



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP GUYS MARSH

**For reporting year
1 December 2020 – 30 November 2021**

Published April 2022



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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Guys Marsh is a category C adult male training and resettlement prison located two miles south of Shaftesbury in rural Dorset.

The operating capacity as of the end of the reporting year was 466. Numbers fluctuated to fit the fire safety refurbishment schedule as wings were emptied in rotation.

The campus-style layout comprises nine wings, one of which consists of 24 separate units. There is little zonal fencing.

Fire improvement work increased the requirement for cell sharing. During the year, Mercia wing and subsequently Jubilee wing were decommissioned to allow for fire safety improvements. Jubilee wing, a former enhanced wing, was, at the end of this reporting year, still out of use.

Tarrant wing, the care and separation unit (CSU), has 12 cells in the main block and two adjacent special cells. It has its own exercise yard. The unit was closed for four months as a result of fire safety improvement work. The planned reflooring of the unit did not take place and needs to be rescheduled for a future date.

There is an extensive range of workshops suitable for industries, and land-based activities including horticulture, ground maintenance and egg production.

The prison has one multi-use playing area due to be the site of a future wing, a well-appointed gymnasium, a health centre and a multifaith chapel complex attached to the education and library block.

During the year, the senior management team (SMT) were much focussed on expansion plans for the prison from the current roll of 466 to 650 prisoners. By the end of the reporting period, there was some action in relation to the demolition of the former Wessex wing. The site will become the new multi-use games area; a welcome addition to the health and wellbeing of prisoners.

The visitor centre is just outside the perimeter fence. The Jailhouse Café, normally open to the public, and the regional learning centre are located nearer the entrance to the site.

The main contractors for the provision of services at Guys Marsh were:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • education and learning skills: | Weston College |
| • healthcare: | Practice Plus |
| • works and maintenance: | Gov Facility Services Limited (GFSL) |
| • prisoner transport: | GeoAmey |

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

3.1.1 This report presents the findings of the Board from 1 December 2020 to 30 November 2021. Evidence has been derived from monitoring activities, attendance at meetings, scrutiny of data, the prison's daily reports, logs and registers, surveys, discussion with prisoners and staff, and applications to the Board.

3.1.2 The Covid-19 outbreak and the change to the prison regime presented challenges to monitoring (see section 8). During the reporting year the prison was on a 'red regime', with Covid numbers particularly acute during the period December 2020 to April 2021. The levels of restriction eased as the year progressed and in late August the prison moved to Stage 2, where it stayed until the end of the reporting year

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

3.2.1 HMP Guys Marsh is by and large a safe establishment **(4.0.1; 4.3.1; 5.3.1.)**. During the year there have been no deaths within the prison, although one prisoner died within 24 hours of his release **(4.2.13)**.

3.2.2 Despite the pressures on the prison population created by red regimes and extended times in cell, self-harm incidents fell by 20% when compared to 2019 statistics (a more comparable year than 2020). **(4.2.4.)**

3.2.3 The safer custody team held multidisciplinary safety intervention meetings (SIM) at which prisoners of concern were assessed for action on a weekly basis. **(4.0.6)**. The locating of the safer custody team alongside the intelligence hub resulted in data being readily available to further safeguard those at most risk.

3.2.4 The Board had concerns about the number of prisoners who had severe mental health issues and the length of time it took to find a suitable placement for ill prisoners **(6.3.1)**.

3.2.5 There was a regrettable increase in the number of assaults on staff, which averaged six a month **(4.3.5)**. In part, this was the result of inexperience among prison officers, but it was also a result of increased prisoner frustration because of greater extended time in cells. The Board commends staff for operating under some very difficult circumstances.

3.2.6 There were 45 life and IPP prisoners within the establishment, whose progression was hindered during the year by the effects of lockdown. The Board was gratified to see the Parole Board's intervention to ensure the release of one prisoner who was 16 years over tariff **(4.3.7)**.

3.2.7 Use of force incidents increased marginally in the year **(4.4.6)**. Whilst acknowledging the professionalism of officers who were charged with using force tactics, the accompanying paperwork and analysis of incidents was not always as robust as it should have been.

3.2.8 There was still a reluctance among staff to wear body worn cameras. (Only 60% of incidents were filmed). **(4.4.7)**

3.2.9 The availability of illicit substances continued to be a concern. A particularly dangerous shipment of psychoactive substances (PS) circulated on two wings and resulted in several near-death incidents only prevented by vigilant staff **(4.5.5)**.

3.2.10 The Board had concerns about how effectively cell-sharing risk assessments were made; several prisoner-on-prisoner assaults occurred during the year as a result of inappropriate cell sharing **(5.1.2)**.

3.2.11 The prison and healthcare team are to be congratulated on keeping the prison relatively free from Covid. Only one prisoner had to be hospitalised during the year as a result of the virus **(4.0.2)**.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

3.2.12 The prison operated on a red regime basis for the year which impacted on prisoners' time out of cell. At Stage 2 in the period from August to November, time out of cell for work and education reflected normal routines. Prior to this, prisoners were only allowed out in wing 'bubbles', which meant that time out of cells was limited.

3.2.13 Staff/prisoner relationships were good **(5.3.1)**. Staff as a rule were supportive both on the wings and in the CSU **(5.2.6)**.

3.2.14 Key working was notably absent over the year and **(5.3.5)** impacted on prisoners' wellbeing. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO), in a report on the death of a former prisoner in the last reporting year, commented on the absence of key working as being a contributory factor in the sad demise of the prisoner.

3.2.15 Lack of laundry facilities on the wings for long periods of the year was frustrating for prisoners and laundry orderlies **(5.1.3)**. A timelier ordering of new machines would have alleviated the issues.

3.2.16 Property that was lost either in transit or within the prison was an issue of concern. Twenty-four percent of all complaints to the prison centred on property loss **(5.1.11)**.

3.2.17 The Board welcomed the establishment of the decency project, which allowed prisoners to order supplies a week in advance **(5.1.9)**.

3.2.18 The DHL contract to supply canteen items was a frustrating cause for concern for prisoners. Healthy eating options were narrowed. Refunds for items not delivered took weeks to process, thus denying prisoners funds for further orders **(5.1.17)**.

3.2.19 The introduction of in-cell phones was a success. It allowed prisoners to keep in contact with families **(5.1.1)**, as well as allowing prison departments such as healthcare to consult with prisoners **(6.2.6)**. The Board regretted that the planned introduction of in-cell IT links was abandoned by the prison service.

3.2.20 The Board welcomed the new IEP policy in March, however, its management was not always even. Of particular concern were incidents where prisoners were reduced in status without appropriate communication **(5.6.2)**.

3.2.21 The Board was disappointed to note that the Prison Service had changed the conditions for enrolling prisoners onto the 'Resolve' course to those in their final year of sentence **(7.3.5)**. This debarred some prisoners from moving to category D establishments.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

3.2.22 The healthcare team provided good care during the restricted regime, attending to general healthcare requirements and being present at incidents on the estate **(6.2.1)**.

3.2.23 As the prison moved into Stage 2, access to the gym increased. However, for the majority of the reporting year, access was severely curtailed **(6.5.1; 6.5.3)**.

3.2.24 The mental healthcare team also provided care via in-cell telephony, and in person once restrictions were lifted. It was not possible to measure the long-term impact on mental health adequately **(6.3.1)**.

3.2.25 The Board continued to be concerned about the timely distribution of appointment slips for healthcare – this should have been addressed by good wing management **(6.2.4)**.

3.2.26 Exercise and soft skills regimes were necessarily restricted by the epidemic, but the integrated substance misuse service team strove to maintain their service as far as was possible **(6.6.1)**.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

3.2.27 The Board welcomed the improvement in educational provision and management by Weston College, as highlighted by the Ofsted progress visit **(7.1.1)**.

3.2.28 Face to face teaching began in April of the reporting year. Ofsted highlighted the need to further improve on delivery of key skills subjects, notably Maths and English **(7.1.5)**.

3.2.29 There appeared to be little effective provision for those learners with neuro-atypical learning patterns **(7.1.7)**.

3.2.30 The library was welcoming and provided support for distance learning **(7.1.10)**.

3.2.31 Opportunities for work were severely restricted to essential activities for the majority of the year. Only moving to Stage 2 allowed work opportunities to open up **(7.2.1)**.

3.2.32 Lack of attendance at work was an area of concern for the Board. There were too many prisoners not actively engaged with out of cell activities during the latter part of the reporting year **(7.2.2)**.

3.2.33 Board members raised distinct concerns as to how the resettlement pathways were to be delivered given the end of the Catch22 contract in July. Post-release accommodation provision was devolved externally to the community offender manager (COM), which prisoners found difficult to manage **(7.5.1)**. Board

members were also concerned about the number of prisoners released to 'no fixed abode' (7.5.3.).

3.2.34 Key working did not, for a number of logistical reasons, develop to planned targets, so hindering prisoners in their progression (5.3.5).

3.2.35 Visits were curtailed through the year because of restrictions on movement both within and without the prison. The Board were pleased to see the introduction of Purple (video) Visits as a way of bringing families together (7.4.1.).

3.2.36 The progression of enhanced prisoners who were re-categorised to category D, was held back, since they often had to wait for too long as a result of a national shortage of category D places (7.3.5).

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

3.3.1 In view of the increasing size of the prison population and the clear intention to prioritise rehabilitation, will the minister give significant thought to expanding category D provision in the south-west?

3.3.2 What steps will the minister take to ensure that the Prison Service is an attractive profession with competitive remuneration, training and professional development?

3.3.3 There continues to be national concerns about the increase in prisoners with poor mental health. Will the Minister continue to liaise with other Ministers to ensure a coordinated approach to the humane incarceration of such prisoners?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

3.3.4 What priority is Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) giving to investing in more efficient IT systems to improve both staff efficiency and accurate, timely communication?

