

Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Bure

**For reporting year
1 August 2020 – 31 July 2021**

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

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

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

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

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

2. Description of the establishment

HMP Bure is a category C prison for men convicted of sexual offences (MCoSO), giving priority to prisoners from the east of England, although this cannot be guaranteed. It has a certified normal accommodation of 604 and an operational capacity of 624. The occupancy as at 31 July 2021 was 618.

The prison has provision for transgender individuals (of whom there was one as at July 2021). Its population is relatively elderly, with 268 (43%) prisoners being over 50 years of age and 80 (13%) being over 70. The oldest is aged 93.

The ethnicity breakdown of prisoners at HMP Bure is currently 83% white and 17% from other ethnic backgrounds.

Located approximately seven miles north-east of Norwich, HMP Bure is a relatively new prison, having opened on 30 November 2009. It is a mix of new buildings and older ones converted from the headquarters building and airmen's accommodation blocks of the former Royal Air Force Station Coltishall.

The accommodation comprises seven residential accommodation units, mostly comprising single cells, although there are four cells in five of the units that are used as doubles, and 32 cells on residential unit 7 that have been used for double occupancy during population pressures.

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, 19 temporary self-contained single accommodation units were added. Rearrangement of residential unit 6 provided 20 spaces to enable new arrivals to be held in quarantine for 14 days – the reverse cohort unit (RCU) – and a further 20 for protective isolation. Prisoners who needed to shield were located on residential unit 7, unless they had requested to remain in their own cells in the other residential units.

Each cell on residential units 1 to 6 has integral sanitation, with use of communal showers. There is one easy-access cell in both residential units 5 and 6. All cells on residential unit 7 have integral sanitation and showers, and one is wheelchair accessible.

Other buildings on the site include the care and separation unit (CSU), healthcare department, three workshops, a learning resource centre, administration block and visitors' centre, and a multi-use building housing the offender management unit (OMU), programme delivery services, the gym, the chaplaincy and the multi-faith room.

The prison's service providers are:

Physical and mental healthcare – Practice Plus Group

Education and skills – People Plus

Substance misuse treatment – Phoenix Futures

Community rehabilitation company (CRC) - Sodexo

Family support services – Spurgeons

Catering suppliers – Bidfood & Hovis

Maintenance – Gov Facilities Services Limited

Escort contractor – Serco/G4S (UK Border Force – Mitie)

3. Executive summary

3.1 Background to the report

The report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board for the period 1 August 2020 – 31 July 2021. Evidence comes from the observations made on visits, scrutiny of records and data, informal contact with prisoners and staff, surveys and prisoner applications. The reporting period has been extraordinary due to the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Board has worked closely with staff and residents using remote ways of monitoring to safeguard all those who live and work at HMP Bure. The Board communicates regularly with the Governors and staff and despite long hours of lock down for residents morale remained high. At the time of writing we have resumed face to face contact with residents who have been able to provide a comprehensive account of how they have been affected during the reporting year.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Board's ability to gather information and monitor in person during the first half of the period covered by this annual report, as Board members were unable to attend the prison. Ministers are aware of these constraints. The Board understands that regular information is being collected specifically on the prison's response to the pandemic, and that is being collated nationally.

There have also been incidents of illness of Board members and the resignation of one member, plus two members on sabbatical. Despite these difficult circumstances, the Board has tried to cover as much ground as possible, but inevitably there is less detail and supporting evidence than is usually to be expected. Such detail as there is has necessarily largely been sourced from the report of the scrutiny visit undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) on 16 and 23-24 March 2021 and from the prison's own statistics. We should like to record our gratitude to those members of staff at HMP Bure who have willingly taken time out of their busy schedules to respond to our several and varied requests for information.

3.2 Main judgements

How safe is the prison?

1. Assaults on prisoners – 18
2. Assaults on staff – 10
3. Violence levels generally reduced, mainly due to reduced association.
4. Self-harm levels have generally decreased, as per section 4.2 of this report.

How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?

Overall prisoners continue to receive fair and humane treatment in the establishment. The introduction of the residents council during the last reporting period has proved invaluable in the current situation. The council meets once a month and has been attended by governors, including the governing Governor. With residents being on lock down for up to 23 hours a day, the council has made the

wellbeing of all residents their priority ensuring steps to prevent the spread of Covid19. The mental and physical health of everyone has been a concern and ideas were generated by both the residents council and staff to minimise harm. In a recent survey, 84% of residents felt they were treated humanely and fairly. Thirty-two cells on residential unit 7 remain equipped for double occupancy; however, the IMB would like a commitment from Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) that these won't be used again.

Quote from a resident who canvassed the opinions of fellow residents:- *"while 23.5 hours locked up alone with almost no human contact certainly reduced the risks of catching covid, one wonders whether the long term damage to our mental health and physical health will only emerge in time. The need for in-cell telephone and IT surely must become a top priority; access to communication and education must never again be allowed to be curtailed".*

How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?

During the reporting year, there were eight deaths in custody.

