



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Kirkham

**For reporting year
1 January 2021 – 31 December 2021**

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

2. Description of the establishment

2.1 HMP Kirkham is a category D open prison holding adult male convicted prisoners. It is located in north west England, seven miles west of Preston and 12 miles east of Blackpool. It occupies the site of a former RAF technical training centre. The site was taken over by the Home Office in the early 1960s and has been in use as a prison since 1962. With few exceptions, the infrastructure and services are World War II vintage and while some of the older prisoner accommodation is now looking quite tired, having been redeveloped over the period 1990–1999, a major financial package has enabled the building of four prefabricated accommodation billets, which were opened in November 2020, and a major new build to accommodate 46 prisoners will be ready for occupation in early 2022.

2.2 There are 27 occupied billets. All billets mainly provide single-occupancy, basic living accommodation. A care and support billet was brought into use in early 2015 and does have some capacity for double occupancy, although that is assessed based on medical needs. (See 5.1.)

2.3 With the addition of some new accommodation the overall capacity will increase from 657 to 699. At the end of the reporting period, capacity was 533 due to the work being carried out to finalise the installation of the new fire alarm system and associated refurbishments. During the reporting period the population ranged from 639 at the start of the year to 469 towards the end allowing for the decanting of billets while work was in progress. The majority of the prisoners fall into the 30-49 age bracket, with only 3% being over 60.

2.4 There are a number of workshops on site, run by outside agencies (Recycling Lives, Remade with Hope and Calpac) as well as in-house – for example, bicycle repairs, and farms and gardens. Education provision is managed by the establishment and run by Novus, formerly the Manchester College. The courses run include literacy and numeracy, as well as lifestyle courses. Library provision is by Lancashire County Council.

2.5 Healthcare services are provided by Spectrum Community Health (Spectrum), which also runs the substance misuse team. Substance misuse is a very busy area and has suffered with staff shortages throughout the reporting period. Following the phasing out of the community rehabilitation company (CRC) a small accelerator prisons project team have picked up some elements of the work, looking to prepare prisoners for release with support in accessing jobs, housing and banking.

2.6 In 2022 HMP Kirkham will celebrate its 60th anniversary and plans are being drawn up to mark that anniversary.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

3.1.1 This report is written from a Covid-19 perspective; the Board continued to visit the establishment during the pandemic, while ensuring that prisoners were able to speak with members without them having to go into the billets. This report is not able to comment on the condition of repair of the living accommodation which is currently occupied. The Board has therefore tried to cover as much ground as it can in these difficult circumstances, but inevitably there is less detail and supporting evidence than usual. Ministers are aware of these constraints.

3.1.2 The reporting period started with a further period of lockdown due to the pandemic. The establishment was periodically an outbreak control site but gradually by the middle of the year, restrictions started to ease which resulted in the reintroduction of prisoners being able to access release on temporary licence (ROTL) along with work in the community and charity settings. Towards the end of the reporting period further restrictions were imposed following the spread of the Omicron variant.

3.1.3 Over the reporting period there have been 16 absconds, all but one of these being after the lifting of restrictions in late spring. Some of the absconds were from those who had recently transferred to the prison. There were also 19 ROTL failures, of these seven were either late back or had not complied with their licence restrictions. Nine prisoners had failed to return to the establishment (see 7.3) and two were arrested for committing further offences.

3.1.4 This has been another year that has required clear and coherent handling of the communications to the IMB, staff and prisoners, to understand the constant regime changes reflecting the government announcements and rising cases of the Delta variant. The Governor, in his final year in office prior to retirement, prioritised ensuring all staff and prisoners were kept safe, as well as keeping them informed each time quick changes had to be made to the regime.

3.1.5 Levels of drug use and drug drops were still high, the number of drug finds being similar to the previous reporting period (281 in 2020 and 279 in 2021). This figure is despite a number of factors: the improvement in CCTV, the reintroduction of ROTL and more patrols by the local constabulary.

3.1.6 There are plans for a new gym to be built but that is the final project on the list of work currently being undertaken to demolish old hangars and the Board is concerned that the capital allocated may not be available when this stage of the project is reached. Limited access to the current gym is available for use of some equipment but the main sports hall is not accessible due to health and safety issues with the roof. (See 3.3.)



The above picture shows some of the demolition of the old hangars.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

3.2.1 The prison is next to busy main roads, a small industrial site and a housing estate. This location makes it relatively easy for those who are an abscond risk to do so. Throughout the reporting period the prison has been in the main a building site with lots of external contractors and their associated vehicles being on site; areas being worked on were all marked off and had staff on patrol to ensure those who had no need to be there were kept out.

3.2.2 The Board receives feedback from some members of staff regarding drug use who feel insufficient corrective action is being taken by senior management. There are also concerns regarding the behaviour of some prisoners not adhering to the regime and displaying behaviours well below the standard expected in an open establishment. The Board also had the same concerns especially regarding the calibre of prisoners being sent to Kirkham.

