



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Hull**

**For reporting year  
1 March 2021 – 28 February 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**

- 2.1 HMP & YOI Hull is a male local category B prison.
- 2.2 The original Victorian wings, which were refurbished after war damage, house up to 645 prisoners including around 100 or more on remand and around 40 young adults.
- 2.3 In 2002, the prison population expanded, and the size of its site was also increased. The expansion included four new wings, one being the first night centre (with a mix of prisoners new to the prison and operating a non-collusive regime of men convicted of sexual offences and others) and the three others housing a similar number of vulnerable prisoners (those who have been convicted of sexual offences and others) including around 60 who are of pensionable age. The expansion also included a new healthcare centre, sports hall and multi-faith centre, and refurbishment of other parts of the prison, including the kitchen, education classrooms and workshops.
- 2.4 Hull is a national sex offender treatment programme resource and has a national psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE) unit housing 50 prisoners convicted of sexual offences.
- 2.5 HMP & YOI Hull has an operational capacity of 958 against certified accommodation of 723.
- 2.6 Healthcare is provided by the City Healthcare Community Partnership.
- 2.7 Education is provided by Novus, both in-house and distance learning.
- 2.8 Resettlement and through the gate (TTG) services are provided by a unit at the prison, Purple Futures CRC (until 2021), Humber Care, Jobcentre Plus and Shelter and other charities.
- 2.9 Maintenance is mainly provided by GEO Amey: facilities management and some in-house handyman provision.
- 2.10 There is input from specialist charities such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Citizens Advice.

### **3. Executive summary**

#### **3.1 Background to the report**

During the Covid-19 restrictions, the Board has had only five fully active members over the last 12 months (though its recommended complement is sixteen). Two new members started in September and October 2021, and have made rapid progress. The Board Chair does not feel that adequate support with regard to recruitment and retention has been prioritised by the IMB Management Board and Secretariat. The scope of the Board's monitoring has, therefore, been restricted. Face-to-face monitoring visits were maintained through the periods of Covid-19 restrictions. Covid secure measures for the collection and response to applications made by prisoners to the IMB were introduced to ensure the concerns of the prisoners were addressed. Healthcare was observed closely, as was segregation and safer custody, but observation of other areas was largely driven by prisoner applications.

In July 2021, HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) undertook an announced inspection at the establishment, having last undertaken an inspection in 2018. The findings of the latest inspection found that the judgement against the four healthy prison outcomes had declined from 'reasonably good' to 'not sufficiently good' in all four areas. A new Governor had been appointed shortly before the July 2021 HMIP inspection.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

##### **How safe is the prison?**

Though there were two self-inflicted deaths in custody, overall, the prison is a safe place and prisoners with mental health issues are usually well cared for.

There has been an overall reduction in self-harming. Statistically, prisoner on prisoner violence has reduced from last year, as have assaults on staff.

Staff use of force has reduced, as have the number of illicit and dangerous substances coming into the prison presumably due to the restricted regime imposed as a consequence of the pandemic.

##### **How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?**

The quality of the buildings makes it difficult to accommodate the operational capacity in HMP Hull. Prisoners are commonly accommodated in double cells which are inadequate both in size and design. Prisoners in wheelchairs have difficulties accessing facilities such as showers. However, the existing facilities are kept clean and habitable.

Prisoners in the segregation unit and wellbeing unit are carefully managed to ensure their welfare.

Staff have continued to provide support for prisoners who have spent long periods locked in their cells, but the support from key workers has been restricted during lockdown. Religious support has continued via the prison's in house television system, and the support for diversity within the prison has been enhanced with

greater scrutiny and awareness raising following the appointment a new diversity and inclusivity lead.

Prisoners have raised concerns about the effectiveness of the complaints system, possibly due to reduced staff numbers during the pandemic. The prison has enhanced the procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of the process.

The management of property transferred in and out of the prison has improved, but recently arrived prisoners are often unaware of what property they are allowed to access.

### **How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?**

Healthcare needs have generally not been consistently and satisfactorily met due to contractual failures and staff absences.

The clinical staff have worked hard to identify and meet prisoners' needs, and the support for prisoners with mental health needs has been sustained. The Board has received comments, however, about the perceived lack of support from senior management. Social care has remained effective on the wings, but access to exercise has been significantly restricted.

During the height of pandemic lockdown, distraction packs and in-cell activities/exercise were introduced using the in-house television system to help facilitate this.

### **How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?**

The Covid-19 restrictions have instigated a new approach to education based on meeting individual needs either in cell or in small groups. This has reduced negative responses from prisoners who are resistant to classroom learning. A learners' forum provides feedback for the education team to respond to, though an Ofsted inspection said there were too few opportunities to gain qualifications. Support for prisoners to change their ways of thinking have continued but with lower numbers due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Opportunities to work in the well refurbished industries site have doubled since last year, and the jobs available have been seen as purposeful and satisfying.