The safer custody team is considered outstanding in their delivery of support to both prisoners and families. Listeners selected from residents by the prison staff and trained by the Samaritans have become a well-respected group who have worked diligently to support those seriously affected by long hours of lockdown and increased anxiety for their families.

Healthcare is fully staffed and has not needed to use 'bank' staff. Healthcare, including the mental health team, has delivered a service equal to that expected in the local community during the current Covid-19 pandemic. Clinics had to be cancelled, but the healthcare team have had face to face meetings with residents using the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) in urgent cases.

3.3 Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

Will the Minister explain why, as at July 2021, 58 prisoners were serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP) without provision for any offending behaviour programmes or accredited interventions to allow progression towards release?

For example, HMP Bure has one individual who has served five times more than his original tariff. In the Board's view this is neither fair or humane.

The Board notes that in the Minister's letter dated 30 May 2019 to the National Chair of the IMB he stated that "HMPPS remains committed to the safe progression of prisoners serving IPPs and ensuring prioritisation of post-tariff prisoners in accessing rehabilitative interventions'.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

Will HMPPS make funding available to the prison to enable prisoners to have access to in-cell telephony? We notice that no progress has been made to the provision of in-cell telephony.

Telephony facilities for prisoners are principally landing-based communal telephones, which lack privacy and are limited to five minutes' use only. There is in addition a limited supply of mobile telephones available to prisoners when unlocked or which they can apply to use in their cell during the evening.

We notice that the heating situation was improved on residential units 1-6 but problems still remain on residential unit 7, where the boiler and whole heating system needs replacement. It is necessary that a fixed date is given for the resolution of this problem.

3.4 Progress since the last report

In last year's report, published in November 2020, we noted concerns that had been raised with the Board regarding ventilation in residential units 1 to 6. Despite work that had been done on cell windows to improve ventilation in the cells, we noted that some prisoners were still experiencing very hot conditions at times during the summer months. We asked the Governor to ensure that work on the ventilation system in those residential units was undertaken as a matter of priority.

The report of an investigation by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman following the death of a prisoner on 1 August 2020, published in April 2021, concluded that high temperatures in prisoner accommodation during a heatwave could have contributed to the dehydration linked to his death.

The Board is pleased to note that during March 2021, work was undertaken to improve ventilation to the residential units, allowing the outer windows to be opened independently of the smoke extraction system. Individual fans were also made available to all residents for further ventilation, if required. Further funding to improve the in-cell air circulation was also secured and maintenance work is expected to commence during 2021. Installing further insulation above each residential unit is also being explored to better control the rise in temperature during very hot weather.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

The Board normally monitors safety at HMP Bure through its own observations, by attending safer custody meetings, adjudications and reviews whenever possible, reviewing relevant documentation and speaking to people within the establishment. As noted previously, however, those activities were necessarily curtailed for several months during the reporting year owing to the constraints imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, because of which our monitoring could only be undertaken remotely.

We have, however, been assisted in our role by HMIP's report of their scrutiny visit in March 2021, and also by the prison's own statistics being made available to us.

The safer custody team is considered outstanding in their delivery of support to both residents prisoners and families.

4.1 Reception and induction

HMIP reported that, despite the constraints imposed by the pandemic, reception procedures were well organised and safe, and effective cohorting arrangements were in place to prevent the spread of infection. These comprised testing prisoners for Covid-19 on arrival and then five days afterwards. They would spend their first 14 days at HMP Bure in the reverse cohort unit (RCU), their temperature being taken daily and associating only with other prisoners with whom they arrived. However, time out of cell to shower and make telephone calls was limited to just half an hour a day.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

The Board regrets to report that there were eight deaths in custody during the reporting year. Of these, one was apparently self-inflicted and seven were from natural causes, one of which was Covid-19 related.

The report of an investigation by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman following the death of a prisoner on 1 August 2020, published in April 2021, concluded that high temperatures in prisoner accommodation during a heatwave could have contributed to the dehydration linked to his death.

Bearing in mind that, since opening in November 2009, HMP Bure did not experience its first self-inflicted death until 17 May 2020 (during our previous reporting year), having another occur just over three months later was an upsetting occurrence for both residents and staff.

The Prison and Probation Ombudsman published the reports of their investigations into both those self-inflicted deaths in June 2021. Neither report concluded that the restrictions imposed on prisoners as a result of the pandemic might have been a contributory factor.

There were 226 individual cases of self-harm.

The prison's analysis of incidents of self-harm shows that the trend for prolific self-harming by individuals (i.e. 20+ incidents per individual) is reducing due to the good work of staff and the controlled movement of prisoners. Non-prolific self-harm is levelling off with a definite change in impetus. Individual prisoner data shows that:

- Four prisoners were responsible for 48% of all self-harm incidents;
- 75% of prisoners self-harmed three times or less.

Only six incidents of self-harm were recorded in July 2021, this being the lowest at Bure since March 2019. It is likely that this is linked to the transition to Stage 2 at the beginning of that month.

