



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

**For reporting year  
1 March 2021 – 28 February 2022**

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## Introductory sections 1 – 3

### 1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. Description of the establishment



The normal operational capacity of HMP Nottingham is 1,060 prisoners, with a certified normal accommodation (CNA) of 718. However, during the first half of the reporting period, the prison continued to operate at a reduced capacity of 850, with a gradual increase during the autumn to 900. The IMB very much hopes the current capacity of 900 will not be further increased.

HMP Nottingham is designated as a category B adult male and YOI establishment, serving primarily the counties of Nottingham and Derby and those cities. Around 30% of prisoners are on remand awaiting trial with a similar percentage designated category C and a small number of category D. In addition, a small amount of capacity is reserved for men being detained under immigration powers post sentence awaiting resolution of their status and who are unsuitable for an immigration removal centre.

Accommodation has been mostly in shared cells and is arranged on seven wings, all of modern design. One is for vulnerable prisoners (VPs) and another for 'first night' prisoners. Prisoners with drug dependency issues are concentrated on a further wing. As in other local and resettlement prisons, remand prisoners have continued to be co-located with sentenced prisoners, a matter on which we have commented many times before but which, in the pandemic situation, could not have been expected to receive attention. In the summer of 2021, we were informed that a policy decision had been reached with Prison Service regional management to separate remand and convicted prisoners; however, no progress towards this was made during the remaining months of the reporting period and at the beginning of March 2022 we were advised that this would not now be happening. This is disappointing.

The segregation unit has capacity for 12 prisoners, including one special cell.

There is a separate block for education which, along with classrooms, provides capacity for two workshops, the library and a barber's suite; there are seven additional workshops, a large sports hall and gym and a separate fitness suite. Separately located workshop and education facilities are provided for VPs. Much of this capacity was closed because of Covid security but as the year progressed it was reopened but with low capacity.

The entire site is designated as a no smoking area.

The following services to the establishment are provided by third parties under contract arrangements:

- resettlement (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland Community Rehabilitation Company, owned by the Reducing Reoffending Partnership) – partway through the reporting year this provision returned in-house
- healthcare (Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)
- substance misuse treatment (Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)
- learning and skills (PeoplePlus)
- library (Nottingham City Council Library Service)
- escort contractor (GEOAmey)
- visitor centre (Pact)
- maintenance (Amey)

The offender management unit also works with a large number of partner agencies in its efforts to provide resettlement opportunities for prisoners.

### **3. Executive summary**

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

The entire reporting period has been affected by the response to the pandemic and the restrictions persisted beyond the end of the reporting period. However, except during periods of outbreak, the restrictions have been less onerous than during the previous year. Prisoners have been able to access exercise, collect their own meals and have some time out of cell for domestic matters. Slowly the normal prison systems, such as use of the kiosks for internal communications, have been reopened and some prisoners have been able to access work. We understand that the future regime will retain elements of the pandemic response with less time off the wing, less mixing across accommodation cohorts and employment limited mainly to half-days. We are concerned that this may mean more time in cell for prisoners and we will continue to monitor this aspect of life in the establishment. National efforts to ameliorate the effects of the pandemic have been gradually scaled back, with the removal of enhanced food items for the packed evening meal and the withdrawal of the additional £5 for phone access. The availability of in-cell phones has continued to make life better than it might otherwise have been. In spite of the situation, mostly prisoners have accepted the restrictions with tolerance and good nature and have been observed supporting each other, although it has to be recognised that for many the frustrations and restrictions were very difficult to cope with, leading to violent outbursts and self-harm.

The prison spent the year in a state of management flux with the head of residence acting up as deputy governor for almost all of the period, and then when a new deputy governor was appointed, she almost immediately had to act up as Governor. We felt that throughout the pandemic restrictions, governance was effective, in spite of the changes. A new Governor, with previous experience of working at HMP Nottingham, arrived just before the end of the reporting period and we look forward to working with him.

Our own monitoring efforts have continued to be affected by low numbers, with colleagues deployed to Covid roles in the community or health service. Several members have been directly affected by Covid infection. However, we have maintained in-person monitoring throughout the period and have dealt with applications in line with our previous practice. We have been able to welcome some new colleagues and worked with them on induction into the role.

PPE has been made freely available to us, as has routine testing, and we have been both grateful for that inclusion and happy to comply with testing regimes.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

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

Self-harm incidence is reduced from the previous reporting period, but incidents of violence have increased.

Much of the safety focus has related to the pandemic; we have, overall, again been impressed with the commitment of everyone at HMP Nottingham to their own and others' safety.

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

There is a broad prison ethos to treat all prisoners humanely and fairly as individuals. Of course, there have been times when we have needed to raise basic housekeeping issues and concerns about food but we have found staff willing to listen. An increase in applications to us about staff attitudes over the final four months of the reporting period was acknowledged by prison management who advised us of various reviews of processes (for example, the discrimination incident reporting form, or DIRF, process) to improve prisoner experience. As in the past, sometimes wing staff have represented prisoners' frustrations to us for attention. Prisoners have again sometimes been deprived of basic rights and confined to cell for much longer periods of time each day than would usually be regarded as acceptable because of the pandemic. This has affected everybody some of the time and those subject to self-isolation for longer periods. There have been individual cases of lengthy deprivations but the general management of the situation has been much more refined than the previous year resulting in less onerous restrictions.

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

As in the community, the pandemic resulted in cancelled appointments, limited face-to-face access and in some cases, periods without treatment and this continued into this reporting year. This situation improved significantly as Covid restrictions eased and whilst face-to-face consultations resumed, in line with community experience, practitioners continued to conduct some consultations using the in-cell telephones.