3.2.3 Throughout the pandemic, changes to the regime have focused on the safety of both prisoners and staff. With the relaxing of the restrictions within the establishment, day and overnight release started again in early summer along with prisoners accessing outside work. This inevitably meant prisoners were in contact with Covid-19 within the community and further infection was brought into the

establishment. A number of billets had to be regularly put into isolation for testing and track and trace purposes.

3.2.4 HMP Kirkham was declared an outbreak site on three occasions due to the number of infections. Testing of all prisoners who consented to being tested was introduced on a number of occasions so that the full extent of the spread of infection could be understood and managed.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

3.2.5 The Board believes that prisoners are treated both fairly and humanely. Living conditions are good, but there continue to be recurring problems with the heating and hot water supplies to some billets over the reporting period. Approval, in principle, has been received for a programme of boiler replacements to start in 2022 at the earliest. Some of this work had to be brought forward due to the number of times the boilers were failing. (See 5.1.)

3.2.6 All billets have now had an upgrade to the fire alarm system, although the work is still being completed in the non-residential areas. In some of the older billets there have been issues with fire breaks in the roof space impacting the new alarm system so further work is being done there.

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

3.2.7 Spectrum provides healthcare and recovery services at the prison, with Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust providing mental health services. Healthcare staff have played an important part in many decisions made with regard to the pandemic. The good links and working relationships between all departments have meant that the health and wellbeing of the prisoners has been a priority.

3.2.8 Initial uptake of Covid vaccines by prisoners was sparse but with the easing of restrictions, coupled with the rapid spread of the different variants, uptake has improved greatly. This is mainly due to pressure from families, who wanted to keep their loved ones safe while either they were visiting the establishment or prisoners were home on temporary release. A number of prisoners have told the IMB that 'the missus says I had to have my vaccine before I went home'.

How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?

3.2.9 This has been a challenging year for a consistent rehabilitative culture due to Covid-19 and subsequent changes to the regime. With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions prisoners were once again able to access work within the community, as well as access to various courses to help with rehabilitation. The accelerator prisons project also assists prisoners in accessing employment, housing and banking on release. Kirkham is a working prison, where prisoners are expected to work either internally on the farm or businesses (Calpac, Timbers etc); however, the task of maintaining a work ethic along with assisting and preparing prisoners towards eventual release was impossible to maintain during the pandemic. Consequently, prisoners were unable to work and the expectation of turning up for work being the

norm was lost. This presents a significant challenge for the senior management team (SMT) and staff in trying to instil a working ethos and environment into a largely reluctant population.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

3.3.1 As a Board, we understand the pressures on the Prison Service but, despite assurances for the last four years from the Minister that the categorisation of prisoners was being correctly carried out, there are still many individuals who are unsuitable for transfer to a category D establishment being sent to Kirkham. During the reporting period 149 prisoners have been returned to closed conditions, mainly due to drug issues which involved dealing, debts and assaults. This figure is a reduction from the previous year (189) but is comparable due to the reduction in capacity over the reporting period.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

3.3.2 A number of works are underway but more still needs to be done. The lighting around the site is poor, and there appears to be delays between reporting issues and getting them fixed. Temporary lighting has been brought onto the site over the darker nights as lighting around the dining hall, offender management unit and chapel is very poor. (See 5.1.)

3.3.3 The Board is pleased that work has eventually started on the demolition of the old hangars, however progression has been much slower than planned and additional costs are being incurred. The funding included the building and furnishing of a new gym which is expected to be the final stage of the project. The Board wishes for a reassurance that final approval will be given for the funding for the new gym, so important for the wellbeing and mental stability of the prisoners, along with appropriate equipment.

3.3.4 The Board is pleased that some of the work recommended in the disability review in 2019 is eventually being undertaken as part of the funding approved to repair roadways on the site, including dropping pavements for accessibility. (See 5.1.)

3.3.5 The prison's IT system is in desperate need of an upgrade. Use of the latest Microsoft packages would enable a more accurate, efficient and robust administration with quicker queries of data and responses to complaints. This would be of benefit to both staff and prisoners.

TO THE GOVERNOR

3.3.6 There is an urgent need to fully implement the abscond and drugs strategies to improve stability within the establishment. Recommendations from this work should be agreed and implemented without delay.

3.3.7 A member of staff needs to be identified to support finance, banking and debt management. This work is currently being covered by staff in the accelerator project as they identified that there was no support for setting up bank accounts or financial management, an area that is vital for prisoners on release. (See 7.5.)

3.3.8 The Board feels that the SMT and senior management were not operating in a cohesive manner. We are aware that the introduction of a new Governor will go some way to addressing the issues.

3.3.9 Kirkham are currently utilising a diversity and inclusion manager from HMP Preston on an 11-hour weekly contract. This is clearly insufficient and it is recommended that funding is made available to support a Kirkham-based post. (See 5.4.)

3.4 Progress since the last report

3.4.1 The Board is pleased that the new residential billet has been built, and occupancy is planned for early 2022. The temporary accommodation units which were brought in during 2020 will now remain as permanent; they have been underpinned to prevent subsidence and connected to the main communications system. (See section 5.1.1.)



New residential billet work in progress.

