



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

**For reporting year  
1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022**

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# Contents

<b>Introductory sections 1 – 3</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of the establishment	4
3. Executive summary	5
 <b>Evidence sections 4 – 7</b>	
4. Safety	8
5. Fair and humane treatment	10
6. Health and wellbeing	14
7. Progression & Resettlement	16
 <b>The work of the IMB</b>	18
Applications to the IMB	19

## Introductory sections 1 – 3

### 1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

## **2. Description of the establishment**

HMP Ranby is situated in north Nottinghamshire, midway between the towns of Worksop and Retford. Ranby is a category C male training prison.

Since opening as a prison in 1972, Ranby has had the accommodation capacity regularly and significantly increased due to demand including most recently 2008 when further accommodation was built.

In May 2016 Ranby was named as one of six early adopter sites for autonomy where the Director of East Midlands Reform Group is able to make business and financial decisions separately to the wider prison estate.

The certified normal accommodation (CNA) at HMP Ranby as at the end of March 2022 was 892 and its operational capacity (OC) 1,025.

The residential accommodation consists of seven house blocks. Located within the House Blocks are the departments for the induction of new prisoners, resettlement, skills for life and safer custody. One house block has prisoners on integrated drug treatment strategy (IDTS).

There is a provision for a 24-hour healthcare service, as HMP Ranby has no in-patient unit but it has a 24-hour healthcare cover on site. The single-storey healthcare building accommodates other functioning departments such as the drug and alcohol recovery team (DARTS), integrated drug treatment strategy (IDTS) and mandatory drug testing (MDT).

The segregation unit is located in one of the older buildings in the establishment and comprises 16 single cells. Attached to the unit is a small, paved area which is used as an exercise yard and is contained by a high wall.

Education is allocated within two buildings, one of which holds the library and one the chaplaincy. For prisoners in the segregation unit, there is in-cell learning and teachers visit them as appropriate.

The workshops in Ranby, which are run both by the prison and education, include:

Textiles; painting and decorating; woodwork; wood assembly; plastics; industrial cleaning; officers mess; graphics input; laundry; powder coating; engineering; barbers, waste management; gardens.

Physical exercise takes place within two buildings and the sports field. One building instructs prisoners mainly on weights and treats prisoners who have physical disabilities. Fitness equipment has been installed outside each house block.

### **3. Executive summary**

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

The Covid-19 outbreak has had a significant impact on the Board's ability to gather information and discuss the contents of this annual report. The Board has therefore tried to cover as much ground as it can in these difficult circumstances. Inevitably there is less detail and supporting evidence than usual. Ministers are aware of these constraints. Regular information is being collected specifically on the prison's response to the pandemic, and that is being collated nationally.

Initially during the pandemic members monitored at a distance by phoning each houseblock and talking to officers on a weekly basis. Through the prison council a council member was able to talk with a member of the IMB over the phone to give a prisoner's perspective.

During the current reporting period the Board has had only five fully active members over the last 12 months (though its recommended complement is 16). Two other members have been on extended sabbaticals. Therefore, the scope of the Board's monitoring has been restricted.

Systems for the collection and response to paper applications were not possible at times due to Covid restrictions. Prisoners were aware of and used the 0800 system during this period.

Though some Board members attended the prison in October and November 2020 generally no Board members visited the prison between the first national lockdown in March 2020 and June 2021; even then few face-to-face meetings took place.

Covid-19 has continued to impact on prison management, staff and prisoners during this reporting period.

At times staffing levels were significantly low. This was managed by the Governor, the management team and staff who kept Covid-19 under control and avoided a major outbreak of the disease in the close society of the prison.

Towards the end of our reporting period the prison moved to Stage 1, the least restrictive stage of the Prison Service's national framework of Covid restrictions.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

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

The Board continued to receive statistical data from the prison which would indicate that the prison was reasonably safe, in terms of acts of violence.

HMP Ranby ranks well in the national ranking with a total number of incidents down by 60% year on year from before the pandemic.