These statistics are encouraging and show good work by the staff and that the system is working.

Assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) is the care planning system the Prison Service uses to support prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm. Its purpose is to assess the level of risk posed, the steps that might be taken by staff to reduce that risk and the extent to which the prisoner in questions needs to be supervised and/or monitored. During the reporting year, 159 ACCT files were opened.

At the start of the pandemic the prison had 20 Listeners, who were available 24 hours a day to help prisoners who needed support. However, owing to release or transfer from the establishment and the Samaritans being unable to train replacements during the pandemic, numbers have dropped to 10 at the time of writing. It is to the credit both of staff and prisoners that a full 24-hour listening service is still being provided. Listeners are dedicated to their role and ensure that officers are made aware of those prisoners who are feeling isolated but not asking for support.

The group has taken on a very difficult role during the pandemic, but has been supported well by the safer custody team and the Samaritans. The safer custody team has supported the group by listening to their concerns and arranging resilience and wellbeing training opportunities with a prison psychologist. In addition, Listeners have been given opportunities to telephone the Samaritans, to ensure their own wellbeing while dealing with an increasing number of prisoners who may feel isolated and fearful for their friends and family. At the time of writing, the Samaritans have returned to Bure and been able to give one-to-one support to Listeners, which is important to their wellbeing.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

Unsurprisingly, given the Covid restrictions in place throughout our reporting period, the level of violence within HMP Bure remained low. Data provided by the establishment shows that prisoner-on-prisoner assaults had a downward trend, with 18 incidents during our reporting period, although there was a small upward trend of

assaults on staff, with 10 incidents recorded. Those trends are shown by the chart at Figure 1 below.

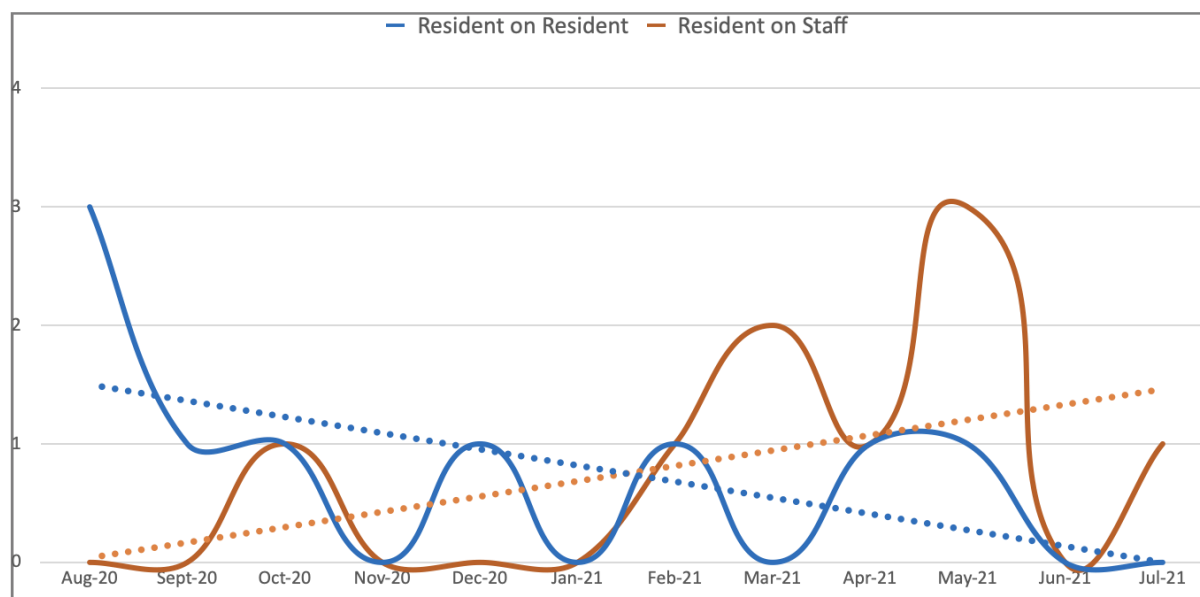


Fig 1: Assaults on prisoners and staff over the period of the report

Prisoner representatives attending safer custody meetings were asked if there was theme or trend which they could suggest as a cause for the increase in assaults on staff. They indicated that most frustrations came from the regime, with limited access to telephones and canteen issues cited as examples. It was also suggested that at times reactions from staff to requests varied, although a lot of the incidents were low level. If those perceptions are correct then, bearing in mind that Bure moved into Stage 2 at the beginning of July 2021, a downturn in assaults on staff can be expected. However, another suggestion for the increase in violence was that prisoners are arriving at Bure earlier in their sentences than formerly, resulting in some violence as they get used to the rigours of prison life.

At the time of HMIP's scrutiny visit in March 2021 the prison was noted to be calm and well-ordered, although in a survey conducted by HMIP, 16% of prisoners said that they currently felt unsafe; however, HMIP felt that was a comparatively good figure.

HMIP noted in their report that, because of these low levels of disorder, less use was made of challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) than in previous years. A CSIP referral can name more than one concern as a reason for the referral.

