



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Leicester

**For reporting year
1 February 2021 – 31 January 2022**

Published July 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 Leicester is a local male adult prison with reception and resettlement functions and serves the courts of Leicester and Leicestershire.

HMP Leicester is a Victorian prison built in 1874, behind a gatehouse dating from 1825, and it occupies a site of three acres, close to Leicester city centre. A visits hall and administration accommodation were added in 1990. The main residential unit is a long rectangular cell block with four galleried landings. Usually, two prisoners share a cell.

To facilitate fire safety improvement works there was a reduction in operational capacity during 2021 to 280 and one half-wing was closed in rotation. There are separate areas on the main wing for the care and separation unit (CSU) housing segregated prisoners, and the MI recovery unit (MRU) delivering substance misuse recovery services. The Lambert unit (for disruptive prisoners) closed in April 2021. The changes made in 2020 after lockdown for the Covid-19 pandemic were modified during 2021. The shielding unit closed in March, fewer cells were required for protective isolation, and the reverse cohorting unit continued as the induction unit.

About 23 vulnerable prisoners continue to be housed in the Welford unit, which is in a separate building, with a dedicated small exercise area. The healthcare facility occupies the ground floor. There is one main outdoor exercise area.

Other buildings on site include those housing reception, the offender management unit (OMU), resettlement services, learning and skills, a workshop, the gym, the multi-faith room, the chaplaincy, the IMB office, and legal visits.

Service providers in 2021:

Healthcare – Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, commissioned by NHS England (Midlands and East)

Dental care – Time for Teeth, commissioned by NHS England

Integrated drug and alcohol treatment services (IDTS) – Turning Point Leicester and Leicestershire, replaced from 1 April by Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Education and skills – PeoplePlus

Library services – Leicestershire County Council (LCC)

Community rehabilitation company – Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Rutland (DLNR) CRC replaced in June by Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) contracted by the East Midlands Probation Delivery Unit

Escort contractor – GEOAmey

Catering suppliers – Bidfood

Maintenance - Amey

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

The Board was fully supported in its work by the establishment during the reporting year and was able to deliver face-to-face monitoring during the whole of 2021.

The continuation of the lockdown measures introduced on 24 March 2020 to manage Covid-19 infection again had a great impact on both prisoners and staff. The severe Stage 4 restrictions in place for 2020 continued until May 2021 and are described in full in our previous report. The lifting of prison restrictions was slower than for the general public, and time out of cell continued to be low for most prisoners during 2021. It is to the credit of prisoners and staff that the establishment remained settled over the whole year.

3.2 Main judgements

HMP Leicester continued to be a well-run establishment, with strong leadership by the energetic and strategic thinking Governor, supported by a hardworking senior management team (SMT) and an engaged body of staff. There were many examples during the year of good teamwork and of staff 'going the extra mile' to keep services running.

How safe is the prison?

The Board judges that the prison remained safe. Covid management remained very good (6.2). Safety processes and quality assurance improved, and the important weekly multidisciplinary safety intervention meeting (SIM) continued without interruption (section 4). As usual, the establishment continued to house some prisoners with very challenging behaviour but compared with 2020 there was less violence (4.3), and less need for the use of force (4.4). There were fewer incidents of self-harm although long periods of constant watch were again required for a few individuals (4.2.1). Security was strengthened, and the availability and use of drugs, particularly new psychoactive substances (NPS), continued to fall (4.5). Prisoners reported feeling safe (4.3.3).

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

As in our last report, the Board feels that it is not humane to lock a person in a small, shared cell for 23 hours a day, and this was the situation for the majority of prisoners in HMP Leicester until May 2021, and even after that, time out of cell was severely curtailed (6.5.1). Nonetheless the Board judges that prisoners were treated fairly and with respect during the reporting year. Staff did their best to help prisoners cope with the restricted regime, and good staff-prisoner engagement remained a strength of the establishment (5.3.1). The capital investment programme started to improve the decency of the accommodation (5.1.2). There were fewer prisoner complaints to the establishment (5.6) and fewer applications to the IMB (P.34).

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

The Board believes that the establishment continued to do its best to meet prisoners' health and wellbeing needs, in the circumstances. Healthcare continued to deliver a very good service and was strengthened by the integration of substance misuse services (6.1). Prisoners were supported by an energetic chaplaincy team (5.5) and

were especially appreciative of the efforts of the physical education officers (6.5.2). The Samaritans made a valuable contribution to prisoner safety and wellbeing during 2021 (4.2.4). The installation of in-cell telephony was a 'game-changer' (7.4.2).

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

The progress of most prisoners towards rehabilitation and resettlement was hampered by the consequences of lockdown. The opportunities for work were very much reduced (7.2). The main purposeful activity remained in-cell education, well supported by PeoplePlus (7.1.1). The high reception population compromised local resettlement work, and many Leicester men were transferred to and released from HMP Lincoln (7.3). The transfer of resettlement services from the CRC to the national probation services started to embed well, but the specification did not include remand prisoners (7.5.1). The situation for prisoners serving an indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP) was again of great concern to the Board during 2021 (7.3.2).

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

1 The transfer of seriously mentally ill prisoners

Although gatekeeping processes have gradually improved, the Board again has to report that two prisoners experienced very long waits for transfer to secure hospital accommodation (6.3.1).

Is the minister satisfied that there are sufficient secure hospital places to cope promptly with the demand?

2 The management of prisoners serving an indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP)

The Board remains concerned about the management of IPP prisoners, including their recall (7.3.2).

Does the minister agree that allowing them to make progress to safe discharge should have a higher priority?

3 The new arrangements for resettlement services

The Board accepts that the transfer of service provision from the CRC to the probation services will take some time to embed. The arrangements apply to convicted men, but there is no clear specification yet for those on remand, who often also need help and support with finance and accommodation issues, both on reception and release (7.5.1).

Can the minister reassure the Board that this will be addressed soon?

4 The increasing number of prisoners waiting for court hearings

The Board raised this last year, when the reception population at the end of 2020 had risen to 70%. By December 2021, there had been a further rise to 80% with many men waiting too long for court hearings (7.3). This continues to compromise Leicester's designated 45% resettlement function.

Is the minister able to work with colleagues in the criminal justice system to address this situation?

5 The performance of Amey Commercial

The Board has raised concerns about Amey facilities management since 2018, and previous responses from the minister have acknowledged this issue and have mentioned changes to be introduced so that contracting processes and project delivery improve.

The Board would like to draw the minister's attention to its continued concerns about the service provided (5.1.2).

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

6 Re-introduction of key working and staff recruitment and retention

While welcoming the gradual resumption of key working (5.3.2), the Board notes that its delivery is critically dependent on full staffing. Recruitment and retention of staff continues to present problems for the establishment (5.3.3).

What plans does the prison service have to address this?

7 The installation of in-cell information technology

In-cell technology would be a major benefit for Leicester prisoners, in particular to support education, the main purposeful activity, and would introduce the virtual campus and the ability to expand teaching input, and link to Wayout TV. Even with the expanded regime available from March 2022, prisoners still spend considerable time in-cell, because of the cramped nature of the accommodation.

For these reasons, the Board requests that the prison service treats Leicester as a priority for its installation.

3.4 Progress since the last report

Capital investment

The Board is pleased to report that a number of capital investment projects has been completed (5.1.2), and that the introduction of in-cell telephony has been of major benefit to prisoners (7.4.2).

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

Safety remained a high priority in the establishment, and the function was strengthened during 2021. There was good leadership, and a fully staffed hardworking team, who liaised well with all prison departments.

The weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM) continued throughout the year and was the focus for the multidisciplinary discussion of about 45 prisoners, including those held in the CSU, those on assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents or violence management interventions, cell sharing risk assessments and safeguarding issues, with an updating of the management plan for each individual. The meeting benefited from the regular attendance of a psychologist, who interviewed prisoners and prepared 'Know your prisoner' reports detailing their background and behavioural problems and suggesting management strategies for the benefit of the relevant wing staff.