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

It is the opinion of the Board that the prisoners within the confines of HMP Ranby are generally treated fairly and with humanity, however, there are exceptions that remain and that we repeat, including: staff communication, cell sharing, cell clearing, and canteen via DHL. The Board considers that the prison system, and not necessarily HMP Ranby, fails to provide fair and humane treatment to prisoners.

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

The health service provide by Nottinghamshire NHS is in line with the service provided to the general public outside the prison. We consider that they provide a satisfactory service most of the time.

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

In the later part of the reporting year the Board is aware that the resettlement department at Ranby has ceased to operate.

Some residual work is still being done via the Department for Work and Pensions and other agencies on site.

Due to Covid restrictions the Board believes that no offending behaviour courses were run. An ongoing problem continues to be the lack of courses to facilitate a prisoner's sentence plan. Also, some courses are not available to some men as they do not have sufficient time left to serve.

## **3.3 Main areas for development**

The Board has previously reported on the changing population of HMP Ranby.

HMP Ranby is currently designated as a category C training prison. However, it is routinely receiving many prisoners with a very short time to serve.

The Governor reports this situation has been exacerbated by Covid, which has diverted HMP Ranby and its staff away from its primary purpose which is to function as a training prison.

During the reporting year the Board does not feel that there has been any progress in addressing previous issues.

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

Although the minister answered our questions last year, the Board feels that very little has been done since then to rectify our concerns regarding prisoners who should be receiving specialist treatment for mental health issues. Prisoners are still being held for far too long when they should be in specialist mental health facilities.

Could the minister assure the Board that this situation is receiving their urgent attention and that something is being done about it?

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

Will the Prison Service explain why several prisoners transferred from other prisons are continuing to arrive without all their property?

Will the Prison Service explain when HMP Ranby will be returned to a training prison with prisoners who are able to complete courses according to their sentence plan and with adequate funding to prepare them for release?

Prisoners are being sent to HMP Ranby needing courses required for release but when they arrive, they are not running.

## ***TO THE GOVERNOR***

Could the Governor please explain why the Board had to read in the local press about a serious incident which took place on April 20 2019, where a coroner's report criticised Governors' actions regarding the release of a prisoner from HMP Ranby who went on to kill a person standing at a bus stop?

Could the Governor explain why the system of recording incoming property has changed? This has made it very difficult for the Board to address prisoners' concerns about their missing property.

The lack of a dedicated Clerk for the IMB and functioning office equipment has been a significant problem for the IMB during this reporting period.

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

The development of the ABC (activities, basics, consistency) strategy.

The possibility of building category D accommodation and two new house blocks.

The introduction of new in-cell laptops and telephones has enabled prisoners to access applications containing all their personal information and communication requirements, therefore enabling them to keep contact with family more readily.

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

The Board acknowledges that the prison set aside a landing of a house block for clinically vulnerable men so that they could be isolated from the general prison population, and staff were trained in the use of PPE from the start to provide additional protection from Covid-19.

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

HMP Ranby altered the procedure on arrival of prisoners due to the pandemic. The men still entered through the reception area and were processed through the system by professional and caring staff before being assessed by healthcare. Regardless of their assessed health, all prisoners were isolated for 14 days in a designated house block. Their temperatures and general health were constantly monitored. Before being transferred to the general house blocks each man was required to have two days of normal temperature and no other symptoms.

Basic induction was completed on the isolation house block after the prisoner had spent 14 days in isolation. This was given by other prisoners initially.

On day three they have a session with education. On day seven they have a key worker session. On day 14 they move to a designated house block.

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

The Board is saddened to report that there were two deaths in the prison in the reporting period. One death was apparently self-inflicted, the other apparently Covid-related. The coroner has yet to report on both.

The Governor states that there are lessons to be learned from this.

There have been 258 acts of self-harm reported this year.

The Board acknowledges the professionalism and care shown by the safer custody team.

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

Acts of violence and assaults were also down over the reporting period, and the Board believes that this could be a result of restrictions to the regime.