3.3.5 What progress is HMPPS making with plans to install IT capabilities in cells to aid prisoner education and administration?

3.3.6 How does HMPPS propose to ensure that prisons are adequately resourced to deliver the six remaining pathways for resettlement?

TO THE GOVERNOR

3.3.7 This has been another difficult year and the Governor is commended for prompt management of Covid outbreaks and progressing the regime to Stage 2. However, how is the model structure and implementation of key working going to be repaired?

3.3.8 After such a long period of disruption, how are plans for incentivising attendance at work and education developing?

3.3.9 The IEP policy is in place, but how is it going to be monitored so that it clearly acts as more of an incentive rather than being punitive?

3.4 Progress since the last report

3.4.1 Education provision supplied by Weston College improved in its scope and delivery **(7.1)**.

3.4.2 A clear new IEP policy has been introduced **(5.6.1)**.

3.4.3 Prisoner voice has been increased with the introduction of the '3Cs' meeting **(5.1.17)**.

3.4.4 Use of force (UoF) reviews became more thorough and analytical **(4.4.1; 4.4.2)**.

3.4.5 There was improvement in the handling of discrimination incident reporting form (DIRFs) **(5.4.1)**.

Evidence Sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.0.1 Safety continued to be highlighted as a top priority, clearly defined in HMP Guys Marsh's safety strategy published in June 2021.

4.0.2 HMP Guys Marsh was free from Covid-19 throughout the whole of 2020 due to the careful management of incoming prisoners and high levels of staff accountability. However, at the beginning of this reporting year the prison community became infected with the virus, and at the highest point 140 prisoners and 28 staff members were positive, with 14 shielding and nine isolating. Mass testing of wings was initiated. The effect was disruption to the regime, cancellation of meetings and remote activity due to staff shortages. The outbreak was quickly brought under control by March 2021, but mask wearing and distancing in compliance with the regulations remained in place. Board members noted that the wearing of masks was not rigorously enforced. The age cohorts of both prisoners and staff meant that vaccination cover was at an early stage in the establishment, so all were acutely aware of the need for safety through vigilance (**see 6.2.2**).

4.0.3 The safer communities team continued to be active on the wings, distributing large numbers of distraction packs to help settle the prisoners and mitigate anxiety.

4.0.4 The Board thanks the safer communities team for their open communication and access to information. Members of the Board were welcomed to observe the monthly meetings and the weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM).

4.0.5 The whole prison approach to safer custody improved with the siting of the intelligence unit in the safer communities' hub. Stronger ties to the integrated substance misuse service (ISMS), ties to drug strategy and security, the creation of the intelligence (intel) hub and the co-location of the safety, violence reduction and drugs strategy custodial managers, enhanced the flow of information.

4.0.6 The weekly, multidisciplinary SIM made use of comprehensive information to assess the best management for those prisoners with identified mental, emotional, physical and behavioural needs. At the end of the reporting year an average of 30 wellbeing checks were being managed. Constructive plans included challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIP), persistent psychoactive substance abuse intervention plans (PPSIP) and assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plans.

4.0.7 The purpose, achievement, community and transformation (PACT) strategy continued to be at the core of safety strategy. In addition, learning from recommendations arising from the PPO report published during the year was emphasised, especially the need to improve mental health interventions. The ACCT document v6 was introduced in July 2021, with the requirement that healthcare staff attend ACCT reviews.

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 The reception area was a clean, welcoming, organised location with a body scanner facing the entrance. Its use was intelligence-led and the reception staff had appropriate training. This was still a subject of disquiet, as there can be doubts about interpretation of shapes in scanned images. The Board had conversations with prisoners about presumption of guilt in the early days of use. The issue did not emerge again during the year.

4.1.2 The Board observed competent, courteous reception officers on duty. All prisoners were given a careful account of their property. A listener was always on duty at the arrival of prisoners.

4.1.3 The prison operated reverse cohorting units (RCU) during the reporting year as the third wave of Covid-19 became a threat. By mid-year, RCUs were still in place but there was a relaxation of release onto the estate following negative test results, which was shorter than the original 14 days in isolation.

4.1.4 In March 2021, the HMP Guys Marsh early days in custody policy was published, outlining clear expectations of the aims of Induction. The management of the prison in line with Covid compliance limited the widest scope of the induction programme, but key areas of needs including information in respect of literacy and language needs, health and status and identity were not affected.

4.1.5 The one-week induction timetable was introduced, with clear structure regarding activity within the first 24 hours such as healthcare, telephone and shower. The cell-sharing risk assessment (CSRA) completed in the period identified an average of 160 prisoners out of an operational capacity of 466.

4.1.6 The rest of the programme detailing life and opportunities at HMP Guys Marsh, offered in modules at varying times, was constrained by the Stage 3 regime, so was not as smooth in delivery as intended; however, it was fully delivered.

4.1.7 It was admitted by wing officers that the induction programme, except the crucial first 24 hours, continued to be limited by the Covid-19 restrictions, the RCU regime and variable levels of staffing.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 The safer communities team did not identify a specific trend in self-harming. For example, there was no increase around canteen days or transfer days.

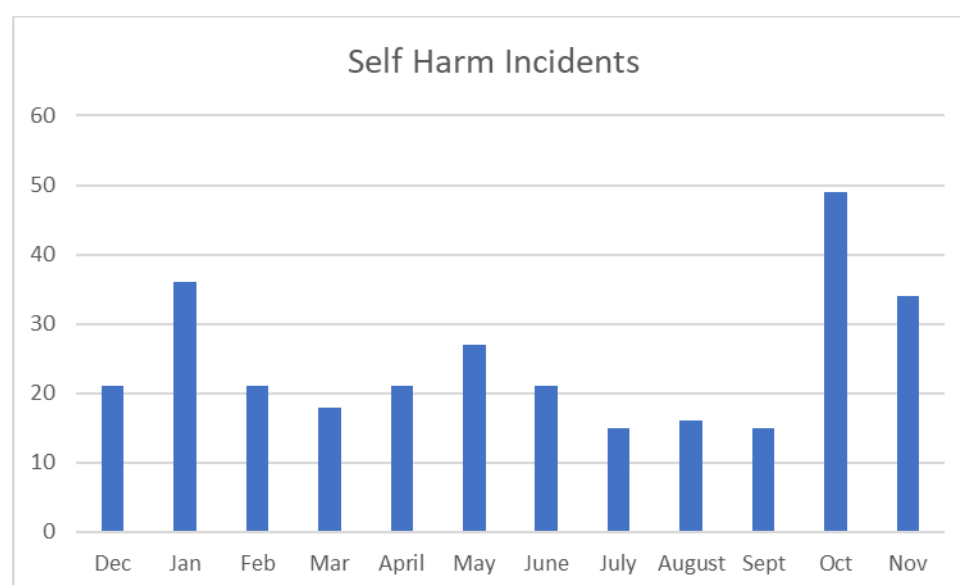
4.2.2 The Board noted that the findings indicated that spikes in self-harm were linked to specific prisoners who self-harmed multiple times. This conclusion was drawn from comparisons of open ACCTs and showed that certain prisoners self-harmed more than once. For example, at the end of the reporting year, in November, of the 34 incidents recorded, 15 prisoners were involved, with one individual involved in 13 occurrences.

4.2.3 It was noted by the Board that there was an increase in prisoners transferring into HMP Guys Marsh with complex mental health disorders and some on open ACCTs.

Self-harm incidents during the year

4.2.4 There was a decrease in the numbers of self-harm incidents in this reporting year (294) set against a more comparable year of 2019 (369). The numbers for the last reporting year covering largely 2020 (172) reflected the very restricted regime in which elevated feelings of safety were identified in closed cells.

4.2.5 Self-harm data over the reporting year:



**Figure 1:
Self-harm
incidents**

4.2.6 Reasons for self-harm fluctuated and were not related firmly to debt or bullying. For example, in figures for November, 13 incidents of the 34 were logged as frustration, with three incidents over medication and three for self-gratification as reported by the safer custody team.

4.2.7 The Board noted that good debt advice was available and that the chaplains were better able to help individuals during the second half of the year as movement increased.

4.2.8 Distraction packs continued to be available, in-cell telephones helped cement family ties and visits recommenced during the year.

4.2.9 Listeners were not fully active except at reception, where the most experienced Listener was regularly on duty. A recruitment campaign was successful in boosting the number of Listeners by five.

4.2.10 ACCT v6 required the attendance of healthcare at every review. Ninety-two percent of operational and non-operation staff were trained in suicide and self-harm (SASH) action.

4.2.11 The number of prisoners on ACCTs averaged 15 throughout the year. They were distributed across the wings, but there was a higher concentration on Cambria,

which housed the more vulnerable prisoners. As noted in 4.2.3, some prisoners arrived at HMP Guys Marsh on open ACCTs.

4.2.12 On routine examination of ACCT documents, members of the Board noted that there was an improvement in entries since more staff had been trained in the ACCT process, but entries with minimal content were seen, especially where officers were stretched by multiple ACCT files with high prisoner observation demands.

4.2.13 There was one death within 24 hours of release at a former prisoner's parental home. The death was not linked to the prison's custody statistics.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 The Board noted that violence was closely monitored as, following the easing of the restricted regime, there was an increased opportunity for violent behaviour. There was a drive to produce accurate, multidisciplinary data to understand the extent and nature of the violence, and to use the diagnostic tools available.

4.3.2 The safer communities team managed appropriate and consistent use of CSIP. All identified prisoners (an average of four) were reviewed at the weekly SIM.