The appointment of a data analyst in early 2021 led to a marked improvement in data collection and its presentation and discussion at all the various regular meetings of the whole function. There was a stronger focus on investigation of trends and anomalies, and the reasons for incidents rather than just a factual description, and this led to more effective action planning. Equalities data was also embedded in the analysis.

A robust programme of quality assurance of procedures and documentation was in place, performed by senior managers with feedback to individuals and to the whole establishment as appropriate. Extra staff training was organised as required.

4.1 Reception and induction

The Covid-19 safe way of managing new prisoners to the establishment introduced during 2020 was continued through the whole of 2021. The reverse cohorting unit (RCU), later named the induction unit, housed new receptions away from the mainstream population for 14 days, with the regime managed in four separate 'bubbles'. The dedicated induction staff were assisted by cleaners and a peer advisor living in the unit. Covid testing followed national guidance, and the men received extra wellbeing checks (5.3.1).

The induction materials were delivered as a PowerPoint presentation, supplemented by induction packs containing written materials. Versions were prepared during the year in different languages, with prisoner input, depending on the needs of the population, and Bigword translation services were readily available. As Covid restrictions lessened, it became easier to deliver face-to-face information and assessments. The concept of the 'induction passport' was introduced at the end of the reporting year, to check that all prisoners had covered all necessary elements, and so that the allocation to purposeful activities could be streamlined.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 Self-harm and constant watch

There were 272 episodes of self-harm during 2021, compared with 455 in 2020. On average each month about 3% of the population was actively self-harming, and about 16% had self-harmed in the past. A few prisoners were prolific in this behaviour. Most commonly, white men between 21 and 34 years of age were involved, and most often injuries were the result of cutting, usually superficial or the opening of old wounds. All self-harming prisoners and those at risk were managed by the ACCT process, and those prisoners showing manipulative and goal-orientated behaviour were encouraged to engage with an individual management plan, setting clear boundaries for entitlements, which staff aimed to deliver in a consistent manner.

About 10% of the total number of incidents involved serious self-harm, sometimes life threatening. Five prisoners attended the accident and emergency department and two were admitted to hospital, compared with 15 and three in 2020. There were 16 episodes of ligaturing, and at least two 'near misses' where a fatal outcome was averted by the prompt actions of staff, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Serious episodes were always followed by a prompt de-brief and the offer of support from the in-house care team to staff and to prisoners if required.

During 2021 there were 40 episodes of constant ('suicide') watch involving 28 individual prisoners and occupying 671 days and nights in total, compared with 34 episodes and 21 individuals occupying 584 days and nights in 2020. Fifteen episodes lasted fewer than three days, and 27 fewer than 14 days, but for five very troubled individuals the total time spent on constant watch was over 50 days each, one of them for 132 and one for 169 days. The Board commended the whole prison approach and the supportive teamwork which kept these individuals safe.

4.2.2 The ACCT process

A total of 254 ACCT documents was opened in 2021. This is fewer than the 325 opened in 2020, but not directly comparable because from April the reopening of an ACCT during the six weeks 'post closure' observation period, which occurred for a small number of prisoners, was counted as the same episode. However, the number of new ACCTs opened in reception or during the early days in custody rose to 87, compared with 73 in 2020. The number open on any day varied between 4 and 18, with a monthly average of 10, and was similar to 2020. The reasons for opening ACCTs included unhappiness with the regime (31) and poor mental health (22). Providing the necessary support for these troubled individuals continued to be challenging and resource-intensive.

HMP Leicester was a pilot site for ACCT version 6 documentation, and this was adopted in April 2021 and a robust quality assurance programme is in place. Every ACCT document is checked daily by the case coordinator, and each review meeting with the prisoner is checked by a manager. Feedback is given to individuals about omissions or poor entries, and the overall findings discussed at the safer custody meeting, with trends highlighted for action. A mandatory '30 Minutes ACCT Speed Training' session was held for operational staff in August, and pocket guides 'Recording observations' and 'Recording conversations and summaries' were issued. During rota visits the Board has inspected a sample of documents and

noticed an improvement in the standard of record keeping. The regional safety lead reported in September that he had observed a significant improvement in the quality of ACCT entries and case reviews.

A dedicated safer custody telephone line is available for members of the public who are concerned about a prisoner's welfare. These calls are properly logged and promptly followed up by a check with the prisoner, and appropriate action is taken.

4.2.3 Deaths in custody

There were no deaths in custody during 2021.

4.2.4 Listeners

The Listeners are a group of up to ten volunteer prisoners, selected, trained, and supported by the Samaritans and by safer custody staff. They offer confidential support to prisoners in emotional distress and crisis and are available 24 hours a day seven days a week. Issues raised by prisoners usually concern mental health, self-harm, and family matters.

Ten Listeners were in post at the beginning of January 2021. They offered face to face contact, usually in an interview room, with appropriate social distancing, but occasionally spoke to the prisoner at the cell door, wearing PPE if necessary. Their number fell because of transfer or release, and the service was suspended in May. The Samaritans promptly provided training for new Listeners, and nine men started duties in August. Listeners were able to resume their attendance at the safer custody meeting in March 2022.

During 2021, 42 Listener interviews were facilitated, which is about half the number in 2020, and there were very few requests to use the Samaritans dedicated phone. The Board found these low numbers surprising and asked to see the PIN phone records for Freephone calls. During 2020 these were available using the phone booths on the landing, and 80 calls were made to the Samaritans. After in-cell telephony was installed, of the 1619 Freephone calls to 40 various agencies and advice organisations, 1277 were to the Samaritans, with a total duration of 8236 minutes.

Participants in the young adult prisoner forum confirmed that they knew prisoners to be making use of the Samaritans line on their in-cell phones because this kept their need for a call confidential, and it was less likely to be overheard. Some participants however said that they had benefitted from contact with a Listener in the past.

The Samaritans have been a very valuable support for Leicester prisoners during 2021. The IMB was pleased to join an event in December organised by the safer custody team and attended by representatives of the Samaritans and by the newly qualified Listeners and their invited guests, to celebrate 30 years of the Listener scheme in prisons.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction

Overall violence fell during 2021, although staff still had to deal with very challenging behaviour from a few individuals.

Prisoner assaults on other prisoners and fights were usually related to outside issues, gang membership or debt. Of the 49 episodes, most involved punches to the face and head, seven were serious, with one prisoner receiving treatment from paramedics for his injuries and four attending the accident and emergency department. Victims were offered referral to the police and support as appropriate.

There were 63 assaults on staff including biting, spitting, and punching, of which seven were serious, and all were referred to the police or the independent adjudicator.

There were 147 episodes of damage to prison property or accommodation, and for a few men this was a frequently repeated behaviour.

There were 12 episodes of fire setting, of which five were attended by the Fire Service.

Violence	2019	2020	2021
Total incidents	1258	957	849
Assault on prisoner	133	53	49
Fights	47	14	12
Assault on staff	103	54	63
Damage	300	205	147
Threatening and abusive behaviour	336	132	132

(Locally collected data)

Challenge, support, and intervention plans (CSIP) were used during 2021 to identify prisoners who posed a risk to themselves or others. Thirty plans were opened during 2021, compared with fifty in 2020.

The additional 'Timewise' violence reduction programme was unable to continue during 2021. It involves a series of individual face to face meetings over a two to three month period and is delivered by trained officers overseen by a senior psychologist. A group of officers was trained by the end of 2021, with a mentor allocated, ready to resume the programme as restrictions eased.

The review of the Lambert unit, the 11- celled area housing prisoners undergoing this programme was held as planned in early 2021, and it was decided that the unit should be discontinued, and that prisoners on CSIP and Timewise should be managed on normal location.