Offender management was less effective for much of the year but the prison is training all offender management unit (OMU) staff to improve this. Ensuring that resettlement is effective has been difficult due to inconsistent communication from the outside agencies, the loss of the work of "Shelter" and the hand over from CRC; with regard to housing, finance and employment.

Family contact was difficult for much of the year, but has been improved recently with both video and face to face contacts, though contact with children is still limited.

## **3.3 Main areas for development**

### ***TO THE MINISTER***

- The Board would ask the minister to

- consider the issues of insufficient capacity within the prison estate which continues to see prisoners housed in double cells which are inadequate both in size and design for this purpose and impinge upon the right to privacy and dignity;
- improve the work of outside contractors and organisations responsible for ensuring appropriate accommodation and support is available on release to reduce the risk of re-offending as they are not communicating effectively with the in-prison resettlement team.

### **TO THE PRISON SERVICE**

- Prisoners' property, particularly on transfer, remains a significant issue for the Board. How will the prison service put systems in place to resolve these issues?

### **TO THE GOVERNOR**

- Continue to develop the attitude-changing interventions with young adults.
- Restore the full support from key workers.
- Sustain the training for OMU staff to ensure that all prisoners get the information, advice and guidance to prepare them for transfers or release.

## **3.4 Progress since the last report**

<b>Issue raised in the last report</b>	<b>Progress made</b>
Improve the management structure of healthcare provision and its communication with prison management.	This has resulted in tendering for a new provider.
Sustain some of the changes which have reportedly improved some prisoners' perception of personal safety, while allowing greater freedoms for activity and association.	The extended lockdown period restricted progress in these areas.
Continue to build contacts with external employers to support prisoners on release.	The prison has continued with this process, and is seeking to extend this further.
Continue to develop the attitude-changing interventions with young adults.	The initiative has continued, though some of the staff originally involved have not had the time available to continue. Discussions with prisoners and staff involved, and observation of the records of the discussions, show that the interventions are helping the young adults to reflect on their behaviour, thinking, and relationships, and giving them new targets for the future.
Restore the full support of key workers.	The key worker support has remained limited due to the extensive pressures on the staff involved during the crisis.

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

#### **4.1 Reception and induction**

During visits to the establishment, we found that officers preparing prisoners in reception treated them fairly and with respect. Prisoners are subject to a medical assessment on arrival at the establishment before progression to the induction wing. The introduction of a body scanner in reception has been invaluable in reducing the number of illegal substances entering the prison.

#### **4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody**

The prison has a wellbeing unit that accommodates men who self-harm and have mental health issues. We have found during the year that prisoners at risk of self-harm are monitored and are well supported. It has been difficult for some, however, to access specialist mental health care when needed.

Prison statistics show a decline in self-harm incidents for those aged 18-25 and 26-35, however, for those aged 36-45, there has been an increase as a result of repeat self-harm. Between November 2021 and January 2022, 57% of self-harm cases involved prisoners who were unemployed, a reduction of 20% from the previous three months and may be attributed to the increase in employment levels. There is ongoing action from the establishment to refer prisoners who self-harm to the activity hub to engage in purposeful activity.

There were six deaths in custody during the 21/22 reporting year; two were self-inflicted, two as a result of Covid-19, and two from long term health issues. The Board has experienced some problems with communication from the prison at the time of incidents, due to confusion over who to call; despite the fact that rotas are supplied on paper and via the computer shared drive. The Board was informed of all deaths in custody, however, and comprehensive information was easy to obtain from prison staff.

#### **4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation**

There were 175 acts of prisoner on prisoner violence over the reporting period. This is a reduction of 20 when compared with our 2020/21 report. The prison continues to monitor trends relating to violence to address the issue. Analysis found that most violent incidents involved the 20-35 age group and that most incidents occurred between 08.00am unlock and 12.00am lock up.

There were 43 staff assaults in the reporting period, a decrease of seven from our 2020/21 report.

When measured against its benchmark group of prisons, HMP Hull has the lowest prisoner on prisoner violence and the second lowest number of staff assaults.

#### **4.4 Use of force**

Since our 2020/21 report, use of force incidents have declined from 403 to 313 during the 2021/22 reporting period. In addition, the use of PAVA and batons has also declined in the reporting year. We have continued to monitor this area and a representative from the IMB regularly attends the monthly use of force meeting.