As far as we can tell, prisoners were given ample opportunities to avail themselves of both Covid and flu vaccinations as appropriate, but it is disappointing that despite all the prison and healthcare teams' efforts, vaccination rates were relatively low.

Once again, we draw attention to the mental health needs of prisoners and we continue to be concerned that allocation of in-patient mental health facilities to prisoners does not meet their needs. We understand the pressures on mental health services overall and how this often results in individual prisoners spending very extended periods in a prison segregation unit, as it is the only location available where they and/or others can be kept safe.

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

Resettlement efforts continued to be severely curtailed because of the pandemic restrictions. In addition, there were significant changes in provision and management of these services, due to the national action to return these services back to in-house provision. Despite this, resettlement staff did all they could to support prisoners within the prevailing circumstances at any point in time, as described in section 7.

The national initiatives to prevent prisoners being released without a place of residence were most welcome but their winding down is disappointing. In June 2021 housing providers resumed responsibility for supporting clients in seeking accommodation. The prison established an accommodation hub during the autumn of 2021. We will continue to monitor progress.

There continued to be prisoners with indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP sentences) within the prison and, as highlighted last year, maintaining hope and preparing them for what few opportunities there are for review of their situation remains incredibly difficult for all involved. We were disappointed to see that limited progress has been made, despite a change in the law that should improve the situation of these individuals; after the end of the reporting period the prison made changes to the prison organisation to increase the focus on these prisoners.

### **3.3 Main areas for development**

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

We would again ask the minister to address the ongoing situation in relation to IPP prisoners who are many years beyond their minimum term (see paragraph 7.3).

#### ***TO THE PRISON SERVICE***

The required separation of remand and convicted prisoners is so widely ignored throughout the prison estate that we suggest this is a matter requiring structural attention beyond the individual prison (see section 2). It was disappointing to have a high-profile announcement that this was to change, only for that decision to be reversed.

#### ***TO THE GOVERNOR***

We hope that lessons learned during the lockdown period will be used to inform the organisation of the prison when the restrictions are lifted and that initiatives found to be beneficial can continue, so that the overall experience of prisoners is improved.

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

A general easing of the restrictions arising from the pandemic is indicated throughout this report.

The reduction in the number of prisoners transferred from Rampton Hospital and spending long periods in segregation has been welcome.

The reduction in use of force has been sustained from the previous reporting period although there has been no significant further improvement.



## Evidence sections 4 – 7

### 4. Safety

#### Pandemic response

The reporting period began midway through the third lockdown and the prison's response again mirrored the community restrictions, which had an impact on visits, work and education opportunities and general mixing of prisoners. As restrictions were gradually lifted in the community, this was broadly reflected in the prison, but it was not until after the end of the reporting period that the prison was finally able to move to Stage 1 of the national prison restriction regime. This was all overlain by periodic localised restrictions imposed on wings when an outbreak was detected. However, this was a much more targeted approach than during the height of the pandemic during 2020 and the prison sought to minimise the restrictions so that only the parts of the establishment affected by an outbreak were locked down. Even then, efforts were made to ensure that those affected could exercise together and basic domestic facilities could be accessed. This was made possible by the availability of testing facilities.

As we noted last year, human rights and OPCAT considerations arise when prisoners spend long periods in their cells but for the most part we have to agree that Covid safety needed to take precedence. Discussions with prisoners have in the main indicated a high level of understanding of a situation beyond anyone's control and prisoners have shared stories with us about the pandemic experiences of their relatives in the community.

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

Due to the physical constraints of the reception area and the holding rooms, it has often been difficult for social distancing to be observed and members have frequently observed prisoners either not wearing masks in holding rooms or wearing them ineffectively.

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

There were, sadly, three deaths in custody during the reporting period. In two of these cases, it seems that they were not related to self-harm or violence or to the pandemic; the third appears to have been Covid related. The Board will await the outcome of any investigations by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

There were 869 acts of self-harm during the year, a reduction of around 15% on the previous year. There were fewer acts of self-harm in all but two months, compared to the previous year. The monthly figures show less variation than the previous year.

As with the previous reporting year, the prison reports that a significant number of acts of self-harm can be attributed to a small number of prisoners. Our scrutiny of the daily operations data supports this analysis. There appear to be some consistent drivers for acts of self-harm. Mental health is often cited, and prisoners who have self-harmed have complained of a lack of access to mental health services. Prisoners have also frequently cited frustrations with various aspects of the regime,

including restrictions due to the need for mass Covid testing and the need to isolate due to Covid-19, and access to medication. In a safety forum, some prisoners have expressed the view that there is a distinction between prisoners who self-harmed because they wanted something and those that genuinely need help.

Again, we know from our own monitoring experience and scrutiny of the data that a small number of individuals are so unwell that use of force sometimes relates to preventing them from self-harm. We observe from information shared routinely with us by the prison that efforts are made in instances of self-harm to identify a trigger incident. This then indicates any trends which can be the focus of management action.

During the reporting period, the prison maintained a process for prisoners who had been identified as potentially needing help to receive a visit from the safety team. This has been particularly important during periods of lockdown and members of the Board have frequently referred prisoners they have been concerned about to the safety team to be visited.

The Board is aware of a planned initiative towards the end of the reporting year to introduce 'talking clubs' for prisoners and will be interested to see how this develops.

There were again significantly fewer ACCTs opened during the reporting year, a total of 818 against 1,020 the previous year and 1,314 in the year 2019-20. Although we have not generally been able to attend ACCT reviews this year, we have monitored the system by sampling relevant paperwork. During the year, ACCT v6 was introduced and the prison undertook assurance monitoring. The new process seems to be taking some time to become embedded and quality has been variable throughout the prison. This further reduction in ACCTs is welcome, though it is not in itself an indication of improving safety.