There have been 41 assaults on staff and 152 assaults on prisoners; a total of 193 assaults.

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

There have been 450 uses of force during the reporting year.

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

A New X-ray Hub is in the process of being built. Staff will also be randomly checked upon arrival at the prison.

Unfortunately, there have been delays in this opening due to faulty workmanship by outside contractors and the non-availability of some of the equipment.

Due to the pandemic the Board was informed that no mandatory drug testing took place during the reporting period.

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

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

Communication to prisoners in general, together with cell clearing following a prisoner's removal from a cell, is continuing to be a problem.

The Board continued to be concerned about the use of cell sharing, although the Board acknowledges it is outside the prison's management control.

The Board has received very few complaints regarding food during this reporting period.

### **5.2 Segregation**

The segregation unit has a total capacity for 15 prisoners with one constant watch cell.

In line with the rest of the world, the past 12 months at HMP Ranby's segregation unit has been 'different'. Managing what at times can be a difficult population has been made more complicated with the introduction of the Covid restrictions, the Covid cleaning policy and then managing segregated prisoners who test positive for the disease itself. The effects that having staff off sick can have on the unit have also shown. Segregation has a comparatively small staffing level of seven. When members of staff are off sick this changes the demographic massively.

There has also been a rise in prisoners being segregated who have challenging mental health issues. Some of these have required complex interventions from the mental health team, the diversity and inclusion team, neurodiversity, and other outside agencies. Four prisoners have been moved to secure mental health units from the segregation unit in the past 12 months. Managing these men prior to their transfer to hospital has brought its own challenges.

The unit is visited on a regular basis by healthcare, mental health, chaplaincy, and a member of the IMB, as well as daily visits by the duty governor. IMB members regularly check all documentation in the unit, including daily logs, history sheets and ACCT forms.

A Board member attends segregation reviews when available, and these reviews are always attended by healthcare. If appropriate, members of the substance misuse and resettlement teams, security, safer custody, and the prisoner's key worker attend.

During the reporting year the lack of regular agreed times has impacted on the availability of members to attend on behalf of the Board.

With violence down during the period, mainly due to restrictions on movement, generally it was reported to us that the segregation unit had a population on average of three men.

The Board wishes to commend the staff of the segregation unit for the care and empathy shown to the prisoners in their care.

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

The key worker scheme has recommenced but at a reduced rate due to Covid outbreaks and restrictions, but good progress is being made to bring this up to normal figures.

The Board is aware the current rate at the end of the reporting year stood at 42%. Staff are working hard to bring this figure up to pre-pandemic levels.

### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

There were 124 discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) completed by prisoners and staff in the reporting year.

We are unable to categorise these further due to the fact that the diversity manager was off for many months.

The Governor reported problems during this reporting year due to staff sickness and absence from Covid. As a result, staffing levels have been increased in this department.

#### **Peer mentors**

There are now mentors on all house blocks except for HB4 and HB2. Mentors' monthly meetings are going well, and the peer mentors are really working well together.

#### **Older residents**

There are a number of ideas for older residents, such as separate accommodation on the house blocks. The first meeting of this group took place with eight prisoners on 10 March 2022. A number of actions and ideas were exchanged for later on in the year and we hope to give an update on this in our report next year.

A coffee morning was arranged for 5 April 2022.

#### **Foreign nationals**

The first meeting regarding foreign nationals has taken place and all four men that were listed attended, two have British passports and changes to their NOMIS entries were recommended. The prison also has a Polish prisoner with no family in the UK and Purple Visits (social video calls) are being arranged for him.

#### **Young prisoners**

The first young people's meeting has also taken place.

## **Veterans**

Veterans have been having a few coffee mornings where they all get together and chat.

At the moment it is reported that one veteran is not coming out of his cell because he has PTSD. A peer mentor is looking after him and getting his meals. He has been referred to Care after Combat and the mental health nurse. However, the veteran will not engage. He has been referred to safeguarding along with another veteran deteriorating with mental health issues.