Whilst there was a sharp rise of use of force in June 2021 and slight increases in May, October and December, there were declines in all other months. The reduction is down to the hard work that has taken place since the 2021 HMIP inspection. All use of force incidents are now scrutinised and follow up action taken, including positive feedback for good practice, coaching conversations where improvement in performance is required, and exceptional cases escalated for further scrutiny or investigation.

#### **4.5 Preventing illicit items**

The prison has worked to reduce illicit substances coming in to the prison, with work including the body scanner in reception, intelligence based cell searches and the photocopying of prisoner domestic mail.

Prison data shows a decrease in illicit substances coming in to the prison, with no substance misuse reported during November 2021 and January 2022.

## **5. Fair and humane treatment**

### **5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food**

#### Accommodation

Due to insufficient capacity within the prison service, prisoners continue to be accommodated in double cells which are inadequate both in size and design for this purpose. As a result of cell sharing, issues such as ventilation and mould have found to be exacerbated. Whilst the head of residence informed us that following the HMIP inspection a further number of cells had been taken out of use for refurbishment, we continued to receive applications regarding cell quality.

HMP Hull has two wings assigned for vulnerable prisoners, mainly those convicted of sexual offences.

During the year, concerns were raised regarding the sufficiency of accommodation for a wheelchair bound prisoner in the segregation unit where he was unable to enter the shower area and remained without a shower for several days. Senior prison staff were aware of the issues, and the prisoner concerned was due to leave the establishment shortly after the concerns were raised, but the shower facilities in segregation remain unfit for use by those with mobility problems. There is some adapted accommodation for disabled prisoners and some receive support from other prisoners with their care, acting as “Care Buddies”.

In our 2020/21 annual report, concerns were raised regarding restricted access to shower facilities and water supply issues on the Victorian wings. Whilst we continued to receive some concerns within the first half of the 2021/22 reporting year, these appear to have been resolved.

Towards the end of the reporting year, significant fire safety maintenance work was underway. As a result, wings in the Victorian side of the prison were taken offline on a rolling programme, as a result the prison has reduced its capacity to accommodate this.

We have noted concerns regarding the heating and temperature of cell accommodation, notably in the wellbeing unit and K wing. We confirmed that wing staff had reported concerns with the maintenance contractor and in subsequent visits were able to confirm the issues had been resolved.

As reported in our 2020/21 annual report, when members have visited the prison, they have regularly reported that the wings and outside areas are clean and tidy. We found that social distancing measures and the wearing of face coverings have generally been well adopted by prisoners and officers.

#### Food

Food has been cited as a concern on general wings, and specifically in the wellbeing unit, in conversation with prisoners. Some prisoners report having to extensively subsidise their meals via “canteen” purchases at their own expense. It is felt by some Board members that the food choices are poor and that they do not meet basic nutritional needs.

The IMB does not routinely observe the evening meal service, On the occasions that this has been observed, it was noted that the meal offering was generally more substantial in quantity than the lunchtime offering.

When visiting serveries, most seem to be operating well, with high standards of hygiene, however recently, on the wellbeing unit, one of the heated serving trollies had not been working for two weeks. This was brought to the attention of the head of catering and a new one was sent, but at the last time of visiting the unit in March 2022, they were still waiting for a new plug to be fitted to the unit, so were only able to operate out of one unit.

The Board has received a small number of applications about diets for different groups of prisoners. The imam expressed concern after complaints from Muslim prisoners about the food during Ramadan and Eid. One Jewish prisoner felt his kosher requirements were not being met. In each case the kitchen staff responded quickly to provide what was needed. A new arrival on a vegan diet got a similar response once he raised the issue.

The dietary needs of each individual on the wing that supports prisoners with mental health issues are carefully assessed by staff. They did have some difficulty accessing suitable food at one stage but this has been resolved.

During the period of extreme lockdown prisoners were issued with additional “grab bags” which included some additional dietary treats. This has since ceased with the easing of Covid restrictions.

### Clothing and property

It was noted on a visit in March 2022 that several Muslim prisoners were wearing the taqiyah (prayer cap), this was seen as a positive and was encouraged by the Governor. In later discussions with the imam, he suggested that Muslim prisoners should be allowed to have religious items of clothing to be sent by their families. This was supported by the deputy governor.

## **5.2 Segregation**

The segregation unit houses up to ten prisoners and there is generally sufficient capacity for day-to-day needs. There is an additional wellbeing unit which provides accommodation for prisoners with mental health issues for whom the segregation unit would be inappropriate. Generally, when Board members speak to the prisoners on both of these areas, they are content with their treatment, and some are very positive about the level of support provided.

Staffs sometimes have to deal with extremely difficult prisoners where the priority is keeping them safe until a place can be found in a more appropriate establishment. Whenever Board members have observed staff in these situations they have commented on the compassionate approach taken, and the effort staff make to help the prisoners to take ownership of their situation, regardless of the risks and unpleasant situations staff may have to cope with.