The Board welcomes the introduction of a new constant supervision policy which places an emphasis on positive interactions to improve prisoner's wellbeing, as opposed to merely observing the prisoner. The Board will continue to visit prisoners under constant supervision, where possible, to monitor the operation of this policy.

The Listener system of peer support by prisoners trained and supported by the Samaritans was significantly impacted by the pandemic. Due to restrictions on prisoners mixing, Listeners were not able to provide support on the wing and for much of the year it was not possible to train new Listeners to replace those leaving the prison. Support was therefore available from the Samaritans via telephone. Towards the end of the year, training was re-started and numbers started to recover. Listeners have reported towards the end of the year that a new rota has been working well. There have periodically been issues, as in previous years, of Listener suites being inappropriately used as storage space.

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

The Board is concerned by a rise in violence between prisoners (15.7%) during the reporting year, with 262 assaults compared to 207 the previous year. There was a reduction in assaults on staff by prisoners, from 103 assaults to 89. There were periods during the year where restrictions were eased, which may have contributed to greater opportunities for violence between prisoners, but even accounting for this,

figures were consistently higher each month than the previous year. A considerable number of these assaults can be attributed to disputes between prisoners, sometimes due to debt. Gang-related issues have also been a factor in prisoner-on-prisoner assaults. There have also been unprovoked assaults attributed to mental health issues. As the prison moves towards a return to a more normal regime with greater mixing between prisoners, the challenge for the prison will be to tackle these levels of violence between prisoners.

Self-isolation has again been more difficult to identify, as for significant periods of the year most prisoners have been locked up for almost the entire day, so prisoners may not have either identified themselves as self-isolating or been identified as such. As the need for such significant restrictions to the regime is removed, self-isolation should become more obvious. Reporting of self-isolators on the daily operations reports has been patchy but when we have visited safer custody to raise a concern, we have always found that they are appraised of self-isolators and that the wing has a plan in place.

The Board is aware that the prison holds weekly operational safety meetings at which those of most concern are discussed, and has on occasion attended. The prison has held monthly safety meetings during the reporting period, which has not always been the case. This does provide a significant degree of analysis of self-harm and violence and the Board scrutinises the minutes of safety team meetings when it does not attend.

#### **4.4 Vulnerable prisoners**

Vulnerable prisoners, located on G wing, have continued to be employed in catering jobs and associated workshops throughout the reporting period, meaning that for many there has been less time in cell than for other prisoners. This has been particularly significant during periods of lockdown when many prisoners have had a very restricted regime.

#### **4.5 Use of force**

There were 765 occasions on which use of force occurred, a significant reduction from the figure of 1,122 in the previous year. Each month was lower than the equivalent the previous year. At the end of the previous year, we noted a downward trend, but whilst the overall figures are lower, there has been no consistent downward trend during the year. PAVA was deployed by the National Response Team on one occasion during a serious incident.

#### **4.6 Preventing illicit items**

The Board noted in its last report that one of the most significant positive outcomes of the lockdown was the apparent rapid reduction in the availability of drugs due to restricted access to the prison. Use of the body scanner in reception to detect hidden packages continues to disrupt the flow of drugs and mobile phones into the prison. Prisoners indicating positive on the scanner, or by a dog, were given the chance to surrender the contraband and if they declined were isolated either in segregation or,

more usually, on C wing. We are not entirely comfortable that men are then in cells for a number of days without access to either showers or exercise but acknowledge that prisoners in this position have the means to bring this situation to a close. All prisoners in these circumstances have access to hot water for washing and food is provided at the door.

Some prisoners have told us that they think drugs are less freely available.

As with the last reporting period which also coincided with long periods of lockdown and restricted access to the prison, quite a few prisoners have resorted to the production of hooch in their cells. There have been regular finds of significant quantities across multiple cells. This continues to be worrying as such substances can be very dangerous.

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

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

#### Accommodation

The designation of the seven wings at HMP Nottingham remained unchanged throughout the year. From time to time, because of delays in moving prisoners on, sometimes because of Covid difficulties and sometimes apparently because of transport difficulties, it proved not possible to free up accommodation on the main residential wings, resulting in F wing, the first night centre (FNC), becoming overstretched.

During the summer of 2021 we were advised that three major changes would take place. The most significant of these was a plan to separate remand and sentenced prisoners onto different wings. As the IMB has been drawing attention to the mixing of sentenced and remand prisoners for many years we were pleased to learn of this initiative. However, towards the end of the reporting period we were advised that it had been cancelled indefinitely which is disappointing. Secondly, a special unit for young adults was to be created on one wing. This is understood to be part of a wider Prison Service initiative and is still expected to proceed, although so far as we have been informed, only limited progress had been made by the end of February. Thirdly, there was a plan to swap F and G wings to better match the capacity with their purpose (FNC and vulnerable prisoner accommodation respectively); again, this has now been cancelled. At the end of the reporting period the recent change in senior management meant that the planning of an alternative strategy was work in progress.

The issues related to cells being too cold and too hot on which we reported last year are unresolved. Whilst some aspects relate to the problems of heating a large and dispersed establishment and also to temporary breakdowns and maintenance needs, the more built-in problem of very high temperatures on the upper floors of two older wings were again a problem during warm weather, with no solution available. Whilst this relates to health and safety issues to do with the construction of the building, this is of little consolation to those locked in cells for many hours in high temperatures with limited control of ventilation.

Management of wings reflected the new Prison Service commitment to cohort separation. Whilst this was an obvious essential health and safety measure during the various peaks of the pandemic it is now part of the approach to safety and security. The IMB at Nottingham regards this as acceptable if it does not result in either significant increases of time in cell compared to pre-pandemic or obvious inefficiencies of use/access restrictions to regime activities like the gym, education and multi-faith facilities. The situation at the end of the reporting period was still in flux but IMB will monitor progress closely.