4.3.3 In March and May there was a noted increase in violence linked to an inflow of psychoactive substance (PS) as the restrictions eased. Later spikes in September and November were linked to boredom with the regime and 'on-going debt issues' between prisoners. The analysts in the intel hub reported that there was an increase in gang-related violence between prisoners from the same geographical area.

4.3.4 The Board was aware that the assaults listed occurred predominantly on three wings, and in the grounds.

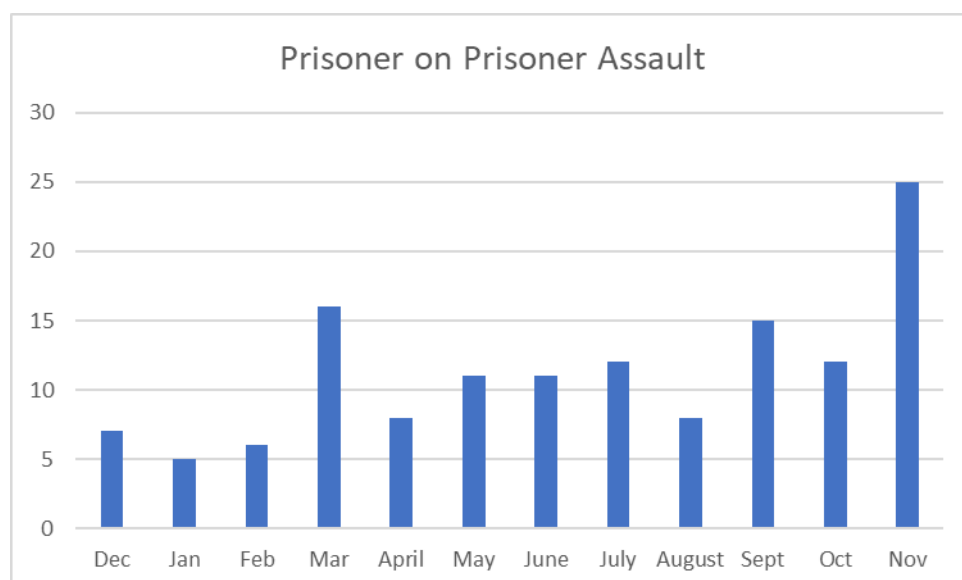


Figure 2:
Prisoner on
prisoner
assaults

4.3.5 It was a matter of some considerable regret that there was an average of six assaults on staff a month. Members of the Board were told that some prisoners were

increasingly less likely to be compliant in situations where de-escalation was tried, especially by inexperienced staff.

4.3.6 Levels of self-isolation fluctuated throughout the year. The Board observed that prisoners who were in debt, were isolating for fear prior to release or had high anxiety levels felt unable to cope. Three prisoners were on constant watch at one stage. They were effectively and sympathetically managed by officers in rotation. Board members observed efforts to encourage prisoners back into the community, and detailed strategies to help engage them were shared at the weekly SIM.

4.3.7 HMP Guys Marsh held 40 to 45 prisoners serving life or indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP). The last two years have been particularly difficult with regard to their hope of progression. One prisoner who was 16 years over tariff caused particular concern by self-isolating and was occasionally on constant watch because of episodes of serious self-harm. He was at the extreme end of the vulnerability of IPP prisoners but was sensitively and humanely managed by officers.

4.3.8 Recalled prisoners were also especially vulnerable. The Board noted that in the document 'early days in custody' (**4.1.4**), particular attention was given to recall prisoners as they returned to the prison regime.

4.4 Use of force

4.4.1 The Board observed that use of force paperwork improved, but there were still problems with follow-up reports. The use of force meetings held over the year regularly highlighted the need for good justification/reasoning for techniques, and for more detail in the statements.

4.4.2 It was noted that the greater correlation with safer communities data identified times and areas of greatest risk, when use of force was going to be a probable outcome.

4.4.3 The multidisciplinary use of force meetings began to process the data for more purposeful outcomes: reasons for use, alternative strategies at times of heightened risk, location and age-range were analysed. Ethnicity and religion were included for the equality and diversity team to study. No DIRFs were submitted as a result of use of force. Use of Force data showed no disproportionality between Use of Force incidents and ethnicity.

4.4.4 Rigid bar handcuffs (RBH), introduced in early 2020, continued to be over-used. Officers' lack of confidence was considered to be a reason. Progress in training and assurance continued to be monitored by the Board. The Board noted that RBHs were used on average 17 times a month in the latter part of the reporting year, showing no change from IMB observations of the previous year.

4.4.5 Use of force correlated with the spikes in violence and an observable influx of more violent, non-compliant prisoners. The Board noted that key individuals accounted for multiple occasions of use of force. As an example of disruption to the

prison regime during a use of force incident, IMB members observed the deployment of 20 officers, two fire engines and an air ambulance.

4.4.6 Figures from December 2020 to November 2021 show a slight rise in the use of force: 344 incidents compared to 335 in 2020. However, the Board was made aware that use of force paperwork must now be filled out for all use of force incidents including low level incidents such as guiding holds, supporting rising from the floor, preventing self-harm and other low-level contacts, thus increasing numbers of reported incidents.

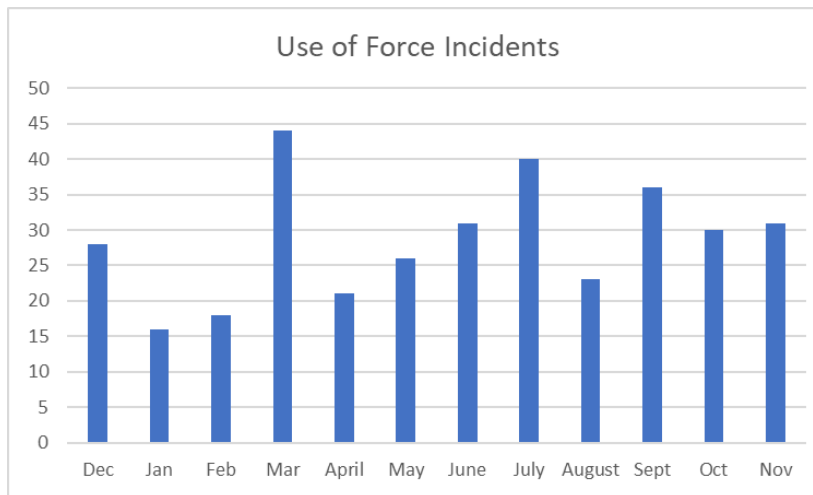


Figure 3:
Use of force numbers over the year

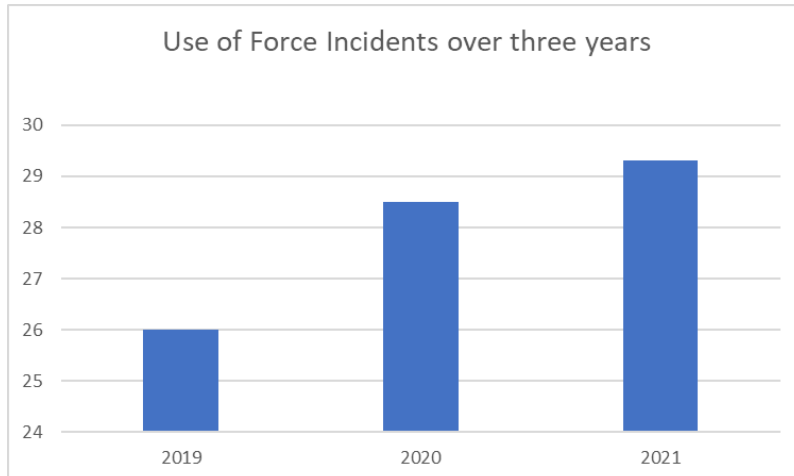


Figure 4:
Use of force average monthly incidents over three years

4.4.7 The use of body-worn cameras reduced to below 60% despite efforts to overcome the apprehensions of inexperienced officers. Lessons taken from footage when used in evidence revealed poor language in addressing prisoners, inappropriate staff laughter and chat as background noise. This issue was treated seriously by the UoF trainer and noted for inclusion in training.

4.4.8 Batons remained the last resort and appeared rarely in the reports, however by the end of November, batons had been drawn on three occasions. The Board continued to monitor the outcomes of the paperwork scrutiny.

4.4.9 Neither body belts nor PAVA were used. PAVA was carried, but only by the use of force instructors.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

4.5.1 Illicit substances were widely available in the prison and the use of PS and 'hooch' continued to undermine prisoner progress. The trade and use of both PS and hooch were instrumental in spikes in violence. The market drove up high levels of debt.

4.5.2 A new Band 6 non-operational appointment was made at the latter end of the reporting year (September 21) to lead the drug strategy team.

4.5.3 The Board expressed great concern about the availability of illicit substances, in particular how drugs got into the prison and the ability to brew hooch in substantial quantities.