Board members have maintained at least weekly visits to the segregation unit as part of rota visits and made it a priority to speak to each prisoner in person. On rare

occasions this has had to be through the cell door observation panel, if the prisoner is viewed as a danger (to themselves or IMB members) by staff. Almost all of the prisoners we spoke to understood why they were segregated and felt they were being looked after well. If they had grievances, they understood that they could raise them on the governor's round or at adjudication. Members also regularly commented on the officers' professional attitude towards the prisoners, managing complex behaviour, answering prisoners' questions, and building a rapport that enabled them to help prisoners to behave in a way that would get them back onto the wings. On a number of occasions, prisoners who were at risk to themselves have been observed by IMB members, and rota reports demonstrate that the prisoners were treated with kindness and good support by the officers on duty.

Review of paperwork has indicated adjudications continued within acceptable time frames. However, the Board has attended very few rule 45 reviews. The limited number of members has meant that we were frequently not able to attend on the days that the reviews were scheduled.

There have been a small number of instances of protracted stay in segregation, but these have been investigated by the Board and valid reasons have been given, not least the disruption to movement between establishments caused by the pandemic, where the individual prisoner's safety requires such a move.

### **5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers**

Generally, rota reports have commented on the positive way that staff have supported prisoners during a difficult time when they have been locked in their cells for long periods, and have missed the social contact and family contact that are important to their wellbeing. Staff have also concentrated on maintaining prisoners' safety.

The important contact with key workers was reduced to very brief checks throughout the year, though the project to support young adults did continue, all be it with fewer staff but committing a lot of effort to building a rapport which could enable prisoners to take more control of their lives.

### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

The Board has been approached by several prisoners saying they felt they were being discriminated against. In each instance the prison has done what it can to rectify the situation.

On rare occasions when prisoners have complained to us about staff discrimination, a discrimination incident reporting form (DIRF) has enabled the proactive head of diversity and inclusivity to investigate. DIRF responses have generally been swiftly made and are available to the board for scrutiny. If prisoners make allegations of discrimination through the standard complaints system, their concern is automatically directed to the head of diversity and inclusivity

The needs of each individual on the wing that supports prisoners with mental health issues appear to be carefully assessed by staff.

There are still basic issues for a small number of prisoners in wheelchairs who have difficulty getting through doors, accessing showers, or coping with the normal beds. The management team is aware of the issues and working to try and resolve them, and care buddies are doing the best they can, but it is not easy in the existing buildings.

### **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

During the reporting period, communal religious gatherings were impacted by Covid-19 and as a result, prison TV was used to bridge the gap and offer faith-based support/religious services. Conversations with the chaplaincy at the end of the reporting period confirmed that most religious groups had chaplaincy representation, although the prison was still looking for representation from the Jewish faith.

We received one application relating to a prisoner concern regarding cell sharing with an individual who did not share their faith and values. The concern had not been raised via the prisons complaints system; however, wing staff were aware of the concerns and working to resolve it.

### **5.6 Incentives schemes**

We have not made any observations on this area during the reporting year.

### **5.7 Complaints**

In the first half of the reporting year, concerns were raised by a prisoner regarding the possibility of wing officer interference with complaints and applications. As a result, the head of equalities amended the process so that only members of the business hub have access to complaint and general application boxes. IMB applications are collected by Board members only.

During the reporting period, we have received numerous concerns regarding the timeframe for complaint and application responses from the prison. We are aware that as a result of Covid-19, responses have been impacted due to staffing limitations.

We have found that prisoners have attempted to speed up the responses provided by submitting a 'comp 2' (confidential access complaint) only to find that the response from the prison service is that a 'comp 1' must first be submitted. We have found that prisoners have submitted applications straight to the IMB, again believing this will speed up a response. Similarly, complaints and application forms for the establishment have commonly been found within the wing IMB boxes, in a belief that this speeds up responses. There has been a recent effort to improve prisoner education of the process through the use of prisoner information desks and monthly meetings with wing representatives.

In the second half of the reporting period, we have been made aware of complaints that applications are 'getting lost in the system' and, when prisoners claim an application or complaint has been made, the IMB have found that the prison has no record of this. Whilst we have been unable to clarify whether the allegations are true, we have raised this concern with the Governor and we will continue to monitor the issue in the 2022/23 reporting period.

The establishment has worked to undertake further analysis of complaints, with monthly reporting on themes produced and reviewed by the senior leadership team. In addition, a review of 10% of complaints is undertaken monthly by the establishment's head of business assurance and since January 2021 this has also been reviewed by the IMB. Written responses are reviewed by the board and comments appear to have been taken on board. The board still feels that there is an issue with the complexity of language which forms the main part of the standard written complaint response, which might be quite unintelligible for some of the prisoners. This particularly applies to those prisoners who may have problems with literacy and comprehension. In some cases the written response is delivered to the prisoner with an accompanying verbal interaction and explanation, but this is in a very small number of instances, given the time pressures on administrative staff.