#### Clothing

The arrangement for all prisoners to be issued with their own stored clothing, which mitigated the kit shortages during the early part of the pandemic, was changed during the latter part of 2021 for security reasons. We understand prisoners can still apply for access to their own clothing but it is not always released. It is perhaps therefore unsurprising that the familiar periodic shortages of essential items re-emerged early in 2022. Although a scheme to issue new prisoners with standard

packs of kit was deemed to be successful, the amount of kit allocated did not match the notified entitlement. This means prisoners, understandably, retain scarce items and wash them in cell. The prison again made a substantial sum available at the end of the reporting period for additional kit.

## Food

After more than a year of restricted menus, the wider choice which was previously available returned during the autumn of 2021, along with access to menu self-ordering on the kiosks. The main meal continued to be served at lunchtime with a packed evening meal. Whilst at the beginning of the reporting period, when lockdown restrictions were still in place, this offer was supplemented by additional items centrally funded, this supply ceased during the year and we received an increase in complaints about the small size of that meal. We were pleased that the prison was able to review the situation and made resources available to enhance the packed meal. After the end of the reporting period, the prison made the decision to increase the daily funds available from £1.98 to £2.15 per prisoner, which was very welcome. We were also pleased that the tight lockdown restriction that saw meals served at cell doors was lifted, giving prisoners a little more social interaction (except during the sporadic outbreaks of Covid infection).

Disruption to food supplies early in 2022 impacted on the prison and sometimes prisoners complained about substitutions. Whilst there were instances when things went wrong, generally the efforts made by the kitchen served to mitigate the problems. Problems are not always the direct fault of the kitchen when provisions, for example for vegan prisoners or others with non-standard dietary needs, do not reach the intended prisoner. There are many reasons why this may happen but the end result is that occasionally prisoners do not receive what they both require and are entitled to. Wing staff are generally responsive when issues are raised but it would be better if problems were avoided in the first instance by the putting in place of proactive systems to which everyone was committed.

Some prisoners continued to complain about the poor provision of vegetables and fruit and we continued to raise this matter with the kitchen and with senior managers. There has been some improvement during the year.

As usual, the kitchen worked with the chaplaincy and the residential managers to put in place arrangements for Ramadan which, after initial glitches, were generally effective. This was made more difficult for a second year because the vacuum boxes could not be used during the pandemic.

## **5.2 Segregation, special accommodation**

The combined effect of Covid restrictions and our own limited numbers challenged our capacity to monitor segregation as we would have done in the past. However, we visited every week and spoke to all prisoners to whom we could gain access, if necessary through the door or on the exercise yard. We were able to resume attendance at a sample of rule 45 reviews. Beyond that we monitored files to satisfy ourselves that due process was being followed. We note also that a governor, a nurse and a member of the chaplaincy visited each prisoner every day. The staff team on the unit provides for a higher staffing ratio than on other locations and we were satisfied that prisoners received adequate attention. Sometimes prisoner

behaviour created disruption which challenged staff but on other occasions we observed high quality interaction.

*Case study:*

*On a visit to segregation a particular prisoner who had been causing a lot of disruption seemed much calmer and a member of staff explained staff had been able to spend increased time with the prisoner and they were sure that this had contributed to his markedly improved behaviour.*

We note that a very significant number of residents in segregation were those who had failed to clear the reception body scanner. During the year we were able to take the opportunity to observe this process first hand. Prisoners are given the opportunity to hand in contraband indicated on the scanner but those who refuse are transferred to segregation for security reasons. They are given frequent re-scan opportunities and most do not spend many days in the unit.

As we have repeatedly done in the past, we would again raise the issue that the lack of suitable secure accommodation for men with severe mental health or personality/behavioural disorders within the justice system remains a cause for concern. However, during the reporting year we have seen an improvement in the number of men spending lengthy periods in segregation because of mental health or personality disorders. Whilst some required a transfer under the Mental Health Act and had to wait for this, for others the prison seemed better placed to integrate them back to normal location and house them safely on a wing, albeit sometimes for short periods before they had to again be returned to Segregation. For those requiring a transfer, we do still have concerns about timely access to more suitable locations/services. This we have reported many times previously and we still saw some cases where men exhibiting distressing symptoms, including self-harm, cannot be safely housed on normal location and remain in segregation for sustained periods.

The transfer of prisoners to HMP Nottingham from Rampton secure hospital on which we reported last year has been less of a concern this year; we understand that the prison group director intervened on this matter and are pleased to report a positive trend.

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

On the whole, staff-prisoner relationships are good and prisoners do sometimes commend staff to us, collectively or individually, for their efforts. We noted an increase in complaints to us late in 2021 about staff attitudes which we flagged up to senior managers. Shortly after the end of the reporting period the new Governor launched a renewed focus on prisoner treatment and respect so we hope next year to be able to report on a general improvement.

During the reporting year the prison's efforts in implementing and maintaining the key worker scheme continued to be adversely affected by the pandemic, but it was an area for management focus and where staffing allowed there was a general increase in the number of sessions. This however remained an area for improvement, as prisoners' access to a key worker was limited and some prisoners

told us they had never seen one. Again, we noted that this was identified as an area of focus for staff shortly after the end of the reporting period.

Whilst finding enough time to fulfil the rigorous key worker programme has been challenging, we have, during the year, frequently observed staff interacting positively with prisoners. The importance of staff having time to interact in a meaningful way with prisoners cannot be overstated:

*Case study:*

*An officer covering the lunchtime shift for a prisoner on constant watch took time to listen to his concerns. The officer talked to him and started exploring with other staff ways of looking for a compromise that would benefit the prisoner.*

## **5.4 Equality and diversity**

During the pandemic it was understandable that equality and diversity were not always a strategic focus, although we received few complaints and generally found staff responsive. As the prison moved to Stage 1 of pandemic restrictions after the end of the reporting period, a renewed management drive to place respect at the centre of prison life included new lead managers for specified protected characteristics. We also understood that there was to be a more line management-focussed approach to the response to DIRF submissions.