Issue raised	Response given	Action taken
Recategorisation of prisoners.	The categorisation is being carried out correctly.	The Board does not consider that statement is correct as approximately the same number of prisoners were returned to closed conditions.
Lighting on site.		Temporary lighting has had to be brought in over the winter period to ensure the safety of staff and prisoners when moving around after dark.
Accommodation for staff where areas had to be demolished,		New office space was found for both displaced teams.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

4.1.1 On arrival at HMP Kirkham, all prisoners go through a comprehensive induction process. Transferring prisoners are checked by healthcare staff for obvious signs of infection and given a 'first night information' pack prepared by the Partners of Prisoners (POPS) family support organisation. New prisoners are isolated from the main camp in a two-storey building, which allows for a separate quarantine period, by arrival week before they join the main camp. All prisoners are regularly tested for Covid-19 before they are permitted to join the main camp.

4.1.2 All new arrivals at Kirkham are from closed conditions and are inducted on day two, into the life of an open prison. During their periods of isolation, the induction process has been by the provision of leaflets and face to face meetings with an induction officer rather than group meeting. The regime of an open prison is explained to them together with the opportunities for education and job training (outside and inside the prison) as well as release on a temporary licence (ROTL). Prisoners are also advised on what is expected from them in an open prison.

4.1.3 Prisoners arriving at Kirkham are allowed to bring a limited amount of property with them. Any remaining property is sent on by courier. A change of courier during the year caused considerable delay and frustration until the new arrangements were resolved. Property of prisoners leaving Kirkham for other prisons can now be forwarded with confidence, but the property of incoming prisoners still suffers from delay.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

4.2.1 There have been three incidents of self-harm during the year (one in 2020). Analysis has shown that two of these were alcohol-related and the other due to domestic concerns.

4.2.2 Eight assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents were opened (six in 2020). Three were opened following the self-harm incidents previously described, four due to prisoners' feelings of helplessness, and one from a mental health issue.

4.2.3 There were a total of 96 referrals during the year for challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs). Of these, 11 were managed outside of CSIPs. Eighteen resulted in no further action, with 67 progressing to CSIPs, mainly for support purposes.

4.2.4 There have been no deaths in custody in the reporting period.

4.2.5 The prison has a team of Listeners selected and trained from volunteers among the prison population, organised by the Blackpool branch of the Samaritans. There were ten registered Listeners at the beginning of the year and 11 at the end, supervised on a day-to-day basis by a trained Listener, one of the prisoners. As Listeners are released there is a need for constant recruitment and training. At

present four prisoners are going through the training programme. As all prisoners transferred to Kirkham come from other prisons, a proportion of them will already have been experienced Listeners elsewhere. Ten transferees and two existing prisoners are awaiting security and healthcare clearance before being eligible for training.

4.2.6 There were a total of 253 recorded Listener interactions during the year. This is considerably lower than the 430 in 2020. Analysis indicated several reasons for this.

1. When possible, a number of Listener prisoners go outside the prison to work on a daily basis. This reduces the time 'inside' to carry out their duties.
2. There are a number of experienced transferred-in prisoners waiting for security and health clearance before they can take up their duties.
3. With restricted access during periods of Covid-19 isolation, the Samaritans team have been able to visit on fewer occasions. This has resulted in fewer interactions to the organisation being recorded by Listeners who do an excellent job.

4.2.7 Recoop is a charity which, together with Lancashire County Council, offers social support to prisoners. Although primarily aimed at prisoners over the age of 50, anyone with an identified need is included in the programme. The number of prisoners trained by Recoop to be buddies varied during the year due to Covid and prisoner releases. Together with the prison healthcare team, buddies help to identify prisoners who are in need of such support. Bereavement and mental health are the two main areas of work at Kirkham. (See 6.4.)

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

4.3.1 There have been 12 reported incidents of violence over the reporting period, nine being prisoner on prisoner and three being prisoner on staff. Six prisoner assaults were regarded as being serious; none of the staff assaults were classed as serious.

4.3.2 Two of these incidents involving staff occurred when staff found prisoners with illicit phones. The staff involved did not require medical treatment.

4.4 Use of force

4.4.1 During the year there were only two incidents which resulted in the use of force, a reduction from seven in 2020. These resulted from prisoners becoming agitated when found with contraband.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

4.5.1 Access to and finds of illicit items continue at Kirkham. During the year there were 279 drug finds (281 in 2020), 271 phone finds, four weapons and 22 alcohol finds.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

5.1.1 Following financial approval four new prefabricated temporary accommodation billets were occupied in November 2020 to avoid the need for prisoners to double up. This high standard en-suite accommodation provides single cell accommodation for 78 prisoners. Approval has now been given to make this accommodation permanent.

5.1.2 In addition, and in anticipation of a major increase in prisoner numbers, a major building programme was approved in early 2021 to accommodate a total of 46 prisoners. The build programme, consisting of single cell accommodation with adjoining (Jack and Jill) bathroom facilities is well advanced and should be ready for occupation in early 2022.