The chart at Figure 2 below shows the pattern of the 68 CSIP referrals during the course of our reporting period, and Figure 3 shows the breakdown of those referrals by concern. As at 31 July 2021 there were nine CSIPs in progress.

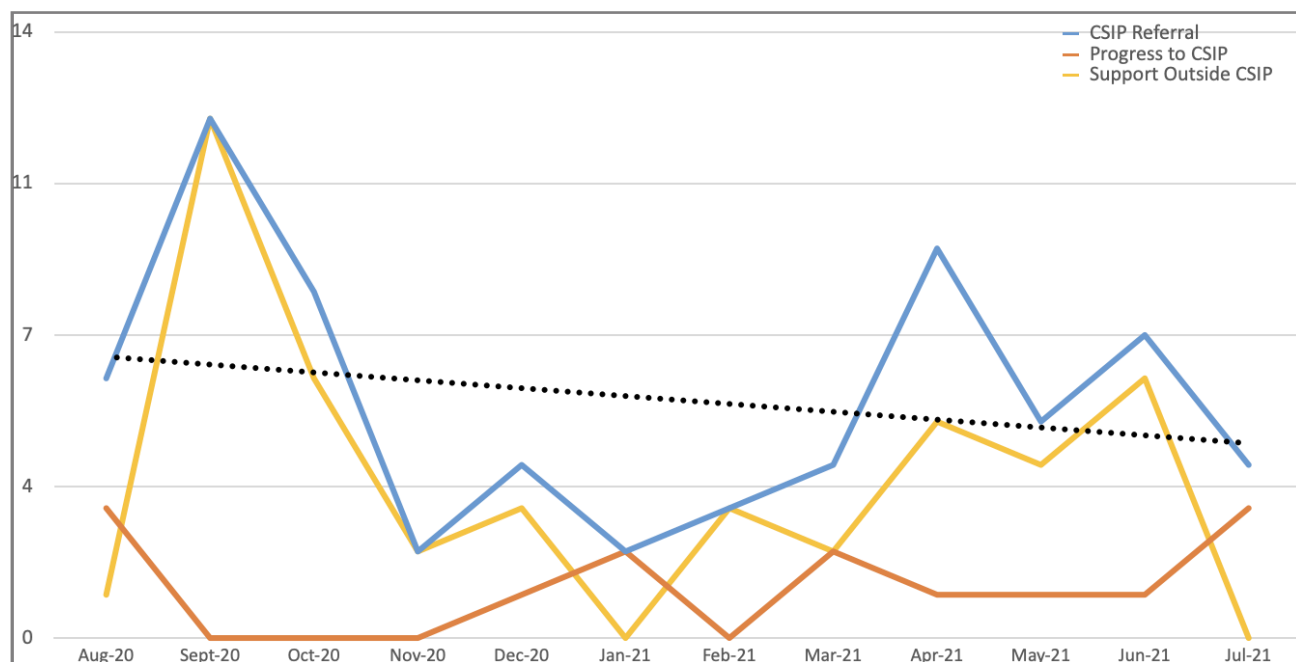


Fig 2: CSIP referrals over the period of the report

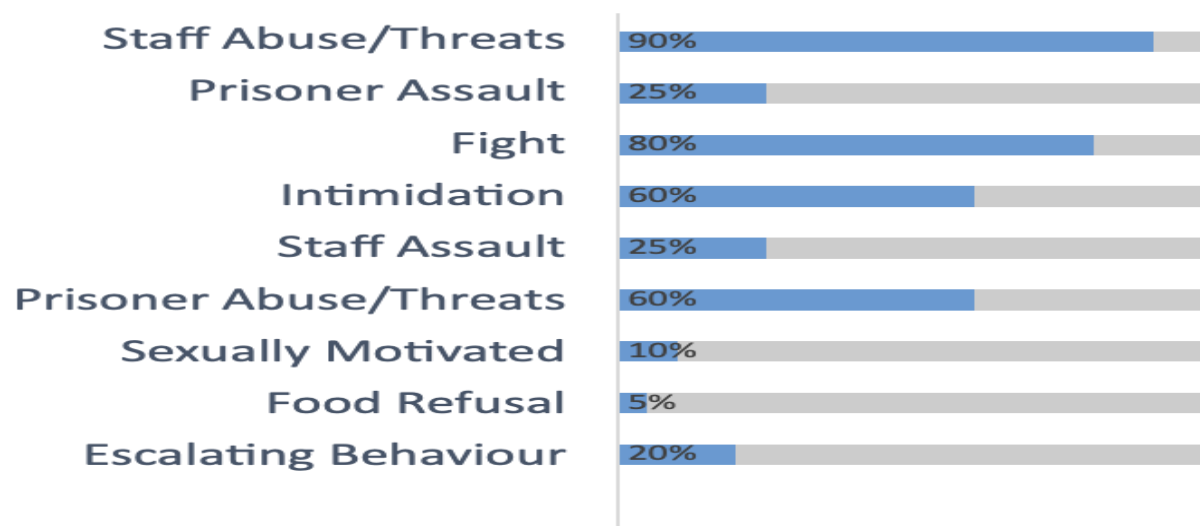


Fig 3. Breakdown of CSIP referrals by concern

CSIP is also used to support vulnerable prisoners who are victims of intimidation, bullying and violence. There were 14 such referrals during the reporting period for victims who had been subject to any of the listed concerns.