We are aware that prisoners sometimes explore or re-engage with faith during their time in custody which sometimes means that there is an apparent greater observance than in the community. However, it is also of note that at the beginning of Ramadan 2021 there were some 170 Muslim-identifying prisoners, representing over 20% of the total population (nearly three times the UK national population). This figure has been broadly sustained. In the circumstances of restrictions and limited IMB members we have not been able to conduct our own information gathering about this phenomenon but we have established that it is reflected at some other midlands prisons (not category B local establishments). We wonder if the minister could consider whether there are wider considerations about justice underpinning this apparently disproportionate number of Muslim observers in custody.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

The prison has benefitted from an established chaplaincy team throughout the reporting period. In line with the external community pandemic response, collective in-person worship continued to be restricted and no in-person collective worship activity could take place until all community restrictions were lifted. Members of the chaplaincy were always available for pastoral work and to pray with prisoners on their wing. Provision for all religious groups for festivals and to observe important religious events continued as in the previous year.

From the autumn of 2021 prisoners had restricted access to religious classes, keeping within wing and landing cohorts. By the end of the reporting period they were anticipating a return to normal collective worship but, again, staying within



cohorts. We will monitor to evaluate whether this in fact restricts access as the new reporting period progresses.

## **5.6 Incentives scheme**

The use of basic status was reintroduced during the year but numbers remained low and, perhaps as a consequence of this, we have received few applications about the incentives scheme. In fact, there were fewer complaints to us about incentives and discipline matters than during the previous year.

## **5.7 Complaints**

The prison responded to numerous issues raised, including by ourselves, about prisoners not receiving responses to complaints by introducing a daily, direct to cell delivery of replies.

## **5.8 Property**

Complaints to the IMB about property increased compared to the previous reporting period by around 50% in total and more of the increase was related to in-prison issues. A problem that we had presumed resolved, when the operational support grade in reception is redeployed on Sundays, meaning that planned access to stored property cannot take place, re-emerged in the later months of the reporting period. In relation to issues that arise either during transfer or in relation to ongoing issues at other establishments, we are aware of persistent delays in getting replies for prisoners.

It is understandable that prisoners place high value on the small quantities of personal property that they can hold in prison. During the year, we dealt with issues such as a dispute between the prison and a supplier regarding who should provide redress to prisoners when the supplier could not provide items but the money had already been taken from prisoners' accounts (this was eventually resolved) and distress caused when a prisoner returned to their cell to find that property had been removed by a departing cell mate who had been released (no redress was made available, as the prisoner was told property was held at their own risk). We hope that as the key worker system is revived it will give prisoners more of a feeling that they are listened to and their property respected.

## 6. Health and wellbeing

### 6.1 Physical healthcare

Prisoners are entitled to healthcare provision equivalent to that provided in the community.

It is unsurprising that prisoners tend to have greater health needs than the general population – deprivation and poverty, homelessness, addiction and chaotic lifestyle all playing a part. In addition, levels of disability are relatively high – at 1 December 2021, 23% of the prison population declared having a disability.

Until the latter part of reporting period, healthcare provision in the prison continued to be affected by the pandemic. In-cell phones were used extensively, especially during periods where face-to-face appointments were not possible because of prison-wide, wing, landing or individual isolation due to Covid outbreaks.

Whenever and wherever restrictions were lifted sufficiently, face-to-face consultations did restart and prisoners in segregation and on ACCTs were seen in person.

Healthcare continued to access and provide PPE for its staff and when necessary arranged work patterns so that only one person went to each wing to dispense medication and visit those whose needs required more than telephone contact.

A great deal of effort was made to get prisoners vaccinated/boosted as and when appropriate, with numerous vaccination clinics held. At times named governor-grade prison staff were given the responsibility of making sure all was done to get prisoners who had agreed to be vaccinated/boosted to their appointment for vaccination. Despite this, vaccination levels were and remain relatively low.

Alongside this, other preventative health measures were in place such as flu vaccinations and hepatitis screening. Take-up again was relatively low and incentives such as provision of extras (e.g. toothbrushes, confectionary items and PIN phone credit) were used to try to increase take-up.

We are not aware of any acute or emergency need being unmet and again we found that generally prisoners were tolerant and understanding that their experience reflected the similar restrictions in the community. Applications to the IMB regarding healthcare dropped slightly from 12.8% in 2020-21<sup>1</sup> to 11.9% in this reporting year.

During periods of Covid outbreaks in the prison, healthcare staff worked with prison staff to provide testing for, and facilitate isolation of, prisoners to prevent further spread but, unlike the previous year, staff testing was organised and provided by the prison's dedicated Covid team and not healthcare. We were and remain impressed by the efforts made by the prison to limit the opportunities for Covid to spread into the prison and we are grateful for the IMB's inclusion in the prison's Covid testing programme.

Very few prisoners became severely ill with Covid and there was one Covid-associated death of a prisoner.

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<sup>1</sup> Using figures adjusted to remove 0800 repeat applications

By the end of the reporting year, face-to-face clinics were once again being held as the prison gradually moved towards Stage 1 Covid restrictions.

## **6.2 Mental health**

Mental health provision continued via an in-reach team and access to out-reach community services, the latter being restricted because of the Covid pandemic for most of the year. Staff working patterns were modified during the year to facilitate weekend and extended-day working, facilitating greater accessibility to mental health support.

