a period suspended altogether, because of the Covid-19 restrictions (see 4.3.6), and this, although inevitable, was a major cause for concern. Arguably most concerning was the suspension over several months of this work with men on an open ACCT, i.e. those deemed to be most at risk in the prison.

Overall safety within the prison was most threatened first by the significant rise in cases of self-harm (see 4.2.1), and secondly by a shortage of staff.

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1. Despite the Covid-19 restrictions, there was still a very high number of prisoners being processed through reception. The total was 11,997 in the reporting year. This is a 13% increase compared with the year to June 2020.

4.1.2 At the start of the reporting year, all new arrivals went straight from reception to Finmere (induction) wing for 14 days in isolation. Later this was reduced to 10 days if a prisoner had received two negative Covid-19 test results. If any prisoners arrived at the prison showing symptoms or having tested positive for Covid-19, the prison transport took them directly to Finmere (induction) wing where they were processed.

4.1.3 A new x-ray body scanner for prisoners was installed at the end of September 2020 and proved very successful in detecting illicit items being brought into the prison. Scans were carried out on prisoners new to the prison, prisoners returning from court, transfers in from court and other establishments, licence recalls and those prisoners who had been subject to a cell search. It was used 3,123 times between 1 October and 30 June, with 508 positive results.

4.1.4 The reception team were badly impacted in January and February by an outbreak of Covid-19 in the prison and surrounding area. At one stage they were down by 50% through positive results and Track and Trace. Despite this, they continued to manage the heavy throughput of prisoners professionally and efficiently, with other officers being detailed to help out. In April, there was a rotation of staff throughout the prison resulting in a number of new members of the reception team. These new members settled in well, with no obvious disruption in the day-to-day running.

4.1.5 Redirects from HMP Winchester happened very frequently. This could result in their transport often arriving well into the evening and mean a newly arrived prisoner might not reach the induction wing until 22.00, or on some occasions even later. This arguably amounted to inhumane treatment of the prisoners concerned and put considerable strain on the resources of the reception team.

4.2. Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

Suicide and self-harm

4.2.1 A considerable increase (53%) in cases of self-harm was reported, about 916 in the reporting year compared with the year to 30 June 2020 (599). It seems probable that regime restrictions, in particular the lengthy, routine confinement time in-cell without external activities, triggered this increase. However, analysis of the data shows about 70% of incidents were carried out by just 15-20 individual prisoners. Thus, a hard core of multiple repeat-self-harmers, some with significant mental health issues, inflated the total prison figures. These individuals were typically located in the SSCU and healthcare areas and proved extremely challenging for staff.

4.2.2 The ACCT procedure is the principal means by which the prison identifies those men at risk to themselves and manages that risk. The number of ACCTs opened is a key indicator of the numbers at risk of self-harm. In the reporting year, 1,035 ACCTs were opened compared with 988 in the year to 30 June 2020.

4.2.3 The effectiveness of the prison's application of the ACCT procedures continued to be under the spotlight. The resulting QA focus led to improvements. Stronger processes were introduced; the main issue was the lack of consistency in implementing them. Better identification of at risk prisoners on entry was in place compared with in the year to June 2020. Staff comments and assessments showed more attention, with clear improvements in care plans produced; multi-disciplinary involvement increased; The required QA checks were variable from department to department. Initial checks by the safer custody team were routinely carried out, but subsequent checks by custodial managers much less so.

Deaths in Custody

4.2.4 Seven deaths were recorded which compares with six in the year to 30 June 2020 and six in the year to June 2019.

4.2.5 During the reporting year, the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) published three reports into deaths which had occurred in the year to 30 June 2020. In all three cases, death through natural causes was recorded. In the first case, the prisoner was deemed to have received healthcare equivalent to that expected in the community. However, the prison was criticised for applying inappropriate restraint to the prisoner during a hospital visit. This specific criticism had already been made in previous PPO reports to the prison. In the second case, the prisoner was deemed not to have received a level of healthcare equivalent to that expected in the community. His chronic conditions were judged not to have been managed satisfactorily. In the third case, the report concluded that the prisoner received healthcare equivalent to that expected in the community and no issues were raised.

4.2.6 A review of safety in the prison was carried out by the regional safety team in September 2020. One of the principal findings related to recommendations made by the PPO in their reports into cases of alleged suicide in the previous three years. The review concluded that the prison had not implemented the majority of these recommendations. Although several enquiries have been made by the IMB, it has not been possible to identify what actions have been taken by the prison since the report was published (October 2020).

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 The number of violent incidents in the reporting year was 403 compared with the year to June 2020 (383), a 5% increase. The number of violent incidents in the year to 30 June 2020 (383) was a 9% reduction on the year to June 2019. This increase in the reporting year is disappointing, particularly in the light of the relatively high levels the prison had reached two years ago. Under the Covid-19 restrictions, violence might have been expected to be reduced, as the opportunities for prisoner-on-prisoner contact were much reduced.

4.3.2 Although the number of serious cases in the reporting year was 43% lower than the year to June 2020, assaults on staff did increase. Extended confinement within cells undoubtedly triggered some of this negative behaviour as frustration levels increased. Prisoners were denied normal opportunities to interact with staff and had to rely on activating cell bells and waiting for a response.