There is one individual at Bure who has been on CSIP management since August 2020 for his behaviour towards staff and his food refusal. At the time of writing, there have been no incidents of food refusal since the CSIP was instigated.

Whilst the reduction in CSIP referrals is a welcome development, HMIP also reported that at those reduced levels the process was not always well understood by the wing staff who were required to monitor prisoners on a CSIP. The Board notes that CSIP was to be a focus nationally this year, with a new training package due to be launched, and refresh training is to be undertaken at Bure.

4.4 Use of force

The level of use of force is low, with 46 recorded incidents, of which five were to prevent self-harm. There were no severe injuries to any prisoners or officers, and no batons were drawn. PAVA spray has been neither drawn nor used in this reporting period. The Board has observed and received training, to ensure that members have a full understanding of the control and restraint methods necessary to reduce the risk of injury both to prisoners and staff.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

Mandatory drug testing, security intelligence and substance abuse services indicate that there is very little availability of illicit drugs. There have been a few incidents of misusing prescribed drugs, but this has reduced since the advent of Covid-19, with prisoners being able to associate with only a small number of other prisoners to reduce the risk of infection. Healthcare and prison staff co-operate with the work of the drug strategy recovery team by monitoring prescribed drugs held by prisoners in their cells. This reduces the risk of bullying or trading of drugs.

5. Fair and humane treatment

As per main judgement 2 at para 3.2 above, it is probably difficult to conclude anything other than that locking up prisoners for 23 hours out of 24 is inhumane, but within that context we can comment on the steps that have been taken to lessen its effect.

The prison management states that *'The vast majority of the time our regime met the ECPT expectations for time out of cell. As you can see our residents didn't want to come out at the time the infection was spread across the prison and were grateful for what we did. HMIP took a sage approach to this and importantly we were one of the first prisons to move on our regime as soon as the option became available'*.¹

See also quote from a resident who canvassed the opinions of fellow residents: *While 23.5 hours locked [up] alone with almost no human contact certainly reduced the risk of catching Covid, one wonders whether the long-term damage to our mental and physical health will only emerge in time. The need for in-cell telephone and IT surely must become a top priority; access to communication and education must never again be allowed to be curtailed.'*

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

Residential accommodation units are clean, bright and in a good state of repair. In recent years, the staff and prisoners have transformed the units with colour and artwork. Since the start of Covid-19, with long periods of lockdown, prisoners have diligently worked to ensure that in-depth cleaning takes place regularly, to safeguard prisoners, officers and staff.

During previous years, there had been problems with the heating system and windows not fitting properly. New boilers have now been installed and, following a local solution found by the workshop to repair the windows, this appears to have been resolved successfully.

Concerns have been raised with regard to the ventilation in residences 1 to 6. Despite the work done on improving the ventilation of the windows in each cell, the prisoners found themselves in very hot conditions during the summer months. The ducting which circulates the air throughout each wing has not had any deep cleaning since the opening of the prison. Many of the filters need replacing, as the existing filters are difficult to access for any maintenance. This needs to be done as a matter of urgency. Prisoners can be confined to cells for up to 23 hours a day because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and it has been agreed that the air quality is poor.

Although the inhumane doubling-up in 32 cells on residential unit 7 ended in December 2019, the double bunk beds remain in the cells, resulting in cramped conditions which are unacceptable with the long hours of lockdown.

The kitchen manager and civilian staff, along with prisoners, work hard to provide three meals a day. As a result of social distancing and the number of prisoner orderlies allowed in the kitchen having to be reduced, some foodstuffs have had to

¹ ECPT = European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

be purchased from outside suppliers, which in the past orderlies were able to prepare, so quality and variety have declined. While on long hours of lockdown, prisoners were given additional snacks each day.

Owing to the change in the regime within the establishment, orderlies have had reduced hours in the kitchen, and this has had an impact on the civilian staff. Nevertheless, kitchen orderlies have worked seven days a week, with very tight timescales, ensuring that meals have been provided on time. The staff and orderlies who have worked in the kitchen have shown exceptional dedication to the task and have continued to provide meals for the 600-plus prisoners, despite the concerns that they may have had for their own families' welfare.

5.2 Segregation

The CSU has 10 cells and has in the past taken prisoners from HMP Norwich for short stays, to support pressures experienced at that establishment. This has stopped since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of cells occupied in the CSU is generally low, with some of the occupants returning on a regular basis because of behaviour, or personality and/or mental health problems. Officers working in the CSU are professional and patient in their approach. No special accommodation has been used in the reporting year and there have been no 'dirty protests'. The Board visited the CSU regularly prior to Covid-19; and since then we have been in regular contact with CSU staff and a telephone link has enabled members to participate in reviews, adjudications and ACCT discussions, and to speak with prisoners.