Throughout the period, healthcare staff continued to attend segregation reviews and ACCT reviews and we continued to see and hear of high levels of empathy and knowledge of their patients. We also observed the involvement of mental healthcare staff in serious incidents (actual and contingency exercises).

## **6.3 Exercise, regime**

Time out of cell continued to be restricted intermittently across all wings at varying times throughout the year as Covid outbreaks and localised infections occurred, necessitating prison, wing or landing lockdowns. Wing and/or landing cohorting for all out of cell activities has also impacted on time out of cell and the activities available. Whilst we fully understand the reasons for these restrictions, we are keen to see time out of cell increase and are monitoring this closely as the prison comes to terms with operating within a post-pandemic environment.

As Covid restrictions were relaxed, more and more men were able to access the gym but the amount of time men could have in the gym each week was less than pre-pandemic because of the need for appropriate cohorting. The separate fitness suite remained closed until October 2021.

Further outdoor gym equipment was installed on one exercise yard and we have had requests from prisoners to ask the prison to provide more, thus covering all exercise yards. The PE staff have provided all wings with circuit training cards that can be issued on entry to the exercise yard to men who request them, so they can complete self-led exercise.

## **6.4 Drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

Many prisoners arrive in a state of drug dependency and healthcare has sustained the supply of substitution medication and, when possible, worked with prisoners to rehabilitate them. Again, this has been periodically disrupted by the pandemic, as has mandatory drug testing.

## **6.5 Soft skills**

The 'shoulder to shoulder' approach reported on last year continued for the early part of the reporting year and a programme of welfare initiatives helped maintain morale across the prison. With the uncertainties of the pandemic and ever-changing

restrictions, prisoner wellbeing was always susceptible to erosion, but the prison did try and do what it could to keep this as a high priority.

The library supplied wellness/activity packs in response to referral by officers, especially from the segregation unit, healthcare and chaplaincy. These were put together with contents to meet individual requirements.

**Prisoner Welfare**

HMP Nottingham Olympics W/C 20th September Old Gym

Monday 21st: Strong Prisoner Brawl

Tuesday 22nd: Ready, Steady, Go!

Wednesday 23rd: Basketball 100m

Thursday 24th: Strong Prisoner Push

Friday 25th: Take 5 items home, one for you, one for a friend, one for a family member, one for a pet, one for a plant

All gym sessions will continue in conjunction for the Olympics. You will be able to take part in the Olympic games in line with your gym timetable. No application required.

**500M ROW**  
Fastest time over the whole week.

**7 MINUTES OF BURPEES**  
7 minute Burpee challenge

**HANG TOUGH**  
Hang Tough  
How long can you hold on for?

Saturday & Sunday will be a mix of all aspects for the table tennis.

Clockwise from top left; barbering sessions, Prison Olympics, Black History Month activities, library activities, "come dine with me" family visits and Ingenuity Sessions.

**Whitepost Farm visit**

Whitepost Farm Animal Roadshow are coming to HMP Nottingham!  
18th August  
11:30 – 13:30hrs  
Come and have a cuddle ☺

As part of our Welfare events we have invited lots of little friends to come and see us!  
Location is to be confirmed (we're waiting to see what the weather does) and more info is to follow.

Extra cuddles for me :)

They're taking us WHERE?

I think they said Nottingham Prison!!

We'll come to you!

## 7. Progression and resettlement

### 7.1 Education, library

During the year education in classrooms recommenced but, because of ongoing restrictions, wing-level cohorting was in place, so set wings were given a specific day for accessing classrooms and/or the library. This had a huge impact on the number of prisoners able to attend at any one time and we repeatedly noted empty/near empty classrooms. At one point during the year only 63% of places available could be allocated and just 51% of places available were attended.

Education staff continued to provide support to prisoners remotely, especially to support those completing formal qualifications and education materials continued to be provided in-cell and via Wayout TV. Distance learning with the Open University was also available.

#### *Case studies:*

*Students seen leaving a barbering class to go to the library reported how they were enjoying the course and commented on the knowledge of and support from the tutor.*

*On visiting an art class, our member noted the enthusiasm, engagement and competence of the students and their respect for and appreciation of the tutor's attention and support.*

Courses are offered at varying levels depending on the course and the needs of the individual.

Level	Equivalence
Entry Level 1	Key Stage 1
Entry Level 2	Key Stage 2
Entry Level 3	Key Stage 3

  

Level 1	GCSE grade 1-3 (G-D)
Level 2	GCSE grade 4-9 (C-A)
Level 3	A Level
Level 4 +	All higher-level courses (Open University)

## Subjects Offered

<b>Functional skills</b>	<b>Vocational skills</b>	<b>Way to Learn courses</b>	<b>Self-directed study</b>	<b>Wayout TV</b>
English	Construction	Creative design	Alcohol awareness	Creative design
Maths	Painting & decorating	Customer service	Creative writing	Mind your own business
ESOL*	Barbering	Fitness for life	Drug awareness	Food hygiene
ICT	Domestic cookery	Food hygiene	Improving own Confidence	Job smart
	Art	Job smart	Introduction to mental health	Minute maths
	Business	Mind your own business	Recognising and dealing with bullying	Fitness for life
	Employability	Minute maths	Time management	Principles of journalism
	Peer mentoring	Principles of journalism	Understanding stress	Creative writing
				Customer service
* English for speakers of other languages				

The library is provided in partnership with Nottingham City Library service. Library staff are employed by Nottingham City Council and there is a service level agreement between the library and the prison.