4.3.3 The prison sought to examine factors behind violence levels beyond the impact of Covid-19. It identified well above average perpetration of violence among wing workers, individuals selected on the basis of their relatively lower risk assessments. Action was taken to address this via partnered work between the safer custody and activities departments. Analysis revealed a well above average number of violent incidents involving young adults (those aged 18-20). Action was taken to disperse such individuals more evenly across the wings.

4.3.4 The prison continued to experience relatively high levels of drug and alcohol abuse despite regular activity to intercept and reduce inflows from outside. Also, there was 'there was information indicating the manufacture of psychoactive substances within the prison. The numbers of prisoners found under the influence of such substances during the reporting year were similar to the year to June 2020. In April 2021, the prison installed an airport-style scanner at the gate used on entry by all staff and visitors. It is too early to assess its impact.

4.3.5 CSIP (see 4.0) is an important tool to combat potential violence; it aims to identify and support those prisoners posing the greatest risk of violence. During the reporting year this tool became more effectively embedded within the prison in terms of referral rates and sources. More attention was placed on risk assessments on entry, in particular drawing on any previous history of violence.

4.3.6 Another important tool to combat potential violence is OMiC and the key worker scheme (see 4.0 and 5.3). Because of Covid-19 restrictions key working was reduced during the reporting year and for a period was suspended altogether.

4.4 Prisoners with specific vulnerabilities

4.4.1. The prison maintained separate regimes for those prisoners who were under threat and were self-isolating on the wings, as well as for the cohort of men convicted of sexual offences who were housed on a dedicated wing. Those prisoners who had mobility or care needs were usually housed on the wings at an appropriate location depending on their needs, although there were some exceptions to this due to the Covid-19 restrictions (see 6.4.3). There was frequent use of the SSCU for prisoners under threat and this often led to long term stays in the SSCU (see 5.2.)

4.4.2. At SIM meetings the staff showed in-depth knowledge of at risk prisoners. Opportunities were offered to any member of staff, directly or indirectly involved with supporting vulnerable prisoners, to raise safeguarding concerns.

4.5. Use of Force

4.5.1. Use of force (UoF) was used on 918 occasions in the reporting year, which compared with 690 occasions in the year to 30 June 2020, a 33% increase. Bearing in mind that for the whole of the reporting year Covid-19 restrictions were in place, whereas for the year to 30 June 2020 they were only in place for the last three months, it might have been expected that there would have been a decrease rather than a large increase.

4.5.2 The bi-monthly UoF meeting routinely examined detailed data and analysis. These included the profile of prisoners from an equalities perspective; the number of complaints received; the assessment of incidents for their proportionality; and the extent to which body-worn camera footage was obtained. Over the reporting year, the proportion of Muslim men involved in UoF incidents was over 50% higher than their proportion of the total prison population. As reported previously (see 4.3.3), the involvement of young adults was significantly greater than the prison average would predict.

4.5.3 The majority of UoF incidents (60%) were recorded on body-worn cameras during the reporting year, an improvement over the year to June 2020. For most of the reporting year, it was rare for any incident to be judged disproportionate in the amount and type of force employed. However, towards the end of the reporting year, more such cases were reported, including instances of disciplinary action taken against staff.

4.5.4 In the year to June 2020, clear deficiencies in the timeliness and quality of reporting of incidents had been observed. This reporting year has seen improvements. In March 2021, a new electronic UoF reporting tool was introduced. Feedback from the staff was that it was much easier to use and helped to reduce the length of time it took to submit a report. There were still delays in submitting reports at the time of the incidents. Unfortunately, UoF training for officers was suspended because of the Covid-19 restrictions.

4.6 Substance misuse

4.6.1 Overall, normal levels of support for overcoming substance addiction were maintained during the reporting year. One third of men entering the prison were identified as having such addiction, a level which remained stable across the reporting year; this compares with a slightly higher proportion (about 37%) among all

local prisons. Sixty percent of all treatment cases were for opiate use, the same level as nationally. The drop-out rate from treatment programmes in the prison was considerably higher (28%) than for all local prisons (6%). The main reason for this difference was the increasing remand role of the prison, which means an ever-growing churn among new entrants into the prison who may start a programme and leave well before completion. The record for referrals for treatment once released into the community was higher (40%) compared with all local prisons (33%).

4.6.2 The prison has a dedicated drug-free residential area where prisoners are supported to maintain their avoidance of substance abuse. During the reporting year much of the work of this unit was suspended because of Covid-19 restrictions.

5. Humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 Accommodation

5.1.1.1 The prison continued to be overcrowded. There are 521 cells designed for single occupancy, many of which are occupied by two prisoners. This chronic overcrowding has a detrimental effect on everything the prison seeks to do and puts great pressure on communal spaces and facilities. It also has a particular impact on the fair and decent treatment of prisoners who are doubled up in cells designed for single use. Prisoners usually eat meals in their cells, and there is little or inadequate screening around the toilets in the cells.