During the reporting period, the average number of monthly complaints submitted to the establishment was 77, peaking in August at 106. The topic receiving the most complaints in the reporting year was property, followed by offender management and induction

## **5.8 Property**

Applications to the IMB increased from the previous reporting year regarding property lost within the establishment. However, whilst written applications relating to property issues during transfer or relating to another establishment had declined, we are aware this remains an issue raised by the IMB nationally. Property received the most complaints to the prison over any other area. During the reporting year, the prison created a new role for an officer to collaborate with other prisons to resolve property issues arising from transfer.

Loss of property/clothing is still being reported by prisoners on transfer from other prisons as being an issue. This is handled on a one to one basis by staff. We observed the handling of a case when one prisoner with limited funds could not access vapes, and the business hub quickly intervened to help him

Applications made to the IMB suggest that there is a lack of understanding among many prisoners relating to the property process. Towards the end of the reporting year, the prison was undertaking a review of the induction resources provided and had re-established prisoner information desk meetings. We will continue to monitor this area in the 2022/23 reporting year.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

The provision of healthcare services is contracted to City Health Care Partnership (CHCP).

An Inspection from HMIP in July found that the healthcare contract was failing prisoners, with poor and inadequate service provision. In September, following proactive involvement from senior prison management and the regional commissioning board, CHCP agreed to terminate their contract due to failure to provide services. The contract for healthcare services has gone out to tender and it is now established that by April 2022 a new contractor will be selected and fully operational by August. Some services were undertaken by Spectrum during the interim stage of the tendering process.

The members of the IMB who were attending the local delivery board (LDB) meetings, now receive the minutes of those meetings instead, due to ongoing issues around Covid-19 restrictions and timings of meetings.

The healthcare centre provides a comprehensive range of both physical and mental health services. The effectiveness and quality of the delivery of these services has been sadly lacking under the present provider.

Within the healthcare centre is the residential wellbeing unit for those prisoners with serious mental health issues and, in a smaller number of cases, physical health conditions. There is a dedicated palliative care suite on the unit, which has been used on several occasions during the year.

It was disappointing that during the first part of the year healthcare services were not providing the quantity and quality of services expected within the contractual arrangements. It was noted that healthcare managers were not always attending the LDB meetings and the pressure on staff working on a daily basis in the centre was beyond what would be expected. For those healthcare staff working at the prison during this period, the IMB members recognised and commended their commitment to their patients as well as responding to the ongoing pandemic. Vaccination clinics added more pressure, along with healthcare staff absences.

It was noted that some services were struggling to provide sufficient staff; this was especially noted in the areas of mental health and DART. The LDB meetings noted the high numbers on both waiting lists for intervention

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

A variety of clinics are held mornings and afternoons, including specialist services and mental health support. Drug and alcohol services are carried out by the drug and alcohol and recovery team (DART). However, the Board is aware that DART services were restricted due to staffing issues and the pandemic. These issues were raised during the LDB meetings and noted as concerns.

Some healthcare clinics were held via a telephone system using the prisoners' in-cell telephones for consultations. This was also a system used for both primary and secondary consultations in the community.

All newly arrived prisoners were seen in reception by nursing staff for an assessment of their immediate medical needs. Due to court and escort issues, the Board noted and recognised that it was not uncommon for there to be late arrivals into the prison and healthcare staff remained on duty to carry out assessments. A full medical assessment of reception prisoners was undertaken in the day clinics during induction time.

Specialist clinics continued, when and where possible, to monitor prisoner health, despite staffing shortage and the pandemic. These included weight management, hypertension, hepatitis B, diabetes and many more conditions.

Applications to the Board relating to the healthcare services increased on the previous reporting period and formed the greatest number of applications submitted overall. . As the healthcare services are provided by a third-party contractor and the contract is in a transitional period it is not possible to gain full data or effectively follow up the progress of such complaints. Health related complaints are not tracked by the prison and approaches to the health care provider for information on progress and response times have been almost impossible to obtain. Within this reporting year, there were 32 complaints relating to healthcare to the Board. This number was up by six complaints from the previous year. The majority of those complaints related to repeat prescriptions and GP services. It has been noted in rota reports and feedback that there were periods of up to two weeks when no GP was on duty. This raises obvious concerns about the monitoring and care of prisoners' health, especially those who are extremely vulnerable.