4.5.4

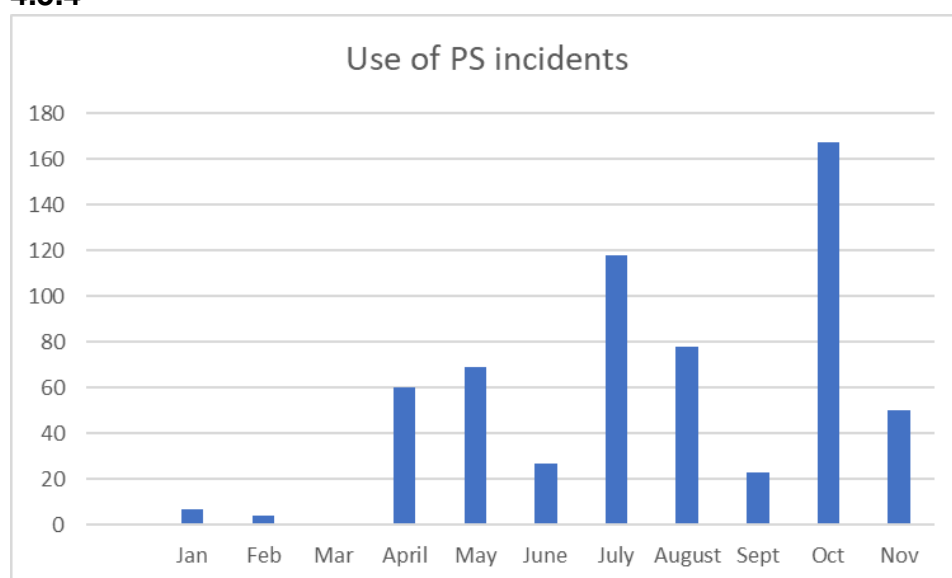


Figure 5: Use of PS average monthly incidents

Prolific users were responsible for multiple incidents

4.5.5 Throughout the reporting year, large amounts of hooch and PS were found and seized by intelligence-led cell searches. Vigilance, good intelligence work on the estate and luck resulted in some significant drug interceptions. Examples of the variety of finds included, on January 5, several litres of hooch found in a void behind a wing washing machine; in February, 72 PS-infused sheets with a value of £10K came into the prison via the confidential solicitors' correspondence rule 39; in March, yeast dough was found on a wing, along with hooch and quantities of PS; in July, five litres of clear liquid hooch, undetectable by nose, with new contents of vinegar, sugar and hand gel was discovered. It was noted that a large bottle of hand gel disappeared from healthcare. A thrown-over 'bad' batch of PS led to a spike in incidents around the prison; in October another large amount of spice infused paper

was intercepted by an observant wing officer. In November a distilling kit was discovered, as well as 60 litres of hooch found stored in the void of a plastic chair. Distilled alcohol was noted as a new illicit brew.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 The continuing programme of refurbishment work throughout the estate (begun in 2018) improved the heating and hot water supply to parts of the prison, although Dorset wing at one point was inundated with water from a burst water main, and sections had to be closed down. Fire safety works were made to the whole estate. Wings principally affected were Cambria, Mercia and Jubilee, which was closed at the end of the reporting year. The CSU was closed for four months, as a result of which the unit was moved onto Anglia wing.

5.1.2 The Board welcomed the introduction of in-cell phones as a means of keeping prisoners in contact with families. The abandonment of the in-cell computer hub installation initiative was a disappointment, given the time this could have saved for staff handling food menus, canteen and decency items orders.

5.1.3 The refurbishment of the wings led to pressure on the wings to ensure that allocated double cells had been populated. This was not an easy situation and led to some serious prisoner on prisoner assaults over the year.

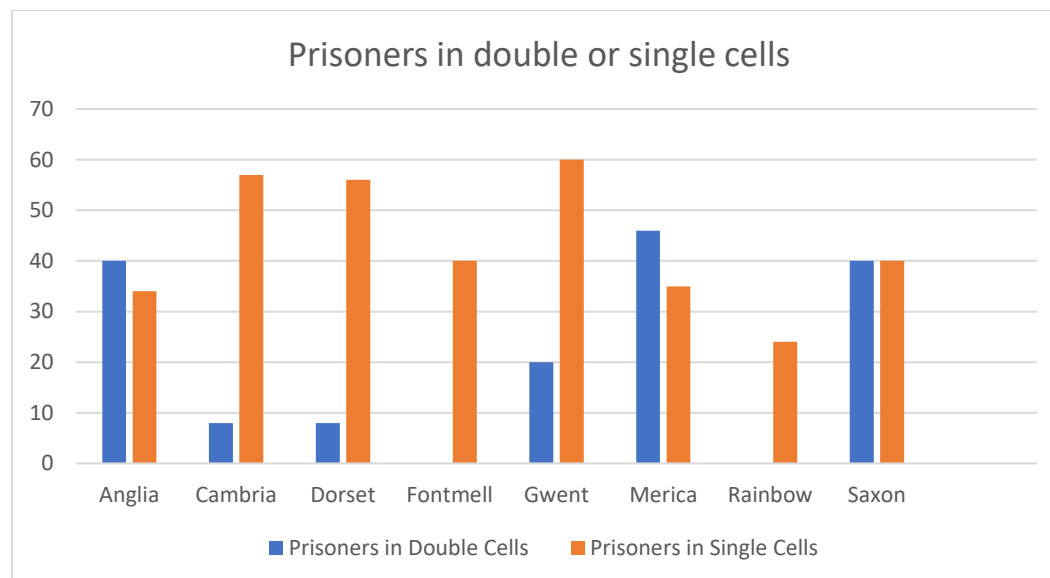


Figure 6:
prisoners in
double/single
cells

5.1.4 Whilst recognising that there was a constant demand for maintenance throughout the prison, GFSL has struggled to deliver timely maintenance throughout the estate. Recruitment of skilled trades personnel was a constant problem. The number of cells out of action on the CSU was unacceptably high at several periods throughout the year.

5.1.5 There were limited facilities for older prisoners with greater extra accommodation needs – for example some slightly wider showers with a seat and grab rails were needed. There were several elderly prisoners who had quite significant needs, particularly on Rainbow wing, which through its design and location created mobility problems.

5.1.6 Rainbow wing continued to provide 24 quality individual living pods without any communal meeting place. It is regrettable that these pods, much valued by their inhabitants, will be removed from the site.

5.1.7 Standards of hygiene in food servery areas continued to be a concern. Some wings were clearly compliant in the wearing of servery whites, gloves and occasionally masks. However, too often members reported that at the prison servery personal clothes were worn with an absence of gloves. The lack of cleanliness of food trolleys continued to be a long-standing concern.

5.1.8 Levels of cleanliness varied between wings depending on how effectively staff enforced standards.

5.1.9 The decency project, after some initial teething problems, was a qualified success. Decency items could be pre-ordered and delivered the following week. For those prisoners who were organised and anticipated their needs, the system worked well. The converse applied for less organised prisoners. Staff initially found the system time-consuming, but by the end of the reporting year it had bedded down well.

5.1.10 Wing board displays were of variable standard; not all were kept current. On some wings, forms and leaflets were difficult to locate because they were not well set out or labelled

5.1.11 Property and respect for prisoners' property comprised the highest category of applications to the Board and complaints to the prison. The loss of prisoner property remained a major barrier to recently transferred prisoners settling down to the regime.

5.1.12 The central laundry continued to employ prisoners during lockdown, but its effectiveness was hampered by the continual failure of ageing equipment. The board was gratified to see the arrival of new equipment for the laundry, although it had not been installed by the end of the reporting year.

5.1.13 The failing washing and drying machines on the wings were a constant cause of complaints by prisoners throughout the year. At the end of the year new machines were ordered, but laundry orderlies on the wing were frustrated by the lack of regard for standards of cleanliness and personal hygiene because clothes were not washed and dried appropriately.

5.1.14 Overall the Board noted that the kitchens coped well with the restricted regime and continued to employ prisoners. The requirements of Ramadan were well-managed and praised by the imam.

5.1.15 Throughout the year responses to food surveys were limited and rarely provided significant feedback. However, given the budget of just over £2 per prisoner per day to supply three meals, the kitchen staff did well to provide within this limit. Keeping food hot continued to be a problem, given the time between its preparation and its delivery across a wide site.

5.1.16 The Board was pleased to see significant amounts of fresh vegetables and salad items produced for prisoner consumption by the farms unit.

5.1.17 The Board was concerned about the degree to which the DHL contract for canteen items effectively met prisoner needs. As part of the prisoner voice within the

prison, the 3Cs meeting alluded to the restriction of fresh food items on the canteen, and the time it took to issue refunds from undelivered items.

5.1.18 The establishing of the 3Cs working group was a welcome addition to the fora for prisoner voice.

5.2 Segregation, special accommodation

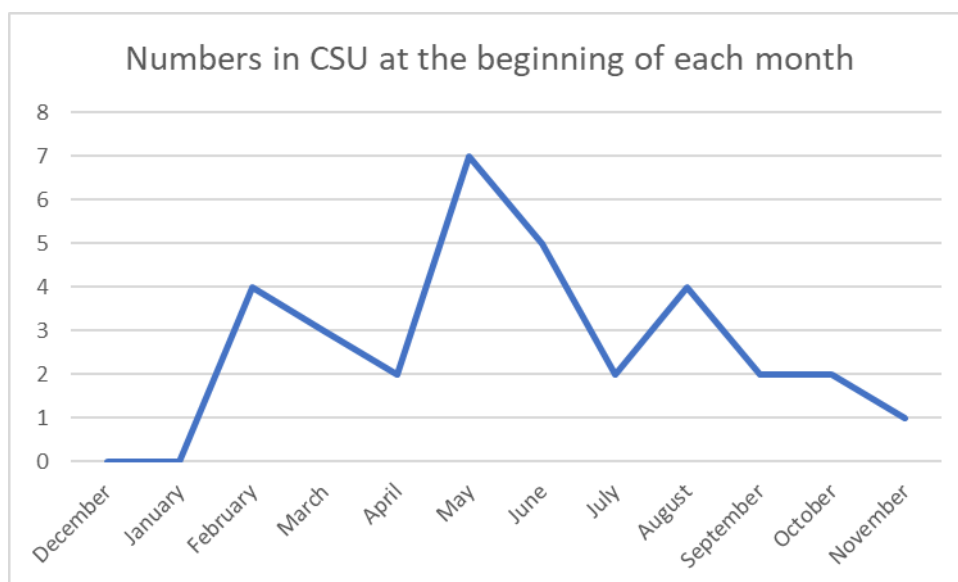


Figure 7:
Numbers in the CSU at the beginning of each month

5.2.1 The CSU was closed for a comprehensive refurbishment between June and October, and relocated to Anglia wing, A spur. The Board commends the professionalism CSU staff displayed in running the unit under difficult circumstances.