## **Gypsy, Roma, Traveller**

The first meeting for this group was held on 14 March 2022. This was held on St Patrick's Day and was for the Irish and this group of prisoners to celebrate. Irish stew was supplied by the kitchen.

The first minority groups meeting was held on 29 March 2022.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

The chaplaincy team at HMP Ranby is staffed by members from a variety of faiths and denominations including Church of England, Roman Catholicism, Free Church, Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Jehovah's Witness, Paganism, Rastafari, LDS, and Quakerism.

The chaplaincy normally delivers a variety of regular services and festivals, as well as faith courses and studies. Unfortunately, during the pandemic none of this has been possible and the chaplaincy team has taken to visiting prisoners on the house blocks.

## **5.6 Incentives schemes**

During the Covid pandemic, the normal incentives scheme was suspended, and all basic prisoners were given standard status. The only exceptions were where an individual had committed a serious offence, in which case his status could be reduced to basic. All prisoners were given a TV in their cell, as well as an in-cell telephone.

## **5.7 Complaints**

The prison report that from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 there were a total of 3,374 complaints received.

- 2,753 were received on time.
- 449 were not answered on time.
- 156 were awaiting responses.
- 10 had interim responses.
- 18 were cancelled.

Late replies to complaints continue to be a problem particularly with DHL and other prisons.

The Board constantly reminds the prison that a lack of a response only produces greater frustration on the part of the prisoner. We urge the prison to respond to all complaints in a timely manner.

## **5.8 Property**

The management of prisoners' property continues to be a considerable concern.

Property not arriving from other prisons is still causing problems and aggravation. When prisoners arrive from other prisons their property card is not always being correctly annotated, and this also causes problems.

Property is still not being tracked efficiently on prison transfers and there are still instances of property being lost when men are moved within the prison.

The Board feels that personal property is very important to prisoners and efforts should be made to ensure that when prisoners move both internally and externally their property arrives with them.

The Board feels that prison staff on the house blocks are not always as proactive as they could be in this area.

The complaints clerk is regularly having to chase up complaints to other prisons regarding a prisoner's property.

Also, the complaints regarding DHL are not answered by them in a timely manner.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

During the reporting period the Board has received very few applications for Board members to follow up. These have been directed to the NHS system.

Due to patient confidentiality Board members are limited as to the enquiries they can pursue.

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

All prisoners are seen by healthcare at the point of reception and are subject to a full comprehensive national healthcare screen which will identify any health needs. It covers physical, mental and substance misuse needs; relevant referrals are actioned at this point. Prisoners' health records are received promptly via email, and medications are received at the time of prisoner transfer.

In addition to the normal GP clinic service, healthcare also provides dentistry, optometry, podiatry, physiotherapy, and pharmacy services. Waiting times are closely monitored to ensure compliance with key performance indicators (KPIs) which are reviewed at contract review meetings. Pharmacy services have separate KPIs and all prescriptions are ordered via an external pharmacy including both urgent and routine

The healthcare centre provides fully functional clinic rooms offering privacy and dignity for all consultations.

### **6.3 Mental health**

There is a mental health matron, supported by an experienced mental health team which provides care for relevant individuals within a reasonable time frame.

There continue to be very long waiting times, in excess of 28 days, for the transfer of prisoners to appropriate mental health facilities. Transfer data is passed to NHS England in relation to waiting times.

During the reporting year four prisoners were sectioned.

Pre-pandemic, the mental health of prisoners was addressed through a monthly 'Time for You' session. This was an educational forum that had a specific theme. Patients were invited to attend, and feedback was requested from attendees. Due to social distancing and Covid restrictions the Board has no information or feedback regarding this particular activity at this time. We believe these sessions were suspended during the reporting period.

#### **6.4 Exercise, regime**

During the reporting year prisoners have had a minimum of one hour's exercise per day in selected cohorts. Prisoners have been able to make use of the outside gym equipment during their time outside.

The prison has two well-equipped gymnasiums which in normal times are well used and extremely popular.