5.3 Staff/prisoner relationships, key workers

Relationships between staff and prisoners are generally good. There is a low level of violence and there are a number of prisoners with responsibilities in each residential unit, ensuring that prisoners' views are heard. Each unit has a representative on the residents council, education orderlies and trained Listeners.

Prior to Covid-19, the key worker scheme was in place, and was beginning to show opportunities for prison officers to support prisoners. Unfortunately, as a result of having to limit each prison officer and prisoner's number of contacts for everyone's safety, and the reduced access to the residential units, it was difficult to maintain contact with a key worker. This was addressed by officers on each residential wing having an individual responsibility for the wellbeing of a group of prisoners, liaising with them and documenting their records accordingly.

During the pandemic, the Board has spoken with staff regularly and more recently has had face-to face contact with prisoners and members of the residents council.

The Board has observed the continuing changes toward a 'rehabilitative culture' which empowers residents and has been invaluable in allowing staff and residents to work together in dealing with the uncertainty caused by Covid-19.

5.4 Equality and diversity

At the time of writing, there were 66 foreign national prisoners at the prison, from 37 countries speaking multiple languages, with one being recorded as 'stateless'. There was one resident identifying as transgender, and they are well supported by staff and other prisoners. The population of HMP Bure is 85% white and 15% black, Asian and minority ethnic. Black History Month information was shared with all, with thought-provoking artwork provided by residents, with the help of the education department.

The population is relatively elderly, with 268 (43%) residents being over 50 years of age and 80 (13%) being over 70. The oldest is aged 93.

The discrimination incident reporting form (DIRF) system works well, and all residents and staff are encouraged to use it. There were 65 DIRFs submitted, with 43% being received from those identifying as being in the BAME group, during the reporting year.

5.6 Faith and pastoral support

The chaplaincy team is respected by all who live and work at Bure. An understanding of diversity and equality is encouraged by all chaplains, with music playing an important part enabling all to experience and enjoy the similarities and differences within cultures.

Prior to the pandemic, the chaplaincy was able to provide services for all faiths and recognised festivals. During the pandemic, members of the chaplaincy dedicated themselves to supporting residents and staff by remaining in the establishment, helping to contact friends or family, and providing reading material, books and DVDs to help residents deal with the long hours of lockdown. Staff and residents alike lost friends and relatives during the Covid-19 pandemic, but the chaplaincy team supported everyone in their grief and arranged opportunities for residents to observe funerals via computer-link.

5.7 Incentives schemes

HMIP reported that most of the population were already cooperative in a prison setting and were not motivated by the incentives scheme. Annual reviews to enhance or reduce residents' privileges were suspended as at the time of their visit in March 2021, and about a third of residents on the standard level of the scheme had not been reviewed since the start of the restrictions some 12 months earlier.

There has been an improvement in ensuring that individual incentives schemes are not delayed. There are currently 428 residents on the enhanced level and 179 on the standard level, with only two on the basic level of the scheme.

5.8 Complaints

A total of seven complaints were submitted via HMP Bure's complaint process during the period of August 2020 to July 2021, along with a further two that were subsequently cancelled.

There has been a significant drop in applications, but those we received related to the frustrations that prisoners felt while on longer hours of lockdown, and unable to attend education, the library and their usual places of work because of social distancing. The Board was able to reply quickly to applications but not always able to resolve problems created by the pandemic.

5.9 Property

The Board is pleased to report a significant drop in complaints regarding property within the establishment. Reception staff have looked at ways to ensure that property and parcels can be collected during exercise. This system was working well prior to the pandemic, which has added to the pressures on staff as a result of the significant volume of catalogue orders allowed to prisoners in order to support them during the long hours of lockdown. Items have to be held for a period of 72 hours to safeguard staff and prisoners from the virus. Some suppliers have not been able to deliver items or collect returns, which added to delays. Business hub staff looked at alternative methods, which resolved some of the problems, but they had no control over the pressure put on outside suppliers by the general increase of online shopping in the community.

Property transfer between establishments has been a problem in the past, but items are now forwarded quickly and not being retained or lost at the level of previous years. Delay in property arriving at Bure from other establishments has improved. This may be the result of fewer transfers taking place, as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

The healthcare centre is open seven days a week, from 8am to 7pm on Monday to Friday, and 8am to 5.30pm at weekends. An out-of-hours service is not provided by Practice Plus Group, and the prison uses the NHS 111 service. GP visits take place three days a week; however, a telephone service to a GP is available to prisoners supported by healthcare staff. This is comparable to the provision in the community.

Since our last report, good staffing levels have been maintained by Practice Plus Group, despite the isolation of the prison and the reluctance of potential candidates to work with men convicted of sexual offences.

6.2 Physical health

The number of GP visits has increased, and there are currently six nurses and a pharmacist (shared with another prison), supporting five pharmacy technicians.