5.2.2 The unit was run in a decent and humane way. Prisoners had access to showers, an exercise yard and PIN phone on the wing. Staff were proactive and willing to help and support prisoners. There was no washing machine in the CSU for much of the reporting year, which the Board considered a failing.

5.2.3 Reviews and adjudications were carried out by a governor and both processes were well carried out. The Board had no concerns about the fairness and accuracy of adjudications. It was heartening to have observed 72-hour and 14-day reviews which focussed exclusively on progression and rehabilitation, with the aim of getting the prisoner out of segregation and onto a wing appropriate to his needs.

5.2.4 One prisoner was on the unit for longer than 42 days. He was eventually re-categorised as a category B prisoner and moved to a different establishment.

5.2.5 Prisoners were moved to the CSU only as a matter of last resort.

5.2.6 The Board was concerned about the length of time it took to refurbish damaged cells. It was apparent that some cell furniture and fittings were not fit for purpose, given the repeated damage one highly volatile prisoner created during his incarceration in the CSU.

5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers

5.3.1 The vast majority of prisoners Board members talked to confirmed that they felt safe and well cared for by staff. The majority demonstrated an understanding of the restricted regime and appreciated the information and updates they received.

5.3.2 Key working recommenced in May, having been slightly stop-start due to restrictions at the beginning of the year. Each key worker was assigned five to seven prisoners. The most vulnerable prisoners were given priority and weekly meetings were held for them. Monthly meetings were planned for the remaining prisoners (see section 5.3.5 for further analysis).

5.3.3 The Board observed that some officers added notes to NOMIS whilst others were unsure of the correct procedure. Response from prisoners was mixed: some were reluctant to participate and others said that sitting talking to a key worker was not how they would choose to spend their limited time out of cell.

5.3.4 Staff retention remained a concern. Some of the staff who left mentioned the increased levels of violence against staff, others the lack of support by senior management. Salary increases in other industries seem to have played a part. The Board was aware that retention of staff was an ongoing issue across the whole of the prison estate, particularly with recently appointed officers.

5.3.5 Key working is the cornerstone of offender management in custody (OMiC) delivery. However, it was a major casualty in the prison's endeavours to keep the establishment clear of Covid. As a base, 30% of prisoners should have been seen per month. The figure at HMP Guys Marsh was far from that target. Sessions held during the period May to July were encouragingly high; however, given staffing pressures they became regrettably low in the last four months of the reporting period.

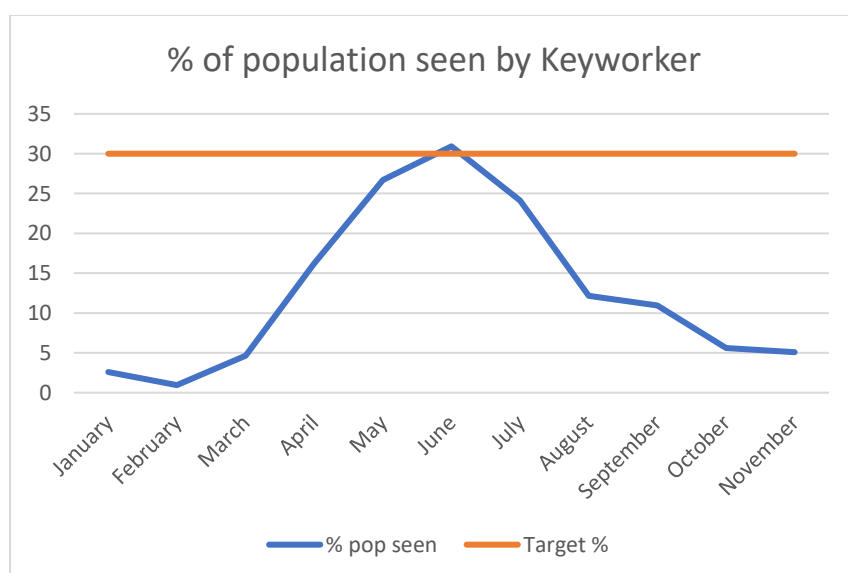


Figure 10:
Percentage
of the
population
seen by a
key worker

5.3.6 The PPO's report, received in July 2021, on the death of a prisoner in the previous reporting year, cited an absence of key working as a contributory factor in the prisoner's sad demise.

5.4 Equality and diversity

5.4.1 The equality lead at HMP Guys Marsh continued to improve the DIRF process. Stability in the department helped to ensure that the DIRFs received were handled in a timely manner.

5.4.2 Forty-one DIRFs were submitted in the reporting year (a 25% decrease on the previous year), 34 from prisoners and seven from staff. Twenty-nine were completed on time, eight were late, although not significantly, and four were pending, of which one was discovered to be written in Farsi and was still outstanding after four months, as the translation service Big Voice had not been able to obtain a translator. Of the sample scrutinised, the system appeared to be working well. Late cases were regularly chased up and reports on progress were shared with the Board.

5.4.3 The equalities team provided support to prisoners seeking ad-hoc items (books for Rastafarians, prayer beads for a Pagan prisoner and sweets and cards for prisoners celebrating Diwali). The team spent considerable time working to understand the diversity of the prison population and made every effort to include all the characteristics that apply.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

5.5.1 The chaplaincy team, which included two full-time and several part-time posts, was proactive in supporting prisoners of all faiths and none. The team arranged calls between specific faith leaders and prisoners where requested.

5.5.2 The return of face-to-face worship was not possible at all during this reporting year. The team worked hard however to hold various faith study groups via telephone link and they responded to individual needs. They were active around the prison, saw all new arrivals and made themselves available to speak to prisoners in need.

5.5.3 During the early part of the year, when the Board's visits to the prison were limited, the chaplaincy team was helpful in highlighting areas of concern, providing much-needed assistance and a view of life inside.

5.5.4 Whilst the communal celebration of religious festivals was not possible this year, the team, residential staff and the kitchens should be given credit for catering for Christmas, Ramadan and other occasions.

5.5.5 The team facilitated the use of iPad meetings to enable twenty prisoners to attend funerals virtually. Arrangements were made for eight people to attend funerals in person once restrictions eased.

5.6 Incentives schemes

5.6.1 The Board welcomed the new IEP policy which was signed off by the Governor at the end of March. It is a clear, comprehensive, and useful document that sets out the mechanism by which prisoners are incentivised to abide by the rules and engage

in the prison regime and rehabilitation, whilst allowing privileges to be taken away from those who behave poorly or refuse to engage. The policy was seen by prisoners as fair and proportionate – as long as it was adhered to by the establishment. Unfortunately, when it was perceived as not being followed to the letter, the policy also served to raise the sense of injustice among those who felt they were being unfairly treated.

5.6.2 There were some problems in the fair and consistent application of the IEP policy, which led to a question over the utility of the scheme to positively manage behaviour and minimise segregation. The Board received complaints that the IEP policy was not working because it was more about penalising than incentivising - one wing advertised that any prisoner found blocking his observation panel would have his IEP status downgraded.

5.6.3 Reviews were not always properly carried out by the relevant senior staff and the process of warnings and reviews was not always documented on NOMIS. On one occasion, it was noted that a prisoner had been denied the opportunity to apply for re-categorisation (to category D) because his IEP status was 'standard'. A check of NOMIS by the IMB revealed that it had been 'enhanced' for at least two months.

5.7 Complaints

5.7.1 During the year, a total of 894 complaints was received, of which 14% (126) were late. Property (24%) once again dominated the list, complaints against staff (13%) featured either side of lockdown with complaints against residential services (11%) most noticeable as the prison went into lockdown.

5.7.2 The Board was concerned that complaints were not always dealt with in a timely fashion and that responses from wing staff were often less than helpful in terms of seeking a resolution.

5.8 Property

5.8.1 Property continued to be an unresolved problem and made up 20% of applications to the IMB and 24% of complaints submitted to the prison in the reporting year. It was frustrating for the IMB that inter-prison communication following property loss on transfer seldom resulted in a positive outcome and the longer the problem persisted, the less likely it was that it would be resolved. Within the prison it was heartening to see that staff made efforts to secure property when prisoners were moved – sometimes as a matter of urgency – but there was often a risk of theft from a cell that was left unsecured, even for a short time, while an incident was being dealt with. The requirement for stretched wing staff to complete the necessary paperwork after the event added to an already busy workload and sometimes contributed to the confused situation.

5.8.2 The policy on receiving property from outside the prison was clear and communicated to prisoners on arrival by reception. Nevertheless, for reasons that may be seen as understandable, there were instances where exceptions had been made in favour of some, to the intense annoyance of others.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

6.1.1 The healthcare provider is the Practice Plus Group, a private company operating only NHS contracts, with 30 permanent staff on site. Healthcare forums were interrupted by Covid restrictions; the most recent was in July, but it was planned for frequency to increase from 2022. An outline of healthcare support available was provided at induction.

6.1.2 Staff were present at ACCT and segregation reviews as part of their daily role; if not, the reviews did not go ahead. Healthcare attended the daily SMT meetings and other meetings where a healthcare input was needed. The head of healthcare had a quarterly meeting with the Governor to address issues and performance.

6.1.3 Health promotion events covered eating disorders, sexual and eye health, smoking (Stoptober), infection prevention, flu, men's health and blood-borne viruses. The HMP Guys Marsh monthly healthcare newsletter supported these promotions.