5.1.1.2 The prison continued to show many signs of dilapidation through wear and tear and deliberate damage by prisoners. Problems persisted in the serveries on the wings, where in many cases there were long delays in replacing broken equipment. During the reporting year, it was identified that a number of cells were missing items of furniture, such as bedside cupboards, but there was a long delay following delivery of replacements before they were installed.

5.1.1.3 There is a poor level of written communication with prisoners. When notices to prisoners (NTPs) are sent out, they are not sent to individual prisoners. They are sent to the individual wings and put up on a notice board and it is up to the prison officers to draw the prisoners' attention to the notices and, if the prisoners have poor reading skills, to tell them what they say. During the Covid-19 restrictions, the prisoners have had very little time to look at noticeboards. Also, some NTPs have been sent out giving very little notice of actions which are about to take place.

5.1.1.4 On the more positive side, the telephones installed in all the cells on the main wings and the telephone points installed in healthcare and the SSCU continued to work well. These helped to facilitate contact between prisoners and their family and friends outside the prison and also contact between the prison staff and prisoners directly. This has been particularly valuable during the Covid-19 restrictions.

5.1.2 Clothing and other supplies

5.1.2.1 As many prisoners were in their cells for up to 23 hours a day during the reporting year, the very poor quality of the mattresses became ever more evident. Many became compressed and gave little cushioning from the bedframe's metal crossbars. Some prisoners managed to acquire a second mattress to compensate.

5.1.2.2 The quality of prison clothing was poor and lost its texture and thickness rapidly. This was particularly relevant during the winter months when an extra sweatshirt often had to be handed out to prevent prisoners, especially the older ones, from becoming cold.

5.1.3 Food

5.1.3.1 The food budget has not been reviewed for six years and it is significantly less than other prisons. It remains officially at £2.02 per man per day, although in fact £2.25 per man is a truer reflection of what was actually spent. Portions were

sometimes inadequate. In particular, the breakfast pack for the prisoners on which the Board has commented in previous reports continued to be meagre.

5.1.3.2 The new colour-coded menus introduced in the year to June 2020 have continued to work well. Food choices were colour-coded: green for healthy choices like salads, red for less healthy options like pizza and chips. The prisoners were enabled to make an informed choice about their diet. Halal, non-halal, vegetarian and vegan options were available every day.

5.1.3.3 Levels of discipline and oversight when meals are served have continued to be variable. This could lead to some prisoners getting large portions and others missing out. Servery workers did not always wear the required clothing or use the appropriate serving utensils, and sometimes prisoners did not bring with them suitable plates on which to take away their meals.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 The majority of good order or discipline (GOOD) boards took place on Tuesdays and a member of the IMB was usually present; when this was not possible, attendance by remote means took place.

5.2.2 Particularly in the last part of the reporting year, a number of SSCU staff were absent with Covid-19 or were self-isolating. This put a lot of strain on the remaining staff and their ability to run a regime aimed at getting prisoners out of the SSCU as soon as possible.

5.2.3 Several prisoners spent a long time in the SSCU: the longest stay was 512 days. This is far in excess of the recommended maximum term in the SSCU. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, it was difficult for prisoners to be transferred between prisons. From the end of December 2020, all the long-serving prisoners in the SSCU were moved either within the prison or transferred to other prisons. This meant that, although at times the SSCU was full, during the period from December 2020 to June 2021, no prisoner was in the SSCU for longer than 107 days.

5.2.4 Regular SIM meetings (see 4.0 above) continued to take place. At these meetings there was consideration of action plans (intended to help prisoners to return from the SSCU to a normal residential wing) which were produced for all prisoners who were in the SSCU for longer than 15 days.

5.3. Staff prisoner relationships, key workers

5.3.1 Staff/prisoner relationships were generally good in the prison. However, Covid-19 restrictions have unavoidably meant that there was less interaction between staff and prisoners.

5.3.2. Key working is integral to OMiC - see 7.3.2. It is a strategy whereby each prisoner has a designated officer who visits him on a regular and frequent basis to help with any problems that may arise, and generally provide support. The prison aims to offer one 45-minute key working session to each eligible prisoner by allocating two sessions of key working per week to each wing. However, key working suffered badly throughout the reporting year because of the Covid-19 restrictions

and staff shortages. At times the sessions per week were halved or suspended altogether. In April 2021, a small amount of key working was reintroduced, prioritising prisoners who had been identified as being vulnerable. This key working was largely carried out by using in-cell telephones. In May 2021, some of the lockdown restrictions were lifted and key working in person was more widely introduced once again.

5.3.3 As well as the problems brought about by Covid-19, key working was in any event challenging because of the high churn of the prisoner population. The continuing reconfiguration of the prison (see 2.1) means that there is an increasing number of prisoners on remand or who have fewer than three months to serve. This in turn means that in many cases a prisoner does not get the chance to develop a relationship with his key worker before the prisoner is released or transferred to another prison. There continues to be some confusion about the way in which key working sessions should be recorded and assessed.

5.3.4 It is estimated that the numbers of probation staff and prison offender managers (POMs) have been about one third down across the prison as a result of Covid-19 along with long-term sickness and maternity leave. This has put great strain on the remaining staff and has had an adverse effect on staff/prisoner relationships and key working.