### **6.3 Mental health**

The service was provided by CHCP and shared with HMP Humber. As previously noted, this service has gone out for tender together with the physical health care contract which was also provided by CHCP. It is anticipated that a new supplier, or suppliers, will take over the contract by August 2022.

It is hoped that the provision of healthcare will improve when the new supplier is established. However, it is disappointing that no additional training has been delivered to the senior prison staff responsible for oversight of the third party relationship going forward.

The in-cell telephone system has been widely used for consultations and assessments of prisoners presenting with mental health issues. A psychiatrist makes regular visits and consultations.

#### Wellbeing unit

The wellbeing unit has single cell beds for 17 prisoners. There is also a gated cell for those prisoners on a constant watch. The palliative care suite continues to provide nursing and supportive care for terminally ill prisoners. This unit provides care, support and assessment for those prisoners with serious mental health problems.



Additionally, one prisoner has been on the unit for some months due to ongoing physical health issues.

The psychiatrist visits regularly and, following full psychiatric assessments, a number of prisoners have been transferred from this unit to secure mental health hospitals.

During the year there have been a number of constant watches for prisoners at risk of serious self-harm. The day-to-day challenge for staff working in this environment cannot be underestimated. It is recorded on most rota reports that the attention and support by officers to the prisoners in their care is commendable. There is good in-depth knowledge of each individual prisoner's mental health needs. The communication between prisoner and officer is appropriate, reassuring and respectful. The wellbeing unit is noted to be a safe and exceptionally well run centre.

#### **6.4 Social care**

There are two dedicated wings which provide appropriate facilities for older prisoners and those with ongoing medical and mobility conditions. On those wings, a buddy system runs, with prisoners assisting fellow prisoners with their day-to-day care. These are basic tasks such as cell cleaning, laundry and meal collection. Buddy carers do not carry out personal hygiene or medical care.

The social care service is directed from outside the prison through the local authority and its resources. However, there is good integration of care between the healthcare unit and outside provision. Specialist healthcare clinics are necessary to ensure those prisoners with life-long conditions are supported through regular assessments.

#### **6.5 Exercise, regime**

Due to the ongoing pandemic the access to gym-based exercise has been severely restricted. The gym facilities, when in full use, provide a range of equipment which is comparable to similar gyms in the community. Outside exercise has continued for all prisoners in small groups. However, prisoners have been spending long hours (in some instances and during the height of the pandemic, more than 22 hours a day) in their cells which may have caused their mental and physical health to deteriorate. Some outside work groups have continued, such as gardens and litter cleaning.

#### **6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

There has been little to report on the services for drug and alcohol, with staff shortages in this area ongoing all year. This shortage will have impacted on services but it is not possible to give any data on how this has been recorded, other than the high number of prisoners on the caseload.

In January 2022, it was noted that a quarter of the prison population was registered with DART. It is hoped that when the new service provider has been selected more information and data can be obtained on these services.

#### **6.7 Soft skills**

We have not made any observations on this area during the reporting year.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

Education is provided by Novus. It has responded actively to the range of challenges it has faced over the last year, and is optimistic that much of what they have learned will enhance the provision for all prisoners when the regime gets back to normal.

Courses included construction and health and safety, as well as ‘managing your money’, ‘creative crafts’, and courses covering a range of basic numeracy and literacy skills, including entry levels. The previously popular ‘starting your own business’ course has not been available due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Initially, the inability to provide classroom activities drove the team to explore different ways of working. The needs were still there, with some prisoners reluctant to learn after many years in the system, and many younger prisoners who had drifted into offending because they had not managed to engage with education.

The new approaches were based on meeting individual needs rather than a generic approach. They initially found that many prisoners who were reluctant to engage in a classroom, where peer pressure was most significant, were more willing to interact with a tutor who at first was focussed only on them either virtually or more recently, face to face.

The team believes that the system of three-hour sessions five times a week prior to the lockdown was alienating some of the neediest learners. So, they started to offer opportunities that can be continued after release, including choice, responsibility and prisoners setting their own deadlines. There is more emphasis on engagement, opportunities, choices and ownership, and less obligation. The timescales are better with fewer two to three hour sessions.

The individual discussions between learners and tutors, and the small groups working in a classroom, showed a much higher level of engagement than existed before the changes had to be made although fewer prisoners were able to engage using this method of delivery.

An Ofsted inspection in the middle of the reporting year praised the provision developed during the lockdown, and the level of response this provoked from the prisoners, but said there were too few opportunities to gain qualifications in education, skills and work activities, and the prison relied on prisoners to identify their own support needs.