5.1.3 The remainder of the accommodation is mainly in 22-cell accommodation blocks which provide, in the main, single occupancy basic living accommodation. In addition, there is also a newer building used to accommodate prisoners with complex needs and limited mobility, along with a relatively new 40 room double occupancy induction/admissions wing capable of accommodating a total of 78 prisoners.

5.1.4 Since the initial lockdown in March 2020, IMB members have not been able to access any of the billets. Consequently, it is not possible to comment on the state of repair of the billets but anecdotal feedback is that some of the billets, particularly the high use toilet and shower areas, need refurbishment and this is being progressed. In addition the opportunity has been taken to:

- redecorate the unoccupied billets during the fire alarm replacement project.
- provide new beds with shelving underneath in all billets. This initiative is still ongoing and has been well received so far.
- replace 16 boilers across 11 billets.
- install a major power upgrade to the sub-station.
- progress a much-needed £300k project to repair roads and pathways including recommendations made in the disability review.

5.1.5 While the new operational capacity of the prison will increase gradually to a maximum of 699, the former capacity was 657 but currently stands at around 470, significantly below maximum capacity for the following reasons:

- The commencement of an 18-month fire alarm replacement project, which places two billets out of use at any one time.
- The restrictions placed on the transfer of prisoners between prisons and the need for new arrivals to self-isolate for fourteen days.

5.1.6 Clothing: prisoners wear their own clothes except where specialist clothing is required, notably on the farms and gardens and in the kitchen.

5.1.7 Food: the food at Kirkham remains generally excellent. As IMB members conducting weekly rota visits were unable to visit the billets, the main opportunity to

see the prisoners was at lunchtime; consequently, IMB members were present in the dining hall and were able to observe at first hand the menus and choices on offer – and the reaction of prisoners – over a prolonged period. There was one complaint regarding the reheating of food but the Board has been reassured that any food that is reheated is done in compliance with HMPPS policy.

5.2 Segregation

5.2.1 Kirkham does not have a segregation unit; instead, there is a building designated as a secure holding and reassessment building (SHRAB) where prisoners are held awaiting transfer to closed conditions. Ideally prisoners are only held there for up to four hours before transfer but occasionally it has been necessary to hold a prisoner overnight for operational and/or safety reasons. The IMB is informed each time a prisoner is placed in the SHRAB.

5.2.2 Originally there were four traditional cells but two were converted into informal holding cells with soft furnishings and bookshelves. Following review it is intended to turn one of the soft cells into a traditional cell, depending on finances being made available. While the SHRAB received a makeover in 2017, it is looking tired and action is in hand to replace sinks and toilets. The fire alarm upgrade is complete and a secure holding room accountability log has been introduced to ensure each prisoner has a dedicated booklet opened once located in the SHRAB.

5.2.3 Very occasionally the need to transfer more than two prisoners arises and this is managed in a proactive manner, with the transfers co-ordinated on a timed basis depending on when transport is available to return the prisoners to closed conditions.

5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers

5.3.1 Prisoners are treated fairly and humanely and the relationship between the majority of prisoners and staff is assessed as good.

5.3.2 During the past twelve months a number of important projects have been introduced including:

- Moving the prison to the offender management in custody (OMiC) model, resulting in more custodial managers (CMs). More CMs meant the prison was able to improve accountability as prisoners know who to go to if they have matters that cannot be dealt with by their billet officer.
- This greater management presence on the billets means the officers know who their line manager is. This has resulted in regular contact with each one, demonstrating an investment in staff.

5.3.3 The prisoner-led Kirkham council has been in place for some time now and has proved an exceptionally useful forum for the Governor and staff to feedback, on a regular basis, changes to the regime stage and the consequent impact on the daily regime. This forum also allows prisoners to give their feedback on issues and get a response from senior management.

5.4 Equality and diversity

5.4.1 The equalities action team was renamed the KIC (Kirkham inclusion council) in February 2021. It is chaired by the head of community safety and equalities, and there are eight meetings per year: four for the KIC assurance meeting, which looks at data pertaining to the nine protected characteristics, and four for the KIC strategy, which tests the performance of the equalities strategy. The equalities strategy was rewritten in late 2021, to be launched and followed from 2022 onwards. A proactive, multi-disciplinary and holistic approach to diversity has been adopted, with departments taking responsibility for personal emergency evacuation plans, discrimination incident reporting forms and diversity data within their own areas.

5.4.2 The appointment of an enthusiastic, dedicated, committed and proactive equalities representative has provided a more structured approach to the way in which diversity and equalities activities are carried out. In addition volunteer representatives for each of the nine protected characteristics have also been employed to progress issues and raise awareness of issues associated with their relevant protected characteristic group. Unfortunately the celebration of major faith festivals and events has been undertaken in a very limited way due to the continuous outbreaks of Covid-19 on site throughout this year.

5.4.3 While it is clear the SMT are committed to equality and diversity, this needs to be promulgated down the organisational hierarchy, and in time become everyone's responsibility and form part of every department's daily work. As mentioned in last year's report, considerable resources have been allocated to promoting diversity and inclusion at a senior management level, but, again, there are fewer resources at ground level, with Kirkham currently utilising a diversity and inclusion manager from HMP Preston on an 11-hour weekly contract. This is clearly insufficient and it is recommended that funding be made available to support a full-time post for this important and pivotal role.