5.4 Equality and diversity

5.4.1 The prison's delivery plan sets out proposed actions for each protected characteristic. The diversity and inclusion meeting now takes place monthly and a prisoner representative is usually involved.

5.4.2 Monthly snapshots enable comparisons to be made to ascertain if prisoners with a given protected characteristic are under- or over-represented in (say) complaints or activities (see also 4.5.2 and 7.1.3). However, data on protected characteristics were not always collected consistently and there were significant gaps. For example, in September 2020, disability was recorded as 'not known' for 40% of prisoners (as opposed to 'refused to disclose'). The prison recognises that a considerable improvement in the collection and interpretation of data is needed; a radical revision of procedures began in April 2021.

5.4.3 A prisoner who feels he has experienced discrimination of any kind may submit, in confidence, a discrimination incident report form (DIRF). The circulation of information to prisoners about DIRFs has improved. The number of DIRFs submitted has increased from about 20 a year to 20 a quarter.

5.4.4 Foreign national prisoners (FNPs) usually made up between 11% and 13% of the prison's population, although this had risen to over 15% by May 2021. FNPs comprise some 40 nationalities but the number of languages spoken is not known. The use of the telephone-based interpreting service has increased in recent years (year to June 2020 – 230; year to June 2019 – 282). The total for the reporting year is not available.

5.4.5 English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses had to be delivered via in-cell reading and writing packs; it was difficult for prisoners with limited English to benefit from these without direct tutoring.

5.4.6 Prisoners may borrow library books in their own language; for example, books in Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Vietnamese and Albanian were borrowed in December 2020.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

5.5.1 Most faith-based activities (including weekly prayers or worship, and classes for religious instruction) usually take place centrally, for prisoners from all wings. Most of these centrally based activities were suspended throughout the reporting year as part of the Covid-19 restrictions. Activities that have resumed took place for groups of prisoners on individual wings or spurs only, so prisoners had only limited opportunities to participate in communal faith-based activity.

5.5.2 Chaplains employed by the prison operated under restricted conditions; they had limited access to some wings during most of the reporting year and made use of in-cell telephony for much of their contact with prisoners.

5.5.3 Unlike other departments in the prison, the chaplaincy typically makes use of a large number of volunteers who assist in different ways. National guidelines prevented volunteers from coming into the prison for much of the reporting year. This absence of volunteers has reduced the amount of faith-based support available for prisoners, and also the number of people able to offer activities such as counselling and support for prisoners (of any faith or none) who had been bereaved.

5.6 Incentives schemes

5.6.1 The incentives policy framework (IPF) is designed to promote good behaviour and challenge misbehaviour. Prisoners may be placed on a 'basic', 'standard' or 'enhanced' level, which affects the privileges for which they are eligible.

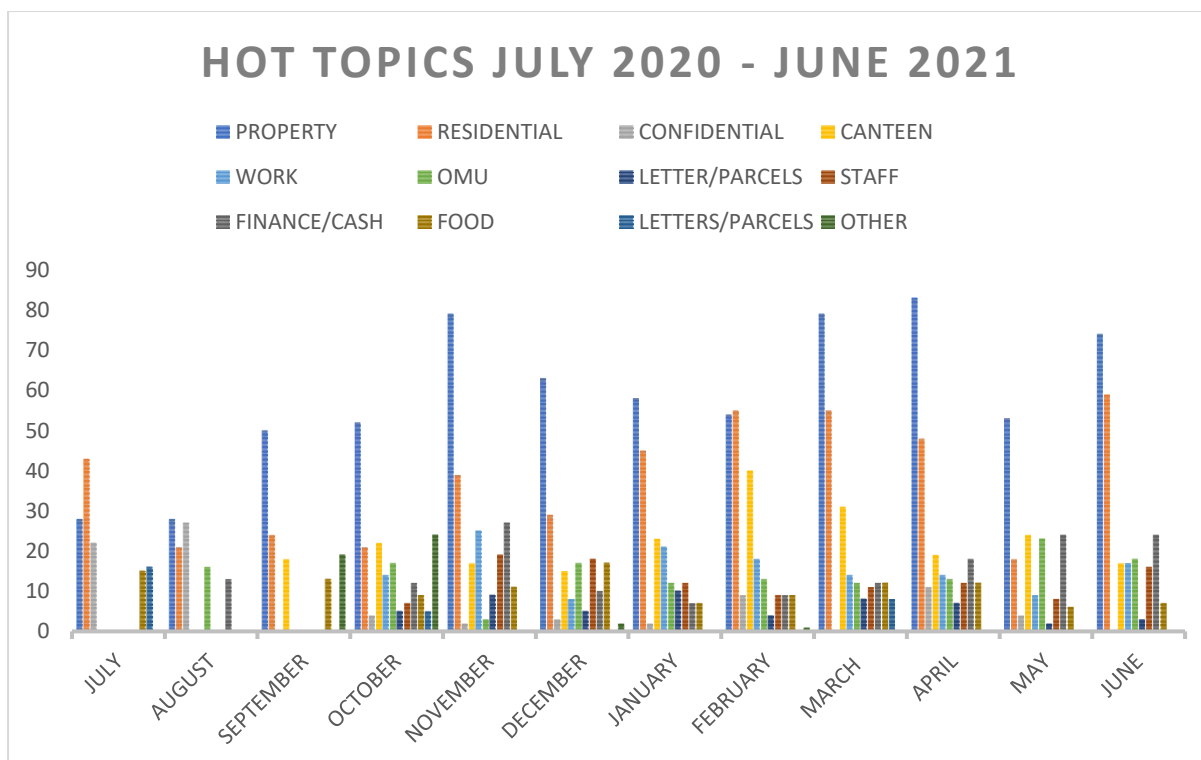
5.6.2 Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, prisoners were given additional privileges to help them to cope and none were left on 'basic'. In May 2021, about a fifth of prisoners were on 'enhanced'. The low proportion may have been due to the more limited opportunities for prisoners to demonstrate responsible behaviour.