However, during the pandemic their use has been severely restricted, and they have been completely shut down for much of the year. The gymnasium is still running a restricted regime; however, all prisoners have access to gym sessions on a rota basis. The Board has been informed that the plan, when able to do so, is to reintroduce 'educational PE' such as nutrition courses and personal training qualifications.

#### **6.5 Drug rehabilitation**

The prison has a dedicated house block which deals with drug rehabilitation.

## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

The library regime is now working as before the Covid outbreak. Each houseblock has an allocated time slot and prisoners can go to change their books or look up information. It is well used.

During the pandemic there was educational provision based on either the prisoner's sentence plan or what the prisoner asked for on their application form. Education fully opened on 14 March 2022 with selected classes and during that time were experiencing between 91% and 95% attendance. However, with more Covid being prevalent attendance has since been reduced.

### **7.2 Vocational training, work**

At the end of the reporting period all workshops were open with limited number of prisoners attending due to Covid restrictions still in place.

During the pandemic there have been periods in which only essential workshops were open. This particularly applies to wing cleaners, kitchen staff and servery workers.

In terms of finances for prisoners, no prisoner was subject to nil pay throughout this period. All prisoners received payments.

The industrial cleaning team is not available at this point in time due to staffing issues.

The prison remained in 'cohort' bubbles and prisoners were scheduled to work part-time with others from the same house blocks. Workshops had different house blocks assigned to them. This is hopefully going to change in the near future to give more flexibility to prisoners going to work.

The Board was informed from 13 March 2022 going forward half the prison population will be unlocked to attend work and the other half will have access to SOWA (structured on wing activity). This could range from appointments with areas such as the offender management unit, education, and other activities. This will enable prisoners to work on a part-time basis.

Moving forward there is an expectation that all the prison's workshop instructors will deliver qualifications within their work areas. Although this is at the very early stages this is positive and will possibly enable prisoners to find employment upon release.

The prison underpins everything they do with the ABC strategy – activities, basics, and consistency. Engagement in purposeful activity and access to education will prepare prisoners for release and enhance their employability. Success will be measured through sustained increases in attendance in purposeful activities in particular education and employability skills.

### **7.3 Offender management, progression**

The Board is concerned that prisoners are not able to transfer to a category D prison due to lack of accommodation in the category D estate.

The Board is also concerned about the lack of redress for prisoners sent back from a category D prison for a misdemeanour without paperwork.

### **7.4 Family contact**

In-cell telephones started to be installed within this reporting period which has given prisoners the opportunity to maintain contact with their families, and 'e-mail a prisoner' has facilitated keeping in touch via photos and updates.

During the reporting year social video calls (provided by Purple Visits) have been available on a restricted basis. On occasion this has involved a too-long waiting period.

In recent months face-to-face visits were restarted, with visitors arriving at the establishment having to take a lateral flow test showing a negative result prior to entry.

### **7.5 Resettlement planning**

The resettlement department was closed during the reporting year. However, there is still some resettlement work being delivered by the DWP and other agencies. Much of this work is being done by the Probation Service external to the prison.

The Governor is in the process of appointing a member of staff to obtain housing provision etc. for those prisoners due for release in the next six months.

## The work of the IMB

The reporting year has, for the Board, been dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Board has not always been able to have a physical presence within the establishment. This was severely reduced during the initial lockdown period. A system of 'blended monitoring' took place for much of that time, with a mixture of visits to the prison, where it has been safe to do so, and remote monitoring by informal contact via telephone and email.

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board Members.	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period.	10
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period.	5 active
	* 2 more members on sabbatical
Total number of visits to the establishment.	253
Total number of shifts on the 0800-telephone line*	0
Total number of segregation reviews attended.	40

## Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, Ablutions	1	15
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	3	3
C	Equality	0	9
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	3	4
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	14	34
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	2	9
F	Food and kitchens	3	3
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	16	26
H1	Property within this establishment	14	54
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	12	47
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	4	26
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, re categorization	19	45
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	6	28
K	Transfers	0	7
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system		
	Total number of applications	<b>97</b>	<b>310</b>





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