5.4.4 During the 2021 reporting period 23 discrimination incident report forms were submitted. Of those 23, four were rejected for not being related to discrimination, and were subsequently dealt with as a complaint. Two were also withdrawn due to the issue no longer being present, and a further two were cancelled due to the prisoners having been released. Of the 15 remaining, all were investigated fully, but only three were completed within the required timescales, which is unacceptable. Of the remaining 15 investigations, three were upheld in the prisoner's favour.

5.4.5 The protected characteristic forums have been resurrected and take place on a regular basis.

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

5.5.1 The small chaplaincy team have again been through a torrid time during the reporting period. Throughout local lockdowns the team met with prisoners throughout the day to discuss any issues they had. Following the initial lockdown in March the team, ably led by the managing chaplain, redoubled their efforts to ensure the needs of the prisoners were catered for.

5.5.2 The team also had the difficult job of delivering bad news relating to illness or death of a family member and were provided with an iPad to enable the prisoners to make real-time contact with family members.

5.5.3 Virtually all the extraneous activities organised by the chaplaincy team have had to be cancelled including family days during the school holidays, a lifer group focussing on long term prisoners who are close to release and an isolated prisoners' group for prisoners who are not receiving visits. Nevertheless, now that the situation is beginning to ease the team are redoubling their efforts to provide as full a service as possible.

5.6 Incentives schemes

5.6.1 A new system was introduced in January 2020. There are four levels: support, citizen, advocate and ambassador. Movement up through the levels is achieved by review. Each case is dealt with sympathetically and there is an appeals system in place. The incentives system was temporarily suspended during the first lockdown period but has since been reintroduced. Prisoners are informed in writing of any issues and can submit written responses before a final decision is taken; more serious cases are seen formally. The ambassador level is considered a worthwhile achievement, with access to higher levels of personal cash, more visits, additional gym sessions etc.

5.6.2 While the incentives system overall is seen by the prisoners as being procedurally just, feedback indicated that there was a slight imbalance in the way it was managed, with petty issues resulting in the loss of privileges while little credit was given for any positive actions.

5.6.3 Adjudications: the presence of a district judge to consider adjudications was in the process of being reviewed at the beginning of lockdown. Since March 2020 governors consider all adjudications and a more relaxed, sensitive and measured approach is evident. Of necessity a large percentage of charges are suspended, and this is seen as a pragmatic response, given that there is little point in awarding a prisoner loss of gym facilities, for instance, when they are unable to access the gym in the first place because of the lockdown.

5.6.4 The IMB will continue to monitor this pivotal area and in particular the decisions made once the review into the future management of adjudications is completed and a way ahead identified.

5.7 Complaints

5.7.1 A total of 469 complaints were received during the year. A dedicated member of staff manages the complaints system and proactively chases up late responses when necessary, contacting other establishments for a response.

5.8 Property

5.8.1 Although the guidance is not to try to resolve property issues this is not always possible when faced with a prisoner clearly frustrated having exhausted the

prison complaints system, with no one else to turn to except the IMB. Because of the lockdowns and the relatively small number of prisoners being transferred, property has not been a major issue.

5.8.2 However, acknowledging the significant increase in prisoner numbers scheduled in the next few months, clearer – and more realistic – guidance on the transfer of property between prisons would be well received and as a result reduce the angst amongst prisoners. In particular the volume of property received on transfer creates issues, especially when large numbers and large amounts of property are transferred. It is recommended that prisoners are transferred with an overnight bag only, with the remainder of their property being delivered the following day.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

6.1.1 The Spectrum healthcare team are a small well-established team who have worked collaboratively year on year to provide a much-needed service. Despite restrictions and low staffing, the team now have three nurses qualified in prescribing, with nurse leads trained in long-term conditions, acute and minor illnesses and tissue viability. This is in addition to all mandatory training being complete.

6.1.2 It is due to the success of their blend of healthcare knowledge, expertise and invested relationships with the prisoners and prison staff that 70% of all prisoners have been fully vaccinated for Covid-19. Those who have tested positive for Covid-19 have been well cared for and have fully recovered, having daily visits from health clinicians during this period.

6.1.3 Kirkham's healthcare manager was shortlisted in the Nursing Times award and made it to the final six. The awards bring together the nursing community to shine a light on the brightest talent in the profession and recognise those who make nursing innovative, patient-focused and inclusive.

6.1.4 The team have embraced the new IT systems and the use of Microsoft Teams calls has meant engagement across multiple prison sites, enabling the team to provide an even better wrap-around service

6.2 Physical healthcare

6.2.1 A business case has been submitted for a further nurse in preparation for the rise in prisoner capacity. Kirkham currently shares a pharmacist with Lancaster Farms, having a pharmacist one day a week. Managers at Kirkham have identified the need to develop governance in clinics and therefore have submitted a business case for a Kirkham pharmacist two days a week. This is supported.