5.7 Complaints

5.7.1 Should the prisoner's complaint need to be forwarded to another establishment for a response, a reply is expected back within two weeks. Approximately 70% of the required responses were not received back within this timeframe: the prison had to send on average two email reminders per complaint.

5.7.2 On 10 May 2021, complaints moved from a paper to electronic system which to date appears to have gone smoothly and is working well.

5.7.3 As the graph below shows, most of the complaints received relate to the prisoner's property.



5.8 Property

5.8.1 Applications relating to property, at 81 out of a total of 543, represents 15% of all those received. This percentage is similar to that in the year to June 2020. Forty-five related to issues within the prison and 36 were due to transfers in or out of the prison.

5.8.2 Some problems arose because prisoners are required to submit a list to reception listing one by one the items that they would like to be sent in. It is frequently thought by prisoners that by completing this general application, approval will automatically be given and parcels can then be sent in. This is not the case and formal approval has to be received back by the prisoner before asking family or friends to send in the requested property. If the parcel has not been authorised, the gate staff will refuse to accept it. A quicker response to general applications could go some way to eliminating this problem.

5.8.3 When a prisoner moves to the SSCU, a cell clearance certificate should be completed by the wing within 72 hours. This does not routinely happen and property has been known to go missing; the loss of letters, photographs and paperwork in particular can contribute to frustration and considerable distress.

5.8.4 In the year to June 2020, £2,733.33 was paid to prisoners as compensation for items that the prison had lost or damaged. The Board was not able to obtain a figure for the amount paid in the reporting year.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

6.1.1 In the early part of the reporting year healthcare services were offered by Care UK. In September 2020, Care UK was incorporated into England's largest independent provider of NHS services, Practice Plus Group (PPG). Sub-contractors remain the same: Cotswold Medicare Ltd provides GPs, Time for Teeth dentistry services, and Global Technology ultrasound tests and some x-ray provision within the prison. A local delivery board oversees the work of these providers and is tasked with ensuring that healthcare services in the prison meet the standards required by the NHS commissioners.

6.1.2 A new head of healthcare was appointed in December 2020. Much of the initial focus has been on the collaborative working with prisoners and staff on the reduction of Covid-19 transmission within the prison, recruitment and training of healthcare staff, and the restoration of healthcare services i.e. future management of waiting lists which have been caused by Covid-19.

6.1.3 During the Covid-19 restrictions, in-cell telephony and door-to-door symptom checking have proved helpful in supporting prisoners' health.

6.1.4 Partly as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions, there were long waiting lists for physical health services, although these were reduced towards the end of the reporting year.

6.1.5 Recruitment and retention of staff remains an on-going issue. Concerted recruitment campaigns continue and have had some success. National changes to tax regulations also impacted on and decreased the supply of agency and bank staff during the latter part of the reporting year. This in turn has had an effect on daily healthcare routines, e.g. delays in the administration of medicines.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 The majority of healthcare complaints received by the Board continue to be medication related. Clinical decisions taken within the prison environment versus prescriptions available in the community are strictly regulated and the Board is satisfied that prison doctors follow guidance issued by the Royal College of General Practitioners relating to safer prescribing within prisons.

6.2.2 In August 2020, an internal audit undertaken by PPG identified issues in the daily management of medications resulting in mislaid prescriptions and delays in administration of medications. On-going training and staff support were implemented to remedy these issues. A second internal audit is yet to take place.

6.2.3 The Covid-19 restrictions caused long waiting lists for healthcare services. Waiting lists for dental services peaked at over 26 weeks for routine appointments and two weeks for urgent referrals. In March 2021, funding provided by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) commissioning services added an extra two sessions of healthcare appointments per week. As of the end June 2021, the waiting lists for urgent healthcare appointments stood at two to four weeks and five to six weeks for routine appointments

6.3 Mental health

6.3.1 PPG offers mental healthcare services through two teams: the primary care mental health team, and the secondary mental health team. Work on their integration is in progress, which includes locating workspace for both teams in one building. In March 2021, there were 7.8 vacancies in mental health posts.

6.3.2 The primary care mental health team consists of three registered mental health nurses (RMNs). The RMNs triage all mental health referrals (which can be received from prison staff or healthcare workers) and also self-referrals by prisoners. They offer short-term interventions and work with GPs, but do not have immediate access to a psychiatrist. They also complete mental health reviews for any prisoners who have been in the SSCU for 30 days or more.