Because of Covid, the library was closed between January and April 2021. Once reopened, on several months of the reporting year, prisoner visits to the library approached 1,000 per month. The necessary cohorting because of Covid put a focus on getting men from the wings into the library at least weekly, from all education classes Monday to Friday and induction whenever possible. The library opened six extra hours each week and staffing was increased to enable this. Wing kiosk requests increased by around 300% (receiving up to 30 applications/day) and library staff visited wings every day to deliver requested items. The library provides and maintains eight satellite libraries covering all wings and the segregation unit. These include six shelf bookcases holding around 180 books, magazines, newspapers and activity sheets, all of which were replenished regularly during the daily wing visits. Despite Covid restrictions, some outreach and development activities continued throughout the year. Storybook Dads resumed during the summer, Reading Ahead and the six book challenge continued and themed displays, monthly author promotions, World Book Day book giveaways, newsletters and competitions all continued as usual. Unfortunately, Storybook Dads craft, activity and recording sessions, Wise Guys club, wing Reading Groups, the Reducing Reoffending project with community libraries, and the Introducing Chess in Prisons scheme had to be



suspended. We hope that these can be reinstated once Covid restrictions and cohorting are eased.

Library orderlies are involved in planning and development as well as the delivery of the service. Most achieve a certificate of competence that lists new skills learnt whilst working in the library. As two staff are qualified librarians, teachers and IQA assessors and one of the casual library customer advisors is a trained teacher, the prison's quality improvement group and education department agreed that library orderlies could undertake a City and Guilds Customer Service Level 2 qualification. It is therefore disappointing that Covid restrictions prevented any orderlies being allocated in reporting period.



As with most prisons, a high percentage of prisoners have much lower literacy levels than the average population. During the year, the library worked on re-establishing the reading mentoring programme in partnership with the Shannon Trust (which works in prisons to reduce illiteracy) despite encountering issues typical of a category B local prison, such as short stays and security issues. This project has now been extended to include the education department.

We know that prisoners value the library service from comments made to IMB members, the library's own user satisfaction survey, the lack of any IMB applications regarding the library and as shown by the comments below.

*'Thank you for the wonderful books, I really appreciate them.'*

*'Visiting the library is the highlight of my week, it's made me realise I can write!'*

*'I like the staff. They are really friendly and always try to help me find any books I need or information.'*

*'I value the opportunity to have access to books, DVDs and to do something different from being in a cell.'*

## 7.2 Vocational training, work

Once again because of Covid, the only work available during most of the year was that related to the running of the establishment (essential work). As we noted last year, prisoners employed in this work had much more time out of cell than other prisoners during periods of restrictions. Other opportunities (e.g. classroom mentor, wing mentor, painting and decorating orderly, library orderly) have mostly not been available.

Workshops reopened with smaller groups of cohorted prisoners in the latter part of the year and the prison has continued to try and identify and develop new, Covid-safe roles for prisoners, albeit in small numbers.

### *Case study:*

*As reported previously, the cycle workshop, linked to the Recycle your Cycle charity and Bike Back Derby, remains popular and through links with commercial enterprises provides some employment opportunities for prisoners on release. Prisoners obtain qualifications improving their employment prospects and several have got jobs on release. Prisoners and staff report that there is demand for the skills they are taught on the course. On visiting the workshops prisoners were all totally engaged and the atmosphere in the workshop was busy and calm. There was rarely any problem with prisoner behaviour in the workshop.*

*The instructor had a lot of experience in working in prisons and reported that of all the projects and initiatives he had worked on, this was by far the most beneficial for prisoners. Released prisoners had got back in touch to say they had got a job and how valuable the course had been.*

Figures for the latter part of the reporting year show that there has been an improvement in the distribution of work amongst prisoners from ethnic groups in essential worker roles. Representation of mixed race, Asian and prisoners of other ethnicities went up across all work, when available. There was also a 10% increase in the number of prisoners living with a disability in key roles. Good proportionate representation of older prisoners in employment is evident, but low representation amongst younger prisoners (10% of the prison population but only 4% of the employed population) is clear. Lack of interest, lack of engagement, shorter sentences or higher incentives scheme sanctions are believed to be barriers to employment for younger men. The prison has been looking further at the age population breakdown and whether remanded or sentenced status affects employment, in the hope this may help find an explanation as to why more people are not employed, in preparation for lifting Covid restrictions further.

## 7.3 Offender management, progression

Whilst the offender management unit (OMU) continued to work with changed ways of working because of Covid, it maintained a responsive service, making extensive use of in-cell telephony. As Covid restrictions eased, prisoner expectations around



sentence management, location and release increased and applications to the IMB concerning such issues rose from 3.5% in 2020-21<sup>2</sup> to 6.3% in this reporting year.

The pandemic continued to have an impact on prisoners' ability to progress and complete sentence plans, due to the limitations on movement between establishments. It also impacted on foreign nationals awaiting deportation and we had a number, small but distressing, where prisoners had no idea what was going to happen to them, when and how, and it seemed impossible for them to make any meaningful contact with immigration/Home Office staff. OMU staff tried to support them but what they could do was very limited.

We have experienced a slight decrease in applications about transfers (5.9% in 2020-21 and 5.4% in 2021-22) once multiple repeat applications from a particular individual are excluded. This may be because prisoners have become more accepting of the Covid effect on such movements.

We are disappointed that our ongoing concern about IPP prisoners within the prison and how provisions are made for their progression is not being addressed. It is accepted that this is not for the prison or wider Prison Service to address, but once again we flag it as in need of urgent ministerial/government attention.

## **7.4 Family contact**

For those in custody, just as for those outside, family access was very limited at times during the reporting year. Whilst restrictions on visits were eased, sudden outbreaks of Covid across the prison or on wings meant visits often had to be cancelled at short notice, bringing much inconvenience to families and disappointment for all involved.

The provision of social video calls continued and take up was sporadic. Some prisoners and visitors found them unsatisfactory and on occasions technical issues made them impossible. The prison continued its schemes to help with family contact, such as birthday cards and children's activity packs, and introduced 'come dine with me' visits which have been highly praised by prisoners, families and staff.