A dentist attends two days a week but, because of the Covid-19 restrictions, the full range of procedures is not available. An optician attends one day every other week and will repair spectacles. Healthcare staff have been trained to do minor repairs to hearing aids, and video-calls are available, using a special camera, for advice on skin conditions. There has been a drop in the number of complaints sent directly to healthcare. However, the Board has raised concerns about the replies received by prisoners, which lack some necessary information. The healthcare manager has been made aware of this and has agreed to address the matter. Those who are currently shielding are seen twice a day for their physical and mental wellbeing.

Since the start of the pandemic, the healthcare team has maintained low levels of staff absence, and encountered a number of more serious incidents involving the intervention of the air ambulance service. They have dealt with the situations in a professional manner, and the safer custody team has provided officer support to ensure the wellbeing of all healthcare staff.

6.3 Mental health

The mental health team consists of three experienced full-time staff and a learning disability nurse. There has not been a significant increase in the workload during the Covid-19 situation but they have been unable to do face-to-face reviews, for the safety both of prisoners and staff. As the prison moved to a less restricted regime, the mental health team was able to speak with prisoners in the open air, until a dedicated Covid-safe room was prepared.

6.4 Social care

Norfolk County Council (NCC) assesses, and provides aids and support for, those with disabilities. Prisoners are trained as 'buddies' to support the needs of those with mobility problems, and healthcare staff provide personal care.

The establishment is not able to offer palliative and end-of-life care. Prisoners requiring this are sent to HMP Norwich, local hospices or the local Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. With an ageing population, Bure would benefit from such a facility. The Board has found that prisoners who have served long sentences would rather stay within the establishment during their last days.

6.5 Exercise, regime

Prior to lockdown, staff provided many opportunities, both for prisoners and staff, to improve their health and wellbeing. Gym staff took on other duties during the initial lockdown period, which gradually increased because of requirements for staff and officers to enable the physical distancing of prisoners.

At the time of writing, prisoners have spoken of their appreciation of the efforts made by gym staff to offer a range of activities in the open air, in all weathers, which have helped them deal with the long hours of lockdown. Circuit training and bowls were organised. It was interesting to hear how much the younger prisoners enjoyed the opportunity to try playing bowls with the older prisoners.

6.6 Drug rehabilitation

Thirteen percent of the population of Bure are monitored for drug-related issues. Members of the drug strategy recovery team have continued their work, although some were shielding during March and April. No programmes have been run since the outbreak of Covid-19 but staff have maintained one-to-one contact with prisoners and given the more vulnerable prisoners regular welfare checks.

6.7 Soft skills

A range of charities has benefited from sponsored activities by prisoners and staff alike, including the Macmillan nurses, East of England Air Ambulance, Spurgeons and the Happisburgh Volunteer Inshore Lifeboat. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has restricted all further contact with local community groups during this period.

Prior to Covid-19, staff managed the needs of the elderly and/or vulnerable with the introduction of CAMEO ('come and meet each other'), which reduced isolation and improved prisoners' wellbeing. Therapy dogs with their handlers visited the establishment on a regular basis to help calm those feeling isolated and/or with mental health problems, although, understandably, this has now stopped owing to Covid-19.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education, library

Education continues to be provided through a well-managed external contract with PeoplePlus. In April 2017, following an unannounced inspection by HMIP, the overall rating of Ofsted was 'good'. The education provision reflects an emphasis on basic skills (literacy and numeracy), key work skills, social and life skills, and information technology (IT), all within the funding envelope of the new prison education framework arrangements. Education staff and the Norfolk County Council (NCC) librarian were not able to come into the prison from March, owing to the pandemic.

NCC is responsible for the library, which is a full and cramped room, but essential to prisoners with limited access to computers. Prior to the pandemic and lockdown, the library was used often, with many initiatives encouraging further education, music and opportunities to learn a foreign language.

Owing to Covid-19, NCC closed the library in March, but prisoners collected and shared books with each other. Residential unit 3, the 'enabling wing', following the necessary sanitary controls, had already set up its own library, which has been invaluable during the pandemic.

Education and NCC staff did not attend the prison at the start of lockdown. At the time of writing, staff have returned to working inside and are preparing for face-to-face contact in the near future.

There has been a steady stream of learners applying for distance learning, and the desire for higher learning has not dropped off.

Before Covid-19, the academic year was going well. Education had embedded the new functional skills standards in mathematics and English, and started delivery of level 3 food safety and hygiene, but numbers were lacking in some classes throughout the year.

The overall achievements for the year April 2020 to March 2021 were:

- Functional skills at 94.74% from 19 qualifications
- Vocational skills at 0 from 0 qualifications
- Personal and social development at 0 from 0 qualifications
- Other short courses at 96.93% from 163 qualifications

Unfortunately, no vocational or personal and social development (PSD) courses were able to run through this period.