6.3.3 The secondary care mental health team is Inreach, provided by Inclusion, which is part of the Midlands Partnership Foundation NHS Trust. Its staff include RMNs, social workers, an occupational therapist and non-clinical recovery workers. They support patients who have a diagnosis of severe/enduring mental illness and patients who appear to be experiencing symptoms suggestive of this diagnosis. The team includes a psychologist and they have access to a psychiatrist who can attend the prison on a part-time basis.

6.3.4. Neither service offers counselling. Volunteer counsellors are managed by the chaplaincy, but volunteers have not been able to visit the prison during much of the reporting year. This leaves a significant need unmet.

6.3.5 South Central Psychology Services offer some support for individuals (but not patients diagnosed with mental health conditions) and also run a range of programmes designed to address offending behaviours (see 7.3).

6.4 Social care

6.4.1 PPG provide social care services on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council. Face-to-face conversations have not been possible since March 2020; the service has continued to operate via virtual consultations.

6.4.2 Some new in-cell chairs more suitable for elderly prisoners have been installed on Edgcott wing. However, as reported in the previous annual report, this remains an issue in other areas within the prison, as does the question of whether fixed seats may be installed in shower units so that elderly prisoners do not need to stand whilst showering.

6.4.3 The cells in the healthcare inpatient unit all have wide doorways, but only two cells on standard residential wings are designed for wheelchair access. Older prisoners receiving social care previously remained on the healthcare inpatient unit; this deprived them of access to the wider prison regime and was unfair. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, some social care prisoners were relocated on to the residential wings. These prisoners then encountered issues such as inappropriate access to their living accommodation and this was unfair but unavoidable in the circumstances.

6.5 Exercise, regime

For some of the reporting year, there were no indoor activities and exercise was restricted to circuit training on the all-weather artificial pitch.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Please see 4.6.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 Education courses under the prison education framework (PEF) are provided by Milton Keynes College (MKC). MKC staff were withdrawn from the prison until August 2020.

7.1.2 Just over half the prisoners engaged in learning through the 40 unaccredited in-cell packs developed by tutors. The packs cover Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 in functional skills (maths and English) and a range of subjects, including art, business, construction, horticulture, hospitality, ICT, and personal and social development. The units (20 hours of student engagement) are short to promote concentration and motivation. Further development of the learning packs is needed, as noted by Ofsted (see 3.1.5). A comparison of September – March for the 2020 contract year with the same period for the 2019 contract year shows increased engagement with education: there were significant increases in starts, and in completion and achievement rates.

7.1.3 Achievement is assessed on evidence of a learner successfully meeting the criteria for a given level and thereby demonstrating 'exam readiness'. Achievement rates were high for the year ending March 2021 (over 95 % of the learners completing). In some cases, prisoners performed better in functional skills than they might have in face-to-face teaching, probably because they have fewer distractions when locked up virtually all day. The achievement rate of prisoners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) was proportionate to the number enrolled.

7.1.4 Until December 2020, the packs and feedback on learning were delivered to prisoners at the cell door by tutors who then had no access to the wings until the end of March 2021, and communication was limited to the internal post. A 'blended' model, combining socially distanced small classes with in-cell guided learning, was gradually implemented from the end of May 2021.

7.1.5 Forty prisoners (including 20 on Open University courses) were engaged in distance learning during the year to March 2021. About 100 prisoners who wished to pursue distance learning were not able to proceed to study, mainly owing to release or transfer to other prisons.

7.1.6 A library request service was operated by one staff member on site each day; books were delivered to the wings by a 'redband' (a prisoner who is trusted to carry out certain defined support tasks around the prison). At the end of the reporting year it had not been possible to move towards men visiting the library in small groups (see also 5.4.7).

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 About 350 opportunities for employment were available to prisoners. Of these, about 200 (mainly cleaning and servery work) were based on the residential wings and some 150 were based in the workshops. Most of the workshops remained open, but the numbers of prisoners working in them at the same time had to be reduced. There was a long waiting list for work for most of the reporting year.

7.2.2. Training for the prisoners in the workshops is provided partly by MKC under the PEF (see 7.1), and partly by other organisations under the dynamic purchasing system (DPS). Training under DPS includes training in the laundry and in industrial cleaning and waste management. Some opportunities provided under DPS were lost because of the Covid-19 restrictions but arrangements were made to provide skilled employment including fork-lift driving. It is hoped that some of these arrangements for skilled employment will take effect when the Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

7.2.3. During induction, prisoners are directed towards education or work or both. A contract for information, advice and guidance (IAG) was awarded to the Forward Trust and came into effect in June. IAG provides individual guidance to prisoners both at the induction stage and prior to release.

7.2.4. Efforts were made to improve skills tracking. A new employability skills system was introduced: each prisoner working in the workshops or on the wings has his own file in which he is required to make entries assisted by his supervisor. The file is then returned to the head of learning and skills (HOLS) every week. Under the old system, individual files mainly recorded the prisoner's skill levels in the job that he was doing. Under the new system, the individual files also record his behaviours relevant to his future employability, e.g. attitude to team work, conflict management etc.