At the end of each month, the team now runs a learners’ forum where they get feedback from some of the most communicative prisoners. They have the opportunity to explain how well they felt they had been prepared for exams. As the year progressed, the enthusiasm for the in-cell learning started to decline, and prisoners were asking when they could be back in the classroom. This particularly represented the view of the more experienced learners, who appreciated the stimulus of discussing challenging concepts with a range of people from different backgrounds and experiences.

The pandemic caused some staff absences, and made it difficult for groups to work together, so the provision of the attitudes and behaviour course for some vulnerable prisoners has been limited.

There were some problems half way through the year. After some positive outcomes when in-cell provision engaged a higher number of prisoners, the move back to the classroom was disrupted. Classroom appointments clashed with association and shower opportunities. Wing staff occasionally exacerbated the situation by denying showers and association to prisoners who had opted out of education to access these facilities.

Throughout the year, prisoners with the most severe learning needs still found it hard to benefit from education opportunities, and the prison is exploring different ways of communicating to overcome some of these barriers. Overall, however, engagement and qualifications achieved have exceeded the previous year. In one case, the education team were applying for a prisoner to enrol on an open university course which he thought would improve his employability after release.

Over the year, 1,747 prisoners engaged with courses, and 1,034 completed them which is, understandably due to Covid, less than the previous reporting period. Movement out of the prison frequently interrupted the courses, but there are good links with the local category C prison so that prisoners can pick up where they left off when they transfer there.

Covid-19 shutdowns have made it more difficult to complete courses within the planned time. Some of the prisoners who did not complete the course actually continued to work with the tutors, but refused to take or complete their exams.

Education has also been recognised as a source of satisfaction and fulfilment by some prisoners who have learned a new way to achieve. In one session a group of five prisoners were working with an art teacher on some technically advanced drawing skills. There was a range of different levels in the group, so peer support was in-built. Prisoners were satisfied, enjoying it, collaborating, and aware of the skills they were developing. The course was focussed on the principles of learning with planned steps and progression, with a very high level of engagement. The principles were complex; that day's focus was on perspective so the activity was very distracting and the prisoners went on to work on even more demanding concepts in their cells.

The library has not been accessible during the year, but individuals have been able to access materials that were relevant to their studies.

## **7.2 Vocational training, work**

The period when the workshops were closed allowed for a complete refurbishment of the workshops site by the staff, making the whole place a welcoming environment. There was also a significant re-think about the aims and purposes of the workshops, as well as ways of achieving them.

By the end of the reporting year, 632 prisoners were employed either full or part time (68%). This compared with the 32% employed in March 2021. The activities

manager pointed out that one of the comparator prisons was currently providing employment for 32% of their population.

Much of the work is now linked to the needs created by the pandemic, so the jobs are clearly purposeful. By providing sanitised clothing for new arrivals, washable seating for visits areas here and in other prisons, notices and information to keep people safe from infection, the workers have come to work to save other people's lives.

There is also a sense of contribution to the community. By providing furniture for a local social facility, or fittings for nearby activities centres, prisoners have understood how they are improving things.

In other workshops, prisoners work to sustain the day-to-day activities within the prison, creating breakfast packs, providing clean clothing and footwear for new arrivals, and learning to use computers to create essential signage to keep prisoners informed and safe here, and in other prisons.

Some workshops have a commercial role, creating wooden artefacts and furniture. However, prisoners are not just making things, as they also have responsibility to plan the project and design the outcomes, so there is a sense of ownership that gives real satisfaction.

The working opportunities are also rewarding and satisfying. One workshop – men of steel - enables prisoners to learn and practise how to create large scale metallic objects, either for practical or decorative purposes. Each prisoner has an individual and challenging target, and the level of satisfaction they experience is quite transparent. They are also able to gain qualifications which could lead to employment after release.

We have not made any observations on vocational training and employability during the reporting year.

At the start of the year the focus was on maintaining safety and supporting safety on the wings. Consequently, the only workshops that remained open employed a small number of men in order to maintain social distancing, and focussed on providing guidance and support for prisoners on the wings. As the restrictions allowed, the lessons learned during this period were extended as the basis of the new opportunities.

We have not made any observations on staffing and contractual issues during the reporting year.

Outside the workshops, a team of gardeners learn new skills and compete for national awards every year. Another team keeps the site as clean as they can, and, like the wing cleaners, expressed their satisfaction and relief that they did not need to spend all their time on the wing.

A recently opened woodwork shop enables prisoners to progress from absolute beginner status to recognised competence in workshop skills that have been largely replaced by machines outside prison.

The opportunities have been extended to include mains prisoners in two of the workshops and in the staff canteen, where previously all the employment was for vulnerable prisoners.

### **7.3 Offender management**

Early in the year the IMB spoke to a prisoner who was happy with the way OMU were looking into a move to a category D prison. Another prisoner submitted applications complaining that his case was not being managed properly. When the IMB looked into it, the offender manager was going through the required processes, but was doing this remotely without face-to-face contact with the prisoner.