6.1.4 On average, eight to ten patients a month attended Yeovil District Hospital. Video consultations for outpatient hospital appointments were generally successful and comparatively less stressful for residents and staff alike. The Board questioned the continued use of handcuffs on a seriously ill (Covid) hospitalised prisoner and the unnecessarily detailed description of his condition in the daily briefing. On at least one occasion a hospital appointment had to be cancelled as no escort was available.

6.1.5 The prison was declared an 'outbreak site' for Covid on 20 January, and all proper additional procedures including testing, tracing and isolation were put in place and maintained, although not all prisoners and staff wore masks (compulsory by November), which concerned healthcare staff. Testing began on 26 January. The Board was kept informed with regular updates. By mid-February protocols took effect, and by April there were no cases, with only isolated cases after that.

6.1.6 Healthcare complaints (direct to healthcare) averaged seven a month; the majority concerned medication being stopped or changed after psychoactive substance (PS) use. Two prisoners staged long running protests about this issue (18 October). Although the Board received 22 healthcare complaints throughout the year, these were often misdirected as they related to personal and general medical matters outside HMP Guys Marsh healthcare remit. The Board was rarely involved, unless the complaints related to on-site issues (eg. delayed pharmacy delivery) as the Practice Plus Group has its own complaints system.

6.1.7 There was a general move away from pharmaceutical prescriptions for both physical and mental issues, with a new focus on exercise and talking therapies. Some prisoners found this challenging, but it did reduce the tradeable market in medications.

6.1.8 Wellbeing checks were introduced to target vulnerable prisoners (around 100 at any one time) in order to establish a rapport to explore worries before they

became more serious. The issues ranged from discussing concerns, to checks on outside contact, access to activity, and the giving of Covid information.

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 Less than 5% of physical health issues concerned serious conditions and were limited to a few prisoners.

6.2.2

- Over the reporting year there were 170 cases of Covid among prisoners and 110 cases among staff. Clearly this had an effect on the healthcare team, but there were no serious breakdowns in healthcare cover.
- Effective coverage for the vaccination programme was a major challenge in spite of a whole population offer, and although coverage rose from 45% at the start of the year to 69% by May, conspiracy rumours were rife, combatted where possible by leaflet education. Hand gel was not available to prisoners (because of alcohol content) which limited staff use. Officers and men criticised the apparent disregard some officers had in relation to wearing masks. More could have been done to encourage mask wearing amongst prisoners. There was a feeling amongst the men that they were 'sitting ducks' for the virus, with a concomitant inclination to blame staff for any increase in cases.
- During lockdown, prisoners with underlying health problems were encouraged to shield by moving to a designated wing. They were not forced to do so. Some preferred to remain in a shielding situation, on the same wing as friends.

6.2.3 Consultations with specialists were by phone where appropriate and reinstated in person once restrictions were lifted in March. This helped to address the backlog of appointments, when there were nominally four dental, six GP, two therapy and four nurse sessions per week, although the reality was often affected by the community demands on some staff. Waiting times were high for dental and general hospital appointments but comparable with, or better than, those in the outside community although on occasion there appeared to be a lack of understanding amongst prisoners about the extent and abilities of the role of nurse practitioner, with demands to see only the GP. Dental treatment slowed as usage of spray-based (drilling and cleaning) equipment needed an officer present.

6.2.4 The relatively high percentage of GP 'did not attends' (10.24%) was a constant issue and arose from poor management and communication on the wings. It is hoped that the wider use of in-cell phones, where residents can be contacted directly, will help address this.

6.2.5 The PPSIP initiative for habitual spice users, created by HMP Guys Marsh's healthcare team in 2018, continued as an adjunct to the ACCT system.

6.2.6 The doctor attended on three days each week. The last two Board reports highlighted the fact that prisoners were not receiving their healthcare appointment

slips, which should be delivered by the wing staff, in time to attend healthcare. The situation did not improve during the current reporting year. This could and should have been easily remedied, thus avoiding the waste of valuable consulting time. This needs to be addressed by the SMT.

6.3 Mental healthcare

6.3.1 The clinical mental health caseload averaged 50 at any one time throughout the year, with new referrals seen within five days, but the waiting times for mental health hospital transfer remained high, reflecting the national shortage of beds.

6.3.2 During the worst of the pandemic, telephone support via in-cell telephones was offered to those shielding. One to one sessions (in full PPE) happened if necessary. Psychiatric support was provided remotely as group sessions were suspended until April. Wing officers were expected to support those with problems despite having limited training. Prisoners in need of focused help were placed on ACCT management. These documents need to be updated regularly and, mostly, they were, but lapses were found on inspection by Board members.

6.3.3 There was also a change of policy regarding medication for mental health issues, with a new emphasis on talking therapies. This was a difficult adjustment for some residents, especially as medication was often seen as a currency. According to the healthcare lead, the majority of men did appreciate the justification and accepted the replacement drugs.

6.4 Social care

6.4.1 There were six referrals for specific social care needs throughout the year, involving Dorset Council needs assessments, aids and support as needed. As the prison was seen by the outside agencies to be providing 24-hour care, minimal aid was forthcoming. A 'buddy' system was in place so that prisoners supported each other when needed. Age UK located a liaison officer at the establishment; the prison was one of three in the country to acquire more services for the over-50 age group.

6.4.2 One prisoner required social care input by Age UK concerning a wheelchair. He was helped with plans for end-of-life care, including funeral arrangements. He was also very well supported by the healthcare team.

6.4.3 Older prisoners reported that they were happy with their treatment. Three prisoners were diagnosed with dementia. They were treated sympathetically by staff, who received basic training in dealing with the problems that this condition presents.

6.5 Exercise, regime

6.5.1 During the restricted Covid regime, the SMT devised a regime with up to 2.5 hours out of cell. Alternating wing/floor outdoor sessions, conducted on the Astroturf and around the grounds, were organised for activities and the prisoners were required to be out of cells and stay out for the whole time. As the prison moved to Stage 3, access to the gym was increased in a limited way, but staffing shortages and altered national circumstances meant that the gym became unavailable again. In-cell workouts were provided by the gym staff to motivate prisoners to keep fit, including gentle exercise for the older prisoners.

6.5.2 The gym usage was 60% by prisoners, 40% by staff.

6.5.3 By July, the sessions allowed at any one time were increased to 16 from 10 (full session numbers are around 44). Gym staff were frustrated that more gym sessions were not being held, with confusion over the necessarily complicated 'bubble' regime. However, once the complicated various regimes of lockdown were lifted, set regimes were not always re-established. A detailed exercise rota for all wings and workers was issued in mid-August. Energetic circuit training was observed. Gym sessions had to be cut in October as a result of medical referrals to the gym, but numbers for each standard session were increased from 16 to 24.

6.5.4 Men on one wing developed their own exercise regime using everyday objects – *'It helps to keep us sane'*. Once the gym opened again, men returning from sessions said that they thoroughly enjoyed it, and it would be good to have some exercise equipment on the wings. Other positive reactions to the use of the gym were recorded at various times throughout the year.

6.5.5 Leisure activities had scant resources. At one point, one wing had only one pool cue. Officers said they did not want to hand out more as there were too many breakages. It was noted in HMP Guys Marsh's daily briefings throughout the year that pool balls were sometimes weaponised.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

6.6.1 The integrated substance misuse strategy (ISMS) was run by the Exeter Drug Charity. The ISMS operated as well as possible during the Covid restrictions, with one-to-one sessions and telephone groups via the in-cell telephones, but no close group work. The team produced a rehabilitation newsletter and accessible posters around the wings.

6.6.2 The clinical ISMS lead attended both initial and daily patient healthcare reviews where applicable. New PS variations often caused problems in detection and rehabilitation beyond the range of established experience and had a major impact on daily activity, although lockdown meant that there were, at least, fewer opportunities for the distribution and taking of illegal substances. A new process (6.3.3) was put in place to review medication after PS use (often resulting in reduction or withdrawal of medication because of clinical conflicts), and publicised

via posters, cell door flyers and cell phone messages. It proved a challenge for many residents.

6.6.3 Once restrictions had lifted, there were an average of 700 one-to-one ISMS sessions held each month (average length 15 minutes), and weekly peer support (SMART) groups on each wing run by wing-based ISMS reps, with some 70 residents a month attending. Fifty half day workshops were run on a range of topics from motivation to harm reduction. Structured programmes of multiple sessions were Alcohol Action (dependent drinkers), Alcohol and Violence (binge, violent drinkers), First Steps (three steps of a twelve step-programme supported by Next Steps groups) and Inside Out (drug rehab).

6.6.4 The annual drugs amnesty took place, and recovery fairs were held every three months on the wings, with Naxolene-trained residents working alongside peers offering social activities such as recovery bingo, creating gratitude cards and a talent contest. A positivity and gratitude week (for recovery) was held.

6.6.5 A drama group (Unlock Drama) funded by NHS England provided interactive therapy for substance misuse after the HMP Guys Marsh health team requested further support for ongoing drug concerns. Prisoners examined their own attitude to drugs through creating a play, over a week, on topics such as spice.

6.6.6

- Service user forums and questionnaires were held and issued monthly, and from these it appeared that there was general approval of the service. Face-to-face contact during Covid was missed, which led to the introduction of wing-based (bubble) groups.
- A process to recruit wing-based peer reps on each wing was initiated and a family worker whose focus was on (re)building relationships received much praise from families for his linking (phone) work – it was planned to involve him in physical visits in future.

6.6.7

- Wing space to hold group sessions became available on most wings, with the exception of Gwent – this should be a priority – but a single extended ISMS wing space would aid development of a ‘recovery wing’, with offices and a group room, to provide a drug-free space.
- One man attended a drugs lecture somewhat reluctantly for ‘something else to do’ and to appease officer encouragement with no intention of stopping his drug use. Contrary to his expectations, the lecture was excellent and he has been clean of drugs since.
- Some officers complained that prisoners were being advised to take drugs safely (for example not behind closed doors).