During 2021, all prisoners on CSIP were also offered the opportunity to study 'Facing up to conflict', a short distance-learning course which is an introduction to a range of accredited courses available through the 'Alternatives to Violence Project Britain'. The course was delivered by a member of the chaplaincy, who was successful in engaging this challenging population. Of the 24 prisoners who started the course, 15 received a certificate of completion and feedback. Some prisoners said that staff had noticed a positive change in their behaviour, and how they handled difficult situations.

4.3.3 Feeling safe

IMB members continued to feel safe when visiting the establishment both in terms of the general management of the wings and of the precautions in place against Covid-19. The staff remained very good at maintaining order and control and reacted swiftly to any incident, and the IMB observed this on occasion. If prisoners did complain to staff that they felt unsafe, for example because of issues with other prisoners, or related to their trial or attendant publicity, prompt action was taken.

The prisoners attending the young adult prisoner forums in August and November 2021 and February 2022 were unanimous in feeling the prison to be safe. They said that if there were any disagreements or fights between prisoners, staff dealt with them quickly and efficiently. Those who had had previous experience in HMP Leicester agreed that there was less bullying and debt now, recalling that, in the past, the day of the delivery of canteen was called 'black eyes Friday', when debts were collected. They had no doubt that the prison was different now and safe compared with 'other places.' The older prisoner survey conducted by the regional equalities team reported that for Leicester 69% of those questioned said that they felt safe there.

4.4 Use of force

In 2021, force was used on 365 occasions, compared with 395 in 2020 and 544 in 2019. Force used was typically low level, such as guided arm holds to counter threatening behaviour, but there was also prompt higher level intervention to contain incidents of violence or vandalism. Forty-seven of the episodes were planned compared with 52 in 2020 and were usually to move a prisoner to segregation or to facilitate transfer, and on most occasions prisoners behaved compliantly. Every prisoner subjected to the use of force was seen the same day by healthcare and by the duty governor.

PAVA spray was used on one occasion, with no harm reported by the prisoner.

The Board was able to monitor in person two meetings of the monthly use of force committee during 2021. All incidents were discussed, and several cases reviewed in detail, including the viewing of CCTV body worn camera footage for unplanned episodes and handheld camera recordings for planned interventions. Missed opportunities for de-escalation or poor recording of incidents were then fed back to named individuals and guidance and training offered. Only one prisoner complained of excess use of force, but after a very thorough investigation this was not upheld. The meeting included checks on quality assurance and timeliness of documentation, again with feedback to staff. A digital Nomis use of force reporting system was introduced in March 2021.

Use of the safe cell: see section 5.2.3.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Security was strengthened during 2021. In April, a dedicated security team (DST) and two additional dog handlers were appointed, to support the newly enhanced gate security reconfiguration. For all individuals entering the prison there is now

enhanced searching and scanning in place. Unfortunately, the X-ray property scanner associated with this project was delayed by a national procurement problem and was still awaited at the end of the reporting year.

Members of the DST were a more visible presence on the wings and intelligence-led searches had a good success rate. The number of incident reports (IRs) submitted to security by staff has fallen annually. For the 12-month period February 2021 to January 2022, 348 were recorded. In the previous 12 months there were 380, and the year before that, just prior to lockdown, 554.

There continues to be a year-on-year reduction in the number of unauthorised items found in prisoner possession:

Finds	2019	2020	2021
Weapons	>70	55	32
Mobile phones	65	23	19

Drug availability and use also continued to fall:

Drugs	2018	2019	2020	2021
Prisoners 'under the influence'	277	133	99	28
In-possession drug finds	165	85	58	39

Drug finds were chiefly new psycho-active substance (NPS), 'green leafy substance' and cannabis.

During 2021 the pattern of drug ingress into the establishment changed.

The Rapiscan detected only 15 in-mailed items of drug impregnated paper, usually NPS, compared with 40 items in 2020 and 125 in 2019, which is the year that the technology was introduced.

Of 1589 X-ray body scans performed in reception between May and December 2021, 230 revealed packages containing organic material. These were all disposed of by the prisoner under amnesty conditions before they were admitted to normal accommodation.

Nine throwovers were discovered, some substantial, containing drugs, mobile phones, and SIM cards, compared with four detected during 2020. At HMP Leicester an increase in throwovers usually means that other routes are less attractive to suppliers.

There were no incidents during domestic visits, in keeping with the reduced numbers of people involved and the increased scrutiny associated with Covid restrictions.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, food

5.1.1 Accommodation

The higher standard of cleanliness reported last year was further improved during 2021 by a vigorous cleaning and painting programme, employing prisoner workers. All cells now have window curtains, in-cell toilets are screened, and prisoners have duvets. There was a regular programme of decency checks carried out by senior managers. At the end of the reporting year, the clean, rehabilitative, enabling and decent (CRED) programme was introduced, allowing prisoner to join a co-operative project with local Amey staff to repaint and refurbish all cells and landing areas on a rolling programme.

5.1.2 Capital investment programme

In 2020, the Board was pleased to report a major capital investment in the establishment, with works all intended to improve the safety and decency of the accommodation. The reporting year saw the completion of a number of projects, including the installation of new boilers and a complete overhaul of the heating system, the replacement of shower flooring on the main wings, window replacement in the CSU, a major enhanced gate security project, and the installation of in-cell telephony.

The nationally contracted fire safety improvement works, involving the installation of in-cell fire detectors and landing smoke extractors, fell behind schedule but should finish before the end of 2022. The associated replacement of lighting has made a noticeable improvement to the brightness of the wings.

Other works still in progress in early 2022 were the change of use of subterranean cells and installation of computing facilities to create five interview rooms for key working and other interventions, and the installation of laundry facilities on the wings. A barber's shop has been created in a wing recess.

Again, the Board commended the establishment for coping with so many different projects and groups of workmen on site simultaneously. Overall, there was minimal disruption for prisoners, apart from the need to move cells.

Amey services remained a cause for concern. The local team were good, proactive, and prompt to attend for emergencies. Amey Commercial however was slow to organise sub-contractors, and poor at contract delivery.

The reception refurbishment project is an example. The project started in January 2021 as an 8-week contract to be finished by April. However, poor oversight of the work, defective work, omissions, and the need for remedial actions led to slippage. The contract was reviewed with Amey Commercial in July (week 21) and a new programme was put in place to finish in September. Again there was delay, poor workmanship, and wrong fittings, such as un-secured wooden benches in prisoner waiting areas. Concerns were escalated to Amey higher management in October, and the work was finally signed off by the estates department in February 2022.

5.1.3 Food

Throughout 2021, the kitchen staff continued to deliver food of a high standard, with a good menu choice, despite challenges. Social distancing requirements until May meant that the prisoner workforce was reduced to 12 men, delivering 14 shifts each week, compared with up to 24 men on a maximum each of nine shifts before lockdown. There was also an increased requirement for deep cleaning. The number of workers was increased to 16 men as restrictions eased.

As usual there was a very good working relationship between staff and prisoners, and the team worked hard and with good morale coping with Covid related staff and prisoner absences, often at short notice, intermittent supply problems and the breakdowns of essential equipment such as the vegetable peeler and dishwasher, typically then out of action for weeks to months, awaiting repair contracts or parts.

During 2021, in-cell breakfast and a cold lunch were delivered to the cell door, and prisoners could attend the servery to collect the hot evening meal. The lunchtime meal was served at the hotplate in December, but only for a two-week period.

Special menus for events such as the celebration of religious festivals and of Black History month were much appreciated by prisoners, and the arrangements for Ramadan were overseen by the imams and were respectful and proper. Prisoners continued to tell the Board that the food was 'good' or 'OK', and as usual it was compared favourably with 'other places'.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 Accommodation

The works to the flooring, the six cells and the showers completed during 2020 have greatly improved the decency and safety of the unit. Five of the six cell windows were replaced during 2021, and adjudications were moved to a more spacious room with good ventilation.