### *Case study:*

*Trusted, enhanced status prisoners apply for a 'come dine with me' visit for their partner/spouse/family. Their visitors join them for a table-service meal in the prison bistro, with the opportunity to then spend time together on games and fun activities as appropriate. Small donated gifts for prisoners to select and give to their children are also available. One visitor reported that it had been the best experience they had ever had of visiting the prison and one prisoner reported that it had been the best thing that had ever happened to him in prison.*

The prison continued to provide additional PIN phone credit to all prisoners at the beginning of the reporting year; when the Prison Service deemed restrictions were

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<sup>2</sup> Using figures adjusted to remove 0800 repeat applications

sufficiently eased and withdrew funding prisoners were permitted to transfer £5 a week of their own funds for PIN credit.<sup>3</sup>

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

In the early part of the reporting period a combination of both national and local initiatives assisted with this, especially in finding homes for prisoners without an abode on release. However, when the national scheme wound down the usual problems began to re-emerge. Staff were encouraged to make contact with prisoners on wings as and when Covid allowed and staff were able to make contact with prisoners via kiosk correspondence and telephone conversations, as well as face to face. Resettlement staff told us of how restrictions still in place due to Covid in the early part of the reporting period impacted upon their ability to communicate with individuals and although they were able to speak with individuals using the in-cell phone, it was no substitute for sitting down with people face to face and completing an assessment. New caseworkers were employed but their induction took longer than usual due to the limited prisoner contact.

There was significant change in this area during the reporting year with the dissolution of the CRC and services moving to the National Probation Service. This provided a catalyst for reorganisation of those involved in reducing reoffending services and the prison created an employment hub and an accommodation hub. In June 2021 housing providers took over responsibility for supporting clients with seeking accommodation and resulting housing. All sentenced prisoners who stated that they had a housing need were supported by the accommodation hub and their community offender manager. They would then refer the case on to the appropriate local provider to make applications for housing, make necessary post-release appointments and support in maintaining tenancies by contacting landlords and completing benefit continuation forms. Remand clients were supported by the newly created accommodation hub in maintaining accommodation, by making contact with landlords and providing benefit continuation forms. The pre-release team also supported prisoners in gaining citizen cards and continued to refer individuals to appropriate agencies should they wish to receive specialist support. Accommodation in the community continues to be limited and access for those leaving prison is a special focus of the Accommodation Hub.

Housing providers do not take referrals for clients without a release date, so no referrals can be made ahead of this being confirmed; prisoners have sometimes consulted us during the year about concerns related to this situation. The new accommodation hub aims to engage with prisoners who are concerned about their housing situation on release.

Unfortunately, the 'next steps' lounge continued to be closed because of the Covid infection/transmission risk but plans were in place for it to reopen once Covid restrictions allowed.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This was indeed stopped in line with the cessation of Covid financial support measures in the wider community shortly after the end of the reporting year.

<sup>4</sup> At the time of preparing this report the lounge had reopened.

## The work of the IMB

The 2021/22 reporting year continued to be a challenging time for the Board with just three members remaining consistently active throughout the entire year. Two members remained temporarily excused from IMB monitoring duties to concentrate on their professional roles within the NHS/Public Health Covid efforts, only one of whom had returned to monitoring duties by the latter part of the reporting period. One member (an EU national) resigned, returning to her home in France because of uncertainties around her citizenship status and ongoing employment in the UK and the 'dual boarding' member's tenure with us came to an end. Several members had to self-isolate for periods and a number suffered Covid infections during the year, taking them away from monitoring duties. Elections for Board Officers offered up no candidates for these roles and so a core of three experienced, active members (who are previous Chairs) have shared Board Leader roles throughout the year.

Despite this, both in-person monitoring, and applications handling has been conducted weekly, apart from a single week during June 2021, and almost all applications have been responded to within 7–10 days. Access to the in-cell telephony system from the IMB office has been vital in allowing direct conversations with prisoners who we were unable to see face to face.

We also benefited from local and national recruitment efforts and had three new members appointed at the end of the reporting year and others in the latter stages of the appointment process. Two of the new members were underway with their training and a plan was in place to bring others on stream as soon as possible.

Visits to wings and especially weekly visits to the segregation unit recommenced during the year but attendance at segregation reviews remained an issue\* because of the small number of members available and ongoing Covid distancing restrictions, as described in last year's report. However, during the latter part of the reporting period members have managed to attend a small number of these reviews and efforts are being made to increase this activity.

The Board has continued to hold Board meetings monthly throughout the year, either in person or via conference calls.

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	15
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	7 (5 active)
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8 (7active)
Total number of visits to the establishment	129
Total number of segregation review sessions attended	3 (* see note above)

## Applications to the IMB

As explained in last year's report, the short period of use of the 0800 applications line in 2020-21 resulted in many repeat applications from a small number of prisoners. To allow for a more accurate comparison between 2020-21 and 2021-22 applications figures both including and excluding these repeats are included in the table below. It is also worth noting that the total of applications for the last pre-Covid reporting year (2019-20) was 419.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b> <i>(categorised by the substantive subject of the application only)</i>	<b>2020-21 reporting year (inc. repeats)</b>	<b>2020-21 reporting year (exc. repeats)</b>	<b>2021-22 reporting year</b>
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	23	20	31
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	15	15	9
C	Equality	9	8	6
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	15	13	13
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	55	34	44
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	8	8	18
F	Food and kitchens	22	22	22
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	49	47	53
H1	Property within this establishment	26	23	40
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	22	22	26
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	7	7	11
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	103	12	28
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	64	60	51
K	Transfers	55	20	24
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints	60	55	66
	<b>Total number of applications</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>442</b>



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