6.2.2 Items of note for service responses are as follows:

- GP waiting time is currently one week for non-urgent appointments.
- Podiatry waiting time is seven weeks.
- Opticians – no waiting time.
- Psychiatrist – no waiting time and rarely needed.
- Physiotherapist – a waiting time of 15 weeks. This resource is shared across three prisons. A business case has been submitted to the commissioner for added sessions for Kirkham to reduce the waiting time.

As well as providing healthcare services, health education has also been undertaken; healthcare and prison staff/managers work extremely well together.

6.2.3 Dental services are provided by Smart Dental Care. There is one dentist and one dental nurse who work between Kirkham and another prison. Waiting time for standard check-ups is 23 weeks; emergencies can be seen on the day if the dentist is on site otherwise the prisoner will be sent to the local emergency clinic. Prisoners who are working out of the establishment are offered the first or last appointment of

the day. Some appointments are wasted when prisoners forget to cancel if they have been granted home leave.

6.3 Mental healthcare

6.3.1 Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust provides mental health services using a stepped care approach. The team includes two registered mental health nurses, a psychological wellbeing practitioner and a psychological therapist.

6.3.2 The team have introduced trauma-informed therapy and eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing, to support those suffering from PTSD and trauma. A counselling service has been introduced; patients can self-refer or this can be done by staff and officers. Cases are triaged and then directed to a trauma counsellor who deals with patients with anxiety issues, sleep deprivation etc. The Trust supports prisoners before release by liaising with external health professionals, thus ensuring continuity of care.

6.4 Social care

6.4.1 Lancashire County Council (LCC) undertakes social care assessments at the prison. Spectrum provides social care packages once LCC has developed a care plan.

6.4.2 Social care needs are identified during prisoners' initial health screening and buddies are assigned if appropriate. Recoop are completing one-to-one training with buddies. (See 4.2.7.)

6.4.3 A challenge for Kirkham will be the increase of the population during 2022 towards capacity of 699 which may well see an increase in social care needs.

6.5 Exercise, regime

6.5.1 Due to the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, exercise regimes were curtailed at times this year. Time out of billets was dependent on the infection levels and prison regime at the time.

6.5.2 The sports hall remains closed due to structural issues, although the gym and equipment area are available for use when restrictions allow. Additionally a former stores area was converted to a small gym, with a number of pieces of exercise equipment installed. This allowed for more prisoners to exercise at the same time.

6.5.3 The 'trim trail' is now back in use following completion of building works in that area. There is a large open area in Kirkham adjacent to the billets which allows for those less able to walk for exercise. Additionally the prison organises occasional accompanied walks to the nature area at the rear of the site.

6.6 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation

6.6.1 Substance misuse services are provided by Spectrum. The drug and alcohol team recognised that the last year or two has been a period of uncertainty for the prisoners at HMP Kirkham: experiencing Covid isolation, missing family visits, receiving restricted services and having their ROTLs cancelled.

6.6.2 The team has moved to new offices in early 2021. Prisoners were not getting the full substance misuse service they would normally be given by Spectrum due to the need to limit numbers and appointments, so the team used this time of reduced services to complete additional training and design innovative new ways of working.

6.6.3 One of the new ways of working was to develop a buddy scheme with access to trained volunteers who could represent the service and offer 'on billet' support. The team trained one man per billet in harm reduction, mental wellbeing support, how to put someone in the recovery position, signs and symptoms of overdose and positive peer mentorship.

6.6.4 The rationale for this was to mitigate the risk of overdose and give the prisoners some additional support during this difficult time. In addition this also provided the buddies with training and investment to contribute to their own recovery journey.

6.6.5 The prison management team are looking at how best to support prisoners engaged with the substance abuse team. Incentivised substance free living units in other prisons provide wrap-around community care. Unfortunately this is not available at Kirkham and its provision would be of considerable benefit as the prison prepares prisoners for resettlement. A recommendation to put in place a pathway from the closed to the open estate with similar facilities at each level is fully supported.

6.7 Soft skills

6.7.1 A number of groups which met prior to the pandemic are slowly coming together again where there is a need. An over-50s club which was running is being looked at again, with possibly changing the age to over-60s to offer some additional support to that age group, especially if they are not able to have meaningful employment due to age or health issues.

6.7.2 Once healthcare have their full complement of staff, they once again intend to run a variety of support groups, enhancing those already in place. Additionally there are plans for a veterans' breakfast club to support veterans in custody.

6.7.3 A bi-monthly prisoner wellbeing meeting has also gained traction and a wellbeing event in October where staff and prisoners took part was a great success.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

7.1.1 Education within the prison has been beset by changing circumstances as the national situation has evolved. This has largely involved modifying staff/student ratios throughout the year. 2021 started with ratios of 1:3 but had to revert to 1:1 in single households in view of the worsening situation. As the national situation improved, ratios increased to 1:5, then 1:10, and are now simply restricted to the risk-assessed number for a particular space.

7.1.2 The initial focus on learning was concentrated on English, maths and IT with blended learning taking place between the classroom and the cell. The prison lost the ability to award functional skills certificates directly but is now confident that this can be restored in the near future and is looking to regain its direct claims status.