5.2.2 Population

In 2021, there were 209 episodes of segregation involving 135 prisoners, compared with 154 episodes and 110 prisoners in 2020. The total includes a number of prisoners who stayed a short time, waiting for adjudication, or serving cellular confinement, who would previously have been placed on the Lambert unit. A few men were held, typically overnight, under the secretions policy introduced after the X-ray body scanner in reception became operational from December 2020. They were transferred to normal location when their scan proved negative.

In 2021 four prisoners were held for more than 42 days, compared with five in 2020, but the Board had no concerns.

A number of segregated prisoners exhibited particularly challenging disruptive behaviour, with repeated episodes of vandalism, threats, assault, and dirty protest, as well as self-harm. However, prisoners were treated respectfully regardless of their behaviour, and the Board had occasion to commend the resilience of the staff caring for them. In January 2022, formal support sessions with a psychologist were introduced for CSU staff, and early feedback has been positive.

Quarterly meetings of the segregation monitoring and review group resumed in February 2021. Data including equalities disproportionality was presented and properly scrutinised, and there was effective follow-up up with investigation and action as required. Segregated prisoners were also discussed at the weekly SIMmeeting, and effective multidisciplinary case reviews were held for challenging prisoners.

5.2.3 *The safe cell*

In 2020 the safe cell was used on 14 occasions, to defuse violent or aggressive behaviour or to prevent serious self-harm. In 2021 it was used only twice, once for a very short time and once for nine hours.

5.2.4 *Adjudications*

A total of 1059 charges was laid in 2021 and the number proven was 585. This was very similar to 2020, when 1079 charges were laid and 581 proven. The commonest charges were also similar to 2020, being possession of an unauthorised article, damage, assault or 'disobeys a lawful order'. However, under the latter category, refusal to share a cell became much more common than in 2020 and between January and June 2021 accounted for 55 of the total of 144 such incidents. .

The independent adjudicator offered remote hearings at monthly intervals. Of 33 prisoners referred to the judge, 17 were awarded added days to a total of 265. In 2020 the total was 633 added days, and in 2019 it was 2100.

The Board did not have the capacity to attend more than a few adjudications during 2021 but received the minutes of the quarterly adjudication standardisation meetings, and a member attended one in person. There was proper scrutiny and interrogation of the data, analysis of trends and equalities, and quality assurance checks of paperwork and processes. Actions included feedback and guidance to individual staff and to the whole establishment as necessary.

5.2.5 *Referral to the police*

In 2021, 46 charges were referred to the police for crimes committed in prison, compared with 47 in 2020. Twenty-four were referred back for prison adjudication, but a small number was taken forward. Two prisoners who each committed assaults on staff during 2020 appeared in court in 2021 and received a significant sentence. Prisoner victims of serious assault were helped to press charges if they wished. The establishment acknowledged a good working relationship with the police during the year.

5.3 *Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers*

5.3.1 *Staff-prisoner relationships*

The very good supportive and constructive interactions between staff and prisoners consistently highlighted in IMB Leicester annual reports remained a strength of the establishment. They played a major role in helping prisoners to cope with the restricted regime, particularly when prisoners became frustrated when they saw that the easing of restrictions lagged behind that in the community, typically by six or eight weeks. The fact that most prisoners were however prepared to cooperate with

the strict timetabling and short time out of cell was testament to these good relationships. The Board observed many instances of good staff-prisoner engagement and good humour.

To the credit of all those concerned, staff and prisoners worked promptly and efficiently together in the mop-up operation on 30 July when torrential rain in Leicester city resulted in flash flooding of the basement and ground floor cells and landings.

The dedicated Covid-19 custody manager continued to play a key role throughout the year, working in close collaboration with healthcare. He acted as a focal point for information and encouragement for staff and prisoners, in person and by regular updates in the weekly prisoner newsletter. He encouraged vaccination, reminded all about the long running safety measures in place, organised the testing programmes for prisoners, staff and visitors, and was efficient in managing cases of the illness and in contact tracing.

From January to June 2021, formal wellbeing daily checks remained in place for each prisoner. Officers were required to hold a daily meaningful conversation at unlock to ask about health, contact with family and any problems that they could help with, and these checks continued in place for prisoners in the CSU and induction.

5.3.2 Key working

The Board was pleased to see the reintroduction of key working from July. Initially 20 officers underwent refresher training and then delivered a weekly 45-minute session to about 40 men deemed vulnerable because they were within four weeks of release, on an ACCT document or judged by the safety intervention meeting to need extra support. A monthly session was timetabled for the other prisoners.

From September, key working was available for all prisoners. Seventy to 80 staff were involved, each timetabled to deliver one session per week for each of five prisoners, and organised so that the same officer would be available for eight out of every ten sessions offered to each prisoner, to improve continuity.

Two of a planned five interview rooms became available in January 2021, with computer facilities, so that the interview could be private, and the records completed during the session. The IMB found that prisoners they talked to generally knew who their key worker was. Attendees at the young adult prisoner forums said that they appreciated the scheme, but they felt that better support and advice was offered by older staff who had more life experience and children of their own, than by officers of their own age.

Overall, the delivery of key working sessions sometimes reached 50% after September, the eventual target being 80%. However, this was critically dependent on sufficient staffing, and for instance fell to 5% on one week when a number of staff were off sick and there was a requirement to staff four constant watches and one bed watch.

5.3.3 Staffing and recruitment

Staffing was under pressure for most of the year, through vacancies, long term absences including maternity leave, and short term Covid related absences at short notice. The fully restricted Stage 4 Covid regime which continued until 17 May

required full staffing of 109 officers. The number of staff available for duty fell gradually to 81 in August, and it was of concern that there was a steady loss of experienced staff throughout the year, some through promotion or retirement but others to better paid work, including the police service.

Prison officers undergoing entry level training joined in batches, with 22 present by November, all requiring close supervision and mentoring. At the end of the year 50% of officer staff had been in post less than two years.

The IMB is concerned that delivery of a full regime, and in particular key working and those elements that relate to successful rehabilitation depend on full staffing. There seem to be two main problems:

1 The national recruitment process, which takes a number of months and seems not to fully test resilience and suitability for the job. We were told that the early attrition rate is about 9%, after new recruits see the day-to-day requirements of delivering the regime and 'it was not the job they expected' from recent publicity.

2 Officer pay, which compares poorly with other employment, including public service posts, notably in the police service.

5.4 Equality and diversity

The protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are age, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (includes nationality and ethnicity), religion or belief, and sexual orientation. A member of the senior management team is the named sponsor for each characteristic as it applies to staff and prisoners. The Board monitors whether prisoners with any of these characteristics suffer disadvantages.

HMP Leicester holds a diverse population, with typically 18 ethnic groups represented. The percentage of white prisoners increased from 57 to 66, while Black, Asian or minority ethnic prisoners reduced slightly from 28 to 26%. The number of nationalities represented more than doubled and was 39, compared with 15 in 2020. BigWord telephone translation and interpreter services were available 24 hours a day, covering more than 50 languages. Dual handset or speaker phones were located in key prison areas, including reception, safer custody, and the adjudications suite.

Other population characteristics in 2021 were similar to 2020. On a typical day, 73% of the men were between 20 and 39 years of age, 9% were over 50, and two or three men were over 70. Eighteen% self-declared as disabled.

Equalities Action Team (EAT) meetings continued during 2021 and were much more proactive than in the previous year. The appointment of an equalities officer of Band 3 business administrator grade in May led to a substantial improvement to the collection and analysis of data and hence to the effectiveness of the meeting. Disproportionalities between the normal population spread of a protected characteristic and its representation over a range of prison processes, such as use of force, adjudications, and submitted complaints were highlighted and investigated, with action taken as necessary. Equalities data is now incorporated into most department meetings in which prisoners are discussed.