6.6.8

- The ISMS service offered week-long courses on emotional management, communication, relapse prevention, families and parenting, relationships, and self-awareness.
- A priority was to aim for a 'whole prison' approach to awareness of the benefits of PSD courses, perhaps by offering the courses to staff. Addressing the loss of pay when attending some PSD courses would have aided their popularity and usefulness.

6.7 Soft skills

6.7.1 Accessing personal and social development (PSD) support during Covid was difficult, with opportunities limited by permitted group sizes. There were few soft skills courses available for lone in-cell work as this increased vulnerability, although 23 completed 'facing up to conflict', while four were awaiting completion. Contact was maintained with all previous education users during the pandemic.

6.7.2 Wellbeing and mindfulness sessions were offered in the in-cell packs during Covid, as well as yoga and art therapy exercises, but take up was low. Further art therapy was available through the in-cell packs, including making cards to send home and a selfie project. Some activity packs created ill-feeling, since prisoners felt that the activities were patronising.

6.7.3 Education used one tutor for all three of their soft skills courses: Change Lets Everyone Achieve (CLEA), Emotional Resilience and Peer Mentoring, with through rates averaging only 10 a course. At the end of the reporting year there were 100 on the post-Covid waiting list (usually around 20). Some courses (for example CLEA) are mandatory as part of sentence plans and waiting times are therefore more crucial and need to be shorter (most courses were allocated in order of release date). The CLEA tutor split her time with delivering another course, and this restricted the course time and places available, with throughput affected and a long waiting list, including those awaiting D-categorisation, parole and changes to sentence planning objectives. Those due for release were prioritised, and the course itself prioritised, but demand could not keep up with delivery (see 6.7.6). There were 32 successful graduates, who are to be congratulated, but it is a small number. There remained a need for general educators capable of delivering all the courses and able to cover for staff absences.

6.7.4 The emotional resilience course was suspended during Covid, but was run from April onwards, as were CLEA and victim awareness. CLEA was initially delivered in-cell, but being victim-focused this approach was changed at regional level due to concerns about mental health.

6.7.5 Peer support was available through education mentors, 3Cs champions (focusing on rehabilitation), together with Shannon Trust mentors and workplace quality champions. A fathers' group, run by the Inside Talking telephone group, met once a week.

6.7.6 Weston College supplied one highly experienced tutor to deliver three soft skills courses – CLEA (Change Lets Everyone Achieve), emotional resilience and peer mentoring. The average size for these groups was 10, with 100 prisoners on a post-Covid waiting list in mid-April. There was professional unease about delivering soft skills during isolation in cells because of the potential to increase vulnerability.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

Educational provision was by Weston College, which at the start of the reporting year had long-standing leadership and staffing problems. The Board was pleased to observe improvement in morale and provision after the eventual appointment of enthusiastic and knowledgeable managers, recruited from outside the prison sector.

7.1.1 From December 2020 onwards, prisoners were offered weekly in-cell education packs prepared and monitored by education staff. Wing staff and education monitors collected and delivered completed materials, but cut-off points and delivery dates were affected by the regime, with an impact on prisoners' perseverance and the efficacy of feedback. Both Ofsted (progress visit 28/29 September) and the Board rated the education and distraction packs meaningful and 'good'. Prisoners commented favourably on the packs and on the certificates of recognition.

7.1.2 Maintaining learning momentum and enthusiasm over many months of isolated learning was challenging. Initially education packs and distraction packs were popular amongst prisoners but their use declined over time. By June 2021, 18% to 20% of education packs were being used. The packs continued to be offered throughout the year in exceptional circumstances such as illness. Face to face contact for limited groups began in April 2021. Face to face contact for most students began in September with the advent of a Level 2 regime across the estate.

7.1.3 Pandemic restrictions limited in-cell assessments of functional numeracy and literacy. Between 1 December 2020 and the end of January 2021, 34 of 172 men who were scheduled to have had an in-cell assessment had not. By November 2021 assessment on entry was in place, though not all mid-course assessments were carried out, nor those of prison leavers. "Teachers tend to repeat the screener when learners are in the course" (education manager, April 21).

7.1.4 Direct interaction with in-cell learners and an immediate focus on preparing for functional skills exams recommenced in March when education staff had access to wings in patrol state. The opportunity for prisoners to discuss educational needs was in place by May. A clear map of educational pathways was on prominent display in the education block.

7.1.5 At the end of the reporting year there were sufficient educational places for all learners. Ofsted recommended that there should be 'swift development of prisoners' English and Mathematics skills'.

7.1.6 Approximately one third of learners in each class had identified learning needs. A specialist language learning disabilities (LLD) teacher had responsibility for completing assessments for exam arrangements, staff training and individual support. Assessment of prisoners, including those with neuro-atypical learning patterns, was carried out by college staff. Specialist materials were available, but providing a distraction-free, highly structured environment in a prison was challenging and often impossible. The Chief Inspector of Prisons has said that 'it is

highly likely that remote learning is not suitable for prisoners in the same ways as for pupils with SEND.’ Ofsted (progress visit 28/29 September) recommended that ‘Leaders must ensure they recruit sufficient and appropriately skilled staff so that prisoners receive consistent high-quality teaching.’

7.1.7 Despite reports that prisoners were pleased to be in classrooms again and that by July classes had over 80% attendance, there remained a small group of prisoners who were ‘hard to reach’ with little interest in learning. The increase in prisoner payment during the pandemic was noted by education staff to have the potential to reduce attendance at classes. Trainers and lecturers were concerned in May about the difficulty of encouraging these learners back to the classroom when their recent experience had been to be paid for staying in their cells. Wing staff had a responsibility to encourage prisoners to understand the value of education, including making clear the potential for better pay and prospects, increased self-esteem and ability to rehabilitate after leaving prison. This did not appear to be embedded in wing culture. Time and ability amongst wing staff may have had an impact on the drive to promote comprehensively acceptable educational standards.

7.1.8 Strategies to improve take up of education included: printing a list of courses on the back of menu sheets; surveying prisoners; newsletters containing wide-ranging articles; endorsement of classes by learners; film recommendations and updates; prospectuses; prominent posters; Storybook Dads. All required basic literacy skills and visual presentation needed to be clear. Feedback on education mentors suggested that they were valuable and appreciated by prisoners.

7.1.9 The appointment of a new education manager in September together with a new assistant manager (already in post) to work collaboratively with a new industries manager reenergised educational provision with aims to promote:

- personal encouragement and understanding, building trust
- liaison with wing staff about the imperative of education
- improved dissemination of information
- the specific needs of reluctant and diverse learners
- effective motivation where effort and achievement are recognised in IEP status, together with advanced pay for advanced courses
- opportunities for wider cultural and practical experiences
- recognition by prisoners of communities interested in and able to facilitate rehabilitation
- expectation that education should be a whole prison objective
- understanding of and action on the difficulties a rigid regime may cause some learners
- an IT link between the library, the college and the prison which could be used to enhance education and employment opportunities
- book club initiative

7.1.10 Library

- The library benefitted from an enthusiastic manager employed by Weston College who ensured that it was welcoming and well laid out. The librarian

provided a changing supply of books to wings when there was no prisoner access. After an initially confusing reopening timetable and problems attributed in part to movement slips, the library was reported to be working well by August.

- Each wing was allocated either a morning or afternoon session on a weekly basis. Uptake was variable, with a core of regular clients. The lack of use of movement slips encouraged prisoners to congregate in the library as a social venue, with low levels of supervision. There was no orderly available during restrictions and the post of assistant librarian was unfilled. When the use of movement slips was enforced, the situation was resolved.
- Resources included terminals for access to distance learning courses, magazines, prison newspapers, large print books, comic and picture type books, reference works, easy readers, DVDs, as well as required works and fiction and textbooks. Displays were accessible and varied. Any permitted book not already held by the library could be supplied on request.

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 Purposeful activity was a major casualty of restricted regimes imposed during the year. When at Stage 4 at the height of the Covid outbreak, only the essential activities were run, notably kitchens, waste collection, livestock management, gardens and wing leaning. There was a gradual reintroduction of work places through Stage 3 and Stage 2. The prison moved to Stage 2 in August 2021. At the end of the reporting period, and still at Stage 2, with an OpCap of 460, the number of allocated activity places (unlock numbers) was 267 full-time and 48 part-time, totalling 315 allocated places. There was a shortfall of places, which will need to be addressed, as will the attendance rate of those allocated a place.