7.1.3 With such a diverse prison population, the list of educational provision ranges from basic literacy, in conjunction with the Shannon Trust, to higher-level degree courses through the University of Central Lancashire and Lancaster University, funded mainly through the Prisoners' Education Trust. In conjunction with library staff, the Shannon Trust is holding training sessions for reading mentors. Attendance has been an ongoing concern. Whilst attaining an average 75/80% attendance rate latterly, efforts have been made to increase that figure through direct intervention and possible changes to IEPs. Competing areas however remain an issue, with opportunities for work both inside and outside the prison and restricted access to the gym at times taking preference.

7.1.4 The contract with Novus has caused some concern over the year. The issues revolved around the quality of provision, student engagement and management performance. These are being addressed through a series of monthly performance meetings, and although the Governor has the ability to withhold 5% of the contract fee, this is something not yet invoked. There have been some short-term management changes, with the education manager from Lancaster Farms brought in to address some of the immediate issues.

7.1.5 As restrictions eased, the library was once again in the process of reopening. Whilst experiencing a slow start things have gradually improved, with Storybook Dads becoming particularly well supported. Greeting cards at Christmas were equally popular. The library is well staffed with two experienced librarians, who in addition to looking after the books also create a regular newsletter and coordinate other activities such as mentor training and language and art classes. They are well supported by a team of knowledgeable and reliable orderlies.

7.2 Vocational training, work

7.2.1 Vocational courses have necessarily been interrupted due to the changing nature of the pandemic. Work within farms and gardens has continued as has that in the timbers workshop, where a group of prisoners are engaged in making flat-pack furniture as well as furniture for the billets. A number are also working with a tutor on theory work leading to a City & Guilds qualification. Similarly painting and decorating and forklift truck training have continued to operate on a restricted basis; SSCS (construction) courses remain popular and are well subscribed. Availability of

courses has clearly been massively restricted but as circumstances have eased numbers attending are now picking up, with 73 attending in November and December

7.2.2 Off-site working has now resumed and is extremely popular, with new employers coming on stream. A number of these have been identified by prisoners themselves and others through existing employers such as Calpac. The quota of prisoners was held initially at 40 but is now increasing. There was a hiatus due to staffing issues, which prevented checks on workplace safety, leading to delays but these have now been largely overcome. It is worth noting that Custody to Work (C2W) is a prison-run venture under the direction of custodial staff, whose primary responsibilities must be to ensure the secure running of the prison.

7.2.3 Opportunities for employment still exist within the prison – in particular, Recycling Lives, Calpac and Remade with Hope. All are popular, with waiting lists. A programme of Pathways to Employment has been put in place

7.3 Offender management, progression

7.3.1 The move to the offender management in custody (OMiC) model resulted in more custodial managers (CMs) and dedicated prison offender managers (POMs). As a result POMs are now more readily available to prisoners to deal with their concerns and progress their sentence plans, which has had a positive impact on the prisoners.

7.3.2 OMiC has been largely successfully rolled out over the year. Meetings with prisoners are held 12 weeks prior to release, with handover between the POMs and community offender managers (COMs) taking place seven and a half months before release. High risk offenders are given priority. The former two CRC staff are now based in the OMU and split their time between COM work and other resettlement activities. The staffing situation has been helped with the appointment of an additional part-time senior probation officer.

7.3.3 There is clearly a shortage of approved premises (AP) places available, with prisoners released on licence taking priority.

7.3.4 ROTL has been increased over the year subject to fluctuations in response to the national situation. Before restrictions were lifted, 200 applications had been approved and were ready to go. Subsequently by mid-May 340 ROTLs had been activated with a further 80 on accompanied resettlement day release. The number of absconds remains minimal with abscond strategy meetings being held regularly. Similarly the number of ROTL failures remains low with all cases being scrupulously investigated.

7.3.5 OMU staff meet with new receptions within 48 hours of arrival, specifically to myth-bust any ROTL misconceptions and to provide realistic expectations. This has been very well received.

7.3.6 Staff worked particularly hard in preparation for Christmas, when it was possible to allow over 60 prisoners to have overnight release over the weekend.

7.3.7 Parole hearings are held periodically and the OMU prepares prisoners carefully for the process, in ways in which they can demonstrate not only progression but also readiness for parole.

7.3.8 Risk management meetings are held when required and the prison makes every effort to retain prisoners. For some however a return to closed conditions is unavoidable.

7.3.9 Resettlement boards led by COMs and the OMU have taken place throughout the autumn.

7.4 Family contact

7.4.1 For part of the year family contact was restricted to Purple Visits (using a laptop for video calls) and phone contact – the latter proving more popular. As things improved it was possible to reinstate face-to-face visits. This was done on a restricted basis in line with government guidelines.

7.4.2 The prison responded quickly to the worsening pandemic situation in late autumn by rescheduling visits into two sessions with 18 slots available in each to maintain social distancing.

7.4.3 The POPS manager oversaw the operation of visits and went to great lengths to make them as fulfilling as possible.

7.4.4 Serious illness and bereavements within prisoners' families are difficult issues, which the prison dealt with sensitively. Telephone and video calls were provided and attendance at funerals was facilitated, subject to risk assessment, time and geographical constraints. The chaplaincy in particular played an essential role in overseeing these arrangements.