Up to five equalities peer workers were in place for part of the year, but no support meetings were held because of restrictions. It was possible to hold occasional prisoner forums later in 2021, and one each was held for older prisoners (on the Welford unit) and for Black, Asian or minority ethnic prisoners, and three for young adults (21 – 25 years of age), with the results fed back to the EAT meeting for information and action.

There was whole prison promotion of awareness of diversity by regular articles in the weekly newsletter, and events including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller month and LGBT+ history month were celebrated. Black History Month in October remains a highlight for all prisoners, with exhibitions in the library, posters, competitions for all to enter and special menu choices.

5.4.1 Discrimination incident report forms (DIRFS)

DIRFs were dealt with by the member of the equalities team responsible for the protected characteristic involved. All responses were quality assured by the deputy governor and constructive feedback given to individuals. The IMB has seen examples of responses to prisoners and has noticed a steady improvement in the thoroughness of the investigations undertaken, including conversations with prisoners and staff, and in how the outcome was conveyed to the complainant.

Forty-four DIRFs were determined in 2021:

Characteristic	Number	Upheld	Not upheld
Age	1	0	1
Disability	1	0	1
Race	28	14	14
Gender	1	1	0
Religion and belief	3	0	3
Gender reassignment	4	0	4
Sexual orientation	6	1	5
Total	44	16	28

This contrasts with 20 DIRFs, and none upheld, over a ten-month period in 2020. Those cases upheld were usually settled by mediation and adjudication, as appropriate.

5.4.2 Foreign national prisoners held on an IS91 (immigration authority to detain)

The Board is pleased to report that the process of removal from prison of foreign national men held on an IS91 and awaiting deportation was quicker in 2021. Of the fourteen received into the establishment during the year, seven stayed three months or fewer, and the longest stay was six months. The number held at any time was between one and six, and for a short time in January 2022 there were none. The use of the immigration bail tagging system played a part in this.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team is well led and hardworking and continues to provide cohesive multifaith support to all prisoners, whatever their belief. During 2021, there were thirteen participating faith groups, and about 28% of prisoners declared as Muslim, 21% as Christian, 15% as Roman Catholic and 25% as having no religion. Information about faith groups and their festivals such as Ramadan, Easter and Diwali was circulated to all prisoners in the weekly prisoner newsletter and in twenty-one notices to prisoners during the year.

In January 2021, corporate worship remained suspended. Members of the chaplaincy continued to attend the establishment and were a constant visible presence on the wing. In person they visited each week a substantial proportion of the population, to deliver in-cell faith material, typically including prayers, readings, and materials for inspiration and meditation. A bereavement counsellor was also available.

The assistant bishop for prisons, who visited in November, reported that prisoners and staff alike had spoken of the warmth, availability and responsiveness to people's needs shown by the chaplaincy team, and this has also been the experience of IMB.

Corporate worship resumed on 30 April 2021, with the attendance of a maximum of twenty men per session, with care to avoid mixing regime groups. This meant that for the larger faith groups there was a rota system, and those who could not attend in a particular week continued to receive in-cell support. This situation was current at the end of the reporting year.

5.6 Complaints

There were fewer formal complaints to the establishment in 2021, with a reduction in both first complaint (Comp I) and appeal (Comp 1A) forms submitted.

The complaints team was energetic, and only five responses were outside the allowed timescale. One prisoner submitted 36 forms over a three-month period.

Part of the overall reduction may be because prisoners were encouraged to speak to wing staff or to use the general landing application process first, so that issues could be resolved promptly.

Complaints	2019	2020	2021
COMP 1	1100	677	478
COMP 1A	60	58	47
Property		85	81
Finance		77	48
Staff		72	61

The Board has occasion to inspect paperwork when IMB applications are being investigated and can confirm that the quality of replies has generally been good. The Board was particularly careful to scrutinise the handling of complaints against staff, including bullying, attitude, and unfair treatment (category J, P.34), and concluded that the issues had been investigated properly, and the responses were fair and had been discussed with the prisoner.

From October 2021, the IMB conducted an audit of complaints submitted and the quality of the response. A random sample of 31 cases was reviewed over a six-month period. Twenty-three responses were good with a clear explanation of the investigation that had been done and of the outcome, with an apology if warranted. One outcome seemed unfair, three showed a poor staff attitude and did not address the issues raised, and three lacked an apology. These results were reported to management and fed back to the staff involved where necessary.

The complaints department conducted a survey in October and forms were available to all prisoners over a six-week period. Four were returned. One prisoner had had a good experience. Three raised issues which were further investigated. It is planned to repeat the survey at six monthly intervals.

5.7 Property

The number of complaints about property to the establishment, usually missing on transfer from another establishment, numbered 81 in 2021, similar to 2020.

However only two such prisoners were dissatisfied enough to submit an application concerning property to the IMB in 2021. One of those had just received his property when the member visited him, and the complaints clerk was investigating the other case. Between 2016 and 2020, applications to the Board for property missing on transfer averaged 12 per annum.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare: general

Healthcare continues to be provided by the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. From April 2021, substance misuse services (SMS) became fully integrated, so that about 50 NHS employed healthcare staff were in post, with a head of healthcare and three clinical matrons responsible for primary care (physical health), mental health and SMS. The service is supported by GPs from Inclusion Healthcare and by visiting specialists. There was very good team working and healthcare provision during 2021, despite temporary vacancies and periods of Covid-related staff absences, usually at short notice.

The integration of services allowed a reconfiguration of the accommodation. SMS prescribing clinics were moved to the healthcare suite, and works were completed on the wing to provide a single area for medication dispensing. This has improved prisoner safety by reducing queueing and 'flashpoints' and requires fewer supervising officers. The 29-cell MI recovery Unit (MRU) opened in October, for men withdrawing from drugs or alcohol. SMS workers were based on the unit and worked collaboratively with prison staff.

Only 11 applications were received by the Board in relation to healthcare issues. Four were from prisoners concerned about their own mental health, and these were discussed with healthcare the same day and appropriate action taken, and four concerned matters for which appointments were already in hand.

6.2 Physical healthcare

Covid cases and contacts were very well managed. There was excellent partnership working with staff in all areas of the prison, which led to successful containment during 2021 of 24 sporadic cases usually arriving through reception, and of outbreaks affecting 13 men in October and 18 at the end of the year. Prisoner cases were usually mild or asymptomatic, but one man was admitted to hospital overnight and two attended the accident and emergency department. Vaccination was delivered according to the national programme and was offered repeatedly to refusers.

Face-to-face clinics with GPs, specialists and other healthcare professionals continued throughout 2021, and the full usual range of services was offered. Remote consultation facilities remained in place but were used only three or four times a month. From January to April 2021, continuing restrictions allowed only three prisoners to be in the healthcare suite at a time, increasing in May to six men in total, and this was still the case at the end of the reporting year. However, waiting lists remained manageable, with routine waiting times for specialist clinics usually between four and six weeks, and less than seven days for a GP appointment. Prisoners acknowledged that waits were sometimes less than those in the outside community.

Healthcare work on the wings included providing reception screening interviews, attendance at ACCT reviews, same day reviews following the use of force, and attending self-harming prisoners and those who developed acute medical problems. For a variety of medical health issues during 2021 there were 35 attendances at the

accident and emergency department, six visits by paramedics and 12 prisoners on bed watch to a total of 34 days and nights.

A good dental service was maintained, and Time for Teeth provided triage and emergency treatments. Restrictions were as in the community, and aerosol generating higher risk procedures were re-introduced, and performed at the end of the list, by the dentist in full PPE. Measures were in place for improved ventilation of the treatment room in early 2022. The waiting list for routine dental treatment remained four to six weeks, again shorter than outside in the community. No prisoner raised any concerns about the dental service during 2021 via applications to the IMB.