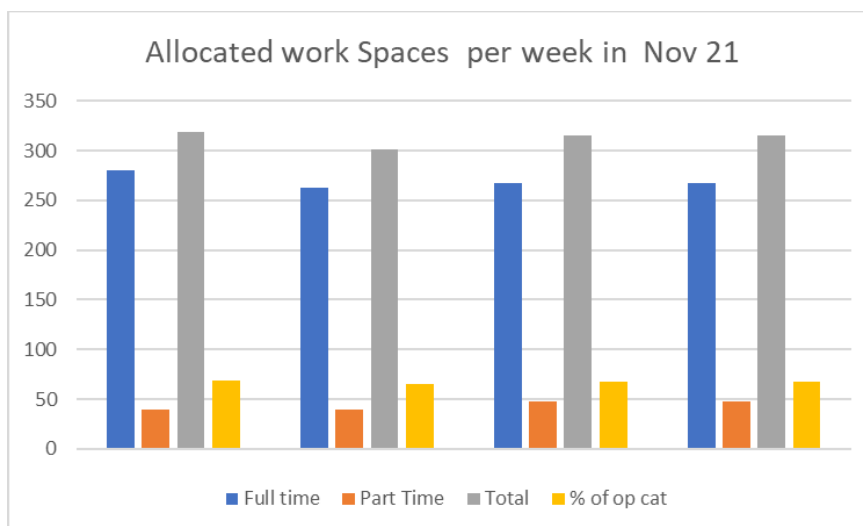
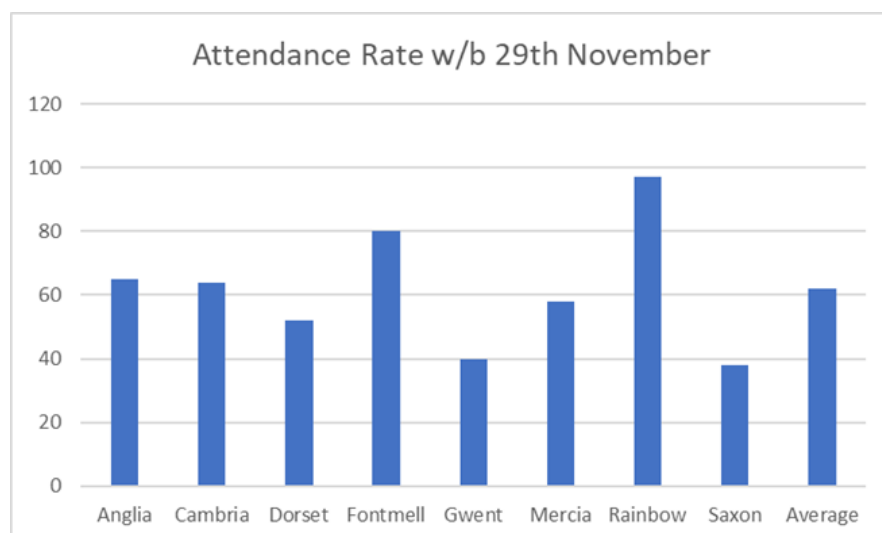


Figure 8:

Allocated work spaces for four weeks in November 2021

7.2.2 As a consequence of the pandemic, there was no reporting of attendance at work placements during Stage 4 and Stage 3 restrictions. Anecdotally, the evidence was that attendance was patchy and that the culture of work attendance had been diminished. With the onset of the Stage 2 regime, reporting attendance recommenced. Attendance figures for the last week of the reporting year do not

make for encouraging reading. There will be a need to refocus on establishing a prisoner work attendance ethos across the establishment when restrictions are lifted.



**Figure 9:
Attendance
rate November
2021**

7.2.3 There were plans in place to expand the number of placements available with a new textile workshop, the arrival of a DHL hub and the expansion of the electrical apparatus repair facility. At the end of the reporting year these plans had as yet to be fully realised.

7.2.4 Personal development and additional vocational courses, including practical cleaning, forklift truck operation, customer service, IT bricklaying, plastering, practical horticulture and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), took longer to reinstate than functional level courses and by November 2021 the range on offer remained limited. Food preparation courses had not restarted. Plans were in place to extend opportunities as soon a staffing and restrictions allowed. Assessment of some vocational courses such as forklift truck operation was hampered by practical arrangements. Nine prisoners were studying with the Open University.

7.3 Offender management, progression

7.3.1 The OMU department at the end of the reporting period was led by a governor one, who was supported by a senior probation officer, three full-time probation offender managers (Oms), one part-time probation OM and six prison OMs. Staffing in the form of administrative support case workers was an issue, given long-term sickness absences, which placed a considerable burden on those managing the additional caseloads.

7.3.2 At the end of November there were 26 incomplete offender assessment system (OAsys) assessments. This is in contrast with the November 2020 figure of 12.

7.3.3 Prisoners complained regularly that they did not know, or had not seen their prison offender manager. In part, this absence of contact could well have been mitigated had key working been embedded in the system as a conduit for communication about sentence progression.

7.3.4 The Board found that a number of category D prisoners were waiting for too long before being given the opportunity to move to a category D establishment.

7.3.5 The programmes team was fractured, given staff turnover further hampering its ability to deliver courses to prisoners who were intent on addressing their sentence plan needs. A number of prisoners were transferred to HMP Guys Marsh in order to progress their sentence plan by following a 'Resolve' course and move on to a category D establishment. It was a matter of considerable regret that the Prison Service subsequently dictated that only prisoners in their last year of sentence could take up the course. The move created considerable discontent among those prisoners directly affected.

7.3.6 Motivation for structured group work once restrictions eased also proved difficult for some. Covid did offer, however, the opportunity to develop more flexible ways of delivering a structured offending behaviour programme (e.g., RESOLVE) in smaller and more intimate groups, with the feedback that it was less intimidating and more open to individual development. This unfortunately was not sustainable due to lack of staff.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 Purple (video) Visits were timetabled by wing until in-person visits could resume. The prison is not easily accessible for visitors without a car, so electronic links were valued by prisoners, families and friends. At the end of the reporting period, the facility was being used by about four men on each wing.

When in-person visits could take place, the number of visitors was reduced compared with 2019. There was no mixing of cohorts from different wings.

7.4.2 The Barnardo's team supported families with children by offering activities and a play area in the visits hall, which was cheerful, light and displayed information and children's work. In the visitors' centre some furniture was removed but information leaflets were available. The small café in the visits hall was shut, although there was a vending machine in the visitors' centre

7.4.3 Prisoners left their wings when their visitors were recorded as having arrived. Staff carrying out body searches were professional, considerate, thorough and able to build a good rapport with visitors. Drug dogs were in use.

7.4.4 There were a number of arrests of people trying to pass illegal items to prisoners. Some touching and hugging between prisoners and visitors was overlooked by staff.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 Until June 2021, the resettlement pathways were dealt with in a unified way through Catch22, who were based within the prison. Prisoners with 12 weeks to serve before their release dates could expect a visit and discussion with a member of the Catch22 team. The contract for resettlement delivery was not renewed; all Catch22 staff had left the establishment for other employment by the end of June.

Subsequent to this, the responsibility for delivering these pathways was split between the community probation officer for accommodation and the Prison Service for the remaining six elements: attitudes, thinking and behaviour; children and family; drugs and alcohol; education; training and employment; finance, benefit and debt.

7.5.2 The Board was made aware by a number of prisoners of how unsatisfactory this situation was. Contact with agencies outside prisons was not an easy task and as a consequence, prisoners often became frustrated by the lack of personal contact within the prison and blamed their POM for lack of action.

7.5.3 The Board continued to have concerns about the number of prisoners who were released to 'no fixed abode'. Figures for the last three months of the reporting year are as follows:

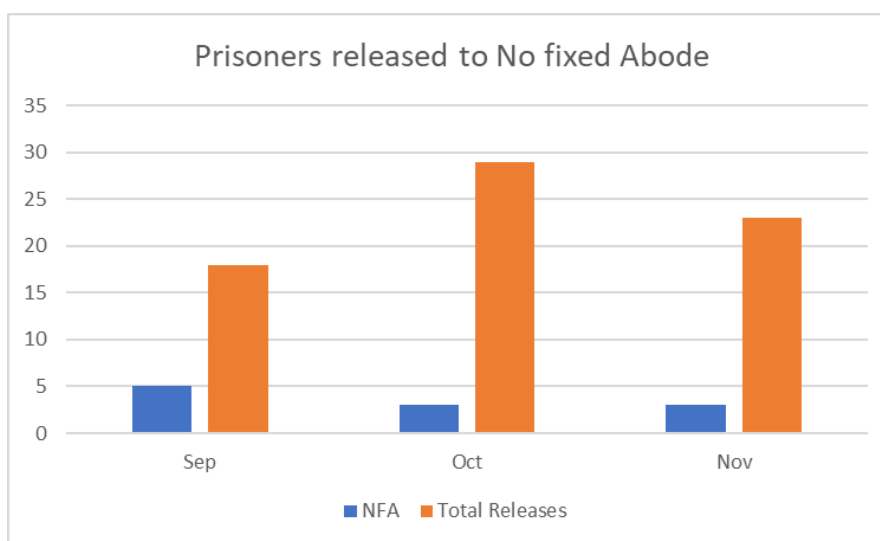


Figure 11:
Prisoners released to 'no fixed abode' (NFA)

7.5.4 Whilst acknowledging that these figures are roughly comparable to the previous year's figures, it is still an issue which needs addressing to avoid unwanted outcomes.

7.5.5 The delivery for the six remaining pathways was devolved to the reducing reoffending team without it having been allocated extra staffing resources to deal with the added workload. The Board thanks those staff delivering the added workload, but it is not a long-term solution and needs to be addressed.

The work of the IMB

8.1 The Board made the decision to monitor in a hybrid manner for the first three months of the reporting year. As such, some members were reliant on contacting the wing staff and functional heads by phone. Whilst acknowledging the help and support given by prison staff, the monitoring under those circumstances could only be partial.

8.2 The prison's daily report was received by all the members of the Board, as well as ACCT registers, SIM minutes, releases and staffing allocation, all via the secure CJSM system.

8.3 Board meetings were held remotely from December through to February remotely via Zoom. From March 2021, members met on site in the visit hall.

8.4 During the year, four members left the Board for a variety of reasons. However, with the support of the Secretariat, the Board ran a highly successful recruitment campaign which resulted in the appointment of five new high-calibre members.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members (until reallocation in 2020)	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Total number of visits to the establishment	293
Total number of segregation reviews attended	14

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

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	1	2
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	2	5
C	Equality	6	5
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	4	4
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	6	11
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	7	10
F	Food and kitchens	5	5
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	5	22
H1	Property within this establishment	9	4
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	76	40
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	12
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	5	34
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	15	25
K	Transfers	4	10
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	20	27
	Total number of applications	166	216



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