7.2.5 A new pay policy was introduced in September 2020 to incentivise education, in particular in English and maths. Given that greater proficiency in these functional skills should increase prisoners' employability upon their release, the intention was that when the normal regime was resumed, all prisoners working in the workshops should have at least Level 1 English and maths.

7.2.6 Most jobs requiring greater skill are categorised as medium- or high-risk, but normally a prisoner wishing to progress to one of these jobs is required to have first worked for three months in a low-risk job. The continuing reconfiguration of the prison meant that there was an increasing number of prisoners with fewer than three months to serve. It can be increasingly difficult to allocate prisoners to jobs which require greater skills and to recruit prisoners who have time to finish the training courses before release.

7.3 Offender management, progression

7.3.1. The number of outstanding OASys plans stood at about 30 at the end of the reporting year, compared with about 60 at the end of the year to June 2020. This improvement was good news for prisoners as better and quicker sentence planning signified improved prospects for the rehabilitation of prisoners for their release.

7.3.2. OMiC continued to work as smoothly as possible given the Covid-19 restrictions.

7.3.3 Prisoners suffering from personality disorder (PD) were previously (pre-Covid-19) screened with formulations (informed ways of working with PD) put together by POMS in consultation with a psychologist. This work slowed due to the Covid-19 restrictions. Although the psychology team have been largely working from home,

contact could be arranged if necessary. For part of the reporting year, all rehabilitative work in the form of programmes stopped. In addition, activities were severely restricted with no family visits and no gym etc;

7.3.4 Various offending behaviour programmes (OBP), provided with the aim of reducing the likelihood and seriousness of future harm, were suspended until September 2020; two Thinking Skills, one New Me Strengths and one Healthy Sex programme were then completed before the Covid-19 restrictions forced a further suspension. With social distancing limitations in place, this enabled just 10 prisoners to complete the courses. OBPs recommenced in June 2021 with six prisoners attending the Resolve programme.

7.3.5 Predominantly prisoners self-refer to attend OBPs but POMS can also refer them. Only sentenced prisoners who can attend all dates are accepted. Prisoners are assessed on their risk of reoffending and medium-risk prisoners are suitable. The prison does not run programmes for high-risk prisoners. The programmes department have faced challenging issues relating to training the course facilitators. All training courses have been held on-line and have been extremely difficult to access during the Covid-19 restrictions.

7.3.6 There were 123 Parole Boards held in the reporting year. Parole Boards are still held in roughly the same numbers as before Covid-19 but are carried out by video link or by the use of the in-cell telephones.

7.3.7. In April 2021, there were about 40 imprisonment for public protection (IPP) prisoners in the prison. Prior to Covid-19, members of the probation staff would meet the head of psychology team to assess obstacles to release and thereby help the individual prisoner concerned. It has not been possible to hold these meetings during the Covid-19 restrictions.

7.4. Family contact

7.4.1 Social visits were suspended at the start of the reporting year, were restarted in August 2020, suspended again in December 2020 and restarted in April 2021. When they were operating, capacity was limited, and only immediate family and mothers of prisoners' children bringing in children were permitted. The visits were strictly non-contact and masks were worn.

7.4.2 A system of Purple (video-link) Visits was established in July 2020. After a slow start the success of these visits grew. Prisoners were allowed to arrange as many Purple Visits as they wanted. It is anticipated that due to the success of these visits, they will continue after the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 Some prisoners are eligible to be released under home detention curfew (HDC), a scheme which allows them to be released before the end of their sentence and monitored at home through a tagging device. Releases on HDC have continued throughout the reporting year and have not been significantly affected by the Covid-19 restrictions. This scheme was given some priority, in an effort to get prisoners out of the prison to ease the numbers in custody. An average of 20 prisoners per month were released under HDC.

7.5.2 Any prisoner who left the prison without a mobile phone listed in his property was issued with one by the community resettlement company (CRC), so that a probation officer in the community was able to contact him, but to be eligible for this he had to live in the Thames Valley or London area.

7.5.3 The prison was selected to take part in the RRA initiative to reduce reoffending. People who leave prison with a home, job, and treatment for substance misuse are less likely to reoffend. However, ex-offenders can find it difficult to access these services when they resettle in the community. The RRA project seeks to address this issue. As an accelerator prison, the prison will receive additional support to design, implement and test new ways of improving the rehabilitative support provided to prisoners in prison, helping them to desist from crime on release and to rebuild their lives. The prison will be focussing on the themes of employment and accommodation seeking to improve the accommodation offer for prisoners who are at risk of homelessness and working with key agencies to improve job prospects. Appointments were made for two new temporary roles - an employment lead and a housing specialist.

7.5.4 The CRC team was transferred to the National Probation Service (NPS) on 26 June 2021, when a period of transition began.