The year was shortened by a couple of weeks when the lockdown was implemented. This caused considerable issues, and it took a month for education staff to be able to start the delivery of in-cell learning packs because the delivery had to be coordinated from outside of the prison. Education staff have attended the learning resource centre and developed subject-specific in-cell learning packs for almost all of the subject areas covered. To the end of the reporting period, staff sent out around 200 stand-alone in-cell packs and 200 subject-specific packs, without any direct contact with learners. Staff were able to mark the work once education staff were allowed back into the prison.

Covid-19 restrictions have highlighted what would have been possible if Bure had more of an IT infrastructure in prisoners' cells. The lack of IT equipment has highlighted the additional learning subjects which could be offered, and that some prisoners have been unable to continue with their studies without access to it.

7.2 Vocational training, work

External contracts are undertaken in three workshops.

Bure provides a number of vocational courses in workshops, waste management and horticulture. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, training for bricklaying was underway and the gardens continued to be diligently maintained to a high standard. However, owing to Covid-19, bricklaying has ended and the space now provides an area for temporary accommodation, to ensure that prisoners are in single cells. Although the civilian horticulturalists were absent for only a very brief period, the amount of time given to prisoners was seriously restricted, and remains so. The gardens are the pride of Bure but they have been difficult to maintain without the horticultural staff being able to come into the prison during the pandemic, and the notably dry summer experienced in Norfolk. However, despite the dry summer conditions, the gardens still produced a limited amount of vegetables and flowers.

Up to the start of the pandemic, the prison was making good progress with a wide range of vocational training leading to employment opportunities. Course retention and success rates were good. Workshops have continued through the Covid-19 pandemic, but the number of prisoners with purposeful activity has dropped owing to civilian staff not being allowed into the prison and social distancing in the various workshops. Workshops have continued with reduced numbers of prisoners, to comply with social distancing. Work has been shared between prisoners, to allow more time out of their cells.

Despite the reduction in the number of prisoners able to work in the workshops due to social distancing, the prison was still able to fulfil the contract for the production of filing cabinets, catering equipment and other items.

The lockdown and social distancing have reduced the number of opportunities for work places by 66%. Those unable to go to work through no fault of their own still receive a payment.

7.3 Offender management, progression

During the reporting year, there has been a significant shortage of staff within the offender management unit (OMU). Figures have shown that it has been as low as 67%. Despite the turbulence caused by the pandemic, there has been strong commitment by the newly- appointed head of offender management services, supported by an experienced senior probation officer and diligent OMU staff working within the establishment.

Accredited offender behaviour programmes are run, and these include programmes specific to the population of men convicted of sexual offences.

Parole has been generally maintained, and the backlog completed remotely or paper-based, with an increase in prisoners recommended for release during the pandemic.

Despite the offender management in custody model being nearly four years old, the National Probation Service has failed to entice and recruit the number of probation officers required for it to function. The training of recruits is underway but 18 months behind schedule.

7.4 Family contact

The family centre is managed by Spurgeons, which, in the first half of the reporting year, was involved in improving all aspects of visits, and engaging prisoners in parenting classes. Unfortunately, the manager resigned just prior to the start of lockdown. Staff were furloughed and some have continued to be so.

Contact with families via computer video-link (Purple Visits) is arranged by Spurgeons, but prisoners are limited to 30-minute sessions only. The visitor centre allows families to have a 60-minute face-to-face visit on Fridays, with reduced numbers because of social distancing requirements. Before the pandemic, Spurgeons had achieved very high standards in the food and drink available to families, who may have to travel long distances to rural Norfolk. At present, no food or drink is served. There has been a significant drop in the number of visitors, averaging a mere 36% of available spaces at this time. Prisoners feel the impact of the loss of family visits but recognise the risks to their relatives of using public transport to travel to the prison.

7.5 Resettlement planning

Although Bure is not funded for resettlement, it has community rehabilitation company staff working within the OMU. However, hours were lost when they were absent for a four-month period because of the pandemic. This was further exacerbated by staff shielding and two prison offender managers being redeployed to the community. Despite the commitment, OMU are not able to deliver a full resettlement package owing to a lack of funding and to pending national changes, and there is a limited resettlement pathway to support men convicted of sexual offences.

The work of the IMB

This year has been a challenging year for the Board at HMP Bure. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on our level of monitoring, as we were unable to enter the establishment while safeguarding ourselves, prisoners, officers and other staff. However, we have embraced ways of monitoring remotely, and at the time of writing we are able to listen and speak with prisoners and staff utilising teleconferencing equipment, and meet with prisoners and staff in prearranged areas while following the strict Covid-19 safety and hygiene guidelines.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8 (2 on sabbatical)
Total number of visits to the establishment	212
Total number of segregation reviews attended	25

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	14	5
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	1	3
C	Equality	2	8
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	12	4
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	11	19
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	8	6
F	Food and kitchens	4	3
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	33	9
H1	Property within this establishment	21	16
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	9	5
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	4	0
I	Sentence management, including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	4	8
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	24	5
K	Transfers	2	3
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	0	0
	Total number of applications	149	94



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