6.3 Mental healthcare

Mental healthcare (MH) provision remained good during the reporting year. The case load of moderate to severe illness was similar to 2020, at about 20% of the population, and up to 45% were in receipt of MH services. MH nurses had full involvement with reception, casework, and properly timetabled ACCT reviews.

The appointed psychiatrist continued to attend one whole day a week, sometimes assisted by a specialist trainee, and continuity of care was good. The psychological wellbeing practitioner continued in post and supported individual men suffering lower-level mental ill health, but group sessions were not allowed to resume during 2021 (due to ongoing Covid restrictions).

The three-year research project 'Potential Unlock Art in Prison – the Impact of Arts on Mental Health in a Custodial Setting' involving healthcare staff, the CRC, De Montfort University and Soft Touch Arts was suspended during 2021.

6.3.1 *The gatekeeping process*

This is the system by which prisoners with severe mental illness are transferred to secure psychiatric accommodation.

During the reporting year, 15 prisoners with serious mental illness were transferred, compared with ten during 2020. Eleven were admitted to low secure and four to medium secure accommodation, and ten were transferred outside Leicestershire. The average time interval between first referral and assessment by secure unit staff was 13 days (range 1 - 34), compared with 24 days (range 10 – 36) in 2020, and the time spent by 13 of the prisoners accepted and waiting for transfer was 18 days (range 4 – 37), compared with 31 days (range 10 – 57) in 2020.

Two prisoners experienced a longer delay. One man with complex issues had assessments by three units, promptly arranged over the 48 days from first referral, but then waited a further 65 days for a place. However, the Board was most concerned about one man who was so unwell that he was held in Leicester on constant watch for 132 days between first referral and transfer. Assessments by two units were performed promptly but there was a 77-day delay in transfer once accepted, although 61 days of this was accounted for by a Covid-19 outbreak at the receiving establishment. One man waited six months for a scarce place at an acquired brain injury unit.

The Board can report that over the past three years there has been a continued improvement in the referral process and the timeliness of assessment and transfer for the 'straightforward' case. This has been achieved through the IMPACT project for secure services in the East and West Midlands, developed since 2019 with a major input from Nottinghamshire NHS Trust. There is a single point of referral to the commissioners (NHSE), and assessment and secure bed allocation are co-ordinated. All prisoners referred are now regarded as a priority. A fortnightly meeting is held on-line, and all 'delayed discharges' (prisoners waiting more than two weeks for transfer) are discussed at a high management level. The system is well organised and efficient and has greatly reduced the time spent by healthcare previously on phone calls to individual clinicians and establishments to press the case for Leicester prisoners. However, there remain insufficient places in secure psychiatric accommodation for prompt transfer to be achieved for all.

6.3.2 Critical time intervention

This valuable initiative has continued. Some men become well known to the establishment through repeated cycles of release and reoffending ('revolving door' prisoners), often the result of complex health needs and disorganised behaviour. Two mental health practitioners identify these vulnerable individuals and, for six weeks before release, network with the resettlement services so that through the gate support is in place on the day of release and continues afterwards for up to six weeks. Fewer prisoners had local release during 2021, but about 12 men were supported in this way, and again there were some notable anecdotal successes.

6.4 Social care

The Leicester City Council funded trained care assistant continued in post and provided rapid assessment and response for physical disabilities. Thirty-two prisoners were assessed between April 2020 and April 2021, and at least five received a social care package. Equipment such as walking aids can be provided without the need for referral to other agencies, and short-term hospital beds were provided promptly, if required.

6.5 Regime, exercise

6.5.1 Regime

HMP Leicester started the year under the Stage 4 restrictions introduced in March 2020, and these continued until mid-May 2021. Time out of cell was about one hour for most prisoners and consisted of 30 minutes outside exercise on 11 days per fortnight, and time for domestics and phone calls. There were still no social visits.

From 17 May, the Stage 3 restrictions allowed 45 minutes outside exercise on 13 days per fortnight and added one gym session per fortnight with limited attendance in the classroom and at corporate worship, and social visits were reintroduced.

In Stage 2, from 13 September, activity groups were larger, and visits provision was extended. From 6 December, the regime was further expanded, and approached the

planned 'new normal' using an alternating split regime in which half the prison had purposeful activity in the morning, and time during the afternoon for exercise, gym, showers, library, key working and visits, and the following week switched the morning and afternoon sessions.

This offered a minimum of two hours out of cell, and between four and five hours for those engaging with the regime.

Unfortunately, alongside all prisons in England and Wales, Leicester moved back to the previous Stage 2 regime on 21 December, and this continued until 22 March 2022.

6.5.2 Exercise

From January to April 2021 the stage 4 restrictions continued, with 30 minutes outdoor exercise available to prisoners on 11 days of 14. The gym remained closed. Gym equipment remained on the yard and was much appreciated. From May, weekend sessions were added, and men received 13 sessions per fortnight of duration 45 minutes.

The gym reopened in May, and men were offered one session a week, with 10 prisoners per session, increasing to 15 in September. This regime continued until 22 March 2022, apart from the 2-week temporary relaxation of restrictions in December.

The three enthusiastic physical education officers continued to play a major role in making the restricted regime tolerable, and encouraged men to keep active, whatever their level of fitness, and there were regular challenges, including a 12 station Grand National obstacle course, entered by a total of 60 men. The IMB regularly received appreciative comments from prisoners, and 'more exercise' was mentioned as a high priority in prisoner consultations and forums, including young adult and older persons. It was rare for there to be bad behaviour during exercise sessions.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Substance misuse services (SMS) were provided by Turning Point until April 2021 and then by the NHS (6.1). Turning Point remained the community provider however, and working links were maintained.

Typically, in 2020, the case load was about 30% of the population, with about 100 men receiving psychosocial support and about half of them on opiate substitution therapy (OST). During 2021, typical caseloads were lower, between 45 and 72 men per month, averaging overall about 20% of the population, but a higher proportion were on OST. A few men were on the alcohol withdrawal programme at any time, and links were maintained with Dear Albert (an organisation that provides support to address substance misuse), although there were no group meetings in 2021.

Throughout the year, the team continued to offer welfare checks and support, and had confidential face-to-face meetings with individual prisoners on the wing. The usual in-cell learning packs were continued, and new materials added.

The Board welcomed the opening of the 29 bedded MRU in October, staffed daily by a SMS worker in collaboration with prison staff. Men who are prepared to engage

with the process were expected to stay for 28 days, before moving on to the main wing. A senior forensic psychologist with a special interest in SMS offender health was appointed in September 2021 and made regular visits to the unit.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 Education

Education remains the main purposeful activity in the prison. PeoplePlus performed well in the third year of their contract and ranked highly among comparator prisons. The good working relationship with the prison working and skills team continued. There was full staffing with 12 tutors and a learning support practitioner in post.

There were many challenges to the delivery of education during 2021, although the gradual easing of restrictions was welcomed by staff, who at all stages were keen to return to the classroom. Prisoners commonly stayed only four to six weeks before transferring out, there were staff and prisoners absent for Covid related reasons, often at short notice, and there was a substantial proportion of remand prisoners, who are entitled to refuse education. The tutors and manager showed considerable flexibility and goodwill in coping with frequent timetable changes.

The usual good range of courses was available, with the emphasis on functional skills and accredited courses which could be continued at other PeoplePus contracted establishments, including HMPs Lincoln and Ranby. The awarding body was Gateway Qualifications for English and maths, both offered at entry level to level 2, and for ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) levels 1-3 and for employability skills. The in-cell four module art course continued to prove popular. The two-week courses introduced in December 2020 continued to be offered to prisoners uncertain of their length of stay and these included budgeting, health and safety in the workplace, individual rights and responsibilities, understanding stress, and valuing equality and diversity.