7.5.5 The following tables show the accommodation and employment profiles of prisoners discharged from the prison.

Accommodation	Jul-Jun 2020	Jul-Jun 2021
Releases (Monthly)	1672	1318
Settled accommodation	938	664
Transient accommodation	285	419
Homelessness	319	235
Unknown	119	0
% with settled accommodation	56%	50%
% with transient accommodation	17%	32%
% Homelessness	19%	18%
% Unknown	7%	0%

*

Settled accommodation - Family and friends settled, rental accommodation social, rental accommodation private, household owner and supported housing

Transient accommodation - Short-term with family or friends or Bail Accommodation and Support Services (BASS)

Homelessness – no fixed address (NFA) and appointments on release

Employment	Jul-Jun 2020	Jul-Jun 2021
Education/training	6	2
Employed	448	172
Unemployed/On benefits	1065	1081
Other (inc carer/retired/voluntary)	132	63
% education/training	0%	0%
% employed	27%	13%
% unemployed/on benefits	65%	82%
% other	8%	5%

**

Employed - Includes apprenticeships

Unemployed/On Benefits - Unemployed not on benefits, unemployed on benefits, in receipt of state benefits, unavailable for work

Other (inc carer/retired/voluntary) - Any other income, declined to provide information, carer, retired

* The improvement in transient accommodation is the result of extra accommodation provided under the Homelessness Prevention Taskforce (HPT) set up during Covid-19. However, HPT was discontinued in April 2021.

** The increase in unemployment figures reflects the fewer opportunities during Covid-19.

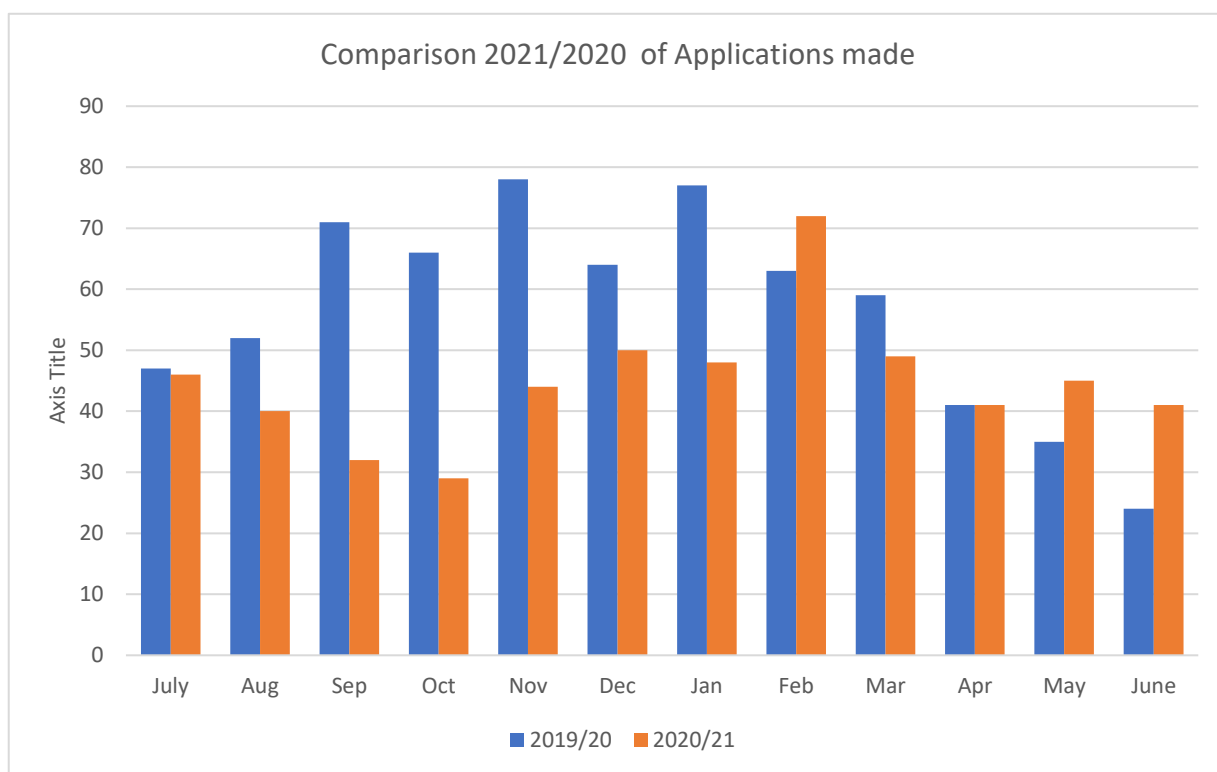
The work of the IMB

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	15
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	14 (plus one member on sabbatical)
Total number of visits to the establishment	353
Total number of segregation reviews attended (some remotely)	185

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
A	Accommodation (including laundry; clothing and ablutions)	16	29	35
B	Adjudications	8	11	8
C	Equality and diversity	21	11	9
D	Education, Employment and Training (including IEP)	40	51	11
E1	Family, Visits, Mail and Phone	42	39	38
E2	Finance and Pay	41	29	11
F	Food and Kitchens	14	23	16
G	Health	112	124	114
H1	Property within the establishment	87	79	45
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	78	43	36
H3	Canteen, Facility List, Catalogues	33	31	22
I	Sentence mgt. including HDC ROTL, parole release date, categorization	78	58	54
J	Staff/prisoner concerns including bullying	51	67	90
K	Transfers	37	12	9
L	Misc. including Complaints System and Regime	67	70	45
	Total	725	677	543





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