7.5 Resettlement planning

7.5.1 The hitherto efficient functioning in this highly important area was thrown into disarray on two fronts. The disbanding of the former CRC has continued to cause issues, leaving one former member to deal with 'through the gate' planning. Similarly, with Shelter losing the accommodation contract, a valuable resource was lost. In its place SeeTec took over and was largely invisible in the prison; the result being that for the first time in years some prisoners were being released to no fixed abode (NFA). This was considerably aggravated by SeeTec only being responsible for placing prisoners in Lancashire and Cumbria whereas many prisoners at Kirkham come from locations outside these areas. This was not an issue under the previous arrangements as Shelter is a national organisation.

7.5.2 Kirkham, however, was invited to join the accelerator project which provides, among other things, provision for an accommodation specialist. The prison was fortunate in securing the services of the former Shelter officer who brought with them not only the genuine experience of issues in an open prison but also numerous contacts built up over the years. Since the appointment in October the perilous situation with a number of prisoners having been released under SeeTec without accommodation was resolved. In total, thanks to their professionalism and

experience, only six prisoners were released in 2021 who were designated as homeless. A homelessness prevention week is being planned for early 2022.

7.5.3 There was a similar issue with setting up bank accounts, so vital in an open prison given the high number of prisoners working outside the prison. With the changing of arrangements in June, it was clear there was no one in the prison actually responsible for this important function. A period of instability ensued and it was only with the appointment of the accommodation officer and with support from the former Shelter officer that the situation was resolved – even though it was not specifically within their remit. To demonstrate the extent of the problem, 72 accounts were created prior to the Shelter contract ending and only 30 since then, after TTG (through the gate) took over. The whole area of finance, banking and debt management is currently under review.

7.5.4 Also as part of the accelerator project, the prison has secured the appointment of an employment specialist whose role it is to secure awareness of employment opportunities, develop relationships with local employers and secure prisoner engagement. To that end an employer engagement group has been set up and a number of initiatives have taken place, including a farm to fork event.

7.5.5 After a 12-month absence from the prison, Jobcentre Plus now has an officer permanently located on site. In addition to providing benefit advice they also assist in compiling CVs and giving employment advice. This often involves signposting to various partners within the prison, including Achieve North West Connect and the information, advice and guidance (IAG) service, and also feeds through contact information from within their department. Since rejoining the prison, 32 referrals were made to the IAG which together with other referrals resulted in 114 successful employment outcomes.

7.5.6 The information, advice and guidance (IAG) service continues to offer advice as well as directing the prisoner to the job vacancy board in the prisoner support centre and job brokering and job matching externally.

7.5.7 Given that a significant number of agencies are involved in delivering on employment issues (Achieve North West Connect, Jobcentre Plus, specialist employment adviser), it is not always easy to identify discrete areas of responsibility and accountability. There are clearly significant overlaps which without sufficient demarcation can lead to confusion and have the potential to hinder amicable working relationships.

7.5.8 Achieve North West Connect is delivering a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence course amongst other activities which is opening up employment opportunities to prisoners, which will continue to be delivered in 2022.

7.5.9 A community project team has been reinstated with a team of prisoners who have been approved for ROTL. It affords a means of reintegration into the community, supporting charities and gaining or rediscovering tangible work skills in preparation for employment.

7.5.10 There has been an increase in applications concerning ROTL, due to anxieties amongst prisoners once they were able to start accessing ROTL again. Understandably, having not seen family members for some time, all those eligible wanted to be at the head of the queue. In order to alleviate concerns and to progress

ROTL requests, it is worthy of note how quickly and efficiently the OMU reacted to ensure the maximum number of prisoners were able to access ROTL at the earliest opportunity.

7.5.11 Prisoners are feeling generally more positive about employment and accommodation because of the accelerator project.

8. The work of the IMB

8.1.1 The Board is a small but enthusiastic team with a broad mix of skills. The Board continued to visit actively, with 122 visits made, as shown in the table below. We were able to talk and interact with prisoners (socially distanced) when they were on their exercise times and then when they were back in purposeful employment.

8.1.2 There was a recruitment campaign towards the end of 2020; two applicants were interviewed and appointed, however one has since moved home and has now transferred to Forest Bank IMB. Additionally one of the members resigned to return to NHS work as a result of the campaign for staff to administer vaccines in community-based centres.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	6
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	6 (includes 2 new recruits, 1 resignation and 1 transfer to another establishment)
Total number of visits to the establishment	122
Total number of segregation reviews attended	n/a

Applications to the IMB

Throughout the reporting period IMB members were able to regularly visit the establishment; they were able to deal directly with any applications.

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	3	2
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	0	0
C	Equality	0	0
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	1	1
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	1	3
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	1	0
F	Food and kitchens	0	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	4	3
H1	Property within this establishment	2	1
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	2	4
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	0	0
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, recategorisation	3	7
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	0	0
K	Transfers	1	0
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	1	0
	Total number of applications	19	21



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