From January to May 2021, the prison continued the restricted education regime first put in place in March 2020. Learners studied in-cell packs, with tutor support, and this continued throughout the reporting year and was supplemented by the offer of topic related DVDs from July. From 17 May up to ten learners were allowed to attend the department, with five to a classroom, and from September the total was increased to 20. Prisoners were prioritised by the need to complete courses or to catch up with the backlog of examinations. During the two-week period of lighter restrictions in December, up to 25 men were allowed to attend, and most were to be offered two classroom sessions per week. The September regime was then reintroduced and continued until March 2022.

In June, there were 95 learners on 118 courses, and in August about 25% of the whole prison population was engaged in education. The last of the outstanding exams was taken in September, and the pass rate in those who completed courses was usually higher than 80% in functional skills. the pass rate in those who completed courses was usually higher than 80%. A typical example was that, of 125 starters in functionals skills at all levels, 36 withdrew, usually through release or transfer and 23 did not complete, but 66 completed and 58 achieved the qualification.

When classes returned, IMB rota members noted a calm and purposeful atmosphere in college, and men listening to and engaging with tutors. Of 100 learners surveyed by the education department in December 2021, 66 wanted to retain in-cell learning, and the education packs were continued for homework, 'stretch and challenge', and for those unable to attend in person.

Education opportunities continued regularly to be promoted in the weekly prisoner newsletter, by means of articles about topics related to the equalities calendar, mental wellbeing and social issues. These took the form of an offer of information, with an attached competition involving an activity such as word search, creative writing, art, or poetry. These materials were sent to all registered learners but made available to all prisoners, with the winner named and awarded a small prize. Topics during 2021 included autism awareness, Stephen Lawrence day, race equality week, Father's Day and European day of languages. World food day attracted 30 correct entries.

7.1.2 Library

The library continued to be much valued by prisoners. It remained open throughout the reporting year, staffed by the senior community librarian and her team. There was a rota system for a visit by each regime group once a week for book exchange, and a wide range of printed material was available, including distraction packs, puzzles, magazines, newsletters, and self-help materials about coping with stress and lockdown. There was a borrowing collection of over 500 DVDs, many of them donated by staff. As usual, different displays were mounted throughout the year, including for the Euros football tournament and Black History Month.

Storybook Dads, the scheme in which a prisoner reads aloud stories which are recorded on a CD and sent to his children, resumed, delivered by the senior community librarian, with occasional help from a volunteer.

The Shannon Trust reading scheme, the five-stage programme enabling a prisoner to learn to read with the aid of peer mentors, was not delivered during 2021. The Trust indicated that they wished this to be driven by prison staff as reading plan coordinators, and applications from staff were invited in May, but unfortunately the scheme did not proceed. As of March 2022, negotiations with the Trust were ongoing,

Normally, there is a flourishing programme of extra activities organised by the senior community librarian and the writer-in-residence, in collaboration with prison staff. During 2021 it was necessary to suspend the three-part project 'Your Brain in Science' involving prisoners and professional actors and recorded for National Prison Radio, and the programme of workshops 'Celebrating Artists from a Working-Class Background'. However, from February 2021, prisoners have participated in a three-year project 'Ingenuity' in collaboration with the National Justice Museum, Nottingham. This will focus on creativity and its effect on rehabilitation and wellbeing, and work will be exhibited in due course. There was good uptake of in-cell material, and project leaders held three workshops, which participants reported as 'brilliant.'

In 2020 the writer-in-residence published 'Tool Book', sponsored by Arts Council England, LCC and the Joyce Carr Doughty Trust. This contained articles by a wide range of artists about creativity and the arts, with positive thoughts ideas and tasks

for prisoners during lockdown. In 2021 he published three further tool books, 'Red', 'Blue' and 'Green', and made them available to the whole prison estate.

7.2 Vocational training, work

During 2021, about 70 prisoner jobs were available, including for workers in kitchens, waste management, and the clothing exchange system, and for cleaners, bio-cleaners, wing orderlies, peer workers and painters. The workshop remained closed.

Classroom teaching continued throughout the year for the waste management industry training and advisory board (WAMITAB) cleaning and waste recycling courses, and of 22 men who were able to complete a course, 20 received the award. Awards in food safety and catering were achieved by 40 kitchen workers, and an award in food safety and storage by three. One hundred and twenty-nine men successfully completed a manual handling course.

Opportunities for employment after release continued to be discussed with local employers, including in catering and construction, although several meetings had to be postponed because of Covid restrictions. Training and employment opportunities at the Glen Parva site were discussed with a number of men coming up to release, and arrangements made to contact 11 of them on discharge.

During 2021, the establishment became involved in the New Futures network, a specialist part of the prison service which brokers partnership between prisons and employers, and the regional employment broker began to provide information and to attend the reducing reoffending meeting. There was also collaboration with the Leicester Employment Hub, a project run by Leicester City Council incorporating an ex-offender stream.

7.3 Offender management and progression

The OMU was staffed by six prison offender managers (POMS), who were either probation or prison officers, managed by a senior probation officer. The number of administrative case workers was increased during the year from seven to nine in recognition of the high workload. The POMS continued to provide an OMU internal duty line service to answer prisoner queries, as well as face to face work.

HMP Leicester is designated as a local prison with a 55% reception and a 45% resettlement function.

'Reception' prisoners are those awaiting court, either on remand or convicted awaiting sentence. At the beginning of 2021, there was a backlog of court cases, and reception prisoners formed 70% of the population. During the year this rose to 80%. Although sentenced men were transferred out promptly, there remained few places for the local resettlement function, and a sizeable number of Leicester men were transferred to HMP Lincoln and released from there. Twenty men were released on home detention curfew (HDC) during 2021.

Waiting times were particularly long for Crown Court hearings. In October, delays for 12 men remanded and 23 convicted and awaiting sentence had exceeded 236 days, and eight of them had each already served between 12 and 17 months.

7.3.1 Legal visits and the court video link

This accommodation remained very valuable for prisoner management during 2021. In spring 2021, the two court links and four legal visits video booths were in use five days a week and often fully booked. This increased Covid-19 safety for prisoners and their advisers and for prison staff, by reducing footfall and movement in and out of the establishment.

However, the work gradually reduced and by the end of the year only 30 to 40% of the capacity was being used. Other video conferencing opportunities were expanded, however, including allowing prisoners to contact their community offender manager (COM), or services such as LCC Housing.

7.3.2 Prisoners serving an Indeterminate sentence for pprotection (IPP)

As a local prison, HMP Leicester is an inappropriate place for IPP prisoners, because it lacks the specialist courses and interventions required by the Parole Board in order to progress them to safe release. Nonetheless, these prisoners continued to be housed in Leicester during 2021, spending a long period of time waiting for parole hearings or for transfer, serving 'empty time' and a seemingly never ending sentence. Of the 14 men mentioned in our previous report, nine were still present at the beginning of 2021 and five of them served at least an extra six months each before leaving. A total of eight IPP prisoners was present in September, and three in October.

A new concern was related to the recall system. These prisoners are subject to recall once released, and this can occur as a result of breaking the terms of their licence, rather than for committing a further offence.

One particular prisoner was failed by the system as a whole. Because of deteriorating mental health and suicidal behaviour, he was recalled in December 2020 after release from another establishment. He spent 21 days on constant watch, before responding to mental health treatment, and was released in June, following a paper parole hearing. Again recalled in September because of deteriorating mental health, he remained in Leicester prison until transfer to secure mental accommodation in January 2022, having spent a further 132 days on constant watch. His needs would have been better served if an urgent admission to a secure mental health facility had been available.

The IMB continues to believe that IPP prisoners are a low priority for the criminal justice system, and that their treatment could be regarded as inhumane and unfair. The highly restricted Covid regime during 2020 and 2021 added to their burden.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 Social visits

The establishment made it a priority to reintroduce social visits as soon as restrictions allowed. Visits had been stopped in November 2020 and did not resume until 28 April 2021. Each man could then book one visit per month of one hour duration. A maximum of ten visits was allowed each weekday afternoon, with a 10-minute interval between arrivals to comply with social distancing requirements.