The key worker initiative (which was providing in depth discussions with a member of staff for every prisoner) has been reduced to a brief welfare check. The reduction in face-to-face contact with prisoners has disrupted efforts to help them to transform their lives. This has caused frustration about their progression and being nearer home.

Group activities to support prisoners to develop a drug free lifestyle have continued in smaller numbers. Feedback from prisoners involved has been very positive. Behaviour changing discussions have also continued, though the size of the groups has made it harder to consider a wider range of ideas.

The IMB spoke to a prisoner who had spent several months waiting to be sentenced, and consequently lacking access to any rehabilitation programmes. He was concerned about the possibility of being released without preparation.

Some internal offender management activities continued to be well run. Key workers were increasing their contact with prisoners after lockdown restrictions, and providing crucial information to the OMU about prisoners' issues and progress. The prison identified new ways for staff to communicate with prisoners which are designed to support individuals to make changes to their behaviour and attitudes linked to offending behaviour. Offending behaviour programmes were continuing, albeit with small groups, though staff shortages restricted group work on A wing. As the year progressed, the key worker sessions were reduced to weekly checks because of staff shortages primarily caused by Covid-related absences. One group of young adults were engaging with personalised support to detach them from a reliance on group activities that had contributed to offending, though the number of staff supporting this positive programme had been reduced by staff shortages.

An HMIP visit in June 2021 reported that almost all prisoners had the required initial OASys assessments on arrival, but more than a quarter of eligible prisoners had not had the required reviews of their progress.

Staff absences meant there were enough links between the team and the prisoners. HMIP said that most prisoners they spoke to could not name their offender manager, and in a quarter of the cases they reviewed, the prisoners had not made enough progress.

The effectiveness of the OMU has been disrupted by staff being absent or working from home due to Covid-19, the closure of some of the OMU offices during a period

of building refurbishment (which led to staff being relocated in different spaces around the prison), staff absences due to Covid-19, reorganisation of the probation service, and the withdrawal of the Shelter team from the prison.

The prison has recognised that offender management has not been good enough and has developed a substantial plan to improve all elements of the provision. All the OMU staff have now undergone the initial training so that they understand the problems and the changes that the team need to make.

#### **7.4 Family contact**

During the year, the prison reacted to a known problem area regarding the family visits booking process. Prisoners and their families complained that it was challenging to reach the relevant team via telephone. Whilst the prison is working to develop a new online booking system, as a temporary measure an email booking route has also been developed. Since this temporary solution, prisoner and family complaints regarding the bookings process have decreased.

Telephone and mail contact has been a problem over recent months. The reliance on telephone contact has led to a short period of increase in minor self-harm and negative behaviour as family relationships have diminished or been disrupted. However, virtual (video) visits have been increased, and face-to face-visits are being re-introduced. The visits centre has been reconfigured to provide safe access for a smaller number of families. The need for visitors to arrive early and go through the search and hygiene processes caused some problems in the early stages, and there is still no access for children.

The lockdown has prevented the range of positive family days that had been established, but the project where fathers can record stories for their children continues to develop, and recently introduced technology now means they can be filmed reading the stories.

#### **7.5 Resettlement planning**

The information about this from prisoners has varied throughout the year. Early in the year prisoners said that the video links with probation were useful, and a conversation with a young prisoner who had just finished a short sentence was equally positive. However, another prisoner described being released to accommodation which was not available, and subsequently being recalled. HMIP reported that during the first four months of the year, a quarter of prisoners released had no suitable accommodation to go to.

When we spoke to Shelter just before their team left the prison, they expressed concern about the level of support they would be able to provide once they had left.

In December, resettlement staff said that staff shortages were limiting finance, benefits and debt support.

In January, prison staff told us that there was currently poor communication between the prison and probation because of an inadequate system. They said that staff in

the National Probation Service in the community were not adequately trained, and only about 80% of prisoners were released to settled accommodation.

There are a number of employment routes as the prison has developed links with local companies, arranging interviews after release, and preparing the prisoners to move straight out of prison into a job. The industries manager continues to negotiate these arrangements as well as seeking further opportunities.

## The work of the IMB

*See capacity limitations of the Board highlighted in section 3.1 (background to the report).*

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	5
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Total number of visits to the establishment	131
Total number of shifts on the 0800 telephone line*	
Total number of segregation reviews attended	4

\*if relevant



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

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
C	Equality	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	<b>12</b>	<b>24</b>
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
F	Food and kitchens	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	<b>26</b>	<b>32</b>
H1	Property within this establishment	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
K	Transfers	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>
	Total number of applications	<b>166</b>	<b>156</b>



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