The visits team provided a welcoming atmosphere, and there was very good compliance by prisoners and their visitors with the pre-visit Covid testing and the restrictions imposed during the visit. A Twitter account was in place to keep visitors informed of changes.

Initial uptake was lower than expected, typically about 30 bookings a week between June and September. It was felt that the introduction of in-cell telephones contributed to this. When weekend afternoon sessions were added on 9 October, the 20 slots were usually fully booked. For a short period in December, before the reintroduction of national restrictions, there were 15 places available, and visits of up to two hours duration, and this regime was reintroduced on 21 March 2022.

A family engagement worker from the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) was based in the OMU from May and available to support prisoners and their family.

Secure video visits remained available during the reporting year and were funded by the prison service and provided by Purple Visits, replaced from July by Phonehub. Fifteen daily sessions were available but were under subscribed. From November, one per month per prisoner was offered.

7.4.2 PIN phones and credit

From January 2021, prisoners continued to be allowed a daily ten-minute phone call to family and friends, using either the PIN phone on their landing or one of the 12 prison issue mobile phones in use since lockdown began.

From 14 May 2021, in-cell telephony was available, with lines open from 6.00am to 23.00pm. A new PIN phone monitoring system maintained security. Prisoners could also make free calls to those prison departments previously available on the prison mobiles, and receive calls back, for example confirming healthcare appointments or following up matters previously raised.

In-cell telephony led to a great improvement in prisoner wellbeing. Even on the first rota visit after installation, prisoners volunteered that they were pleased with the service, it was a 'game-changer' because calls were more private, they did not need to wait for staff to provide a phone, and they could speak to their family at more convenient times such as the late afternoon or evening when their children were home from school or their partner from work. This gave them something to look forward to during the lengthy periods of lock-in.

Postal correspondence, email a prisoner and prisoner voicemail were also available as usual.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 Organisation of resettlement services

The CRC consisted of seven through the gate (TTG) case workers, some of whom had particular specialist interests such as finance and accommodation, a housing and welfare officer, and a community support worker, with good managerial and administrative support. There was already good collaboration with probation services who share the same office.

The CRC was disbanded on 28 June 2021 and replaced by commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) contracted by the East Midlands Probation Delivery Unit of the probation service. The focus shifted from prison-based to community-based service delivery. Some CRC workers left to take up community posts and some remained to cover a 'transition' period. At the end of the year, the head of offender management delivery was an experienced senior probation officer, managing six POMS (7.3) and two experienced ex-CRC case workers, who were very valuable in providing continuity for prisoners.

It was realised straight away that the new service specification only covered sentenced men, with no provision for remand prisoners, even though they had a similar need for help with immediate accommodation and financial issues including tenancies, lets, debt and benefits. Additionally, some men were released from court with no firm arrangements made.

Pre-release teams and short term sentence teams were being discussed nationally by the end of the reporting year, but in the meantime the case workers did what they could to support these prisoners, despite having limited resources.

7.5.2 Finance, benefits and debt management

The long established finance officer continued to work for the CRC during the first five months of 2021, and during this period on average each month he assisted 64 prisoners with a total reported debt of £59,000, contacted 54 creditors, and helped six men to open a bank account. Between June 2021 and March 2022 no contractor was appointed for finance, benefit, and debt services, and the work was managed by various members of the resettlement team, and detailed records are not available. The team continued to open bank accounts for prisoners held in Leicester for more than eight weeks, as six weeks is required for the process.

DWP worked remotely during most of 2021 but maintained regular email contact with the team so that prisoners were assisted with their benefit claims. From November, however, a DWP work coach began to work regularly on site, to offer prisoners assistance and advice on a range of issues, for example court fines, council tax, and housing benefit. DWP were also able to make post-release appointments on their behalf for prisoners classed as vulnerable.

7.5.3 Accommodation on release

From June 2021, the East Midlands contract for accommodation services was awarded to NACRO, and the main provider is the Bridge, Loughborough. A NACRO worker allocated to HMPs Leicester and Lincoln began to attend the prison weekly.

Under the new system, those who are likely to be of no fixed abode (NFA) on release are identified by the resettlement team, who then complete the 'duty to refer' request to the local authority at least 14 days prior to release, so that a homelessness prevention officer can be allocated in good time. The prison team also contact the COM to ask them to make a referral to the NACRO accommodation providers.

A cooperation between Help the Homeless and LCC led to more accommodation becoming available for those released NFA. The Leicester Homelessness Task Force continued to operate in 2021, and during Stage 3 and 4 restrictions offered guaranteed accommodation for up to 84 nights.

In 2020, 579 men were released from HMP Leicester, and of 295 released between June and November 19 (6%) were NFA on leaving custody

2021 was not a typical year, because the high 'reception' population meant that a significant proportion of Leicester men was released from HMP Lincoln. Of the 270 releases from Leicester, 61 (22%) were NFA on leaving custody. Seventy men were released from court, because of time served or no custodial sentence awarded, and no data are available for their destination.

Accommodation

2021	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Released From prison	33	23	24	31	16	26	13	25	14	19	20	26	270
NFA	2	3	2	8	6	8	5	7	2	5	5	8	61
Released from court							8	16	18	13	9	4	70

Locally collected data

At the end of the reporting year, the reducing reoffending committee heard that the liaison with COMs seemed to be working well, and that referrals were being completed in a timely manner.

7.5.4 Reducing reoffending function

The reducing reoffending committee met regularly during 2021. The membership expanded during the year, and the team of prison heads of function and representatives from education, resettlement services, psychology, chaplaincy and healthcare (including substance misuse services) was joined by representatives from the Bridge/NACRO, the New Futures Network, and the regional careers service adviser (PeoplePlus). There was a genuine optimism about the future prospects for prisoner rehabilitation and the Board looks forward to monitoring these developments during 2022.

8. The work of the IMB

During 2021, the Board provided face-to-face monitoring and a rota visit at least weekly. One member retired after six years' service, one took sabbatical leave and one new member moved away. Two newly recruited members successfully completed the new member's induction training, and the IMB clerk completed the updated online training module.

Board meetings were held monthly, and face-to-face meetings replaced teleconferencing from May 2021.

Members continue to be made welcome in the establishment, and prisoner contact is readily facilitated. Members attended a sample of establishment meetings during the year, including the daily briefing, safer custody, safety intervention meetings, reducing reoffending, segregation monitoring and review group, adjudication monitoring group and use of force. The Board has also continued to receive the daily briefing sheet, prisoner and staff newsletters, notices to staff and prisoners and the minutes of key departmental meetings.

Pre-Board training sessions included a review of local IMB guidance documents, record keeping, information assurance and confidentiality. There were two talks from colleagues in probation about the Probation Inspectorate and the progress of the reorganisation of probation services. An IMB colleague presented an insight into the work of the IMB at a high security prison.

A member met visitors from the Samaritans at an event celebrating the work of the Listeners and a member met the assistant bishop for prisons on his visit to the chaplaincy.

Board statistics 2021

Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Total number of visits to the establishment	159

Applications to the IMB

Application boxes are situated in the Welford Unit, CSU, Parsons Unit, MRU and beside the servery on the main wing.

During the reporting year the boxes were opened, usually weekly, by an attending member.

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	1	5
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	9	4
C	Equality	2	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	2	2
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	7	6
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	2	1
F	Food and kitchens	2	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	10	11
H1	Property within this establishment	3	3
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	7	2
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	1	4
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	7	2
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	10	9
K	Transfers	4	3
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	2	3
	Total number of applications	69	55

Ten confidential applications were dealt with (compared with seven in 2020).

The issue had already been resolved before the IMB contacted the prisoner in nine cases, and five prisoners had left the establishment. During 2021, no prisoner used the 0800 IMB applications line.



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